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**The American University in Cairo**

**School of Global Affairs and Public Policy**

**THE CONSTRUCTION AND ASSUMPTIONS MADE ABOUT EGYPTIAN  
WOMEN BY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS**

**A Thesis Submitted to the**

**Department of Law**

**in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in International Human Rights Law**

**By**

**Christina Gagnier**

**February 2013**

The American University in Cairo  
School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

THE CONSTRUCTION AND ASSUMPTIONS MADE ABOUT EGYPTIAN WOMEN  
BY THE WORLD BANK

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*Christina Gagnier*

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September 2012

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
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The American University in Cairo  
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THE CONSTRUCTION AND ASSUMPTIONS MADE ABOUT EGYPTIAN WOMEN  
BY THE WORLD BANK

Christina Gagnier

Supervised by Professor Sayeed

ABSTRACT

Since the inception of international human rights, some activists have argued for a universal framework and this framework has encountered resistance. International feminism is a space where the concept of universal truth begins to unravel. Feminists from the First World, purporting to speak on behalf of all women, essentialized the international woman's experience and set an agenda based on their First World experience. Third World women critiqued the systematic exclusion of their voices from the dominant feminist discourse. The international human rights agenda shares many goals with economic development. Economic development can be a vehicle through which universal human rights are created in the Third World. More importantly, economic development shapes and describes an economy. Women, viewed by economic development, are consumers and producers of future consumers and future economic sectors. They are both shaped by and define the economy. In order to properly understand the intersection of the Third and First World, it is helpful to look at how the powerful actors, such as economic development agencies, construct women. In order to explore the relationship between economic development and Third World women, this paper will analyze World Bank development reports from Egypt. The reports date from the moment Egypt became an object of development in the 1950s to the present. The analysis will demonstrate the World Bank's construction of Egyptian women. While throughout history, the locus of women's oppression has been complex and changing, the World Bank has failed to understand Egyptian women as having agency over their own lives. Egyptian women are seen as being helpless victims, needing international intervention to act on their behalf.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

As I embarked on this project, I constantly discussed my topic with my Egyptian friends, hoping to gain some insights into my research. One conversation foreshadowed the development of my thesis. Recently at a party, I went into my normal, automated topic discussion about women's empowerment in Egypt, when my friend interrupted me.

“What if they don't want to be empowered?”

I stared at him, flummoxed. This was not something I had even considered. Of course this was not possible. Everyone wants to be empowered, right? Perhaps they don't know it yet. Of course they want to be empowered; it would be ignorant to think otherwise.

But as I started to think more about the conversation, another story came to mind. A women's empowerment organization I worked for was doing development projects in Upper Egypt. Recently, they had embarked on a health project to educate Bedouin women about family planning. Soon after finishing, two or three women from the group committed suicide. The story is not confirmable. But it did raise an important question for me: had this intervention caused these women to commit suicide? If so, what about this specific intervention had caused these women to take their own lives? Did they not want to be empowered? Or was the problem with the conceptualization of empowerment?

As I asked myself and my thesis adviser these questions, yet another question emerged. Who was the woman that international organizations were attempting to empower? International organizations have created interventions on behalf of women for several decades now. But who was the woman they had both constructed through their interventions, and had discovered in the process? What were the assumptions these international organizations have made about her, through the focus of their interventions and through the way they made her an object of study?

The first section of this paper will create a conceptual map for the reader, exploring the concepts of feminism, international development and international human rights. Then I will explain the way these concepts interact to result in the deployment of

the concept ‘woman’. As a case study, demonstrating this deployment in reality, I have chosen to explore the use of the word ‘woman’ in World Bank reports from Egypt.

For this paper, my intention is to unpack the deployment of the word ‘woman’ in the context of Egypt, specifically how the word is deployed by the World Bank. The World Bank is one of the main leaders of the modernization project. The World Bank is a place where both international human rights law and international development meet. Through funding, technical expertise and powerful allies, the World Bank has implemented numerous influential policies and interventions which have been instrumental in shaping Egypt. The assumptions the World Bank has made about Egyptian women have played a role in her very making. Based on these constructions, development organizations have created policies and interventions in an attempt to reach the Egyptian woman they have so conceived. By labeling and naming her<sup>1</sup>, the World Bank has inadvertently created expectations of her, norms she must live by.

## II. WHEN THE FIRST WORLD ENCOUNTERS THE ‘EXOTIC OTHER’

“Contemporary imperialism is, in a real sense, a hegemonic imperialism, exercising to a maximum degree a rationalized violence taken to a higher level than ever before—through fire and sword, but also through the attempt to control hearts and minds. For its content is defined by the combined action of the military-industrial complex and the hegemonic cultural centers of the West, all of them founded on the advanced levels of development attained by monopoly and finance capital, and supported by the benefits of both the scientific and technological revolution and the second industrial revolution itself<sup>2</sup>”

~Anouar Abdel-Malek

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<sup>1</sup> G. WOOD, THE POLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT POLICY LABELING: DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE 89-90 (1985) cited in Jane Parpart, Patricia L. Connelly, and V. Eudine Barriteau, *Feminism and Development: Theoretical Perspectives*, in THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT, 56 (Jane Parpart, Patricia Connelly and Eudine Barriteau, eds., 2000).

<sup>2</sup> ANOUAR ABDEL-MALEK, SOCIAL DIALIECTICS: CIVILIZATIONS AND SOCIAL THEORY (1981) 145-146, quoted in Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses*, in THIRD WORLD WOMEN AND THE POLITICS OF FEMINISM (Chandra Talpade Mfohanty e al. eds., 1991), 335.

Universalism and international development are words that invoke a sense of progress in the Western world. Much like the Christian missionaries of imperial and colonial times, men and women have traveled the earth spreading the good word of universal human rights, capitalism, free-markets and development. Concepts both learned and created within the context of their Western cultures<sup>3</sup>, missionaries of universal knowledge and technical expertise have attempted to bring the undeveloped world into what it has deemed as modernity.

The apologists of so-called universalism have come in many forms. From human rights activists to Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), these apologists have argued for a collective and universal truth. Deviations from this universal discourse, coming from the beneficiaries of international development, have contested its absolute truth. A recent debate, and the focus of this paper, is between First World and Third World<sup>4</sup> feminists, which threatens to dismantle the core of universalism, developmentalism and ‘progress’.

In this chapter, I will explore the ways international human rights legal discourse has shaped the debate between the first and Third World feminists. Then, I will discuss the ways in which women and gender have entered the discourse on development. Lastly, I will explore the ways in which the two discourses are pertinent to each other, how the discourses are different and the historical relationship between the two discourses. This conceptual map is intended to help explore the ways these discourses have impacted and shaped the way the World Bank has constructed women in Egypt.

#### A. HUMAN RIGHTS LAW AND ITS DISCOURSE ABOUT WOMEN

Over the past several decades, the advent and rise of international legal feminism can be traced through several dominant schools of thought. With the codification of the international legal order after World War II came the rise of two distinct feminist

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<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this paper, culture can be defined as a collective consciousness for a specific group of people. It includes the collective beliefs and values of a group, and behaviors based on these things.

<sup>4</sup> The Third World is a term coined in 1952 by Alfred Sauvy. The Third World became a recognized entity because of its relevance to the capitalism-communism fight. For the purposes of this paper, the Third World refers to the underdeveloped countries as identified by the World Bank.



critiques. The first, deemed 'liberal inclusionism' by Karen Engle, is a critique of the current international legal framework's lack of a female presence<sup>5</sup>. However, these feminists are willing to work within the international human rights legal framework, but ask only that women are more involved in the international institutions which create international law<sup>6</sup>. An example of this would be hiring more women at the international institutions that create international human rights law.

The other feminist critique was one labeled structural bias by Karen Engle. This school of thought advances the argument that the international legal system is inherently flawed because of its 'maleness'. The best example of this comes from Hilary Charlesworth. She writes that

Law is part of the structure of male domination. Its hierarchical organization, its adversarial format, and its aim of the abstract resolution of competing rights make the law an intensely patriarchal institution. Law represents a very limited aspect of human experience. The language and imagery of the law underscores its maleness: it lays claim to rationality, objectivity, and abstraction, characteristics traditionally associated with men, and is defined in contrast to emotion, subjectivity, and contextualized thinking, the province of women<sup>7</sup>.

For these feminists, no inclusion of women could solve the problems of the international legal order. This legal order, according to structural bias feminists, reinforces a global dominance of men through its patriarchal structures and, thus, needs revolutionary change.

This theory of structural bias focuses on the private lives of women, arguing that the 'private' is the locus of women's oppression and culture and is the vehicle through which women are oppressed. Some of the issues these feminists have chosen to focus on

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<sup>5</sup> Karen Engle, 'International Human Rights and Feminisms: When Discourses Keep Meeting' in Buss & Manji (eds.) INTERNATIONAL LAW: MODERN FEMINIST APPROACHES 51-52 (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2005) 47-66.

<sup>6</sup> *id.* at 51

<sup>7</sup> Hilary Charlesworth, *What are 'Women's International Human Rights?'*, in HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES, 65 (ed. Rebecca Cook, 1995).

are female genital cutting (FGC) and domestic violence. For these women, FGC and domestic violence are examples of cultural oppression by men<sup>8</sup>.

Both of these feminist legal theories engage Third World women, or the ‘exotic other’,<sup>9</sup> in very different ways. Liberal inclusionists are distinct because “they acknowledge cultural differences as a potential obstacle to achieving women’s rights”<sup>10</sup>. But liberal inclusionists attempt to reframe the debate within a context which will convince an audience, including this ‘exotic other’<sup>11</sup>. Liberal inclusionists attempt to convince women, men and States to accept their ideas through two different methods of persuasion. First, they attempt to persuade by choosing the correct doctrine. An example of this can be found in Engle’s article when she describes Khushalani’s work about wartime rape. She cites numerous treaties and documents that convey a sense of the right to not be raped. She uses the Geneva Convention of 1949 Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War to justify her arguments<sup>12</sup>. Second, liberal inclusionists use extralegal means of persuasion<sup>13</sup>. Kushalani appeals to morality to convince her audience that “assuming, though not admitting, that the resolutions declaring the principle of protection of civilian population in armed conflicts are not binding, it is, an alternative submitted that they possess moral force and do, as such, exert great influence<sup>14</sup>.”

The structural bias feminists, however, do not engage with the Exotic Other. They focus on the way violations are ignored in the private sphere, “noting that... refusal to intervene perpetuates structures that deny women equal enjoyment of rights<sup>15</sup>.” This focus on the systematic exclusion of women from the public realm creates a lacuna. It

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<sup>8</sup> *Supra*, see note 5, at 52-54

<sup>9</sup> The exotic other is a term coined by Karen Engle. The ‘exotic other’ is the First World scholar’s construct of the woman who engages in her own oppression through her support of oppressive ideals. Engle gives the example of women who support female circumcision *id.* at 57

<sup>10</sup> Engle, *supra* note 5 at 534

<sup>11</sup> *id.* at 57

<sup>12</sup> Yougindra Khushalani, DIGNITY AND HONOUR OF WOMEN AS BASIC AND FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS (1982) in Karen Engle, *International Human Rights and Feminism: When Discourses Meet*, 13 Mich. J. Int’l L. 517, 540 (1992).

<sup>13</sup> Engle, *supra* note 5 at 534

<sup>14</sup> Kushalini, *supra* note 12 at 543

<sup>15</sup> Celestine Nyamu, *How Should Human Rights and Development Respond to Cultural Legitimization of Gender Hierarchy in Developing Countries?* 41 Harv. Int’l. L. J. 381 2000, 391.

prevents the structural bias feminists from seeing that the conception of rights is not universal, nor is the experience of woman universal.

There are two common themes in both critiques, however. The first is that both focus on the State as the main actor in human rights. Liberal inclusionists attempt to convince the State to accept the norms, while the other places the state as a problematic entity, part of the system that refuses to intervene and thus a reflection of patriarchy. I would also argue that both perceive non-Western culture as a barrier to acceptance of women's rights. Both see culture as an oppressive force that prevents their feminist goals from being achieved. The liberal inclusionist attempts to convince from a legal positivist perspective, or by imparting the significance of morality. The structural bias feminists view cultural oppression as a symptom of the "maleness" of the system. Thus, the system would need to be drastically changed. Feminist scholar Felice Gaer states that "there's a very big conceptual problem and that what is needed, in order to put the woman's agenda into the agenda of the international human rights groups is a redefinition and a period of reconceptualization<sup>16</sup>." These descriptions of legal feminism are not very specific. What is most important to take away is that these critiques define an aspect of culture as the barrier to women's rights. Liberal inclusionists identify culture as a potential barrier to acceptance, while for structural bias feminists, culture is always a problem since culture is a vehicle of patriarchy.

Third World women's rights activists<sup>17</sup> respond to these critiques in two ways. The first response mimics the liberal inclusion critique. In other words, Third World women critique their exclusion from dominant feminist discourse, but believe that the current 'system' does not need radical change- only more inclusion of their voices<sup>18</sup>. The second form of critique mimics the structural bias critique. These women's activists critique the current feminist discourse for three things; a focus on culture and thus, a

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<sup>16</sup> Felice Gaer, *Women's Rights and Human Rights: Possibilities and Contradictions*, Address at the 1988 Harvard Human Rights Symposium, cited in Karen Engle, *International Human Rights and Feminism: When Discourses Meet*, 13 Mich. J. Int'l L. 517, 588 (1992).

<sup>17</sup> For many Third World women, the term feminism carries with it a connotation of sexual rights and neocolonialism, rather than the rights Third World women have demanded. See eg, Nadjé al-Ali *Standing on Shifting Ground: Women's Activism in Contemporary Egypt*. PhD Dissertation. University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1998.

<sup>18</sup> Engle, *supra* note 2, at 59

misrepresentation of all women, the inability of feminist goals to meet the true needs of Third World women, and the perpetuation of colonial and neocolonial structures.<sup>19</sup> Focusing on the private, rather than the extreme poverty experienced by Third World women, has made First World women, with their imagined bonds of ‘universal sisterhood,’<sup>20</sup> complacent in the oppression of these women. Western feminists fail to address the issues Third World women would choose to address<sup>21</sup>.

## B. DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE ABOUT WOMEN

Development began as a project of replacing the ‘traditional’ Third World with the ‘modern’ and ‘universal’ concepts of the First World, which also acted as a justification for colonialism. The most basic assumption of economic development is that societies follow a specific path from ‘traditional’ to ‘modern’. This path “required the wholesale adoption of Western technology, institutions and beliefs<sup>22</sup>.” The goals and outcomes had to parallel and match those of the First World. In an attempt to map out this supposed natural progression, economic theorists, such as Walt W. Rostow and Myron Weiner<sup>23</sup>, speculated about the barriers to development. According to Rostow, traditional societies “evolved within limited production functions... limitations of technology decreed a ceiling beyond which they could not penetrate... they did lack a systematic understanding of their physical environment capable of making invention a more or less regular current flow<sup>24</sup>.” This statement embodies the *raison d’être* of development. The First World, who has been able to take advantage of technology and efficient production, can help the Third World move beyond this ceiling. The First World would ‘fix’ the

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<sup>19</sup> Engel, *supra* note 2, at 65

<sup>20</sup> A Ong, *Strategic Sisterhood or Sisters in Solidarity? Questions of Communitarianism in Asia* (1996) 4 *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 107, 109

<sup>21</sup> Engle, *supra* note 2, at 65

<sup>22</sup> Jane Parpart, Patricia L. Connelly, and V. Eudine Barriteau, *Feminism and Development: Theoretical Perspectives*, in *THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT*, 56 (Jane Parpart, Patricia Connelly and Eudine Barriteau, eds., 2000).

<sup>23</sup> See Myron Weiner, *Introduction*, *MODERNIZATION: THE DYNAMICS OF GROWTH*, 1-14 (Myron Weiner, ed. 1966).

<sup>24</sup> W. W. Rostow, ‘Stages of Economic Growth’ in *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1959), 4.

problems of the Third World, simply by guiding them down the same path. Through the seemingly innocent process of grouping the diverse First World histories and experiences, and labeling this collective experience as modernization, development created the framework for judging the very nature of progress<sup>25</sup>.

Development theorists, however, failed to consider the role of the First World in the underdevelopment of the Third World. During the 1950s and 1960s, development theorists from Latin America established a theory known as Dependency Theory. The theory established itself as a response to modernization. One of the first people to write about Dependency Theory was Raul Prebisch. In his report titled “The Economic Development of Latin America and its Principal Problems,” Prebisch makes the argument that technical progress is not evenly distributed across the world, but that the periphery, like Latin American countries, does not increase its standard of living<sup>26</sup>. However, none of these development theories focused on the relationship between gender and development.

While the development project was occupied with transmitting technology, it largely ignored women until 1970 when Esther Boserup wrote a study called *Woman’s Role in Economic Development*. Her findings revealed that international development had not improved the lives of women in agricultural societies in southern Africa. Rather, it had taken away economic opportunities for women.<sup>27</sup> Inspired by this study, development organizations began to think about women as part of their project. This resulted in the development of a new approach to development called Women in Development (WID).

Since the 1970s, scholars have conceptualized women and gender<sup>28</sup> within the context of international development. However, the World Bank has only officially

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<sup>25</sup> FEMINISM, POSTMODERNISM, AND DEVELOPMENT 11 (Marianne H Marchand & Jane L. Parpart eds., Routledge, 1995)

<sup>26</sup> Raul Prebisch, *The Economic Development of Latin America and its Principal Problems*, Lake Success 1950

<sup>27</sup> ESTHER BOSERUP, *WOMAN’S ROLE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT* (1970).

<sup>28</sup> See e.g., M. Patricia Fernandez Kelly, *Broadening the Scope: Gender and the Study of International Development*, in *COMPARATIVE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: SOCIETY AND ECONOMY IN THE NEW GLOBAL ORDER* 143-168 (Douglas Kincaid and Alejandro Portes, eds.) 1994; IRENE TINKER, *PERSISTENT INEQUALITIES: WOMEN AND WORLD DEVELOPMENT* (1990).; Diane Elson, *Male Bias in the Development Process: An Overview*, in *MALE BIAS IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS* (1991).; Schweta Singh, *Deconstructing ‘Gender and Development’ for ‘Identities of Women’*, *Int J Soc Welfare* 2007: 16: 100–

accepted two approaches to development, the first being WID. The second approach, called Gender and Development (GAD), developed from criticisms of WID and was formally adopted by the World Bank in 1994<sup>29</sup>. While there is one more additional theory, the Women and Development (WAD), this theory has not had a major institutional influence on the policy of the World Bank. This chapter will explore both approaches, including their criticisms, and perceived benefits in an attempt to map out the concepts deployed by scholars and development organizations.

## 1. WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT (WID)

WID developed as a theory in response to the ‘trickle down’<sup>30</sup> concept of development organizations. The WID theory was conceptualized by women development workers who had witnessed development further marginalizing women, rather than empowering them<sup>31</sup>. In the United States, the Percy Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act (1961) was passed in 1973. This amendment required a portion of U.S. international aid, such as money spent by USAID, be used to integrate women more fully into development<sup>32</sup>. The WID approach to economic development is largely based on creating greater equality between men and women in the workforce. The entire approach is predicated on the notion of promoting women as an economic resource, with many organizations justifying women’s inclusion as an economic incentive to achieving modernization<sup>33</sup>. In the following chapter, I will demonstrate this justification with

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109; Anne Marie Goetz, *Feminism and the Claim to Know: Contradictions in Feminist Approaches to Women in Development*, in GENDER AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (1991).

<sup>29</sup> WORLD BANK, AN EVALUATION OF WORLD BANK SUPPORT, 2002-08: GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT, 2 (2009) available at [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/GENDEREXT/Resources/Gender\\_eval.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/GENDEREXT/Resources/Gender_eval.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> The ‘trickle down’ concept advanced the idea that the benefits of economic development would ‘trickle down’ to all members of a society. The idea holds that when one sector grows, the economic benefits will spill over into other sectors since people will have more disposable income. See, Debraj Ray, *Uneven Growth: a Framework for Research in Development Economics*, Journal of Economic Perspectives, Vol. 24, No. 3, Summer 2010.

<sup>31</sup> C Miller and S Razavi, *From WID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Development Discourse* (1995) UNITED NATIONS RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, 2.

<sup>32</sup> See 22 U.S.C. § 2151(k) (in Section 113 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, note the support of incorporating women more fully into development.)

<sup>33</sup> See, e.g., OFFICE OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT: THE FIRST DECADE 1975-1984 (Report to Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and

numerous examples. WID theorists began to focus on shifting women's roles from mothers to their productive capacities as members of the economy<sup>34</sup>. Thus, the WID framework continued to see the problem of equality as a strictly logistical problem, existing as yet another hurdle to modernization<sup>35</sup>. After Boserup's study, the development community began to advocate that women were the missing link in development<sup>36</sup>.

The World Bank and other development organizations, as we shall see from various reports, began to include WID experts on development projects in the 1970s. Their goal was to incorporate women into the development process. "It marked an important corrective, highlighting the fact that women need to be integrated into development processes as active agents if efficient and effective development is to be achieved<sup>37</sup>." Additionally, the theory was "fueled by a belief that by simply improving women's access to technology, credit and extension services, women's productivity would increase and this would positively influence the development process"<sup>38</sup>. What is most important to note is the assumption common in these statements; that women must become 'productive' to enhance development. The WID theory is largely based on the assumption that development would follow a similar pattern to western history of modernization and economic development<sup>39</sup>.

There are several criticisms of the WID approach that are relevant for the analysis in this paper. The first critique stems from WID justifying its reasoning by claiming women should be allowed more access to resources because of their productive capacity. However, implicit in this justification is that productivity justifies resources. Thus, if

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House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs 1984); Gender Equality available at [http://sitemaker.umich.edu/sec006group4/gender\\_equality\\_and\\_economic\\_growth](http://sitemaker.umich.edu/sec006group4/gender_equality_and_economic_growth); WORLD BANK, RECOGNIZING THE "INVISIBLE" WOMAN IN DEVELOPMENT: THE WORLD BANK'S EXPERIENCE (1979); LAWRENCE H. SUMMERS, WORLD BANK, INVESTING IN ALL THE PEOPLE: EDUCATING WOMEN IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (1994)

<sup>34</sup> Miller and Razavi, *supra* note 18, at 2

<sup>35</sup> *supra* note 13, at 13

<sup>36</sup> Miller and Razavi, *supra* note 18, at 4

<sup>37</sup> Sally Baden & Hazel Reeves, Gender and Development: Concepts and Definitions, 33 (BRIDGE, Report No. 55, Feb 2000) available at <http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/re55.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> WID available at <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/bpaper/boxseng.htm>

<sup>39</sup> Jane Parpart, Patricia L. Connelly, and V. Eudine Barriteau, *Feminism and Development: Theoretical Perspectives*, in THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT, 58 (Jane Parpart, Patricia Connelly and Eudine Barriteau, eds., 2000).

women prove to be less productive<sup>40</sup> than men, does this also mean that they are deserving of fewer resources<sup>41</sup>? Furthermore, theorists fail to value women's role in reproduction and the domestic spaces where women's labor is not appreciated as productive. These roles for women enable economic efficiency<sup>42</sup>. Additionally, while many WID based policies have focused on increasing the income of the most disenfranchised women, female heads of household (FHH)<sup>43</sup>, these economic policies do not focus on the way resources are distributed within the household of a 'nuclear family', simply assuming the family unit will adjust<sup>44</sup>. WID is based on the assumption that women's lack of resources results in their subordination. However, it fails to address the question of how gender may actually be the cause of the lack to resources<sup>45</sup>.

The second critique stems from the WID framework's failure to address the structures of development and, by default, of modernization. Thus, "WID fails to link the exploitation of women to exploitation as a component of the global capitalist system<sup>46</sup>." Similar to theories of modernization, as this paper will demonstrate, the WID framework assumes that by connecting women with proper resources, such as education and technology, women will become full and productive members of the economy. This critique is linked to the first, since modernization intrinsically values human beings for their productive capabilities.

The last important critique comes from the 'otherization' of Third World women implicit in WID theories. Authors like Chandra Mohanty criticize Western feminists for essentializing women's experience, attributing all women's oppression to a universal experience of men, while forgetting "a particular world balance of power within which any analysis of culture, ideology, and socio-economic conditions has to be necessarily

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<sup>40</sup> Here, productivity refers to the ability to produce goods and services within the market.

<sup>41</sup> Miller and Razavi, *supra* note 18, at 4

<sup>42</sup> V. Eudine Barriteau, *Feminist Theory and Development: Implications for Policy, Research, and Action*, in THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT, 58 (Jane Parpart, Patricia Connelly and Eudine Barriteau, eds., 2000).

<sup>43</sup> FHH are single mothers in the Egyptian slum communities.

<sup>44</sup> Nyamu, *supra* note 15 at 386

<sup>45</sup> Miller and Razavi, *supra* note 18, at 12

<sup>46</sup> Nyamu, *supra* note 15 at 386.



situated<sup>47</sup>.” Western feminists, and specifically WID theorists, have forgotten to situate the Third World woman’s experience of oppression. This omission has resulted in constructing Third World women as a passive victim of culture and thus, ignoring her own assertion of power through forms of resistance<sup>48</sup>.

## 2. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT (GAD)

The Gender and Development (GAD) approach developed in response to criticisms of the WID approach. Soon after it was adopted as World Bank policy in 1994, Gender and Development experts began to appear on World Bank projects. The GAD policy required more in-depth analysis of gender relations at a country level. The analysis and findings would then be integrated into the Country Assistance Strategies (CAS)<sup>49</sup>. Also note the shift in terminology from women to gender. The term ‘gender,’ as used in this paper, can trace its theoretical origins to the 1976 University Sussex Workshop on the Subordination of Women. There, feminist theorists determined that

women, like men, are biological beings but that women’s subordination was socially constructed and not biologically determined... to conceptually differentiate between these two realities, it is necessary to identify “sex” as the biological differentiation between male and female, and “gender” as the differentiation between masculinity and femininity as constructed through socialization and education among other factors<sup>50</sup>.

And according to the World Health Organization, “gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers

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<sup>47</sup> Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Western Discourses*, in THIRD WORLD WOMEN AND THE POLITICS OF FEMINISM 335 (Chandra Talpade Mohanty et al. eds., 1991).

<sup>48</sup> Jane Parpart, Patricia L. Connelly, and V. Eudine Barriteau, *Feminism and Development: Theoretical Perspectives*, in THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT, 80-81 (Jane Parpart, Patricia Connelly and Eudine Barriteau, eds., 2000).

<sup>49</sup> World Bank, *An Evaluation of World Bank Support, 2002-08: Gender and Development*, 2 available at [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/GENDEREXT/Resources/Gender\\_eval.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/GENDEREXT/Resources/Gender_eval.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> Rhoda Reddock, *Why Gender? Why Development?*, in THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT, 62 (Jane Parpart, Patricia Connelly and Eudine Barriteau, eds., 2000).

appropriate for men and women<sup>51</sup>”. This paper will further demonstrate the theoretical distinction between gender and women in the analysis section.

The theory behind GAD focuses more on the way gender and power are distributed within a society<sup>52</sup>. The GAD approach disregarded the WID’s notion that women can be seen in isolation<sup>53</sup>. For example, it attempts to answer the question why increasing access to resources has not necessarily meant greater participation in the workforce. However, the main component of the GAD approach addresses the way gender is conceptualized within a society and how institutions shape the roles created by gender<sup>54</sup>. It also explores the “relationships through which women are subordinated in the division of resources and responsibilities<sup>55</sup>”. The GAD approach is based heavily in Western socialist feminist theories<sup>56</sup>. And it “seeks to grasp the construction and reproduction of gender identities and the role of gender ideologies in the reproduction of unequal power relations between men and women<sup>57</sup>”.

While there are many theories on gender, there are two main approaches to ‘gender’ within the framework of GAD. Gender theories focus on the way women have access to resources and the roles created by patriarchy<sup>58</sup>. Gender interests can usually either be classified as either strategic interests, like gender equality and ways to change social structures, or practical interests, like education and meeting basic needs<sup>59</sup>.

There are two main critiques of GAD. The first is that the policy proposals advocated for by GAD theorists are extreme, according to the people and institutions who

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<sup>51</sup> What do we mean by "sex" and "gender"?, <http://www.who.int/gender/whatisgender/en/> accessed August 7, 2012

<sup>52</sup> Nyamu, *supra* note 15 at 387.

<sup>53</sup> Miller and Razavi, *supra* note 18, at 12

<sup>54</sup> Miller and Razavi, *supra* note 18, at 13

<sup>55</sup> Kriemild Saunders, *Introduction: Towards a Deconstructive Post-Development Criticism* in FEMINIST POST DEVELOPMENT THOUGHT, 11 (Kriemild Saunders ed., 2004).

<sup>56</sup> Jane Parpart, Patricia L. Connelly, and V. Eudine Barriteau, *Feminism and Development: Theoretical Perspectives*, in THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT, 62 (Jane Parpart, Patricia Connelly and Eudine Barriteau, eds., 2000).

<sup>57</sup> Kriemild Saunders, *Introduction: Towards a Deconstructive Post-Development Criticism* in FEMINIST POST DEVELOPMENT THOUGHT, 11 (Kriemild Saunders ed., 2004).

<sup>58</sup> *id.*

<sup>59</sup> Jane Parpart, Patricia L. Connelly, and V. Eudine Barriteau, *Feminism and Development: Theoretical Perspectives*, in THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT, 63 (Jane Parpart, Patricia Connelly and Eudine Barriteau, eds., 2000).

are implementing development policies, requiring changes to the basic family structure<sup>60</sup>.

The second is that

while GAD rejects the perception of culture as a fixed entity, the approach continues to portray women as victims of culture. According to GAD's patriarchy ideology, culture is produced through a dynamic process of social construction which men control. Women are thus presented as having no role in the shaping of culture and as only experiencing its oppressive effects<sup>61</sup>.

### C. WHERE DO THE TWO DISCOURSES INTERSECT?

While the origins of both human rights and development discourses arose from different issues, both have developed similar theoretical blind spots which preclude each from accomplishing their goal of gender equality.

Both discourses share a theoretical space over comprehending domination. The original feminist development discourse of WID was incorporated into the dominant development discourse because it was believed to help development workers achieve modernization. The goal was to create economic equality between women and men. And the development field believed this would lead to greater equality between men and women in developing countries. International legal feminism, however, began as a project to include women in the international field. Just as WID advocates believed that providing women access to the economy would create equality, these liberal inclusionist feminists believed that through incorporating women into the legal field would create a more equal legal regime. Both discourses, which created sweeping international solutions established by a small intellectual elite, failed to accomplish gender equality.

This lack of gender equality resulted in the rise of GAD and structural bias, both theories centered around the concept of patriarchy. Structural bias believes that the legal system is a vehicle for patriarchy and requires a radical overhaul of the system. The GAD theory chooses to examine the multifaceted way gender is constructed. However, World Bank GAD advocates continue to cite patriarchy, embedded in culture, as a reason

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<sup>60</sup> Nyamu, *supra* note 15 at 388

<sup>61</sup> Nyamu, *supra* note 15 at 388.

preventing women from fully participating in society<sup>62</sup>. Additionally, GAD portrays women as passive victims of culture, which is fully constructed by men<sup>63</sup>. Like structural bias, GAD requires a revolutionary change to the system to abolish patriarchy<sup>64</sup>. While both structural bias and GAD look at patriarchy, they both fail to account for the resistance of women. Structural bias in particular fails to account for the desires of women, which GAD proponents would argue are constructed by men.

Both WID, and to some extent World Bank GAD, discourse and structural bias and liberal inclusion feminist legal discourse make the argument that cultural practices should be abolished and customs should be replaced with international human rights treaty regimes and national legislation, rather than looking to local solutions within the cultural context<sup>65</sup>. WID advocates tend to see traditional culture as a static and non-changing object, which has directly resulted in women's oppression<sup>66</sup>. WID advocates tend to see tradition and cultural practices as preventing women from assuming their roles within the economy.

GAD advocates, however, see the diverse nature of culture, but believe that men fully construct culture and women are passive victims of these cultural constructions<sup>67</sup>. Additionally, the GAD advocates focus solely patriarchy and the way it is transmitted in culture while simultaneously ignoring the forms of resistance women have used to create culture<sup>68</sup>. Most importantly, by ignoring women's agency and focusing on patriarchy, especially within the area of reproduction, this enables GAD activists to attribute a false consciousness to Third World women and to decide on the interventions as experts.

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<sup>62</sup> World Bank, Country Gender Assessment, 2003 accessed from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMNAREGTOPGENDER/Resources/CGA.pdf>

<sup>63</sup> Nyamu, *supra* note 15 at 388

<sup>64</sup> *id.*

<sup>65</sup> Nyamu, *supra* note 15 at 393

<sup>66</sup> Kriemild Saunders, *Introduction: Towards a Deconstructive Post-Development Criticism* in FEMINIST POST DEVELOPMENT THOUGHT, 5 (Kriemild Saunders ed., 2004).

<sup>67</sup> M. Patricia Fernandez Kelly, *Broadening the Scope: Gender and the Study of International Development*, in COMPARATIVE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: SOCIETY AND ECONOMY IN THE NEW GLOBAL ORDER 156 (Douglas Kincaid and Alejandro Portes, eds.) 1994.

<sup>68</sup> Nyamu, *supra* note 15 at 388

Frequently, institutions are responsible for the perpetuation of gender inequality while cultural practices are blamed. For example, Egypt regularly makes reservations to treaties, such as CEDAW. One such reservation is to article 16, stating

The provisions of the Sharia lay down that the husband shall pay bridal money to the wife and maintain her fully and shall also make a payment to her upon divorce, whereas the wife retains full rights over her property and is not obliged to spend anything on her keep. The Sharia therefore restricts the wife's rights to divorce by making it contingent on a judge's ruling, whereas no such restriction is laid down in the case of the husband<sup>69</sup>.

However, the government does not always enforce the alimony awards, especially if the address of the former husband is unknown<sup>70</sup>. This discrimination against women has little to do with the culture of Egypt and more to do with the inefficient bureaucracy of the Egyptian government. In fact, one could make the argument that the government's actions are a violation of cultural practices. By labeling culture as 'bad', it prevents gender activists from using culture to create more gender equality<sup>71</sup>. Activists could exploit this disparity between Islamic law and state practice to create better care for women.

Additionally, discrimination against women may come from institutionalized beliefs, rather than from cultural practices. For example, the court system in Egypt enforces marriage and family law differently depending on the socio-economic level of the woman involved in a divorce. Women from lower socio-economic levels have a much higher brightline of abuse when demanding a divorce than women from the upper class<sup>72</sup>. This raises the question as to whether or not this is an issue of culture or bias based on socio-economic class. By placing the onus of oppression on a vague notion of culture, rather than on governmental practices, human rights organizations ignore the role the state plays in defining culture<sup>73</sup>.

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<sup>69</sup> Declarations, Reservations and Objections to CEDAW accessed at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reservations-country.htm>

<sup>70</sup> Farida Deif, *Divorced From Justice*, 1 Journal of Middle East Women's Studies 108 (Fall, 2005), 112

<sup>71</sup> Nyamu, *supra* note 15 at 401

<sup>72</sup> Deif, *supra* note 70 at 110

<sup>73</sup> Nyamu, *supra* note 15 at 401

While the structural bias critique focuses on how the Western legal system is rife with patriarchy, the other discourses fail to consider how Western social organization also transmits patriarchy. Engle makes the argument that in order to properly address the gap between Northern and Southern feminist theories, we must look at how gender and the economy are ‘mutually constitutive’<sup>74</sup>. Only through the production of people, literally through reproduction, is it possible that the economy functions. Thus, sexuality and gender are critical components of the economy, which necessitates the production of gendered people<sup>75</sup>. The economy is a social production of both goods and people. In order for goods to be produced and consumed, the nuclear family and reproduction becomes an integral part of the economic process<sup>76</sup>.

Failing to recognize the relationship between culture and economics purports economics as an entity that is both external and separate from the object it is describing. In fact, Western concepts of economics are derived from specific cultural constructs; both the economy and Western culture create and describe the other<sup>77</sup>. Western economy and Western culture are both mutually constitutive and constantly evolving as questions of power within the culture are evolving. To place one outside the other, such as the development project does, ignores this reality and its implications. Its placement of the economy not only supposes a static and unchanging object, but economic development also arguably delineates its legitimacy and power from its ‘observational’ and ‘scientific’ nature.

### III. DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS IN EGYPT- OR EXPERTS ACTING ON BEHALF OF THOSE WITHOUT AGENCY

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<sup>74</sup> Engle, *supra* note 2, at 66

<sup>75</sup> Judith Butler, ‘Merely Cultural’ (1998) *New Left Review* 33, 272 available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/466744>

<sup>76</sup> *id* at 271

<sup>77</sup> Vasuki Nesiah, “The Ground Beneath Her Feet: TWAIL Feminisms” in *The Third World and International Order* at 141 (Citing Judith Butler, ‘Merely Cultural’ (1998) *New Left Review* 33) cited by Karen Engle, *International Human Rights and Feminisms: When Discourses Keep Meeting* in *INTERNATIONAL LAW: MODERN FEMINIST APPROACHES* 51-52 (Buss & Manji, eds., 2005) 47-66.

There have been three main eras of how development interacts with the Egyptian woman. The first era ranges from the 1950s, when Egypt became the subject of development reports, to 1977, when the Women in Development (WID) approach was adopted by the World Bank. This phase parallels the international feminist critique of liberal inclusionism, or the desire to bring women into the development process. In 1994, this approach shifts slightly to the Gender and Development phase, which demands more country specific analysis and interventions. GAD is characterized by a deeper understanding of the roles women play in society, and I will argue that to some extent, it both parallels and is influenced by the feminist critique of 'structural bias' since both focus on patriarchy. This is the most current international development approach to women's issues. The third era begins in 2001, with the advent of the Millennium Development Goals, when gender equality became conditional for lending to take place<sup>78</sup>. The new millennium is characterized by a drastic increase in literature about gender. In fact, there are more reports with the Egyptian woman as the main subject in the last decade than in the fifty years previous.

There are several other theoretical shifts that take place over the course of the past 60 years. From 1950 until about 1980, a lack of education is identified as the locus of oppression for women. A lack of education prevents women from having alternative roles within the culture, which in turn causes high fertility and low female workforce participation. Around 1980, a paradigmatic shift takes place and Egyptian women are now perceived to be oppressed by culture and social norms. At this point, culture and social norms prevent women from becoming educated, lead to higher fertility and result in less female participation in the workforce. The new millennium is characterized by an exploration of the way institutions add to Egyptian women's oppression. An example of this would be the role legal institutions play in preventing women from obtaining divorces. While the common locus of oppression is culture, the oppressive area of culture changes over time.

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<sup>78</sup> World Bank. Independent Evaluation Group (2010). *Gender and development: an evaluation of World Bank support, 2002-08*. World Bank Publications. 2, available at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/GENDEREXT/Resources/GenderEquality.pdf>

The types of interventions in women's issues over the past 50 years have changed drastically as well. Projects in Egypt began with a Population Project, which inspired interventions in more 'population issues,' such as maternal health, child mortality, and education. The 1990s saw the advent of microcredit finance, encouraging social entrepreneurship and subverting patriarchy to get women to work. Additionally, in the 1990s, the rural Egyptian woman becomes a subject of international development. She is conceptualized differently than the urban woman. While the differences between rural and urban were mentioned before this period, traditional rural life was criticized, but not studied. In 1997, Egypt was forced to outlaw female genital cutting by the United States. However, the World Bank only begins to talk about FGC after the millennium. Reproductive health becomes a place of intervention in the late 1990s. And in the millennium, personal status laws, domestic violence and FGC become spaces for intervention and discussion.

#### A. 1950-1980: MODERNIZING THE IGNORANT

There are three main themes present in this era. The themes interact to shape each other. The first theme is modernization. Throughout this chapter, I will demonstrate that the World Bank is intent on modernizing Egypt and women, identifying the reasons why Egypt has not modernized and identifying women as an aspect of modernization. This leads to the second theme, which is population control. Population control is an aspect of modernization which assumes that women cannot become productive participants in the economy if their only role is having children. Thus, the third theme is one of providing alternate roles for women. Women are meant to find alternate roles to motherhood, which will be provided by and are a natural consequence of modernization.

The First World Bank report about Egypt was written in 1951, entitled *Technical Review of Development Projects in Egypt*<sup>79</sup>. This marked the inception of Egypt as an object of economic development. It began with a short discussion of the Aswan Dam, a

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<sup>79</sup> World Bank, *Technical Review of Development Projects in Egypt*, accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2002/07/19/000178830\\_98101902161668/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2002/07/19/000178830_98101902161668/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf) accessed on October 11, 2011.



project which Timothy Mitchell has argued enabled the reorganization of knowledge, as it displaced the knowledge local farmers had of the river Nile and transferred the knowledge of the Aswan Dam to foreign experts and development organizations<sup>80</sup>. These interventions in agriculture and land distribution, would set the stage for one of the major places of intervention for Egyptian women; the population sector.

In 1955, the first report on Egyptian economic development was written. And with it, the theme of population control began to take shape. The report opens by describing Egypt as “a densely populated country of 23 million” with an ongoing challenge of rising “output commensurate with the growth in population which has already attained an annual rate of 2.5% and is likely to increase further<sup>81</sup>.” The description of Egypt as overpopulated, with limited resources to meet the needs of its future population, shapes the nature of the relationship between Egypt and international development organizations by necessitating the intervention of experts<sup>82</sup>. It begs the question: how can man control natural resources<sup>83</sup> and reproduction of people to meet the needs of people in Egypt within the context of limited resources?

Two reasons make fertility, reproduction and population important for Egypt. First, reproduction, as previously noted, ensures the continuation of the economy<sup>84</sup>. Reproduction of gendered people perpetuates the creation of both future consumers and future producers. However, limiting reproduction, according to the World Bank, is instrumental in creating the ability of future Egyptian production to meet the needs of its future consumers. Thus, science and experts must intervene. With this intervention, however, the war against nature will be waged on women’s bodies.

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<sup>80</sup> TIMOTHY MITCHELL, *RULES OF EXPERTS: EGYPT, TECHNO-POLITICS, MODERNITY*, 6 (University of California Press, 2002)

<sup>81</sup> World Bank, *The Economic Development of Egypt*, 28 Aug., 1955 accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64193027&piPK=64187937&theSitePK=523679&menuPK=64187510&searchMenuPK=64187283&theSitePK=523679&entityID=000178830\\_98101901550245&searchMenuPK=64187283&theSitePK=523679](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64193027&piPK=64187937&theSitePK=523679&menuPK=64187510&searchMenuPK=64187283&theSitePK=523679&entityID=000178830_98101901550245&searchMenuPK=64187283&theSitePK=523679) accessed on October 11, 2011

<sup>82</sup> Mitchell, *supra* note 76, at 210

<sup>83</sup> Mitchell, *supra* note 76, at 209

<sup>84</sup> Butler, *supra* note 35, at 272

The World Bank's war on fertility began in 1972 with a report from Robert MacNamara titled Population Project<sup>85</sup>. In the report he claims that the world's growing population is a problem precisely because "there is great doubt about its (the earth) ability to sustain unlimited numbers at decent standards of living, which a majority do not have even now<sup>86</sup>". This is, of course, a natural assumption if the Third World is to eventually consume the same amount of energy as the First World, as it strives towards 'higher standards' of living. Limiting the over consumption of the First World is never considered as part of the solution. MacNamara then makes the claim that the First World's changes in demographics, or lowered fertility, are the reason for its current economic state<sup>87</sup>. He further claims that this lowered fertility is linked to "increasing the age of marriage, urbanization, the gradual spread of education, reduced infant mortality, the high living standards that accompany rising incomes, the spread of old age pension systems, the prohibition of child labor, and rising equality for women<sup>88</sup>." These metrics, which he describes, coming completely from the context of western history, will set the stage for how women are perceived in the Third World by development organizations.

It's important to note what else was going on in the world at the time of MacNamara's Population report, as it may give insight into why it was written. This report coincided with the beginning of the energy crisis, where western energy consumption and production of oil had come to an all-time high in 1970<sup>89</sup>. If the developing world would eventually come to match the developed world in energy consumption, overpopulation would be a significant problem. There would not be enough oil or energy. That is, of course, if developing countries become 'industrialized,' 'urbanized' and 'modernized' just like the west. Here, development makes its most significant error. It failed to consider alternative possibilities to industrialization. MacNamara illustrated this in his report by saying that for development to be successful

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<sup>85</sup> Robert MacNamara, *Population Project*, March 1972, accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1972/03/01/000009265\\_3961003061334/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1972/03/01/000009265_3961003061334/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf), accessed on November 11, 2011

<sup>86</sup> *id* at 4

<sup>87</sup> American contraception was barely legal at this time. In 1965 the Supreme Court ruled state laws banning married couples from using contraception as unconstitutional (*Griswold v. Connecticut*)

<sup>88</sup> MacNamara, *supra* note 45, at 6

<sup>89</sup> Key World Energy Statistics, 2011 accessed at [http://www.iea.org/textbase/nppdf/free/2011/key\\_world\\_energy\\_stats.pdf](http://www.iea.org/textbase/nppdf/free/2011/key_world_energy_stats.pdf)

it must result in urbanization and modernization, mapping it out in a way that mimicked the First World's process. So, in order for energy consumption to not become a problem, it was up to the developing world to minimize its growing population. The United States and Europe, which currently account for almost half the world's consumption of energy, were not being held accountable for their overconsumption<sup>90</sup>. Nor is there any focus on development of subsistence farming and environmentally sustainable communities, especially not within the West.

During this first era of development, Egyptian women are constructed to be several things. First and foremost, they are constructed as mothers. Second, they are perceived to be women who lack a role other than reproduction. Last, the average Egyptian woman is uneducated, and this lack of education is why she is oppressed. However, as women more became educated, women who lacked education became the subject of future interventions. Lack of education, or ignorance, was identified by the World Bank as one of the major impediments to development, with concepts of education and population inherently linked. In fact, during this era, Egyptian women were only discussed within the context of population or education interventions.

In 1973, the *Appraisal of a Population Project*<sup>91</sup> proposed to collect data on the Egyptian woman, to better understand her fertility habits. The actual project, however, mostly focused on the supply side of population control; or the creation of distribution centers and easier access to birth control.<sup>92</sup> It also included a plan to collect statistical analysis of the different demographics and behaviors of acceptors. These statistics were quickly gathered and another sector review was then generated in December of 1973.

Within the sector review, certain patterns began to emerge. It established the importance of a population project in the beginning of the report, saying that Aswan High Dam construction would permit several million people to inhabit new areas<sup>93</sup>, but would only support four more years of population growth at its current rates. Thus, “despite this

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<sup>90</sup> [http://www.iea.org/textbase/nppdf/free/2011/key\\_world\\_energy\\_stats.pdf](http://www.iea.org/textbase/nppdf/free/2011/key_world_energy_stats.pdf)

<sup>91</sup> International Bank for Reconstruction and Development International Development Association, *Appraisal Report of a Population Project*, 28 Sept, 1973 accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2000/12/13/000178830\\_9810191240295/Rendered/PDF/multi\\_page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2000/12/13/000178830_9810191240295/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf) on October 11, 2011

<sup>92</sup> *id* at ii

<sup>93</sup> This culminates in the New Land Development Project which is mentioned later in this paper.

relentless demographic pressure on an almost fixed supply of land, increases in agricultural productivity have permitted slowly rising living standards. No one knows how long scientific advances in agriculture will permit productivity to stay ahead of population growth<sup>94</sup>.” The World Bank believed that Egypt’s natural resources would not be able to match its population growth, necessitating an intervention.

It also established the role motherhood played in the lives of Egyptian women, a theme which would hold for most of the century.

“The village bride who starts having children as soon as she is married has few reasons for stopping and many reasons for having more. The standing and prestige of a family in the village are partially related to its size... Children are much the most important source of old age security, with sons representing more security than daughters, since the latter will inherit only half as much land as their brothers and will not remain in their parents' family... if a woman feels insecure in her marriage, she may dissuade him from threatening divorce by doing her husband's bidding, by providing him pleasure, and by giving him more children. Village life provides women with few potential roles other than pregnancy or breast-feeding the latest baby. Most of the things women do if not pregnant or nursing they can also do if they are -- cooking, cleaning the home, and washing clothes at the canal. Hence it is little wonder that having babies and nursing them becomes the primary role of a large proportion of rural women for long periods in their lives. This is what fills up their days, provides hope and expectation to life, and gives it fulfillment -- in their own eyes, in the eyes of their husbands and parents, and in the eyes of their friends and neighbors. Having children -- many of them -- is their main reason for being, their primary role in life.<sup>95</sup>

The tone used to describe the village woman’s life is disdainful, and her lack of role is identified as a place of intervention for international development. In order to limit the size of the population, international development focused on the creation of alternative

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<sup>94</sup> *supra* note 51, at 17

<sup>95</sup> World Bank, *National Family Planning Sector Review Report*, December 1973, 27 accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2002/07/25/000178830\\_98101903312910/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2002/07/25/000178830_98101903312910/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf) accessed on October 11, 2011

roles for women.<sup>96</sup> The report went on to emphasize the “importance of changed roles for women as a primary basis for the spread of smaller family norms<sup>97</sup>.” One way to change roles is through increasing education opportunities for women<sup>98</sup>. The main assumption here is that by offering alternate roles, women will take them.

The report went on to make the argument that women who are employed outside of the agriculture sector, such as poor village women, are likely to have a higher fertility than are women employed in other sectors of the economy. Additionally, it asserted that women who are educated have lower fertility than women who are illiterate, and the majority of women in Egypt are illiterate,<sup>99</sup> which necessitates foreign intervention. Additionally, the report argued that there are significant differences between the urban and rural populations about their views on family planning, religious and other culturally held beliefs. It went on to claim that “modernization - summed up in urbanization, education, and rising family incomes - generates many reasons for limiting family size and makes the means of doing so much more accessible.<sup>100</sup>” The cities, as opposed to the villages, also offered emancipation for women, which was necessary for lowering fertility. One cannot ignore the implication in this assertion- that high fertility is a function of the backwards ignorance of peasants. Naturally, this offered a moral imperative for interventions of development experts; if only modernization and enlightened educators could reach these peasants, the women will be encouraged to convert.

In 1977, the World Bank adopted the Women in Development (WID) approach to international gender issues and appointed the first WID adviser<sup>101</sup>. WID was intended to integrate women into development, as opposed to the view that women were merely passive beneficiaries of development. And in 1984, the World Bank adopted a policy of considering women’s issues in development. This analysis was intended to explain women’s role in society, in order to better benefit her, with more specific programs.

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<sup>96</sup> *id* at 57

<sup>97</sup> *id* at 58

<sup>98</sup> *id* at 56

<sup>99</sup> *id* at 28

<sup>100</sup> *id* at 15

<sup>101</sup> World Bank. Independent Evaluation Group (2010). *Gender and development: an evaluation of World Bank support, 2002-08*. World Bank Publications. p. 2

There was a five year gap between the first population project and the next report mentioning women. In 1978, the World Bank published a five series report titled *Economic Management*, which covered major Egyptian economic sectors. In Volume II of the series, the Egyptian population problem was again discussed. In the last few years, Egypt had seen a decline in fertility, attributed to a “decline in marriages” which “is a reflection of increased urbanization, rising education levels (especially among females), extended military service, and the difficulties of finding separate lodgings, especially in urban areas. The trend of later marriages, which started about 1964, contributed to the decline in the birth rate beginning in 1967<sup>102</sup>.” Lowered fertility is related to the modernization of Egypt. This quote also reiterated what MacNamara had stated in his report about the factors that caused a drop in fertility, and thus, economic development.

Egyptian women’s lack of alternative roles was also explored throughout the report. “High fertility is also associated with the lower social status and limited education of women because they have few options open to them besides raising a family. The problem is one of social customs rather than legal status<sup>103</sup>.” Again, the theme was that women were not choosing to be mothers, but circumstances had precluded the Egyptian woman from becoming anything else. In fact, the report stated that women do have rights ascribed to them from Islam, but “a lack of education and awareness, particularly among the women themselves, has contributed to the difficulties<sup>104</sup>” in women securing their Islamic rights. So, lack of education became the reason for women’s lack of participation. Also,

one of the main obstacles to female emancipation is the lack of employment opportunities in the urban sector in general. Although the Government recognizes that urban working women tend to have fewer children than their rural, agriculturally-based counterparts, it has not encouraged them to compete for these scarce jobs because this would only exacerbate male unemployment<sup>105</sup>.

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<sup>102</sup> World Bank, 1978 Economic Management Report, Volume II: Human Resources, accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2000/02/24/000094946\\_00020905315320/Rendered/PDF/multi\\_page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2000/02/24/000094946_00020905315320/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf) accessed on October 11, 2011

<sup>103</sup> *id* at 6

<sup>104</sup> *id*

<sup>105</sup> *id* at 7

The World Bank observed that low overall employment means women are less able to get jobs, a reflection of the feminization of poverty.

The report also claimed that

the low participation rates of Egyptian females compared with international standards... reflect the fact that Egyptian society has emphasized the seclusion of women and their domestic roles. Improved educational opportunities have increased their social and occupational mobility in recent years but job openings remain severely restricted by custom and by the prevailing attitude that with the widespread underemployment of men, it would be unrealistic to prepare women to compete with them<sup>106</sup>.

Again, the report attributed the lack of employment for Egyptian women to a lack of suitable roles. But with education, women are becoming more ‘emancipated’ and mobile. Note the language here, that women are restricted by ‘custom’. Customs and traditions could be altered by development and modernization. In fact, the paragraph demonstrated that illiteracy and lack of education are primary reasons for unemployment. So education, or access to resources, offers an alternate role.

Education of women was again identified as a barrier for female emancipation, lowered fertility and economic development. “The continuing low level of female education may inhibit any decline in future fertility, particularly when it reduces the opportunities for outside employment. Because of the poor prospects for labor absorption in agriculture, Egypt's future development is going to depend on its ability to absorb more labor in urban areas<sup>107</sup>.” Education was equated with emancipation. “In the field of education as in other areas of Egyptian society, female emancipation is still in its early stages. Despite recent gains, female students are still less likely than males to finish school and to major in career-oriented subjects<sup>108</sup>.” Females were also less educated than males, indicating they were not emancipated.

Boys still outnumber girls in primary schools by about 2 to 1, a ratio that persists into the higher levels. Until 1922

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<sup>106</sup> *id* at 19

<sup>107</sup> *id* at 17

<sup>108</sup> *id* at 28

only one secondary school for girls was in operation with a handful of pupils. Now women account for more than one-quarter of all Egyptians with higher degrees. The illiteracy level among females (71 percent) is still extremely high compared with 43 percent among males<sup>109</sup>.

Low levels of education and literacy continued to be a barrier to economic development and modernization in Egypt.

Although illiteracy is a barrier to employment, it remains true that more than 50 percent of those in the labor force are unable to read or write-and a further 25 percent have no more than primary education. Only 2 percent have a university degree. This low level of educational attainment is a formidable obstacle to raising the level of skills<sup>110</sup>.

So while the problem of literacy was not a uniquely female one, it did affect women more than men. Additionally, this statement seems to imply that more access to resources, such as more skills, will trigger economic development. This again necessitates the intervention of foreign experts who can transmit these skills and expertise. Additionally, this supports the assumption that women were unable to access the benefits of economic development.

In 1978, the World Bank embarked on its Second Population Project. This project intended to incorporate two new goals to lower fertility, decreasing infant and maternal mortality<sup>111</sup>. The report claimed that these factors interacted in the following ways: “Lower fertility, through the better spacing of births, improves maternal health and infant nutrition and, by reducing the incidence of pregnancy in high-risk groups of women, reduces maternal mortality. Reduced infant mortality leads to lower fertility, as fewer births are needed to attain a given desired family size<sup>112</sup>.” The report re-emphasized the harms in a growing Egyptian population, a justifier for the development project. According to the report, “the problem in Egypt is compounded by the rapid growth of the

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<sup>109</sup> *id* at 28

<sup>110</sup> *id* at 19

<sup>111</sup> World Bank, Egypt: Staff Appraisal of a Second Population Project, August, 1978, accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2000/10/18/000178830\\_98101902312135/Rendered/PDF/multi\\_page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2000/10/18/000178830_98101902312135/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf), accessed on October 11, 2011, p. 14

<sup>112</sup> *id* at 14



labor force. The population aged 12-64 (i.e., the population of working age) is growing at an annual rate of about 2.7%<sup>113</sup>.” With a rapid increase in the labor force, it would be difficult to maintain employment and thus, higher standard of living.

This report claimed a victory of modernization, “the rising age of first marriage is a reflection of urbanization, better education (especially among females), as well as extended military service and the difficulty of finding housing, especially in urban areas<sup>114</sup>.” The Six Days War had taken place in 1967, resulting in the death of many Egyptian men, as well as extended compulsory military service. Yet, lowered fertility was primarily read as an indication of ‘modernization’. The report went on to mention that since 1973, the crude birth rate spiked again, and attributed it to a post war baby boom<sup>115</sup>.

While fertility had slowed, it was not yet optimal. High fertility was hypothesized to continue, unless there was “a substantial modernization of Egyptian society, bringing with it more basic education for females and more modern sector jobs for women<sup>116</sup>.” Again, this statement illustrates the assumption that Egyptian women lacked roles other than motherhood and were oppressed due to their lack of education. It also reiterated a statement from the previous report, saying that women’s employment had drastically increased in the past ten years, but that it was still incredibly low. “This is a fairly typical figure for the Middle East, but it compares with 23% for Latin America, 30% for Asia and 32% for Sub-Saharan Africa. There is thus a large potential for increased female participation in the labor force. Such an increase would be desirable as tending to reduce fertility<sup>117</sup>.” This implies that development organizations believed that women will benefit from modernization.

Lack of education is identified as an impediment to economic development and lowered fertility. “The continuing low level of female education may seriously retard the decline of fertility, particularly if poor education becomes an obstacle to female employment. Given the poor prospects for increased employment in agriculture, Egypt’s

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<sup>113</sup>*id* at 3

<sup>114</sup>*id* at 2

<sup>115</sup>*id* at 2

<sup>116</sup>*id* at 3

<sup>117</sup>*id* at 3

growing labor force must look largely to the industries of the urban areas for jobs<sup>118</sup>.” Hence, development organizations appeared to believe that by simply accessing resources, like education, economic development would naturally follow.

The report began to note a subtle shift in the Egyptian family planning program, as there was a greater discussion on the ‘demand’ side of family planning. The first phase of the family planning project focused on distribution, or ‘supply side’ of family planning. The second phase of the

population policy was dominated by the consideration that as long as it remained economically advantageous, as well as socially acceptable, for the poor to have large numbers of children, family planning programs would be unlikely to have much appeal. Thus the improvement of family planning services per se would not greatly reduce fertility unless it was accompanied by progress towards such socio-economic goals as a higher standard of living, better education and wider economic opportunities for women. In the third phase, starting in 1975, population policy turned from concentration on fertility reduction to a broader concern with "population problems," which were regarded as including, in addition to the rate of growth and size of the population, its geographical distribution, age structure, and such features as the level of education, occupational structure, migration and the status of women<sup>119</sup>.”

These issues, or education and status of women, were all issues that contributed to high fertility. With this program, the government will be convincing people to become acceptors of the family planning program.

At this point, when the focus shifts to ‘demand,’ the project of re-education came into existence.

There are also social and cultural barriers to family planning in Egypt. For example, many married couples wrongly believe that family planning is not permitted by the Moslem religion. Government officials believe that this particular barrier could be overcome by an adequate informational and educational campaign. In its publicity in favor of family planning, the Government has been

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<sup>118</sup> *id* at 3

<sup>119</sup> *id* at 5

emphasizing the health benefits resulting from fewer and adequately spaced births, in the belief that this approach will help to overcome the traditional preference for large families<sup>120</sup>.

This posits the modern, or the desire for small families, against tradition, the desire to have large families. International organizations attempted to convince the Egyptian woman that her desire to have large families was wrong, normalizing smaller families by claiming health benefits. The government will attempt to convince women that their religious understanding of the role of the family is wrong. Modernization is supported by the discipline of science, an objective discipline.

#### B. 1980 – 1988: EDUCATION IS ENLIGHTENMENT

In 1980, there is a paradigmatic shift take place in the World Bank literature. One of the main assumptions in early Egyptian World Bank literature is that an impediment to development is ignorance. In this era, we begin to see the World Bank shift from simply making education available to examining the barriers that prevent women from accessing education. The World Bank reports appeared to place blame on culture. However, it continued to assume that women will access development if the resources are made available.

The new era was ushered in with a World Bank project called the New Land Development Project. The intention of this project was to create new agricultural towns made possible by the expansion of Aswan Dam irrigation systems. The people who were to be most affected by the project were the local Bedouin tribes who inhabited the planned area. This project identified rural mindsets as an impediment to development. The report continued to perpetuate the idea that Egyptian women, especially village women, lacked roles other than the traditional role of motherhood. Education would provide these alternate roles.

There is also a need to provide educational measures for women to overcome a traditionally subordinate and isolated

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<sup>120</sup> *id* at 10

position in rural society which can otherwise be an impediment to development. A high level of illiteracy among women in previous schemes has led to difficulties in introducing social and health measures necessary if the long-term social objectives of the project are to be achieved. Educational and training programs for women are also needed to enhance the role which they traditionally play in agricultural and livestock production<sup>121</sup>.

This means that rural women are unable to accept critical development programs because of their ignorance and lack of education.

If this role of motherhood gives a woman meaning and privilege within her village, what is the justification in deconstructing this role and reconstructing it with an alternate and more suitably 'western' role? One of the main arguments MacNamara makes for limiting fertility is that it would lead to a higher standard of living, since countries have limited resources. Indeed, during the 1980s, Egypt moved towards importing more food. However, a large percentage of the population remained malnourished<sup>122</sup>.

On the surface, this appeared to prove MacNamara's theory. But, development organizations had missed something. Because of the original assumption that Egypt is an overpopulated country unable to support its future population, little was done to focus on subsistence farming. Instead, there was a shift towards cash crop farming. While grains and other crops were grown, little attention was paid to the kinds of grain, nor to who, or what, the grain was feeding. Between 1966 and 1988, the Egyptian population grew by 75 percent. Its population growth was accompanied by problems like anemia and malnourishment<sup>123</sup>. Grain production also increased at 77 percent, while the overall consumption of grain reached 148 percent. This spike in consumption of grain seemed to prove that Egypt was unable to sustain its current population trajectory. However, the majority of the grain in Egypt was being used to feed cattle and meat, not people. The majority of impoverished Egyptians can't afford meat on their average monthly

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<sup>121</sup> World Bank, New Land Development Project, October, 1980 p. 33, available at [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2000/05/13/000178830\\_98101912502475/Rendered/PDF/multi\\_page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2000/05/13/000178830_98101912502475/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf) accessed on October 11, 2011

<sup>122</sup> Mitchell, *supra* note 76, at 213

<sup>123</sup> Mitchell, *supra* note 76, at 215

salaries<sup>124</sup>. So while MacNamara and the World Bank were arguing that village life was impossible to sustain, in reality, village life might not only have been sustainable, but continued subsistence farming would have enabled Egypt to sustain its population<sup>125</sup>.

In 1978, the Government of Egypt started to engage in a more well-rounded approach to population ‘issues’ rather than strictly supplying contraceptives. In 1981, Susan Cochrane started to do fertility research in Egypt. In a journal called *Research News*, a publication of World Bank research, Cochrane and her team theorizes that “fertility is determined by the biological supply of children, the demand for children, and the cost of regulating fertility. In turn, these variables are determined by economic and demographic variables such as education, market wage rates and age at marriage. They also depend on the availability of public services such as education, health and family planning clinics, and water supply and sanitation facilities<sup>126</sup>.” Family size and fertility had been translated into an economic model.

In 1981, Cochrane’s research findings were published in *Some Issues in Population and Human Resource Development in Egypt*. The report looked at population, mortality, health, education and the labor force. While the idea that women must be provided with alternative roles to motherhood is no longer mentioned, lack of education was discussed at length. Cochrane even established a correlation between education and fertility, claiming that “fertility is lower among the more educated. Over the past several years, fertility differentials by educational attainment have become more pronounced. Fertility declined among the educated women and increased among some of the illiterate women<sup>127</sup>.” High fertility was still a problem associated with being uneducated. This is an example of liberal feminism that Karen Engle discusses in her article. Namely, if women are given opportunity to become western and liberated, all women would make the same choice.

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<sup>124</sup> Mitchell, *supra* note 76, at 215

<sup>125</sup> Mitchell, *supra* note 76, at 212

<sup>126</sup> Susan Cochrane, World Bank: *Research News*, Fall 1981 Vol. 2, Num. 3, accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2006/09/19/000160016\\_20060919154441/Rendered/PDF/37336.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2006/09/19/000160016_20060919154441/Rendered/PDF/37336.pdf), accessed on October 11, 2011.

<sup>127</sup> World Bank, *Some Issues in Population and Human Resource Development in Egypt*, May 1981 accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2001/02/02/000178830\\_98101912515124/Rendered/PDF/multi\\_page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2001/02/02/000178830_98101912515124/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf), accessed on October 13, 2011

The report made an argument for correlation between fertility and education, saying that “

women with primary education want a half a child less than women who did not go to school, and women with preparatory school desire one less child than the uneducated. Differences in contraceptive behavior between women of different educational levels are even greater. Twenty six percent of those with no schooling have used contraceptives, compared with 53 percent of those with primary and 69 percent of those with preparatory education. Age standardized numbers of children actually born, however, shows that women with some schooling have slightly higher fertility than those without education, but those with preparatory education have half a child less<sup>128</sup>.

And also, “it appears in Egypt that fertility increases slightly with small amounts of education<sup>129</sup>.” We can draw a distinction between literacy, or the ability to read and write, and longer term education and the relationship to fertility. However, education can be expensive, when considering the costs of school clothes, books, and other school related costs. So the relationship between more education and fertility may have to do with socio-economic differences. However, it seems that the researchers are intent on proving a relationship between education and fertility.

While not directly stated, the ‘lack of alternative role’ stereotype is apparent in the following quote. “The lack of literacy probably keeps women from participating more actively in the labor force, particularly in non-manual occupations. The greatest effects of high female illiteracy, however, appear to be demographic. Female illiteracy directly and indirectly (through low female participation in modern sector jobs and high child mortality) keeps fertility high<sup>130</sup>.” Again, women would access development if given the chance.

Another quote from the paper made a contrary claim, saying that “while female education and family planning programs seem the most obvious policy instruments to use in the Egyptian context, the effects of these variables on fertility in Egypt are not

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<sup>128</sup> *id* at 12

<sup>129</sup> *id* at 15

<sup>130</sup> *id* at 11

uniform. Female employment is often considered a policy to reduce fertility but the evidence of its effectiveness is less clear than for education both in Egypt and elsewhere. More research is needed on its policy potential<sup>131</sup>.” The paper both questioned and asserted that female employment participation is critical for lowering fertility. If anything, this statement demonstrates the authors’ uncertainty.

And if these women are educated, the question still remained if there would be enough jobs for women to be hired. “There is undoubtedly a large pool of well-educated manpower available to Egypt, but it is unclear to what extent this can be utilized effectively to the benefits of all segments of the population and the cost of this high quality manpower has been the slow progress made in the lowest levels of education, especially for women. This in turn has had the demographic consequence of keeping fertility high and maintaining population pressure<sup>132</sup>.” There is a well trained workforce, but high unemployment. In fact, “Egypt has been characterized as an example, par excellence, of a developing country with a severe "employment problem"<sup>133</sup>.” So, even if alternate roles were available, they would not necessarily be available for women.

The report also claimed that higher levels of education lead to later marriages in life.

Part of education’s effect on fertility is to lead to later marriage and thus slowing population growth through postponing the first birth as well as reducing births over the entire reproductive life. We do not have data for the relationship between education and age of marriage in Egypt so we cannot quantify this first effect<sup>134</sup>.

The report also tried to establish a relationship between literacy and late marriage.

When women marry late, not only does the proportion of married women decrease, but more women would have died before having married and thus would never be exposed to the risk of reproduction. The fertility rate of the married women could also decrease... the completed family size of women who marry late (with a marriage duration of 30-34 years) is usually smaller. Women who

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<sup>131</sup> *id* at 15

<sup>132</sup> *id* at 14

<sup>133</sup> *id* at 148

<sup>134</sup> *id* at 17

marry late are usually better educated and more of them use contraceptives. The average age at first marriage of illiterate women and those with primary education is only 19 years, while that of women with a secondary education is 22.7 years and that of women with college degree is 23.5 years<sup>135</sup>.

The justification for educating women was that their education would lower fertility, not simply because of the value added to educating women.

The report also explored the difference between regions.

In 1960, the illiterate women in Cairo and Alexandria had larger families than the illiterate women in the governorates of Lower and Upper Egypt, but at higher levels of education, women in the urban governorates had fewer children. Thus, the higher fertility in Cairo and Alexandria (in 1960) compared with that in the nonurban governorates was contributed by the illiterate women; even in 1960, educated women in Cairo and Alexandria had distinctly lower fertility. Second, although the comparisons are not strictly valid, the fertility rate of illiterate women has changed little between 1960 and 1975. On the other hand, there have been some significant decreases in fertility among the educated women<sup>136</sup>.

Women in the ‘modern’ cities, like Cairo and Alexandria, were more successful at adopting economic development goals. Women from the ‘traditional’ or agricultural sectors were not as compliant.

Another assumption the report made was about education and the Middle East. It claims that “the low participation of females in primary education cannot be blamed on culture per se since Egypt has a lower female primary enrollment than the average for the Middle East and North Africa<sup>137</sup>.” The comparison demonstrates that the authors believed that Arab culture was homogenous across the region.

The next report written about Egyptian women is the *1985 Population Sector Review*. This report was written in preparation for a new population project between Egypt and the World Bank. Susan Cochrane presided over the report. Many of the themes

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<sup>135</sup> *id* at 34

<sup>136</sup> *id* at 33

<sup>137</sup> *id* at 116



present in the report were similar to previous ones. The report looked at the rural versus urban women, lack of education and roles, and maternal and child mortality's relationship to fertility.

The difference between rural and urban women was still pronounced. "In rural areas the population in general and women in particular have less access to markets and health services and also lower literacy than those in urban areas. Upper Egypt is similarly disadvantaged in comparison with Lower Egypt. This explains the higher mortality in rural areas and in Upper Egypt<sup>138</sup>." Again, lower levels of education and literacy permeated the rural areas. These factors, or barriers to modernization, seemed to negatively impact women's health. It appeared that the rural areas are isolated from development, as they lack the benefits, such as markets, education and health facilities, which creates an opportunity for intervention.

The report went on to make the argument that fertility is lower in urban areas. "Overall, fertility is lower in those areas with greater socio-economic development, those areas in which the cost of raising children is highest and falls mainly on the family unit and in those areas where family planning services are easily available<sup>139</sup>." Places where socio-economic development is highest would be places like Cairo and Alexandria, or other urban areas. Because of high population densities, these places are also the most expensive place to raise children and families. In fact, fertility rates declined the most in urban areas.

By 1960 there were already marked differences in marital fertility and in proportions married between the large cities of Cairo and Alexandria and Lower and Upper Egypt and between the urban and rural areas outside Cairo and Alexandria. These differences became even larger in the following twenty years. Both the marital fertility and the proportions married declined the most in Cairo and Alexandria, somewhat less in Lower Egypt and very little in Upper Egypt<sup>140</sup>."

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<sup>138</sup> World Bank, Population Sector Review, September 6, 1985, 2 available at [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDS/IB/1985/09/01/000009265\\_3970904162640/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDS/IB/1985/09/01/000009265_3970904162640/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf), accessed on October 13, 2011

<sup>139</sup> *id* at 4

<sup>140</sup> *id* at 19

The report constructed urban women as very different from rural women. Rural or traditional populations did not accept family planning like the more urban, or developed and modern societies. Throughout the reports, there was a huge difference between the urban and rural populations.

There are several reasons believed why this difference in development took place between the rural and urban areas. The assumption that wider roles for women mean lower fertility becomes a factor.

“The differential declines may reflect primarily the differences in socio-economic development, with the associated implications in terms of cost and benefits of children, and of women's opportunities for education and work. They may also reflect a greater program effort in more accessible and easier areas and cultural factors to a lesser extent. It is clear that the effort to provide family planning services as well as other services has been less in the less developed regions of the country<sup>141</sup>.”

The report also assumed that because programs were not in place in Upper Egypt there were low levels of acceptance among the rural populations. This again reflects the assumption that by making resources, like family planning services, available, people will want to access these resources.

Proponents of the population program also assert that economic development will create a demand for smaller family sizes and lower fertility levels. “There is no question that socio-economic development will tend to reduce desired family size and to increase the demand for contraceptive services<sup>142</sup>.” So, modernization and economic development will naturally result in smaller family sizes and lower fertility in women. Thus, high fertility is a problem of undeveloped and ‘traditional’ areas. This again necessitates the development project; socio-economic development is not something Egypt seems to be able to provide for itself.

To combat rising fertility, modernization and economic development are needed. Educated women with alternative roles apparently have less need for motherhood.

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<sup>141</sup> *id* at 19

<sup>142</sup> *id* at 24

Beyond improving family planning programmes and contraceptive distribution to ensure access to safe and effective measures of fertility regulation for all families, lies a series of development strategies which are known to contribute to decision making on family size. Provision of education and employment opportunities for women is known to reduce national fertility and should receive priority. The Government of Egypt should explore ways of shifting the cost of high fertility from the society to the individual and develop policy options accordingly<sup>143</sup>.

The report asserted that Egyptian women's lack of education and employment opportunities meant that they lack roles other than motherhood. Additionally, Egyptian women who lived in rural parts of the country are more fertile than urban Egyptian women, because of the rural woman's lack of participation in the development process. It justifies the development project. If the rural women were part of the development process, they would be more likely to be acceptors of family planning. The lack of access to resources is the reason for the oppression and traditional nature agricultural women.

The next report written about Egyptian women, or in this specific case, Egyptian girls was the *Participation of Egyptian Children Report* in 1986. This was a working paper that was written about Egyptian children's participation in the education system. Egypt was chosen as a case study because of the extensive amount of data collected there<sup>144</sup>. The intention of the study was to see the trends in school attendance in order to meet the future policy goals of the Egyptian government.

According to the paper, there was a higher level of female enrollment in schools in Egypt than in other Arab countries. "While female enrollment ratios are below those of males (63 versus 88% in primary schools in 1980 and 39 versus 64 at preparatory and secondary levels), female participation and achievement in Egypt are substantially above what they are in other Arab societies and women have a correspondingly higher status<sup>145</sup>." The conclusion implied a causal link between 'high status', however this is

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<sup>143</sup> *id* at 30

<sup>144</sup> World Bank, *Participation of Egyptian Children*, accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1986/12/01/000009265\\_3980623151652/Rendered/PDF/multi\\_page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1986/12/01/000009265_3980623151652/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf), accessed on October 18, 2011

<sup>145</sup> *id* at 2

defined, and education. If women could only have more access to resources, such as education, they would improve their situation within the political economy. Additionally, the World Bank appeared to be defining female participation, or the choice of women to access the resources offered by economic development, as a metric to judge their status. Thus, women who chose not to access economic development have a low status.

The difference between rural and urban was differentiated again in this report. In fact, it claimed that families in rural areas have lower aspirations for their daughters than do urban area families. “It is quite clear that aspirations far exceed achievement but the pattern of achievement is similar to the pattern for aspirations with achievement being generally higher for boys than girls, higher in urban than rural areas and especially low for girls in rural areas -- particularly in rural Upper Egypt<sup>146</sup>.” And also,

in rural Upper Egypt husbands and wives are far less likely to want university education, especially for their daughters, and more likely to want no schooling whatsoever for daughters. These sharp differences in aspirations for schooling explain in part differential rates of school participation... and also explain differences in fertility aspirations among urban husbands<sup>147</sup>.

The report linked the idea of fertility and school participation; urban men want higher levels of education for their children, so they desire smaller families. The authors linked urban, or modern, city dwellers with a desire to educate their daughters, reflecting the effectiveness of the modernization project. In contrast, the rural and traditional people have fewer aspirations for their daughters, most likely a function of their backwardness.

### C. 1988 - PRESENT: CULTURAL VICTIMIZATION

The year 1988 marked the beginning of a new era. This era demonstrates several trends. First, a major trend is women’s sexuality, with women being oppressed because of their sexuality. Additionally there is a shift towards understanding culture as being multifaceted, with a focus on how gender is constructed by patriarchal culture, and

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<sup>146</sup> *id* at 4

<sup>147</sup> *id* at 4

women are oppressed by this patriarchal culture. Last, there is a shift towards understanding the role of governmental institutions in the perpetuation of culture.

The next report discussing Egyptian women was the *Second Population Project*. This was done in 1988. And it marked a sharp departure from the supply side focus it previously employed. Egypt began to adopt the ‘development approach’. This approach

“defined population growth as the product of inequality and low socio-economic development, and maintained that family planning services would not be effective unless accompanied by higher living standards, better education, and wider opportunities for women. Proponents of the "health approach," including MOH, argued that health services should first be well established and accepted in order to gain the confidence of the public, and allay suspicions of many religious leaders, before intensive family planning work could be undertaken successfully<sup>148</sup>.”

Most notably, religious beliefs came into the discussion of family planning. This was the first time religious opposition to family planning has been mentioned. This was significant for several reasons. First, the World Bank and Government of Egypt were aware of religious opposition and wanted to convince or persuade the religious leaders who opposed family planning that their interpretation of Islam is flawed. Second, this is the first time development becomes a direct opponent of religion in the field of family planning. The Egyptian government will persuade religious leaders that their interpretation of Islam is incorrect.

The year 1991 marked a shift in economic development in Egypt with regards to Egyptian women. For the first time, development organizations became curious about the specific issues facing women, broader than assuming women have no other roles than motherhood. For the first time the World Bank asked the question: what are the implications being an Egyptian woman? Education remained as an important issue, though its lack was no longer considered the locus of women’s oppression. There was a subtle shift from lack of education to cultural practices being the locus of women’s

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<sup>148</sup> World Bank, *Second Population Project Appraisal Report 1988*, 3, available at [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1988/03/14/000009265\\_3960924182848/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1988/03/14/000009265_3960924182848/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf), accessed on October 11, 2011

oppression. Additionally, the focus on rural women was intensified, as they were identified as being uniquely disadvantaged.

In 1991, the World Bank created the first Social Fund with the help of a presidential decree. The intention of the fund was to alleviate poverty from the influx of workers returning from the Gulf Region. Additionally, it was intended to help alleviate poverty incurred during the structural adjustment (SAP) period, as many impoverished people were negatively affected by the SAPs.

According to the report,

Women and children are among the most vulnerable to negative social impacts of adjustment. It is noteworthy that Egyptian women play a critical role in determining household strategies to maintain family welfare. Some of the burdens placed on women include maintaining family health and nutrition, and supplementing family income to alleviate economic stress (or being solely responsible for the economic welfare of households in which there is no male breadwinner present)<sup>149</sup>.

Based on this comment, development organizations had started to recognize women's role as decision makers in the household. Additionally, development organizations had subtly recognized the burden of reproductive labor on women.

One of the goals of the Social Fund project was “to integrate women more fully into the development process, notably by improving their access to basic social services and participation in productive activities. The Bank will undertake a women-in-development sector study to contribute to the Bank's understanding of the issues affecting women in Egypt<sup>150</sup>.” Women lacked involvement in the development process, and the WID approach would apparently solve their concerns and hear their voices. The program was to give “special attention... to improvements in the economic and social situation of women through increased participation in productive activities and better access to basic social services<sup>151</sup>.” This was an important shift, and paralleled the goals of liberal

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<sup>149</sup> World Bank, Social Fund, 1991, 6 accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1991/05/29/000009265\\_3961001083147/Rendered/PDF/multi\\_page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1991/05/29/000009265_3961001083147/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf), accessed on October 18, 2011

<sup>150</sup> *id* at 16

<sup>151</sup> *id* at 41

inclusionism, which purported that women just needed to be included to solve oppression. If given an opportunity to participate in economic development, women would access this opportunity.

Social and cultural factors became the locus of women's oppression.

“Positive developments in improving the status of women has taken place in a number of areas. However, various constraints remain, mainly arising from cultural and social factors. The more severe constraints include high fertility, high maternal and child mortality, illiteracy, and lack of access to resources (such as, agricultural services related to extension and credit, and thereby to input supplies and marketing outlets) for increasing productivity and return in agricultural and other rural enterprises... In the case of credit, problems of collateral requirements, and illiteracy constrain women's access to credit. Furthermore, women's access to governmental decision making processes is limited and there are few institutional mechanisms that can ensure that their concerns are integrated into the planning and implementation process<sup>152</sup>.”

These issues were not new, but there was an important shift in language. Culture becomes an encompassing persecutor, threaded throughout Egyptian life. Culture is described as being dynamic, but also extremely vague. The authors never mention how culture acted as a barrier. This was also the first time women's access to political processes was mentioned.

Additionally, the Egyptian female farmer became an object of study, and she is considered important as well.

“Egyptian women represent an important human resource for promoting the agriculture development process; yet very little systematic attention is paid to their needs. Close to 47 percent of the total active female population in Egypt is engaged in agricultural work. Due to male out-migration to seek urban or regional job opportunities, many are effectively Head of Households who have to make the daily decisions. Women participate in virtually all facets of agricultural activities, including planting, weeding, irrigating, harvesting and marketing<sup>153</sup>.”

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<sup>152</sup> *id* at 68

<sup>153</sup> *id* at 68

Rural women have had alternate roles to motherhood all along, yet they are the most backwards. However, now, alternate roles were still needed for women in agriculture, since their roles will soon cease to exist. “Rural women are involved in numerous agricultural activities, employment in which may be influenced in the future by the secondary effects of agricultural modernization; there is a need for a study to identify innovative approaches for creating new gainful employment for women in the rural economy<sup>154</sup>.” Modernization would be ending the roles of these women.

Additionally, it appeared that these rural women have been largely ignored by the development process and specifically disadvantaged.

“Efforts must be intensified to develop training programs for adult women that are relevant to their cultural and rural environment, as well as to improve the access to basic resources such as safe drinking water and health services. Increasing the primary and secondary school enrollment of young girls and developing curriculum relevant to their rural environment is a further important aspect so as to ensure that the disadvantages of present adult rural women do not get repeated in the future<sup>155</sup>.”

Again, culture was something to be considered. While the 1981 report on *Some Issues Surrounding Human Resources and Population* mentions culture, its relationship to development was unclear at best, but might be something to eventually be discussed<sup>156</sup>.

The next report to mention women is the *Basic Education Improvement Project* which was published in 1993. The intention of the project was to improve access to education and improve overall education for children. The four goals of the project were to increase institutional development, in-service teacher training, school construction and rehabilitation and policy studies<sup>157</sup>. This intervention wanted to help some of the previously underserved segments of the population, “such as girls and poor children,

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<sup>154</sup> *id* at 82

<sup>155</sup> *id* at 69

<sup>156</sup> World Bank, *Some Issues with Human Resources and Population*, 1993, 87 accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2001/02/02/000178830\\_98101912515124/Rendered/PDF/multi\\_page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2001/02/02/000178830_98101912515124/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf), accessed on October 18, 2011

<sup>157</sup> World Bank, *Basic Education Improvement Project*, 1993, v-vi. accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1993/03/05/000009265\\_3961003222755/Rendered/PDF/multi\\_page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1993/03/05/000009265_3961003222755/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf), accessed on October 18, 2011



some of which are expected to be principal beneficiaries of the expanded capacity and improved quality of the system<sup>158</sup>.”

This report made the argument that girls are not participating because of a lack of resources.

“As noted earlier, access to schools is unequal in terms of geographic location, economic standing and sex. For example, enrollment of girls in some rural areas often does not exceed 35 percent of an age cohort, owing to cultural values that restrict girls' abilities to attend mixed-gender schools or schools more than a short walking distance from their homes.<sup>159</sup>”

Culture became the thing that prevented a woman from becoming educated or attending school. Additionally, these previous factors were reasons that Egypt continued to have high levels of illiteracy, which as we have seen, resulted in low female emancipation.

The goal of the *1993 Public Sector Investment Report* was to establish a plan maximizing investment in the public sector in the years immediately following structural adjustments. The report looked at things like unemployment, poverty, and market failures. The report examined how women heads of household were being affected by poverty and SAPs. Additionally, the theme of cultural oppression was present. Also, the report identified a lack of women's education as a reason for low levels of female participation in the workforce.

Again culture was identified as a barrier to development. “The principle underlying causes of excessive mortality among mothers and young children are high fertility, gastrointestinal and respiratory infections. These are problems that result primarily from cultural preferences for early marriage and large families, and from poor sanitation, inadequate nutrition, unsafe water supply and crowded housing<sup>160</sup>.” Better health and sanitation were side effects of modernization and development. The cultural barrier identified, a preference for younger marriage, is a barrier to health. Development would offer some solution to save these women from themselves.

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<sup>158</sup> *id* at vi

<sup>159</sup> *id* at 8

<sup>160</sup> *id* at 286

Another theme in the report was the lack of education. Women were unable to enter the workforce because they were less educated than men.

“Gender inequalities in enrollments and in illiteracy rates are pronounced and may have contributed to the low participation rate (percentage of population of all ages in the labor force) of females in the labor force (6 percent compared to an overall rate of 28 percent in 1990). The eradication of illiteracy is also a precondition for poverty alleviation. The reduction of female illiteracy in particular could help improve the health of mothers and infants and strengthen population programs<sup>161</sup>.”

This quote is significant for several reasons. First, this is the first place that ‘gender’ is mentioned. Second, not only does this statement reflect the belief that ignorance is a barrier to development, but it also ignores the possibility that even if women were well educated, they might not be able to secure jobs with the shrinking job market.

In 1996, the World Bank and Egypt began another Population Project. The project’s continued goal was lower fertility, which had experience recent success. “The drop in fertility has been due to a rise in age of marriage (increased by two years over the last 25 years); and a fall in the demand for children (four in 1980 to three in 1992) resulting in increased contraceptive prevalence from 21 percent in 1980 to 47 percent in 1992<sup>162</sup>.” The two most pronounced themes in the report dealt with how rural life and culture affect women’s fertility.

In fact, high fertility was especially pronounced in Upper Egypt.

The total fertility rate in rural Upper Egypt remains extremely high due to a combination of factors - higher demand for children, earlier age of marriage (median age is four years lower than in urban governorates), lower educational levels, greater proportion of women’s family planning needs are unmet, and less urbanization. Creating a social climate that is more conducive to fertility decline in this region would require a multi-pronged approach. In addition to addressing broader developmental issues which affect demand for children (such as female education and

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<sup>161</sup> *id* at 266

<sup>162</sup> World Bank, Population Project, 1996 accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1996/02/26/000009265\\_3961008072254/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1996/02/26/000009265_3961008072254/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf), accessed on October 18, 2011

gender role) specific issues such as access to family planning methods and attitude towards family planning need to be addressed. Upper Rural Egyptian women are ten times more likely than those in urban areas not to know a source for modern family planning methods, and only 60 percent of couples in Upper Rural Egypt approve of family planning methods compared to 80 percent elsewhere<sup>163</sup>.

Note that the report blamed this on lower levels of education and urbanization. The report did not explore if family size was a function of agricultural lifestyles, or even if it could be a safeguard against poverty in old age<sup>164</sup>. Family size preference was placed in the realm of culture and its relationship to economics and poverty was ignored.

Although Egypt is relatively homogeneous in terms of language and culture, there are pronounced regional differences in values regarding the family and the status of women, which affect the utilization of family planning services, which consequently must fit the perspectives of local populations. Addressing this diversity will require decentralization and systematic testing of innovative approaches to lower social barriers to the use of family planning and to change reproductive behavior. It is Government policy to decentralize implementation of population activities to the governorate level to the extent possible, and one of the factors against which the performance of Governors is evaluated is their success in incorporating population concerns into their programs<sup>165</sup>.

Additionally, this marked a move from large, all-encompassing policies to policies based on demographics and local ideals. Yet, it still failed to address the differences between people based on class or other identities that divided a diverse population in Cairo or Alexandria.

The World Bank also identified several psychosocial barriers to acceptance of family planning.

First, health concerns are prominent in Egypt, but no more than in other countries; concern with side effects, in particular, appears muted by comparison. Second, infrequent sex is a common answer, more common than in

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<sup>163</sup> *id* at 5

<sup>164</sup> Mitchell, *supra* note 76, at 218

<sup>165</sup> *id* at 7

the other Middle Eastern countries and indeed than in any of two dozen countries surveyed recently. Combined with the frequency with which women report difficulty in getting pregnant, these responses indicate a need for better understanding of sexual relations and possible sexual problems. Third, a fatalistic view of childbearing is more common in Egypt than in any other country. This may reflect cultural patterns that need to be understood and addressed by IEC efforts. Finally, religious and social opposition are decidedly minor factors in nonuse. However, this may change, and the influence of militant Islamic ideology merits attention, especially in parts of Upper Egypt<sup>166</sup>.

Again, culture and religion, specifically Islam, are identified as possible barriers to family planning. The idea of family planning is still reviewed in the cultural realm.

The report advocated that women who are well-educated and women who are married later in life have lower fertility. The report continued to advocate for interventions in the following areas: “early age at marriage, low level of schooling especially of girls, relatively low status and decision making opportunities of younger women in the family, and others that contribute to keeping fertility at a high level in several areas of the country<sup>167</sup>.” These reasons exhibited a continuing pattern. The Egyptian women that the World Bank was trying to reach were the uneducated Egyptian women who were helpless victims in their own lives. If women were educated and otherwise empowered, they would choose to be less fertile.

The *1996 Social Fund for Development* came next. This report discussed microcredit finance loans in Egypt. Microcredit loans were a new wave of development initiatives that gave small business loans to entrepreneurs in Third World countries. This was to invigorate the private sector. Women were speculated to benefit from these microcredit loans, especially female heads of household in Egypt. Some of the other programs associated with the Social Fund for Development (SFD) included adult

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<sup>166</sup> *id* at annex 2, page 10

<sup>167</sup> *id* at annex 11, page 1

education classes and classes for self-esteem and marketable skills<sup>168</sup>. The SFD partnered with local NGOs who offered these adult education classes, along with microcredit finance loans<sup>169</sup>. Many of the adult education classes, according to the report, lead to microcredit loans after learning skills like math<sup>170</sup>.

Microcredit finance was another way of getting women to work, providing them with alternate roles.

As productive agents, women's participation in income generating activities represents a crucial part of the survival strategy of poor households. Women have increasingly shifted away from traditional agricultural into commercial activities, either in the selling of agricultural products or in trading of urban goods and services. The status of women and their empowerment in their communities has been dramatically enhanced through the use of a participatory approach and the provision of social and productive services... Apart from their increasingly important role in the economic well-being of poor families, women have traditionally played the central role in the development of Egypt's human resource base<sup>171</sup>.

Thus, as mothers, women are responsible for transmitting knowledge and ideals of market capitalism while producing the future producers and consumers.

In 1997, a compilation of research papers were presented in a journal titled the Economic Report, with the Egyptian woman's employment as a focus. The research demonstrated that women were generally more employed in public sector positions than in the private sector<sup>172</sup>. Additionally, Assad made the argument that "female nonagricultural wage workers also tend to be more concentrated in the large metropolitan

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<sup>168</sup> World Bank, Social Fund for Development, 1996 accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1996/04/25/000009265\\_3961022111536/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1996/04/25/000009265_3961022111536/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf), accessed on October 18, 2011, p. 4

<sup>169</sup> *id* at annex 1, p. 2

<sup>170</sup> *id* at annex 2, p. 2

<sup>171</sup> *supra* note 129, at annex 2, 4

<sup>172</sup> Ragui Assad, *The Effects of Public Sector Hiring and Compensation Policies on the Egyptian Labor Market*, in Economic Report, 95 accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2003/08/23/000094946\\_03080904003880/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2003/08/23/000094946_03080904003880/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf), accessed on October 18, 2001

areas of Cairo and Alexandria, where social norms are more permissive of women's work outside the home<sup>173</sup>.” Social norms, or culture, were the reason for women’s oppression.

In 1997, the United States forced Egypt to outlaw female circumcision, an issue not mentioned in the World Bank reports. The U.S. made its funding conditional on a ban of female circumcision after a video of an Egyptian girl’s circumcision was released on CNN<sup>174</sup>. This was both an important and controversial development in international interventions. The abolition of female genital cutting (FGC), which was considered a health issue, is a practice that many women prefer to engage in because it makes them feel beautiful. The practice, which was outlawed because of America, could have been made safer. The practice continues to be prevalent among women, with roughly 80% of the Egyptian female population who have been circumcised believing that the practice should continue<sup>175</sup>. Arguably, by outlawing the practice, it has made it more dangerous since it will be done in potentially unsanitary conditions without anesthesia.

The practice of FGC is considered abhorrent by Western culture. Feminists from the First World have condemned clitoridectomy as a violation of the ‘rights of the child’, ‘health,’ and ‘sexual integrity’<sup>176</sup>. For these feminists, it epitomizes misogyny<sup>177</sup>. However, for many Egyptian women, circumcision is considered a rite of passage into adulthood<sup>178</sup>. While the practice may be a form of internalized control, it fails to distinguish itself from dangerous beautification rituals in the West, such as breast augmentation or starvation dieting<sup>179</sup>. And women want to engage in the practice. This is a space that represents a major divergence between First and Third World feminism. The First World feminist chooses either not to engage the Third World woman, or only engages her to change her mind<sup>180</sup>. Arguably, the First World has practices that equal

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<sup>173</sup> *id* at 104

<sup>174</sup> Elizabeth Heger Boyle, Fortunata Songora & Gail Foss, *International Discourse and Local Politics: Anti-Female-Genital-Cutting Laws in Egypt, Tanzania, and the United States*, *Social Problems*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (November 2001), pp. 524-544 accessed from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/sp.2001.48.4.524> on September 20, 2011

<sup>175</sup> *id* at 531

<sup>176</sup> K Engle, ‘Female Subjects of Public International Law: Human Rights and the Exotic Other Female’ 1513 (1992) 26 *New England Law Review* 1509-1526

<sup>177</sup> *id* at 1510

<sup>178</sup> *id*

<sup>179</sup> *id*

<sup>180</sup> *id* at 1512

clitorectomy. In the First World, women and men can pierce sexual organs, engages in sexual practices which are potentially damaging to the body, add botox and implants, juice fast, and women spend thousands annually on looking beautiful. These practices are not illegal.

Also in 1997 was the advent of Egypt's first Country Assistance Strategy report, written in conjunction with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Starting in 1994, the World Bank enacted a new Gender and Development (GAD) policy<sup>181</sup>. The goal of the program was "reducing gender disparity in human development and enhancing the economic participation of women as part of the Bank's overall support for poverty reduction in a client country<sup>182</sup>." GAD explores the relationships of power between men and women, exemplified through division of labor and issues with institutional propagation of gender oppression<sup>183</sup>. The first report does not go in-depth into women's issues, but it does recognize that women are among the most vulnerable poor populations in Egypt<sup>184</sup>.

Egyptian women are mentioned briefly in several other reports. While there is not much said about women, I think it is important to note the types of reports women were mentioned in. The first was the National Health Care Project<sup>185</sup> and the next was the Commercial Banking and Microfinance Report<sup>186</sup>. These types of interventions continued to fit two of the main focal points for the World Bank; getting Egyptian women into the workforce and health, an offshoot of population control.

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<sup>181</sup> World Bank, Country Gender Assessment, 2003, 3 accessed from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMNAREGTOPGENDER/Resources/CGA.pdf> accessed on October 18, 2011

<sup>182</sup> *id* at 4

<sup>183</sup> Baden, Sally and Reeves, Hazel, Gender and Development, Concepts and Definitions, Feb 2000, accessed from <http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/re55.pdf>, accessed on October 30, 2011 p. 35

<sup>184</sup> World Bank & IMF, Country Assistance Strategy, 1997 accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2000/05/19/000009265\\_3970818103117/Rendered/PDF/multi\\_page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2000/05/19/000009265_3970818103117/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf), accessed on October 18, 2011

<sup>185</sup> World Bank, National Health Care Project, 1998, accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1998/04/24/000009265\\_3980625101449/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1998/04/24/000009265_3980625101449/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf), accessed on October 30, 2011

<sup>186</sup> World Bank, Commercial Banking and Microfinance Report, accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2001/12/11/000094946\\_01110204011432/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2001/12/11/000094946_01110204011432/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf), accessed on October 30, 2011,

The next significant quote came from the Nutritional Assessment of 1999. The report made the argument that “not only income but the status of women, their educational attainment, cultural factors, food and agriculture policies, and access to various social services including health care and clean water are critical factors affecting nutrition and nutritional disorders<sup>187</sup>.” Cultural factors and the status of women were identified as barriers to accessing food and better nutrition.

Egyptian women and girls were discussed in the *Country Assistance Report*, written in 2000. This report is a comprehensive look at the World Bank policies in Egypt. Women were not discussed at length, but new rhetoric entered the report and was exemplified by a discussion of the gender gap. “Educating girls has important externalities: it can improve children's health and contribute to slower population growth. In Egypt, progress in education has not been evenly distributed between men and women, boys and girls<sup>188</sup>.” The idea of ‘even distribution’ of educational benefits became a topic of discussion and an example of examining power relations between men and women. Also, education was still seen as contributing to the decline in overall fertility, which of course leads to emancipation of women. However, gender relations precluded girls and women from accessing education.

The report also demonstrated that “survey results suggest other factors inhibit women's well-being and potential for improvement: women have limited financial autonomy and limited freedom of movement. Any strategies to improve the quality of life would have to include interventions to overcome biases against girls and women<sup>189</sup>.” Women’s unique position as women prevents them from accessing resources or having autonomy in their own lives. And the status quo required major interventions, if not radical changes in thought processes to overcome these biases against women. These reports placed the construction of gender in the sole realm of patriarchy.

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<sup>187</sup> World Bank, *Towards a Virtuous Circle: Nutritional Assessment of the Middle East and North Africa* (1999), accessed from , [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1999/10/19/000094946\\_99100712133942/Rendered/PDF/multi\\_page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1999/10/19/000094946_99100712133942/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf)

<sup>188</sup> World Bank, *Country Assistance Report*, June 2000 accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2000/08/26/000094946\\_00081005310062/Rendered/PDF/multi\\_page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2000/08/26/000094946_00081005310062/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf), accessed on October 18, 2011.

<sup>189</sup> *id* at p. 3



In 2000, a report was written about Reproductive Health. This marked another shift in World Bank thinking and international development.

The reproductive health approach represents a major paradigm shift from previous thinking on population and development. While the commitment to slowing population growth as a goal remains, there has been a significant shift in the strategies to achieve this goal - an emphasis on meeting the needs of individual women and men rather than on achieving demographic targets. This emphasis is clearly consistent with the ultimate goals and strategies of health systems and health reform; in fact, it fits much better than a more narrowly focused 'demographic targets approach'<sup>190</sup>.

The World Bank is attempting to care about the people it is trying to help rather than achieving numbers on a graph.

In 2001, the World Bank published the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with eight goals the world and development organizations agreed to cooperate on. They were 1) eradicate extreme poverty, 2) achieve universal primary education, 3) promote gender equality and women's empowerment, 4) reduce child mortality, 5) improve maternal health, 6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, 7) ensure environmental sustainability, 8) develop a global partnership for sustainability<sup>191</sup>. The MDGs were significant for two reasons. First, they made funding conditional upon meeting these goals. Second, women's empowerment became a mandatory policy of the World Bank.

The same year, another *Country Assistance Report* was published by Egypt. The MDGs and women's empowerment were discussed at length in the report, and Egypt came up with some new strategies to achieve these goals.

Gender is an important component in its current Five-Year Plan, and the Government has requested Bank support in

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<sup>190</sup>Krasovec, Katherine and Shaw, Paul, *Reproductive Health and Health Sector Reform*, World Bank Institute, 2000, accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2000/10/27/000094946\\_00101305481414/Rendered/PDF/multi\\_page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2000/10/27/000094946_00101305481414/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf), accessed on October 18, 2011

<sup>191</sup> World Bank, Millennium Development Goals, 2000 access from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/MDGsOfficialList2008.pdf>, accessed on October 18, 2011

mainstreaming gender in the next plan through a well-tailored gender assessment. It is a signatory to the Committee for the Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and its commitment to greater gender equality was well articulated at the UN's Beijing +5 meeting. Women are increasingly gaining equal access to legal protection under the law and improvements in access to education and health care over the past two decades have had a particularly positive impact on women<sup>192</sup>.

The role of institutions, like the legislature and the court systems came into the discussion. The interaction between gender, market capitalism and class is not discussed.

The report discussed FGM, reproductive health and early marriages.

“In the area of health, despite progress in lowering population growth during the last two decades, more attention needs to be given to reproductive health services and the introduction of new methods of birth control. With regard to female genital mutilation (FGM), the Ministry of Health has issued a decree forbidding this practice in public and private centers and punishing the perpetrators. However, the practice continues and more is needed to educate and disseminate information as well as to improve the capacity of social and health workers and NGOs to address this issue. Early marriage is another area of concern. Despite the legal marriage age being 16, early marriage persists, adversely affecting women's health conditions. Legal measures to prevent this practice, which typically occurs because a good number of women are not registered at birth, must be implemented and supported by a national campaign to encourage and ensure registration of girls at birth<sup>193</sup>.”

The report, thus, explored how legal institutions interacted with women. But based on these interventions, it appeared that western development organizations have identified women's oppression from patriarchy, and focused on their sexuality. Child brides are married to much older men, who sexually benefit from having a young wife. Women are circumcised, according to the WHO, because men fear their sexual liberation. It is

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<sup>192</sup> World Bank, Country Assistance Strategy, 2001, accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2001/06/29/000094946\\_01061404112783/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2001/06/29/000094946_01061404112783/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf) accessed on October 18, 2011, p. 10

<sup>193</sup> *id* at 10

symptomatic of gaping inequalities between the sexes<sup>194</sup>. The interventions are an attempt to save brown women from brown men<sup>195</sup>. Millions of development and aide dollars have been spent on preventing FGM. In fact, in the *2001 Reproductive Health Report*, the World Bank observed that “despite international condemnation and a government ban, FGC of young girls is practiced in Egypt. Most Egyptians have a positive attitude toward the practice, and almost all Egyptian women have undergone the procedure<sup>196</sup>.” So women are still choosing to engage in the practice despite having gone through the practice themselves and millions are spent convincing these women that the practice is bad.

“The Egyptian government recently succeeded in banning the practice, despite the fact that the Supreme Court had overturned the government’s previous attempt. It is not likely that the eradication of FGC will be achieved easily or soon, for even though FGC is legally banned, a majority of Egyptians nevertheless believe in continuing the practice. Many Egyptians, including some scholars, consider FGC to be a religious requirement. National and international NGOs have long been working for the eradication of FGC through dialogue with community members<sup>197</sup>.”

The *Reproductive Health Report* discussed women’s sexual health and well-being. This was the first time that women’s sexual issues, such as STDs, were discussed by the World Bank. For example, the report noted that “a study conducted in rural Egypt showed that more than half of ever-married women between the ages of 14 and 60 years who were not pregnant at the time of the study suffered from various afflictions of the reproductive system, such as infections and genital prolapsed. These problems affect women’s health, quality of life, and social status<sup>198</sup>.” Sexual health, or health of the reproductive organs themselves, was not been explored until this point. Only issues

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<sup>194</sup> World Health Organization, Female Genital Mutilation, accessed from <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/index.html>, accessed on November 15, 2011

<sup>195</sup> Engel, *supra* note 2, at 65

<sup>196</sup> World Bank, *Reproductive Health Report*, 2001, accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDS/IB/2001/06/29/000094946\\_01061404112783/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDS/IB/2001/06/29/000094946_01061404112783/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf), accessed on October 18, 2011, p. xx

<sup>197</sup> *id* at 70

<sup>198</sup> *id* at 29

effecting fertility, such as maternal health, were discussed. Now the Egyptian woman becomes recognized for her sexuality.

In 2001, a *Social Sector Review* looked at employment in Egypt, and specifically the employment of women. The report gave an in-depth analysis of the differences in employment between women and men, showing that women were inherently oppressed in private sector employment. Development workers were nervous that this low level of female employment could lead to lower levels of education because “if it is perceived that that investment in women's education does not have a payoff, this could lead to lower investments in women's education in the future. This would not only have implications for the educational level of women, but also of other outcomes such as returns to children's education, children's health, and family income<sup>199</sup>.” Additionally, the report demonstrates that women are unable to find work in the private sector, save for commercial banking<sup>200</sup>. The report demonstrates that women are losing out in the private sector.

The *Second Social Fund*, written in 2001, was intended for the “the creation of jobs in an efficient and cost effective manner. Secondary objectives included targeting more women and poorer communities. The ICR economic analysis will be focused on job creation success and on meeting gender and poverty targets<sup>201</sup>.” This report dealt with Egyptian women, but within the context of the MDGs.

With the millennium, there was a literal explosion of reports about Egyptian women, with five reports successively written about Egyptian women. Due to the sheer amount of information available, I will only discuss the themes of each of the reports and then discuss the main trends. Women are the subject of, or are an integral part of the following reports; 2002 Education Report, 2002 Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2003 Girl's Enrollment Report, 2003 Matruh Management, 2003 Population project, 2005 Country Assistance Strategy, 2005 MENA Women's Progress Report, 2007 GEM report, 2010

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<sup>199</sup> World Bank, Social Sector Report, 2001, 78 accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2001/07/13/000094946\\_01070404141145/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2001/07/13/000094946_01070404141145/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf), accessed on October 30, 2011,

<sup>200</sup> *id* at 56

<sup>201</sup> World Bank, Second Social Fund for Development, 2001, 21 accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2002/02/09/000094946\\_02012504030341/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2002/02/09/000094946_02012504030341/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf), accessed on October 30, 2011

Country Gender Assessment, 2011 Reproductive Health report. The themes were about poverty, education and health. Some reports, however, offered more in-depth analyses of women and their situation in Egypt, like the GEM and CGAs. I will give an in-depth discussion of the CGAs, as they contained the most comprehensive information about Egyptian women. Also, many of the other topics, like education and health, are covered in the CGAs.

In 2003, the first Country Gender Assessment was written. This Gender Assessment had some common trends. A major theory that emerged in this decade was about the way women are socialized differently than men when growing up. Advocates believed that this is true because it has been true in other cultures.

Generally, girls are prepared to become mothers and wives, while boys are socialized with the expectation that they will enter paid employment and support their families economically. In addition, girls are expected to be more obedient, to play indoors and to undertake household chores. Parents are also more likely to encourage aggressive behavior in boys. Quantitative data to measure gender norms for Egypt are lacking, but various anthropological studies and biographical materials suggest that gender socialization in Egypt follows these patterns<sup>202</sup>.

Women are constructed from a very young age to be obedient to men. The theme of a cultural patriarchy was present.

FGM was another issue discussed extensively in the CGA. FGM is the most prominent example, for the World Bank, of women's oppression by men.

The practice of FGM in Egypt is one particularly strong example of how deeply ingrained gender values can lead to particular practices, which have implications for girls' mental and physical health. This practice continues to be justified based on the argument that it is dictated by religion and/or necessary for controlling girls' sexuality, although considerable evidence suggests that neither is the case<sup>203</sup>.

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<sup>202</sup> World Bank, Country Gender Assessment, *supra* note 62, at 12

<sup>203</sup> *id* at 12

Another interesting theme presented itself in this CGA as well. The role of women within the culture, as mothers, was again explored. “Although norms are evolving in Egypt, women are still generally defined as dependents, and expected to be subordinate to men. Reproduction and childcare are generally seen as their primary responsibilities<sup>204</sup>.” Egyptian women’s role as mother is again explored. While a lack of roles used to be discussed frequently in the 1970’s, this lack of alternative roles was not discussed for quite some time. The original reason for the discussion existed in the context of fertility. Development would offer women new roles and thereby liberate them from the role of motherhood. Now, women are oppressed by the role of motherhood, which is forced upon them by society, because they did not choose economic development. Notice the shift to helpless victim.

Women continued to lack agency, especially within the public sphere. “Because women are more likely to be unregistered, less educated, and more generally less involved in the public sphere, a significant gender gap in political participation exists<sup>205</sup>.” And yet again, tradition is the culprit for her lack of agency. “Traditions and attitudinal barriers have also acted as impediments to enhancing the status of women in Egypt and to their ability to participate in their country’s political and economic life as full and equal citizens<sup>206</sup>.” Foreign aid officials must act on her behalf, since she lacks the ability to act for herself. Egyptian women, with their false consciousness, can’t possibly enjoy being mothers. Like a parent, with an unruly teenager, development agencies are essentially asking the question- why don’t you want something better for your life?

The Country Gender Assessment from 2010 only focused on the Egyptian woman’s participation in the labor force. The report concluded that despite the massive rise in educated women, women are remarkably absent from the workforce, labeling this phenomenon the ‘gender paradox’<sup>207</sup>. After performing attitudinal surveys, the report concluded that women in Egypt generally believe that a woman who is unmarried and 30

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<sup>204</sup> *id* at 52

<sup>205</sup> *id* at 5

<sup>206</sup> *id* at 7

<sup>207</sup> World Bank , Country Gender Assessment, 2010, 2 accessed from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2011/09/13/000386194\\_20110913010434/Rendered/PDF/546980ESW0p1120derReport020100Final.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2011/09/13/000386194_20110913010434/Rendered/PDF/546980ESW0p1120derReport020100Final.pdf) accessed on October 19, 2011

is pitiable<sup>208</sup>. Most of the report, however, focused on econometrics and concepts such as market failures. Strangely, there is no mention of reproductive health in the report, aside from nominally mentioning lowered fertility rates in Egypt. Institutional and legal bias, analysis extremely prevalent in the first CGA, was lacking from this report. The reports language appeared to make a shift towards more labor market analysis, and away from cultural analysis. The cultural claims are based on informational surveys, rather than conjectures about Egyptian attitudes.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In writing this thesis, it was not my goal to describe, in actuality, the Egyptian woman. The reports I have explored do not, nor cannot, describe the Egyptian woman. Rather, it is an attempt to reveal constructions by the First World through the international development project. My goal was to discover the blind spots created by the World Bank's paradigm, if only to reveal that it does, in fact, hold a single point of view. Throughout the history of the World Bank in Egypt, there have been several important trends in the construction of the Egyptian woman.

One of the major and alarming themes present throughout these World Bank reports is that these Egyptian women appear to have no agency. It creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. If there is no space created for women to have a voice, then they will not be able to speak. If it is assumed that she does not have a voice, there will be no reason for development organizations to make that space at an institutional level. Additionally, a lack of agency necessitates the development project. Assuming that a woman has no agency in her life creates a moral imperative for someone to act on her behalf, while also feeding the assumption that she has a false consciousness. If a woman has no agency, she will be unable to speak on her own behalf, since her thoughts will only be a product of her oppression. Thus, someone from the enlightened First World will need to interject to save her from herself and her culture.

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<sup>208</sup> *id* at xiv

Assuming that women lack agency is also dangerous because questions of identity are also questions of power, and assuming that women need to be defined by an outside source detracts from women finding their own power. As author Tahera Aftab argues,

Postcolonial nations as survivors of colonial marauding and systematic pillage are wary of the ‘visions’ of others for them; they want to have their own visions and to make their own dreams come true. Maria Mies thus warns that ‘it is important to recognize that questions of conceptualizations are questions of power, that is, they are political questions. In this sense, the clarification of conceptual position is part of the political struggle of feminism<sup>209</sup>.

Currently, development organizations and some liberal feminists have projected the desires of the First World woman onto the Third World woman in an attempt at solidarity. These projections are a reflection of the First World’s own developed identities. Allowing Egyptian women to establish their own feminist agenda may dismantle the absolute truth of this vision, which has resulted in the essentializing of women’s experience. It has defined the Egyptian woman’s life and values in a way that makes little sense. In many ways, one could say these goals, ideas and definitions are a foreign concept to many women in Egypt.

Most importantly, drawing this clear distinction of culture as the locus of oppression ignores culture’s relationship to the economy that has co-created it. By assuming that women lack agency, and this lack of agency is why she is relegated to roles of motherhood, it is easy to then ignore the role an economic system plays in sustaining her roles. While this is a simplification of the intricacies of the choices surrounding motherhood, this is an attempt to demonstrate that the economy plays a role in forming the space where women to engage with the world. The shift towards putting economic empowerment in the realm of culture ignores this.

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<sup>209</sup>Tahera Aftab, *Development and Women in Pakistan*, FEMINISTS DOING DEVELOPMENT: A PRACTICAL CRITIQUE 34 (Ellen Judd & Marilyn Porter eds., St. Martin’s Press, 1999).