*The Second Arab Women Development Report*

# Arab Adolescent Girls: Reality and Prospects

**Title**
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Working together, we must support adolescents to achieve their dreams for a better life. If they are prepared with knowledge, choices and opportunities, they can live healthy and productive lives and contribute to a more stable world. If, on the other hand, their needs and concerns are ignored or given low priority, the disservice done is to us all.

**World Population Day, 11 July 2003**
**Statement of Ms. Thoraya Ahmed Obaid**
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# Preface And Acknowledgements

The Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), created in 1993 with headquarters in Tunis, is a unique regional institution in the Arab region. Its interests are focused on gender issues, and it seeks to promote Arab woman's participation in development and to provide services to the different parties concerned with these issues in all fields. These services include training, research and networking. The unique composition of its Board of Trustees is another characteristic of the Center. Indeed this composition enables the Center to establish partnership relations with both governmental and non-governmental organizations. The Board includes representatives of the League of Arab States, The Tunisian government, the Arab Gulf Program for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the European Union, and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). The Board of Trustees is presided by His Royal Highness Prince Talel Ibn Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, President of the Arab Gulf Program for United Nations Development Organizations.

CAWTAR is active in many areas of research, training and networking related to gender issues and development in the Arab region. It aims to achieve a better understanding of women's conditions in those areas, and set a more accurate inventory of their roles, make of knowledge about the Arab women's conditions one of the mechanisms to develop their effective participation in the achievement of global and sustainable development. CAWTAR also aims at reinforcing gender equality as an integral part of human rights in the Arab region.

To achieve these objectives, the Center has started a tradition of issuing periodical Reports on Arab Women Development, modelled on the UNDP's Human Development Reports . Each of these reports focuses on a specific issue which CAWTAR selects on the basis of the recommendations of regional and international conferences, as well as on the recommendation of the members of its specialized networks,[1] before it is submitted to CAWTAR's Board of Trustees. Each report is based on serious research and, in addition, provides recent quantitative and qualitative indicators, so as to assist decision makers in the Arab region in formulating the policies, strategies and programs that take into consideration the gender approach.

The topics of CAWTAR's reports stem directly from the Millenium Development Goals on the national and regional levels, and are an attempt, modest though it is, to further their achievement. Indeed, out of the eight Millenium Development Goals, five are directly associated with women, namely: reinforcement of gender equality, women empowerment, generalization of primary education, reduction of infant mortality rate, improvement of maternal health, eradication of severe poverty and hunger. CAWTAR's Arab Women's Development Reports share the same convictions expressed in the three Arab Women Summits, as well as in five seminars organized within their context, in the crucial importance of supporting research and publications on the importance of supporting research and studies, and the collection of the statistical data on gender, as well as with the Arab Women

**(1)** CAWTAR has established specialized networks through which it ensures the involvement in its activities and programs, of the largest number possible of institutions, organizations and individuals. This effort has been crowned by the establishment of the Arab Network for Gender and Development, «ANGED», in 2002 with support from the World Bank. The purpose is to achieve a wide presence for the Center in the region and a more effective interaction with active agents in the area of gender and development.

Development Report view that «development in which the Arab Women does not the crucial importance of supporting research, publications and the collection of data on gender. All agree with the Arab Human Development Report's words : «development in which Arab women do not participate is an endangered type of development» and «knowledge is the pillar of development». Thus the Arab Women's Development Report series can be considered to be a mechanism for achieving development goals and implementing the recommendations of different summits and regional seminars, as well as for providing a knowledge base which both regional and international reports agree is crucial in activating the process of sustainable and global development.

The first issue of the Arab Women Development Report on the topic «Globalization and Gender: Economic Participation of Arab Women» was published at the end of 2001. Dealing with this topic was, in itself, considered a challenge. Despite the fact that the debate over the complex effects of globalization on the Arab region has garnered much attention, available indicators show that the gender issue continues to be largely neglected. CAWTAR's first report contributed to filling the gaps in the quantitative data and qualitative indicators related to Arab women's economic participation in the context of globalization.

The Center faced another challenge in choosing «Arab Adolescent Girls: Reality and Prospects» as a subject for its second report . The importance of this choice lies, to a great degree, in the adoption of a new and complex approach derived from the most important approaches used in the social sciences, on the one hand, and in steering away from the classical view of adolescence limited to the psycho-physiological aspect, on the other.

CAWTAR's starting point was that the situation of the Arab women « is not governed by a simple ascending or descending linear process, but by a multi-leveled, complex and composite process. Therefore, it took into consideration the interconnection and complementarity of the economic, social, cultural and political factors in determining the situation of women in society, and the interconnection of the international, regional and national effects with the local ones, or those generated within the family, and even within the individual himself. Interest in today's female and male adolescents is tantamount to interest in the women and men of the future. The future social roles of men and women are made today in what is being implanted in the minds of the female and male adolescents. During the adolescence period, the puberty and physiological changes correspond to the behavioural and social changes, and it is particularly at this stage that the social roles begin.» [(2)]

Therefore, CAWTAR has sought to investigate the specificities of adolescence as a social phase through which the dynamics of social change in Arab societies can be understood, as well as to examine the current distinctions drawn between adolescent boys and girls, which are indicative of their future conditions and roles.

**(2)**Adib Nehmeh, Rainbow: Testimonials of Arab Adolescents, CAWTAR, 2003

This project, particularly in its preliminary research phase, is expected to lead to recommendations and suggestions to decision makers, relevant institutions, the media, civil society organizations intervening in the field of adolescence and youth, and to adolescents themselves, as a way of helping them improve the conditions of adolescents and their active and effective participation in society and its institutions.

The second Arab Women Development Report includes the followig four parts:

- Part I presents a general framework, includinga description of the report's theoretical framework, its objectives, and adopted methodology.

- Part II deals with the field research and includes qualitative studies based on analyses of interviews conducted in seven Arab countries namely: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen. The Results of these analyses are presented in six chapters.

- Part III involves a general analytical description of the adolescents' conditions through statistical data and indicators from to 22 Arab countries.

- Part IV is devoted to conclusions and recommendations.

An extra publication containing autobiographies of female and male adolescents involved in this publication, and entitled «Rainbow: Testimonials of Arab Adolescents» was added to the report. Indeed, in its comprehensive project, CAWTAR thought it appropriate to set apart the life stories of female and male adolescents by issuing a special publication, composed of selected testimonies by two (one male and one female) adolescents from each of the seven counties involved in the qualitative study. This publication also includes summaries of about two hundred interviews.

We should point out that CAWTAR is considering the possibility of publishing the national reports prepared by the national teams. It will also endeavor to implement the recommendations of these reports, to carry out advanced research on their themes, and set up joint programs with institutions that are influential on the national and regional levels. CAWTAR will also cooperate in some of the regional projects such as the Arab Project for Family Health, and will also contribute to projects in the area of capacity building and training in partnership with relevant institutions such as the Arab Institute for Human Rights.

To confirm the Center's strategy aimed at supporting networking as a critical instrument in bringing about change in the conditions and development roles of Arab women, as well as out of belief in the principal of partnership in the formulation and implementation of projects, a series of workshops were held in Tunisia and in other countries, in which participated experts working or interested in youth and adolescence and representatives of partner agencies concerned with

the subject within and outside the Arab region. They examined the feasibility and importance of the study, on the one hand, and attempted to achieve some form of consensus over the problematics of the subject, and over the structure and contents of the report, on the other hand. Furthermore, the Center made sure to involve media specialists and journalists in the activities surrounding this report. The number of articles published on the report before its publication has proven to be the best indicator of the Arab media interest in the subject.

Because it is not possible to name all the experts who took part in the series of workshops organized by CAWTAR in preparation for the report, we would like to take this opportunity to express to all of them our sincere thanks and deep consideration for the valuable suggestions and contributions to the report.

The main researchers were selected from within the national teams representing the countries involved in the study. The members of these teams were commissioned to conduct the investigation and field interview, and to write the national reports and bibliographies. The completed report documents were discussed in four workshops, two of them devoted to the national reports, and the others to the structure and contents of the regional report. The regional report team included members of the national working teams whose names are mentioned on the page devoted to them in the report. Dr. Mohamed Baqir (a statistics expert and independent international consultant) provided valuable contributions consisting in the preparation of the part dealing with the quantitative indicators. This part includes a general analytical description of the adolescents' conditions, and the tables and diagrams provided in the report.

CAWTAR also takes this opportunity to thank all the experts who took part in the workshops and came from the United Nations Women Development Fund, the World Bank, the United Nations Population Fund, the European Union, the UNICEF, the Population Council in Egypt. To all of them, CAWTAR expresses its deep consideration for the valuable contribution they provided in guiding and advising the researchers.

Mr. Adib Nehmeh, the report coordinator, took the responsibility of organizing all of these materials into a well-knit and coherent document. Professors Pierre Noël Deneuil, Noureddine Harrami, Moncef Hajji, Slaheddine Ben Fredj, Sihem Najjar, Hedia Belhdj Ghoueil, Mourad Ghachem, Hafedh Chekir, Kamel Ben Abdallah, and Khaled Louhichi provided constructive suggestions and guidelines which contributed to reinforcing the contents of the report. Together they spontaneously formed an advisory committee assuming their responsibilities in the best way possible.

The project benefited from the additional support of institutions and bodies that believe in the importance of the subject, and committed their efforts to reinforce the expansion of the report's activities, as well as from the countries involved in the study. Our thanks to all of them, and particularly to Bettina Maas from the United Nations Population Fund in Yemen, Zineb Ben Jelloun of the

UNIFEM Morocco, Barbara Ibrahim of the Population Council in Egypt, Sheikha Hind Bint Selman Al-Khalifa of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in the kingdom of Bahrain, and Bahyia Al-Jaishy of the Suprem Council for Women in the kingdom of Bahrain, Golda Khoury of UNICEF Lebanon, and Nedra Zaqi of UNICEF Egypt.

We cannot forget the support provided by the UNICEF, the European Union, the UNFPA, the UNIFEM, the UNDP, the AGFUND, and particularly the World Bank which funded the publication accompanying the Report, «Rainbow: Testimonials of Arab Adolescents». To them all, organizations and bodies, we express our sincere thanks for their support for the report and the activities it included.

The Center expresses special thanks to the European Union and the the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), for their invaluable support. We can, without any degree of exaggeration, say that this report would not have seen the light of day without the support provided by these two institutions.

We should also express our thanks and consideration to the Center's staff and to the staff of United Nations Office for Projects and Services (UNOPS), for the relentless efforts they exerted during the period of preparation of the report, and for the technical support they provided for the research teams and the Center's Executive Director.

The Center should not forget to express particular thanks to the female and male adolescents involved in the interviews for their cooperation with, and trust in the researchers; a trust that was manifest in their straightforward and spontaneous answers which leave in the heart of whoever reads the full text of the interviews a sense of love, friendship, tolerance, and emotional wealth, in spite of the spirit of rebellion expressed in their words. Indeed, the female and male adolescents involved in this second Arab Women's Development Report are attached to the institution of the family in spite of the disagreements that characterize its internal relations, and to educational institutions despite their criticisms of methods of work and internal management, to love as a permanent value despite the numerous failed experiences they see around them, and to the dominance of things material over human relations in general.

The Center remains convinced that this report will represent a formative step in the study of the subject of adolescence in the Arab region, given the results and conclusions it will provide on the experience of female and male adolescents. As for us, we hope that this study will reinforce gender equality in the Arab region, and open the way to other advanced studies and to the collection of data on female and male adolescents. We also hope that our report on adolescence will foster discussion of gender and critical issues of interest to the Arab region, now and in the future.

**Dr. Soukeina Bouraoui**
Executive Director, CAWTAR

# Executive summary

## Introduction

The Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) sees this report on «Arab Adolescent Girls: Realities and Prospects» as a preliminary, exploratory study that will lead to further studies in a field that is still not sufficiently investigated in the Arab region. The main aim of this report, particularly the field study included in it, is to look into the future of the Arab women and draw the attention of decision-makers and those working to extend women's participation in the development process, to the possibility of positively affecting this future, particularly the possibility of raising the level of women's participation in decision making. This is to be achieved by identifying handicapping factors and dealing with them through effective policies and interventions in the early stages of their formation.

Accordingly, and in cooperation with the work team, the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research planned the project and the report so as to realistically meet the research and practical needs of the field of adolescence in Arab societies. Qualitative dimensions therefore acquired much importance in the study of the situation of female and male adolescents, because they allowed for their voices to be heard as clearly as possible, without ever excluding other dimensions expressed by quantifiable indicators.

The first part of the report includes a general introduction; the second part includes a field study involving seven Arab countries, namely: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. The qualitative study is based on interviews with female and male adolescents, in which different aspects of their lives were presented and analyzed. The interviews were analyzed according to the following six themes:

Identity and self-image
Puberty, reproduction health and love
Family relations
School and work
Adolescent culture and behaviour
Attitudes and values

Part three contains conclusions and recommendations. The last part of the report includes an analysis of statistics and human development indicators in Arab countries, with an attempt to extract from these indicators whatever is relevant to the subject of adolescence, in addition to statistical tables.

A special publication entitled «Rainbow: Testimonials of Arab Adolescents» has also benn prepared. It contains a presentation of selected biographies from the seven countries as well as a summary of all the interviews conducted in the context of the national field studies.

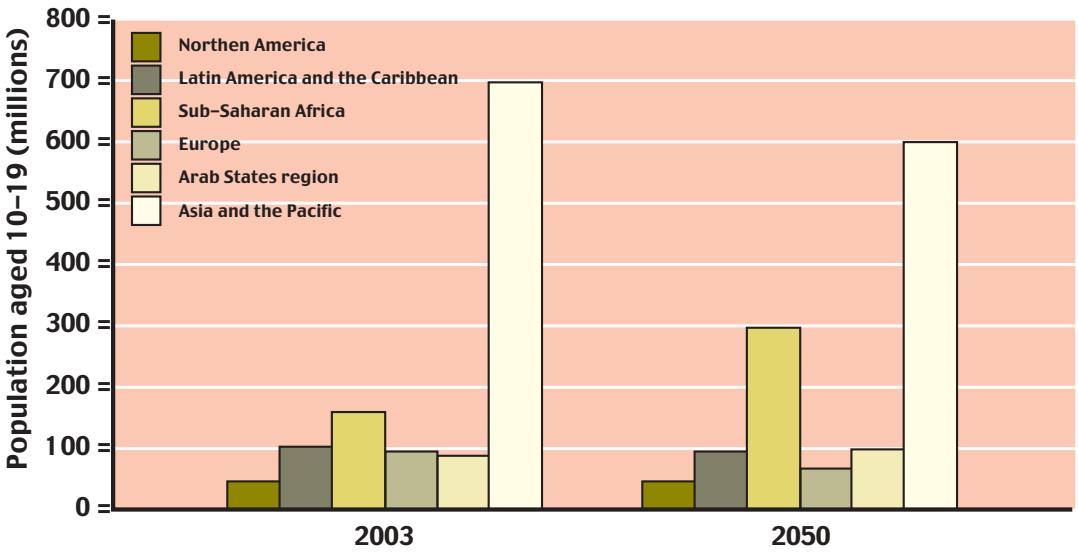
The following are the major results reached by the report, beginning with the results of the analysis of the final part.

## Arab Adolescent Girls: Quantitative Indicators

### 1. Human Development Indicators in Arab countries

This part included a follow-up on the human development indicators and the economic and social indicators in Arab countries. In line with the method of presentation adopted in the First Arab Women Development Report entitled «Globalization and Gender: Economic Participation of Arab Women, issued by the Center of Arab Women for Training And Research (CAWTAR) in 2001, indicators specific to each Arab country were presented separately, then in averages for the four sub-regions namely: the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, the Mashreq countries, the Maghreb countries and the less developed countries (LDCs), in addition to a general average for all Arab countries including some comparisons with other world regions.

**Adolescent Population by Region, 2003 and 2050**




**Source: UN Population Division in UNFPA Report State of World population 2003 investing in adolescents health and rights**

This part also covered the various human development indicators used internationally (e.g., the Human Development Index, the Human Poverty Index, and the Gender-Related Human Development Index) in addition to indicators related to population, education, health, the economy, living conditions, environment issues, basic rights and communication.

From these indicators, it became clear that the Arab region still occupied the same positions on the world development scale: that is, in a better position than sub-Saharan African countries and the LDCs, but in a position lower than that of the Latin American region, East Asia, and the transition - economy countries. Arab countries were divided into: the high development level (the GCC countries), the middle development level (the Mashreq and Maghreb countries, except Iraq), and the low development level (the LDCs and Iraq). Indicators also showed important economic, social and human disparities between the sub-regions, and sometimes between the countries, which required a greater effort particularly in the study of the features that characterize each group of countries and lead to different development priorities.

Furthermore, this part includes recent attempts to devise of human development indicators. This includes an examination of the First Arab Human Development Report, and also looks at the joint work of the Economic and Social Committee for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)[1] in this area. Both these attempts at producing Arab human development indicators take into consideration the economic, social and human dimensions, and support the idea of grouping Arab countries into sub-regions, at comparable levels of development, and on the basis of these various elements.

## 2. Female and Male Adolescents: Basic data

In their search for statistical data on female and male adolescents, work teams encountered major difficulties. What was available was drawn from statistical data generally published on the basis of a 5 year age-division, or by level of education. In the statistical part of the report, the 15-19 age group and the secondary education level were chosen as the 2 divisions that are closest to the age group involved in the field study in the seven countries (i.e., the 15-18 group). Below is a presentation of some of the data on female and male adolescents which can be examined in detail in the statistical appendices.

The number of female and male adolescents in the 15-19 age group in Arab countries rose from 23 million in 1990 to 31 million in 2000. This number is expected to approximate 35 million in 2010, and 41 million in 2020. Concerning the proportion of female and male adolescents in the total population of Arab countries, it has increased from 10.3 % in 1990 to 11 % in 2000. However, this percentage is expected to decrease to 9.9 % in 2010 and to 9.7 % in 2020. Female and male adolescents are unequally distributed among Arab countries, depending on the size of the population in each of these countries. Egyptian adolescents represent one fourth of the total Arab adolescent population, while both Algeria and Sudan count 11 % of all Arab adolescents respectively, Morocco counts 10% and Iraq 8 %. That is to say that, approximately two thirds of the female and male adolescents live in five Arab countries all of which suffer from difficult economic conditions, and three of which suffer from wars or internal conflicts.

**(1)** Mohamed Houssein Bakir, Measuring Human Development, the Economic and Social Committee for Western Asia and the United Nations Development Program, 1997.

■ Why is it that I am responsible for household chores?
Must I be a servant because I am a girl?

■ Why is it I cannot be friends with young boys?
It seems like friendship is not allowed and I don t understand why.

■ The supervisor is always waiting for us by the door if we are late
and asks us to cut our nails if they grow long.

■ Why is it that I must wear a hijab? And that it is forbidden to enjoy youth?
And that girls cannot go out unaccompanied? I must say I do not like this situation.

**Sarra, 16 years Bahrain**

■ I was agitated and caused trouble. My father s words hurt my feelings and my mother slapped me in the face without even giving me a chance to explain myself. I felt terrible and like I didn t belong in the house.

■ I have never had any sexual relations with a girl, and this will not happen outside of a legal marriage be it a regular long-term marriage or a temporary mutaa marriage.

**Mahmoud, 18 years Bahrain**

The data included in this part presentsome of the general characteristics of female and male adolescents in Arab countries in accordance with available statistical indicators. Doubtless, this is a partial image that points to a clear shortage of consistent, complete information. One of the main recommendations of this report is to provide this type of information(2).

The major recommendations of this chapter are as follows:

■ Build a database and set up a list of indicators specific to female and male adolescents in Arab countries through:

- Regular evaluation and monitoring of the use of data on female and male adolescents.
- Endeavor to unify available data on female and male adolescents through the development and distribution of statistical guidebooks on definitions, indicators and criteria, and the organization of training programs and exchange of experience so as to generalize the unified use of these guides.
- Encourage the production and development of data on female and male adolescents by researchers outside of the area of specialized statistics, and provide them with the technical, statistical support necessary.
- Develop more relevant indicators and apply better-suited methodologies in describing the reality of female and male adolescents in the Arab region.

**(2)** The details and relative proportions by country, and the averages by sub-region can be found in the statistical tables in the appendixlocated at the end of the report.

# Part I: The General Framework

This report deals with adolescence as a modern social phenomenon and as a condition generated by the interactions between adolescents and the physiological, cognitive and psychological transformations they go through when they reach puberty on the one hand, as well as the surrounding social, economic, and political factors, and their institutions, ideologies and value systems, on the other. Adolescence, with its characteristics and problematics, is thus a dynamic condition, in the sense that any change in the factors affecting either one of the two parties involved in the equation (the individual and the society), results in a different description of the problematics and characteristics that define adolescence in any given society and time.

## 1. The Emergence of Adolescence

The theoretical framework of this study includes a historical presentation of the emergence of adolescence and its association with modernity and the advent of individualism in European societies. It also includes a presentation of the different approaches used in the study of adolescence, more particularly the physiological, psychological, educational, anthropological and sociological approaches. Indeed, understanding adolescence and its various dimensions and levels requires the use of a multidimensional approach that, on the one hand, is suitable to the complex nature of female (or male) adolescents' lives and behaviours, and which shape their personalities as individuals and as members of society. On the one hand, this approach must also be inclusive of the idea that adolescence is a social phenomenon which constitutes an area of common interest to psychology, education and sociology. Based on this, the report adopted a combined approach using a methodological and scientific synthesis of the necessary elements that guarantee a coverage of all the dimensions and levels of the phenomenon.

■ I became sexually active two years ago...but having sexual relationships requires experience, and I try to avoid it to stay clean.

■ ...Someone wrote my name on the board, and I became some kind of a criminal at school.

■ To the researcher: what type of sex do you want me to tell you about, legitimate or illegitimate?

■ I love taking risks and being adventurous, especially when it has to do with saving or helping other people.

■ Sometimes I think about immigrating clandestinely...I dream about visiting Germany and hope I will become a famous football player.

**Jihad, 18 Years Tunisia**

This introduction also includes an analysis of the problematics associated with the transformation of Arab societies from traditional societies to modern ones, and with the structural transformations that made these societies sway between tradition and modernity, in the sense that they are neither traditional in the traditional sense of the word, nor modern in the modernist sense. The introduction also clearly distinguishes between modernity and globalization, considering the latter as a factor of social divison that compounds vertical binaries in societies, and strongly affecting both female and male adolescents.

An examination of the emergence of the individual as the detainer of an individualized identity is one of the basic themes of analysis in this report, as one of the core features in the definition of adolescence. The question was raised concerning the extent to which it is possible to raise this issue in Arab societies, and whether anything has come up in the field study conducted in the context of this report that confirms or denies its applicability. In this respect, every effort was made to avoid projecting preconceived notions o the matter and to steer away from unfounded generalizations in thi report.

## Monotoring ICPD Goals-Selected Indicators

| | Reproductive health Indicators | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 | Contraceptive Prevalence | |
| | | Any method | Modern methods |
| North Africa | 36 | 47 | 42 |
| Algeria | 16 | 64 | 50 |
| Egypt | 47 | 56 | 54 |
| Libyan Arab Jamahirya | 7 | 40 | 26 |
| Morocco | 25 | 50 | 42 |
| Sudan | 55 | 8 | 7 |
| Tunisia | 7 | 63 | 51 |
| Western Asia | 47 | 47 | 28 |
| Iraq | 38 | 14 | 10 |
| Jordan | 27 | 53 | 38 |
| Kuwait | 31 | 50 | 41 |
| Lebanon | 25 | 61 | 37 |
| Palestine | 94 | - | - |
| Oman | 66 | 24 | 18 |
| Saudi Arabia | 38 | 32 | 29 |
| Syrian Arab Republic | 34 | 36 | 28 |
| United Arab Emirates | 51 | 28 | 24 |
| Yemen | 111 | 21 | 10 |

**Source: UNFPA - State of World population 2003**
**investing in adolescents health and rights**

■ I would not follow the example of any particular person. I would choose to act because of an idea, not because of a person.

■ I think marriage traps people. I like living in a disorganized way, well maybe not disorganized but not fixed.

**Achraf, 18 Years, Lebanon**

■ A girl can only turn down a suitor before becoming engaged. After the engagement, it s not appropriate to leave a fianc .

■ I became a problem for my family. You feel like a stranger if you get married then come back to live with your family.

■ My sister says: even if the Pope told me to drop out of school, I wouldn t. I tell her: don t leave school and don t get married.

■ I used to even write poetry to my husband and read to him because he doesn t read very well. Now, I am disgusted, I don t write any more.

**Zeineb, 18 Years, Lebanon**

## 2. The Emergence of Individualism

The emergence of individualism is also one of the most important outcomes of modernit. Adolescence is also crucial as a recent phenomenon associated with the very social and cultural transformations that led to the shaping of the modern individual. However, excessive use of the concept of individual has, in turn, lead to other excesses, making it a mythical concept more than an expression of a real state. This applies to the modern European societies themselves, which often criticize this concept as mythical. This must be taken into consideration in the study of the period of adolescence and its relation with the emergence of individualism in Arab societies where transition to modernity has been a complex and incomplete processes.

Indeed, in Arab societies female (and male) adolescents are considered to be influenced by the concept of «individual as consumer» produced by globalization, more than by the «individual as citizen» produced by modernity. Distinction is seldom made between these two concepts, and reactions are consequently divided into two diametrically opposed sides. Some identify with the consumer type of globalization, and others with an absolute rejection of the values of both globalization and modernity, due to the inability to distinguish between them, often resorting to seclusion within a strict concept of cultural specificity[3].

Belief in the existence of a simple linear transition from «a society without individual» to a society in which the individual holds a central position is misguided. Some kind of hybridization in values and concepts has, indeed, taken place. Therefore, it is difficult to associate the individual with modernity and to describe the other values as being traditional. We can say, however, that the mixture of elements from individual culture with elements form the culture of the community is a modern combination, to the extent that individual values contribute to the transformation of community values. The community elements in this combination cannot be described as traditional because they too belong to

**(3)** According to Castoriadis Cornelius, there is the model of the individual in a democratic society where society defines the set of living rules which permit first the emergence of the individual, and second the enjoyment of a set of rights and new spaces for freedom. This model has been replaced by another. It is the model of privatized individual, that is to say the individual who closes himself up in his narrow private environment and who refocused himself on consumption, taking a negative, pessimistic attitude towards politics in its Greek meaning, that is to say, as a res publica.

Robert Bidart, Autorite parentale et citoyennete: La question des competences parentales. In: Nouvelles problematiques adolescentes, pratiques institutionnelles en recherche. Sous la direction de Maryse Vaillant et Jean-Paul LeBlanc, L'Harmattan.

### Rights Denied By Child or Early Marriage

Early Marriage of girls undermines a number of rights guaranteed by the convention on the rights of the child:

- the right to education (Article 28).
- the right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, including sexual abuse (Article 19) and from all forms of sexual exploitation (Article 34).
- The right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24).
- The right to educational and vocational information and guidance (Article 28).
- The right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas (Article 13).
- Thr right to rest and leisure, and to participate freely in cultural life (Article 13).
- The right to not be separated from their parents against their will (Article 9).
- The right to protection against all forms of exploitation affecting any aspect of the child's welfare (Article 36).

**source:** UNFPA - the State of World Population 2003

modernity and have been reformulated and transformed so that they now constitute a part of a suigeneris structure. And, instead of assuming that individualism is achieved at the expense of the relation between the individual and the institution and in complete severance with it, we should say that individualism requires a redefinition of the meaning of this relationship[4].

Consequently, approaching the issue of adolescence in Arab societies from the perspective of the emergence of the individual, in the troncated sense of the word, that is, without taking into consideration the social and historical dimensions of this concept, can lead to partial understanding and to projections that would deprive the study and its conclusions of objectivity and consistency with reality. The theoretical framework included in Part I seeks to avoid exactly this pitfall by providing extended presentations, analyses, and comparisons. This part has managed to clarify the social and historical characteristics which are specific to adolescence in Arab societies on the one hand, and the degree of interaction with, and influence by, the global context in the two stages of transition to modernity and globalization, on the other. It also reinstates the place of adolescence within contemporary world history, as is the case in western Europe.

## Part II: The field study and analysis of the contents of the interviews

This part includes an analysis of the contents of the interviews conducted in seven Arab countries on the basis of six themes which form the chapters of this part. The main results are as follows:

**(4)** Vincenzo Cicchelli, Recomposer le sens du lien de filiation. De l'individualism ethique au processus d'individualisation. In: Etre soi d'un age a l'autre: Famille et individualisation. Tome 2. Sous la direction de Francois de Singly, L'Harmattan, 2001.

## Chapter One: Identity and Self-Representation

This chapter examines the methods and means used by female (or the male) adolescents to build their self-identity and self-perception. Female and male adolescents repeatedtly use the term «normal» in describing themselves. They did not give much importance to the components of shape and beauty, at least outwardly, focusing more on the moral, behavioural and relational aspects. They also granted themselves often positive attributes without seeming to look critically at themselves, and resorted to comparisons with siblings, relatives and friends in defining their self-identity. There was also an overlap between their self-perception and the others' perceptions.

Another dimension that was made clear in this chapter is adolescents' lack ofability to express themselves consistently as regards to the self and temporal continuity. It often seemed that the present was the only existing time, the past being an unpleasant memory.

Construction of individual projects, however, is often associated with the availability of the cultural, social and economic resources for female (or male) adolescents and their families. This raises the issue of independence in contemporary societies. Contemporary societies are in fact characterized by delayed social autonomy because adolescents have already been granted the means to enable them to achieve better development and growth. This is paradoxical. Children mature physically, emotionally and intellectually earlier than in the past. But they are more dependent on their parents, and become independent at a much later age than in the past(5).

The field study shows that the process often followed by female and male adolescents in forming their identity and crystallizing their self-image, differ depending on the objective social and economic conditions, on the life experiences that affected them, as well as on the means they possess to direct their choices and deal with the problems and difficulties they encounter.

The paths that female and male adolescents follow in building their identity can be classified into three types: first, a path that is considered «obedient» and prepares the adolescent to be a full member of the traditional family group; he/she internalizes their standards and values, adopts their visions and judgments, and believes in the necessity of agreeing with them so as to achieve tranquility and avoid all causes of tension and aggravation. Close integration in the family group leads to the marginalization of the peer group's influence in the building of the personality of the adolescent who, in this case, becomes more like adults in terms of his/her behaviour and values.

The second path consists in leaving the beaten tracks and «rebelling» against adults by rejecting their ideas and views and by criticizing their attitudes, thereby making sure to fashion a distinctive personality. This rebellion may not necessarily and spontaneously lead to the building of an independent personality or to

**(5)** Boris Cyrulnik, Resilience et capacite d'evolution, in: Nouvelles problematiques adolescentes, Pratiques institutionnelles ens recherche, sous la direction de Maryse Vaillant et Jean-Paul Le Blanc, L'Harmattan, 2001.

contributing to social change, except if other favorable circumstances become available. Sometimes female and male adolescents seek «uniqueness and distinction by exaggerating their conformity to, and integration with, an imposed youth culture. They resist being described as different. To them, the highest achievment is for one of them to embody a given group value,»[6] even if this value is different from those of adults. However, full integration in the buddy group hinders the crystallization of individual projects, because the latter means distinction from the group to which the adolescent belongs[7].

The third course is reconciliatory. It takes into consideration both internal and external changes. Here, the female (or male) adolescent resorts to respecting the standards of the family and society, while personally contributing to the shaping of a distinctive identity and avoiding clashes.

Each of these courses is characterized by the fact that reflexive thinking about the self holds a different position for the female or male adolescent. In the first path, where the individual almost fully identifies with the family group, self-reflexive thinking is limited. This thinking increases in the third path where the female or male adolescent seeks to reconcile the ego and the other, and culminates in the second, associated with avoiding that the individual personality melt into the group. However, in all cases, social comparison plays a central role. The ego image is constructed based on the «significant» other or the «generalized» other as reference, through imitation and obedience, or through relatively distancing oneself from the judgments of others, or completely severing from them and attempting to build one's identity and crystallizing one's personality away from stereotyped attitudes and prejudices.

**The major recommendations of this chapter are:**

- To consider the forming of a unique and innovative personality capable of free and independent thinking, as a primary educational goal in society's relations with female and male adolescents. This would be compounded with the development of specific patterns of relations within the structures of families and schools that complement each other in achieving the goal stated above for the creation of a balance between the individual, society and the intermediary entities, based on cooperation and interaction.

- To reconsider the strict age and gender hierarchy in society, its institutions and culture including the achievement of an institutional, legislative and cultural reform that takes into consideration contemporary developments including children's early intellectual and cognitive maturity, so as to prepare them for roles and for greater participation than what they usually get.

**(6)** Alain Clemence, Francois Rochat, Caroline Cortolezzis Patricia Dumont, Michele Egloff, Claude Kaiser, Scolarite et adolescence: Les motifs de l'insecurite, Haupt, Bern 2001.

**(7)** Robert Bidart, Autorite parentale et citoyennete: La question des competences parentales. In: Nouvelles problematiques adolescentes, pratiques institutionnelles en recherche. Sous la direction de Maryse Vaillant et Jean-Paul LeBlanc, L'Harmattan.

## Chapter two: Puberty, Reproductive Health and Love

This chapter covers several different subjects. It first addresses the process and memories of puberty, and the female and male ways of dealing with its early manifestations. It then addresses adolescents' views concerning sex, love and friendship, as well as marriage and the choice of partner and his/her characteristics. The chapter focuses particularly on the different ways in which female and male adolescents experience and react to the period of puberty, communication between parents and children, and parents' roles in preparing the latter for the physical and psychological transformations they are about to to face.

The chapter does not deal with the process of puberty as a unique and independent factor in the definition of adolescence, but as one of the interconnected and intertwined factors that form adolescence. Indeed, the roles and behaviours accompanying adolescence cannot be attributed to one single factor. They naturally result from complex multi-leveled elements. Puberty and adolescence constitute a type of «bio-social chemistry» that generates qualitative situations that cannot be considered as the result of individual factors; rather, adolescence itself exists only thanks to, and as a product of, this «chemistry».

In Arab societies, it is necessary to put the process of puberty and its interactions in the context of the general social and transformations in values that have occurred in the last few decades, particularly those related to marriage and relations between both sexes. The most important of these transformations which are directly related to the subject of this chapter is perhaps the increasing delay in marriage age, which has become a major phenomenon in most Arab countries. For the young generations, average age at marriage varies between 25 and 30 for females and males in most of these countries. This raises the average time span between puberty and marriage to over a whole decade, sometimes two decades, a period during which prevailing values and customs and the laws in force do not allow the establishment of open and stable sexual relations among the two sexes. This issue did not really exist for previous generations, when only a few years separated the age of puberty from marriage (in addition to social life being less complex than it now is). This new situation exerts pressure on the situation of female and male adolescents, on their conceptions of relations between the sexes, on what types of relations are acceptable or prohibited, and on their conceptions of marriage.

In the female and male adolescents' testimonies, disagreement emerged concerning their respective view of the process of puberty, and on sexual matters in general. While discussion over puberty among male adolescents led naturally to the discussion of sex, it was, except in a few cases, different with female adolescents. In general, we can say that responses in both groups were brief, which showed adolescents' unease and embarrassment when they talk about these topics.

responses point to a mixture of difficulty and ignorance of sexual matters and reproductive health. Discussions also reveal the narrow space reserved by families for discussing sexual matters and reproductive health, due to the parents' lack of readiness to assume their roles as transmitters of knowledge and to prepare their children to access a new phase in their lives. This particularly applies to fathers, as mothers seemed to be more able to assume this role particularly with girls informing them, at a particular age, about the start of menstruation and how to deal with it. Judging some of the testimonies concerning teachers' reactions, it is likely that there is also an important shortage of information among teachers on these questions. This is one more reason that encourages female and male adolescents to seek the help of friends, older siblings, media, books and magazines (the good and the bad), and films to obtain information on sex and reproductive health, which may not always be scientific.

Some of the testimonies indicate that the traditional system that prevailed in previous decades may have contained traditional means of communication which were more effective in their socio-historical context. They also stress that embarrassment, shyness and avoiding to talk about sexual matters within the family, represent a somewhat modern phenomenon, whereas puberty was traditionally the object of celebration as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

The field study reveals the existence of a clear disagreement between female and male adolescents over everything concerning sexual behaviour and reproductive health. It also emphasizes the fact that discrimination on the basis of gender acquires new and more important dimensions with puberty, which supports the conclusion that, for women and men, social roles become more clearly defined with the formation of sexual identity. The study further showed that constraints on female adolescents sharply increase, particularly in conservative families, to the point of withdrawal from school and imposition of early marriage. In general, female adolescents expressed a greater interest in emotional, moral and behavioural aspects in the person they love or desire to marry, while male adolescents showed greater interest in sex and beauty in their life-partner. The majority of female and male adolescents consider that the choice of partners must be their own, with parental consultation but with respect for the personal choice of the person directly concerned, even though it doesn't seem to be always guaranteed, especially for female adolescents.

**The major recommendations for this chapter are:**

- Integration of health awareness, protection from accidents, reproductive and mental health, and sex education in educational programs, and ensuring that schools are a safe channel for the provision of scientific and sound information in these matters.

- Organizing training sessions in these subjects for teachers, counselors in educational institutions and associations which deal with adolescence.

- Devoting innovative programs targeting social milieus where early marriage is still widespread, for the purpose of curbing and eradicating this phenomenon, and setting up partnerships with active bodies and with government and judiciary authorities for the purpose of imposing a minimum age for marriage.

- Conducting advanced research on the phenomenon of delayed marriage age, as a forced choice resulting from economic and social conditions, and from certain social habits and their consequences on the female and male's bodily and mental health, and on social situations and behaviour.

## Chapter three: Family Relations

The interviews indicates that both female and male adolescents give great importance to family. Female adolescents are generally more strongly attached to their families than male adolescents. For boys, other areas of interaction are available outside the family, whereas for girls, family is the only avaialble institution, particularly in milieus that limit girls' access to the public realm. The adolescent's relation with family and parents can be described as relatively conflictual but limited by an «understanding» attitude towards parents on the part of the adolescent, with a few cases of absolute obedience or open conflict.

The chapter examines the female and male adolescents' relations with both parents, with fathers and mothers individually, and with male and female siblings and relatives. It also examines the impact of family break-up on children, control over female and male adolescents' behaviour, areas of disagreement with the parents, and discrimination between girls and boys within the family. The chapter concluded with «a typology» of different families and a definition of some of their common characteristics, and the extent to which they contribute to the building of female and male adolescents' personalities.

The analysis of female and male adolescents' testimonies, shows that not all families contribute equally to the process of identity building, and that female and male adolescents succeed in building their specific individual personality, and their independence only when a set of conditions and resources are available. It seems that two types of resources, namely economic and cultural resources, play a major role in forming the profile of Arab families.

In general, it seemed that the majority of female and male adolescents live in families that have a greater tendency to follow a traditional family type in which roles are clearly distributed on the basis of age and gender. But other types of families exist, ranging from the more traditional type (which gives a greater role

to the extended family and tribal structure, particularly in Yemen), to a type that is more influenced by modernity and modern living pattern. There are also behaviours that are more influenced by «consumer» globalization, particularly among the younger generations.

Families seem to be more affected by the historical and social conditions of the country than by the other issues addressed in the report. While it is possible to draw prototypical profiles of the Arab family, identify the transformations they experience and the exchanges likely to occur between them, these families seem, according to adolescents' testimonies and to the other sources of the study, to tend towards three poles that are highly dependend on the characteristics of individual countries. First, the development of the Arab family seemes to be attracted to the pole of the traditional patriarchal family which is more frequent in Yemen where the tribal structure is strong and the extended family still has an important role and a strong presence in the nuclear family, a situation which deeply affects female and male adolescents. The second pole is that of the modern family which agrees more with the characteristics of the Lebanese and Tunisian societies. Mention should be made here of the difference between these two countries. Lebanon is characterized by cultural idiosyncrasies and social relations that puts it ahead on the level of social and cultural practices more than on the level of legislations and laws. As for Tunisia, the legislative, legal framework is considered to be more advanced than it is in Lebanon and more advanced than what prevails in the Tunisian social culture itself.

The third pole is represented by the influence of the pattern of consumption-oriented globalization. This family conforms more with models that are widespread in Bahrain where this pattern deeply marks the behaviour and relation of family members, a situation which could lead to a weakening of family ties and bring them to the edge of desintegration.

Based on the above, we can distinguish four «ideal» family models from within the three above-mentioned poles. In the traditional pole we can distinguish between traditional wealthy families and traditional poor families. Relations between these two types of family are based on traditional allegiance. It may be a work relation (i.e., the latter working for the former, particularly in the rural areas). It is generally a vertical one-directional relation. There is also the model of the globalized consumerist family which generally enjoys wealth and adopts consumarist behaviour thereby imitating the globalized model and its values. Between this family and the traditional wealthy ones relations are likely based on the exchange of power and wealth interests. We also note the existence of relations of exchange between a third family model. These are middle class families which tend to be modernist. The basis of exchange here lies in the overlap that exists in the areas of professional activity, in the advanced cultural level, and in wealth particularly for the upper middle classes. Exchange is also defined on the basis of individual choices, as the values of both modernity and globalization overlap in their positive evaluation of the individual's role and personal choices. Finally, we mention the relations of exchange between middle class families which are modern and the poor families, particularly in the lower middle classes and the upper poor

classes. The mechanism and channels of this exchange are achieved through education, culture and participation in political or social activities, achievements which bridge the gap between poor families and middle class ones.

These family models and common exchanges allow us to draw a general framework which defines relations of social exchange between families, and structures female and male adolescents relations, friendships, exchanges and behaviours within, and in agreement with it. Female and male adolescents are faced with the same influences (globalization, tradition and modernity) but to degrees and levels that differ from those faced by adults in general, and by their families in particular. They also have different reactions, which constitutes one of the most important foundations of what may be called the conflict of generations. The interviews clearly show that female and male adolescents are, in general, more attracted to the extreme cases than their families and parents, and this attitude is the most widespread and common one among adolescents. Indeed, from a behavioural point of view, female and male adolescents were more influenced by the «globalized» consumerist pattern.

In terms of values, however, female and male adolescents seem to be more influenced by a special form of affiliation with an inherited identity (which is more tinged with fundamentalism than with traditionalism, from the religious point of view). The influence of modernity and its values, on the other hand, seem to be limited and primarily confined to the combination of the elements of socio-economic affiliation to the middle class, and to urban belonging, cultural openness, educational level, and political or social activity. The combination of these conditions is not always easily available. Finally, the majority of female and male adolescents tend to find a middle position that enables them to find middle solutions and to coexist with their families and society.

All of these models exist. They coexist and interact within the same countries. As explained above, they are approximate and ideal models, and real families are at varying distances from them.

As for the main problems associated with female and male adolescents' relations with their family, they essentially consist in a lack of space for dialogue within the family, a quasi-general, although variable, discrimination between boys and girls. There are also two levels of what may be considered «a conflict of generations». The first is primary and consists in the disagreements occurring between parents and children over certain areas that are subject to severe control, particularly going out, choice of friends, and dressing especially for girls. The second level of this «conflict of generations» takes a more crystallized form and is observable among female and male adolescents who enjoy reasonable cultural resources and feel the difference between their own perceptions and those of their parents. We should not lose sight of other cases such as the one mentioned by Sana (age 15, Egypt) when she said: «I have no time for conflicts of generations. My father, my brother and myself are busy fighting poverty».

**The major recommendations concerning the family are:**

- To develop relations within the family that would make it a more appropriate space for accompanying the female and male adolescent in building his/her unique personality and effectively integrating into society, by concentrating on addressing essential gaps in the family through:
  - increasing the spaces of dialogue between parents and children,
  - eliminating discrimination between girls and boys within the family,
  - developing interactive and complementary relations between family, school and female and male adolescents' friends.
- To develop programs targeted for parents, using communication media or through direct contact with them, and programs that target children and contribute to bringing forth multiple models for family construction and family relations based on dialogue and participation.
- To conduct an analytical field study of the phenomenon of family breakdown.

## Chapter Four: School and work

This chapter examines female and male adolescents' relation with school and their perceptions of their professional future. It also examines the experiences of those who enter the job market.

### 1. School

The chapter presents four essential functions for school, namely: the cognitive function, preparation for the job market and economic activity, preparation for social and citizenship roles, and another function resulting from the presence of pupils in large numbers in the school institution which allows for the development of horizontal relations between them and the expansion of their scope of references. This chapter also addresses pupils' relations with their teachers, discipline systems, curricula, teaching methods, co-education, discrimination against girls in educational opportunities, pupils' behaviour in school, the characteristics of popular kids, with emphasis on the great need for reforming schools and their organization, and for the modernization of teaching methods.

In addition, this chapter addresses school's major historical and social functions, as a channel and a mechanism of social modernization used to break with prevailing traditional concepts, as well as an essential contributor to the emergence of adolescence as a social category in Arab societies. Adolescence is, in fact, considered in some senses as a product of schooling. However, the study also notes that the school is facing reverse-influences and that it has become more

and more affected by the transformations experienced by local and world communities as a whole. This raises the issue of «the crisis of schools » as a global crisis involving the role of school in society, as well as their cognitive and economic functions, the internal relations between the administrative and academic bodies and pupils, and schools' relations with the parents.

School often find themselves caught between two types of relations: in the first, traditional types of relations, priority is given to law, order and discipline. When a pupil disagrees, he/she is punished. The second type of relation gives priority to exchange and is more receptive to dialogue and negotiation. At present, the school system cannot be accepted arbitrarily and without discussion, but must be open to negotiation be able to convince on the part of pupils. But the level of heterogeneity between schools within the same country and between Arab countries is so high, that Arab societies are faced with two different sets of problems associated with school and education. There are, on the one hand, the traditional schools in the full sense of the word that separate boys and girls ans result in the spread of illiteracy, particularly among girls,use bodily punishment, dictation and backward curriculums, in addition to the problems of inadequate equipments, absence of health conditions and security ... On the other hand, there are problems associated with the need to move to a modern school model in terms of teaching methods, curriculums and relations. What should be mentioned here, is that the effects of globalisation and economic reform in Arab countries push towards a deeper gap and dualism in the educational system.

Female and male adolescents consider the school as a compulsory passageway to maturity, work and independence. Most of them do not consider school as an attractive or enjoyable institution. They also severely criticize top-down system of relations within school and the excessive reliance on the of discipline and on the use of authority in the administration's and teachers' relation with the pupils, so much so that some of them compared the male or female principle to a jailer. The interviews clearly show the decline in the symbolic importance of teachers. The latter have, according to the female and male adolescents, lost their scientific competence and their abilities to establish interactive relations with pupils. Their pedagogical methods have also regressed. Indeed, many adolescents say they did not find an ideal teacher among their male and female teachers. The interviews have also shown manifestations of violence and uncivilized behaviour in schools, which brought about complaints particularly from girls.

Most female and male adolescents prefer mixed schools which, for them, represent spaces that stimulate competition and contribute to the shaping of personality. There were also some reservations regarding religious customs and values, particularly among male adolescents, and reservationsexpressed by female adolescents who felt embarrassed and annoyed by boys behaviour.

An issue that is common to all the countries involved in the study is the disparity that exists between public schools and private schools. In private schools, similar behaviour among male adolescents was noted in all the countries, particularly as regards the widespread phenomenon of consuming tobacco, alcohol, sometimes drug use, and certain inappropriate behaviours associated with relations between the sexes. In this respect, it was clear that social factors are more influential than national affiliations. As for female and male adolescents in public schools, they are more influenced by national specificities, and consequently their behaviour differed from one country to another.

in what concerns the internal reform of school systems, sufficient attention has yet to be accorded to relations between pupils, teachers and the administration. Those concerned with this reform are not sufficiently interested in developing a work system that includes «safety valves» for solving conflicts through dialogue, or in creating effective participation mechanisms for pupils to deal with their school affairs and with their personal issues at school, even though these are priorities when it comes to adolescents.

**The major recommendations in this field, are:**

- To renew school as an institution and reshape roles and relations within it, and to grant sufficient significance to the relational aspects that are usually neglected in educational reform programs. This is to be achieved through:

  - Reinforcing the pupil's sense of affiliation to his/her educational institution and rehabilitating school as an educational institution founded on participation rather than as mere instructional institution where relations are limited to administrative dimensions and vertical hierarchy.

  - Producing a qualitative change in teaching methods through a greater reliance on active methods, and preparing a rehabilitation program for teachers to carry out this change.

  - Creating appropriate forms of creative association between teaching inside the school and the many sources of knowledge existing outside the school.

  - Encouraging pupils to organize committees and clubs and to elect their representatives in order to participate in the running of the school life. School is qualified to be the first space in which pupils are trained to participate in the management of public affairs on the local or national level. This must be included in the texts regulating school life and commitment to these regulations must be guaranteed in practice.

  - According sufficient importance to sports, arts and practical activities and avoiding to classify disciplines and periods into fundamental and secondary.

- Developing school's internal regulations to allow for the establishment of early warning mechanisms to detect and solve conflicts before they worsen and become conflicts between pupils, parents, administration and teachers.

## 2. Professional Work and the future

To both female and male adolescents, work represents a fundamental choice in the perception of their personal future. However, their testimonies did not indicate that they give priority to work as an instrument of self-achievement; for them, work is more associated with earning a livelihood (which is the most important consideration), the achievement of social recognition, or is considered as something taken for granted, a natural path that takes man from home to school and on to work. For female adolescents, in particular, it seems that joining work is not a necessity, not only because of social considerations that prevent it, but rather because it is a matter of personal choice and depends on whether their husbands are able to earn a good enough living. Here the image of work is associated with effort and exhaustion, and often with doing work that does not agree with personal aspirations and desires.

On the other hand, pure economic logic and the logic of success based on individual aspirations are still not widespread; and this shows the influence of social, cultural and economic dimensions in the evaluation of work and the definition of choices. The major conclusions regarding professional choices are characterized by:

- The overlap of female and male adolescents' choices, especially in terms of professions associated with technology, languages, and with diplomacy. However, choices are still very infulenced by a traditional division of labor between women and men, such as preference for the social professions like medicine, education for female adolescents, and preference for engineering, enterprises and commerce for male adolescents.

- A state of confusion and indecision regarding choices exists among a part of the female and male adolescents, which is natural owing to age and to the desire and ability to pursue education, as well as to other factors.

- Some of the choices are expressions of wishes and reflect the high value given to certain professions, as well as to the social importance a title associated with higher education can give, whatever the specialization.

- The female and male adolescents' choices seemed to be realistic in certain cases or countries, and associated with school tracks or with the emergence of current jobs. In other cases, the choices reflected an orientation towards professions with high financial yield and associated with the market and modern technology (e.g., computer and commerce).

◆ In general, female and male adolescents do not explicitly express preference for a given profession on material grounds. In some cases, it seems that adolescents could be satified with a job that guarantees stability and success in the social milieu where they live, a contentment limited to founding a family, owning a house and a car, and having a good reputation and acceptable social relations.

◆ Despite the existence of professional choices that reflect the specificities of each society, there were common cross-national choices, particularly for specializations in computer science, commerce and marketing, and a clear continued presence of fields that allow to work abroad or in diplomacy (e.g., languages, political science, and law).

These conclusions call for further research and reflection on the programs and policies that aim at encouraging youth employment. These programs do not come as ready-made conceptions at a time when opportunities for their success are not sufficiently available because they are not realistic or with the choices and preferences of those most concerned.

**The major recommendations are as follows:**

■ Improve and revamp government and non-government professional orientation programs, and create new lively formats of interaction between schools and fields of economic activity.

■ Develop of labor legislation relative to adolescent employment, particularly through commitment to the a minimum legal age of entry in the job market, the conditions of work, and trainee regulations, so as to grant adolescents more rights.

■ Guarantee female and male adolescents' rights to unionize and to benefit from social and health insurance, and from other work-related benefits and rights.

■ Plan intervention programs targeting youth such as income-generating projects, loans, and professional training. These programs must take into consideration: first, female and male adolescents' expectations and the priority they give to the social value of work ; second, the prevailing conviction among them that there is a social division of labor on the basis of gender; and third, the adolescents' preference for a stable and permenent job that provides guarantees for the establishment of special projects the results of which are not guaranteed.

## Chapter Five: Adolescent Culture and Behaviour

In the past, the family played a critical socialization role by providing the child and the adolescent models of interaction and different patterns of expression concerning behaviour, opinions and values. Family used to be the primary reference for the models of conduct encountered by adolescents. This family role, important though it was, is gradually shrinking to the benefit of other, various social and political institutions such as the school, the religious institution, and the different social and political institutions, as well as to the benefit of the peer group and friends who, in turn, form one of the essential sources for the shaping of female and male adolescents' behaviour and attitudes.

Mass media plays an increasingly important role in shaping female and male adolescents' behaviours, particularly those female adolescents, Indeed, these media have the ability to communicate messages and common contents to millions of adolescents. They are also characterized by intensity and continuity, which reinforces their cumulative impact and increases the likelihood of the messages and contents they spread being transformed into behaviour. Media has acquired great power, and as such, it has the ability to provide evidence, as a reference and a reliable source of news, knowledge and behaviour.

The appeal of the media which leads to a change in the patterns of behaviour and customs and in what may be called the culture of adolescence, is one of the main dimensions identified by this study. It clearly showed the influence of the mixture of local environment effects with those resulting from increased exposure to the media of mass communication, as well as to the typical images that are generated by these media and are either internalized or rejected.

The contents of this chapter are divided into three themes, namely:

- Views of body and looks
- Self-isolation and friendship
- Interests and hobbies

Investigation of the first theme clearly shows that female and male adolescents generally accept their looks. The majority of them, especially the males, expressed reservations about attributing to themselves the «quality of beauty», as if that was something undesirable. However, the majority of adolescents of both sexes say they are attentive to their looks. Slenderness was a general demend, particularly among female adolescents, regardless of the country or the social class to which they belonged. As to male adolescents, they tend to keep away from obesity and expressed the desire to be taller and athletic. In order to achieve that, some female and male adolescents follow a diet, practice sports and use make up, some even go as for as wanting to undergo plastic surgery.

As far as nutrition habits are concerned, they are variable. And despite the emergence of a category of female and male urban adolescents who increasingly consume fast food, traditional food still enjoys wide popularity and is sometimes the unique choice, as adolescents keep away from fat food to avoid obesity. In some cases, the nutrition system is unbalanced, showing in particular an insufficient consumption of vegetables, fruits and meat in the poor milieus.

As regards dressing, female adolescents are more strictly controlled. In this respect, we note a wide variety of tastes and practices. Female and male adolescents from the middle and wealthy classes influenced by consumer behaviour share a preference for modern, «globalized» clothes and international brands. Others wear usual or traditional clothes, while a minority of adolescents consider the matter unimportant. In general, male adolescents prefer informal comfortable clothes, and female adolescents preferred clothes that go along with «reasonable and reserved» fashion, thereby keeping away from «conflicts».

The second theme emphasizes the search for friendships as an essential theme in female and male adolescents' lives. For female adolescents in particular, friendships include relationships with sisters (sisters being friends at the same time) and with relatives (female cousins on both the father's side and the mother's side). Friendship between opposite sexes is limited in the poor, rural and conservative milieus. For male adolescents, the friendship circle is wider, encompassing school, the neighborhood, and relatives as well. Friends constitute the favorite group with whom several activities are undertaken, especially outside the home. However, there seemed to be a problem with sharing secrets with friends, as female (and male) adolescents tended to be reserved, except with the special friend of whose discretion they were already sure.

The third theme shows the restrictions imposed on female adolescents who are likely to carry on activities within the home and with the family, compared to a greater freedom for male adolescents in practicing activities with friends, outside the home. As for hobbies, watching TV and using the computer were particularly emphasized compared to reading and going to the movies.

Practicing sports seemed to be a male activity for those who have financial resources, while music seemed to be a more widespread activity in all ages, countries and social classes, and particularly among female and male adolescents. Musical tastes varied between inclination to listening to classical and light songs, and interest in the most recent music fads. In this respect, tastes represented an indicator of the influence of globalized waves in music and arts and of the behaviour associated with them.

Finally, the female and male adolescents' most important demend in this field was the need to establish a network of institutions and infrastructures designed for adolescents in neighborhoods and villages and near residential areas and which can be used at affordable costs.

**The recommendations in this area are as follows:**

■ To provide appropriate infrastructures including clubs, associations, youth hostels, sport, leisure and cultural equipment, and make them available in places close to homes, especially in rural areas and in poor urban neighborhoods, which puts them within reach of larger groups, and enable female adolescents in particular to attend them.

■ To develop consciousness-raising intervention plans and programs to encourage youth to read and use or obtain information technology. This can be achieved through reduction of book prices on the one hand, and setting up information technology networks in schools and in infrastructure reserved for female and male adolescents, thereby making it possible to extend the use of modern technology by girls and low-income categories, on the other. And to develop interest in the cinema and theater among both female and male adolescents.

■ To increase the effectiveness of artistic education and spread general culture, legal education, tolerance values, respect for humen rights and protection of female and male adolescents, using available means and channels (schools, media, club and association networks).

■ My mother and father love my brother and I exactly as much as they love my sister.

■ Friendship with girls is difficult. They spend most of the time in the house, and we are always in the streets.

■ I do not want to rush into marriage. I want to save money and travel all over the world.

**Amrou, 16 Years, Egypt**

■ Divorce is something scary but sometimes it s necessary. I don t know what s best.

■ Young girls didn t used to wear hijab. Only older women working in the fields used to wear the black hijab.

■ He who can t lie won t be able to do anything, not go out or go to any place.

■ It s like any given men is better than any given women. Where do they come up with this kind of talk? It can t be religion. They make it all up.

**Nahla, 15 Years, Egypt**

## Chapter Six: Attitudes and Values

This chapter examines the concepts and representations developed by female and male adolescents in their interactions with the wider society and the world, their attitudes towards public affairs, and some of the important current developments in the world. The material is organized into four basic themes:

◆ Attitudes towards women and the social roles of women and men. This theme includes the following sub-titles: opinions regarding the current

position of women, attitudes towards gender discrimination and equality, attitudes toward Western-type free relations, and attitudes towards the veil.

- Attitudes towards religion and its importance in the adolescent's life and in society.

- Attitudes towards political life and public affairs. This theme includes female and male adolescents' definition of, and attitudes towards, authority, political action, involvement in social work, attitude towards wars and the events of September 11th 2001.

- Miscellaneous attitudes concerning female and male adolescents' definitions of success and happiness, the value of money, and their attitudes towards travelling.

## 1. Attitude towards women and the social roles of women and men

The majority of female and male adolescents expressed dissatisfaction with the situation of women in Arab societies, recognizing the existence of deprivation and injustice towards them. However, this does not spontaneously lead to an attempt to change this situation (particularly on the part of male adolescents), or to an acceptance of the idea of equality of rights between men and women (an opinion that is equally widespread among female and male adolescents).

Attitudes towards the situation of women were categorized as follows:

- Clear opposition and dissatisfaction with the current role and situation of women in society, leading to a call for equality of rights and a rejection of all forms of discrimination.

- Dissatisfaction with the current situation of women and recognition that women are generally wronged in society, without necessarily expressing the need to explicitly adopt egalitarian principles.

- Focus on the comparison of women's past and present situations, or between one society and another, to conclude that there is some kind of improvement or limits it would be better not to cross.

- Considering that women's situation is normal or natural given our customs and traditions, but without the expression of strong and firm attitudes against improvement of the situation and linking the likelihood of improvement with agreement with the prevailing social environment.

- Considering that women's situation is what it should be, often because of considerations associated with religious notions, as confining women's role to family duties towards their husbands and children is considered to be the ideal situation, anything contrary to that is considered as a departure from the right path, in addition to opposition to any attempt to change this situation.

- Adopting an indifferent or unconcerned attitude towards the issue.

There are several factors affecting these kinds of attitudes. Some of these factors are associated with the historical and social characteristics of the country concerned which may give precedence to conservative or egalitarian attitudes. Yemen is generally a prime example of a country where responses are mainly focused on the conservative pole, and where the egalitarian pole is weaker. The opposite case is that of Lebanon, a country where the egalitarian attitudes appear to be stronger than in other countries. The second factor is gender. Indeed, female adolescents' attitudes seem to express dissatisfaction combined with a call for equality, and ultimately, dissatisfaction associated with discrete endeavors for change appropriate to customs and traditions. There are, at the same time, among male adolescents some attitudes that are stricter and more opposed to change.

The third factor is socio-cultural. Here the tendency (particularly with the combination of urban membership, social affiliation to the middle classes, and family cultural openness) is consistently to call for change and equality, accompanied by the emergence of a theoretical awarness of this necessity.

The fourth factor is religious and has a double influence: one is based on the fact that religious affiliation is a factor that helps interaction with, or rejection of, modern culture or conservative interpretations of traditions and heritage, particularly those concerning family relations and attitude towards women. The effect of this influence can be seen in the religiously mixed countries (e.g. Lebanon). The second influence is associated with female and male adolescents who are influenced by the religious political movements or with people affiliated to these movements. These adolescents hold religious-ideological convictions regarding women, more than simply religious convictions in the traditional sense of the word, even if these convictions are presented as coherent or expressing local traditions. We note, however, that the purely «typical models,» in this or that sense, do not exist, except for a few very exceptional cases.

The chapter also dealt with the phenomenon of veiling in its various forms, and shows the transformation that this phenomenon has gone through and its significance in the current conditions. Indeed, while wearing the veil was formerly a social custom common to rural and poor classes regardless of religion, it has for the current generation of female and male adolescents become an expression of political and cultural identity. Indeed, the interviews clearly showed that female adolescents who wear the veil are influenced by mass media, religious movements and friends of both sexes, more than by their own parents who seemed to be more lenient in this respect. In general, wearing the veil was considered a personal matter, but female adolescents influenced by religions and political movements menifest a strict attitude ultimately calling for imposition of the veil on all girls.

## 2. Attitude towards religion

The second theme deals with attitudes towards religion and its influence on the female and male adolescent's life. The interviews show that religion is present, and strongly so, and that it plays an essential role in determining attitudes and behaviours. This description applies to all respondents, except for a few cases who considered

religion as being of little importance or give a critical view of the prevailing understanding of religion. Their attitudes range from considering religion as a special relation between men and his Creator and avoiding pretension, to considering religion as a general organizer of society and the world in all the details of life. The chapter also notes the transformation from moderate, middle-of-the-road religion to religious movements of a political character which are more widespread among the generation of children, as compared with the generation of the parents. In general, it also became clear that religious culture, in the wider sense of the term, is weak, and that female and male adolescents often do not make a difference between religious provisions and social customs and traditions on the one hand, and certain political and ideological discourses on the other. Nor do they know anything about religions other than the one to which they are affiliated.

In light of the above, the major recommendations in this field are:

- Extending access to the religious heritage of the Arab region so as to include a wider knowledge of the religion to which the female (male) adolescent is affiliated, and knowledge of other religions, to enable these adolescents to build a religious culture based on tolerance and the discovery of common aspects, a culture that helps reject intolerance.

- Developing awareness of the distinction between religion and social habits and traditions, and between political and ideological choices, in order to make sure they are not confused in the prevailing consciousness, especially among female and male adolescents.

### 3. Attitude towards political life and public affairs

As regards this theme the interviews show that there is great interest in major political issues, particularly those of Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and the events of September 11, 2001, all of which were current issues at the time of the interviews. On the contrary, there is little interest in organized political action and a negative view of political parties and movements, as well as of the traditional concept of domestic policy. Regardless of their different affiliations and intellectual, religious and political backgrounds, female and male adolescents are unanimous in their negative evaluation of American politics and its pro-Israel bias. Adolescents are also unanimous in showing sympathy towards the Palestinian Intifadha and the Iraqi people. Besides, they all condemn war as morally unacceptable. However, beyond this general emotional reaction, there were no indicators concerning the availability of sufficient resources to build a practical and cohesive attitude that goes beyond what is spread by the media. The interviews also point out the great influence exerted by TV particularly on the forming of this emotional political awareness. Many of the female and male adolescents expressed frustration at their inability to do anything to face up to the images and events broadcast on the silver screen.

Concerning authority, the female and male adolescents' views are close in defining it within a special circle generally represented by the parents and particularly the father, and within another circle generally represented by the organs of political authority. Certain adolescents hold the view that society and traditions constitute also an authority,

explaining that attitudes adopted toward this authority is lenient when the parents' authority is involved, and more demending in terms of justice and the idea of right when authority in the public domain is involved.

In general, the interviews show no radical attitudes in facing up to any private or public authority; rather, the likely tendency was to express dissatisfaction, a need for dialogue, and more freedom, with clear dispositions to negotiate and compromise, and indeed to adapt to the requirements of that authority.

## 4. Other Attitudes: Success, Happiness, Money and Immigration

On this theme, the most obvious element is the adolescents' denial of any moral value to money. Clearly menifest is also the adolescents' talk about happiness and success in the future tense, as though achieving them here and now was something totally unthinkable. Desire for traveling and immigration was strong, choice of the country of destination varied, and reasons for that were numerous, ranging from seeking a better life and curiosity to finding out about new civilizations.

The contents of the four themes discussed in this chapter shows disparities in the attitudes, behaviour and concepts expressed by the female and male adolescents. The first disparity refers, in one of its dimensions, to the dualism of words and deeds which menifests itself through the difference between expressed attitudes and actual behaviour. This is a dualism that generally prevails in society between what is stated and should be coherent with prevailing values, and what is practiced and tolerated even when it is in disagreement with what prevails, as long as it is not elevated to the level of the value it proclaims.

■ The boys especially feel like they are men, that they can do whatever they want, they can smoke cigarettes and spend time with friends.

**Khadija, 18 Years, Morocco**

■ It s when I started dreaming and day-dreaming that I knew I had become a men. I started looking at women with lust.

■ Girls want to have sexual relations more than boys do nowadays. They are becoming more and more westernized.

■ America is behind all the wars that are being waged around the world today.

**Hassan, 18 Years, Morocco**

■ They look through my pockets and ask me where I was and with who, and what I ate and what I drank.

■ As for violence, we are used to it.

**Fakhri, 18 Years, Yemen**

■ It doesn t make sense for a women to be president here because women are weak by nature. Women should work in sectors that are appropriate and that are suitable to our Islamic traditions.

**Shadha, 18 Years, Yemen**

The second disparity between attitudes and/or behaviour on the one hand, and concepts on the other, result from the fact that the change from the first level (attitudes and behaviour) to the second level, is a complex process which requires a degree of abstraction and a higher degree of harmony between the different dimensions of female and male adolescents' personalities in various fields. This process is complex by nature and its conditions become available as the female or male adolescent grows older, and as her/his experiences and activities become more diverse.

## General Conclusion

The points presented in this summary include some of the conclusions of the report and the contents of its chapters. The report itself captures some of the abundant and rich material that was available for its preparation. It is a material that can be exploited in additional general and specialized analyses, and CAWTAR intends to undertake this work as part of its programs during its up-coming phase.

Doubtless, female and male adolescents' reality is richer than what is reflected in the report as well as more complex and more diverse. In this respect, and based on the contents of the interviews, the report identified the following points:

- There are general dynamics that work towards bringing female and male adolescents' attitudes and behaviour closer together. The report identified four essential dynamics, namely: consumption-oriented globalization, the move to religious fundamentalism and radicalism, modernity, and the reproduction of traditional society.

- There are dynamics that work towards division and increased specificity, the most important of which being the lack of an overall culture, consumption-oriented trends, individualism and intolerance. Social, economic and cultural disparities between countries, and within the same country increase the effects of family and individual experiences on the building of the individual's personality, and of the personality of the group in a manner that differs from the more typical,general model.

- The typical models mentioned above remain closer to the ideal theoretical models. In fact, we seldom find female and male adolescents who consistantly follow a model that combines specific convictions, intellectual values, attitudes, opinions, behaviour and practice. As mentioned earlier, the most widespread characteristic for the majority of adolescents is the fragmentation of frames of reference.

All of this leads to an important diversity and multiplicity, as well as to atypical thinking and behavioural models. These models vary according to the different areas and dimensions that characterize the reality of adolescence. These models vary in number also according to the number of national, family and individual experiences and characteristics, which means that typical models must be considered as theoretical frameworks that can be, but aren't neceassrily, similar to potential outcomes in reality.[8]

In short, the study indicates that there are as many disparities between Arab countries regarding the subject of adolescence, as there are similarities that transcend national borders, and to a lesser extent, as those that transcend the borders of the Arab region to reach the rest of the world. Adolescence is similar to the variety of worlds you find in a single country, and which, nonetheless share simiarities with other countries.

**(8)** See Appendix 1 which descriptively and extensively presents the different formats of the models of personality building, behaviour and attitudes, based on the field study.

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# Part One
# General Framework

# Part One
# General Framework

# General Framework

## Introduction

There are over 31 million adolescent girls and boys of between 15 and 19 in the Arab countries, representing about 11% of the total population. The number is roughly doubled if those between the age of puberty (11-12) and 14 are included.

Today's adolescents are the women and men of the future; what is implanted in their minds, and the opportunities and possibilities offered them, determine their future social roles. Adolescence is a time when puberty and the accompanying physiological change coincide with a change in cognitive, behavioural and social behaviour, when social roles emerge, when girls start to be restrained, and when boys become freer.

This explains the significance and urgency of this study for the CAWTER Centre. The Centre probes gender and development issues in the Arab world, a field where satisfactory, comprehensive studies are conspicuously absent.

## Aims and methodology

### Aims of the Report

CAWTER sees this second Report as exploring a field that has not yet been properly studied. Its aim, particularly the field study done as part of it, is to address the future of Arab women and persuade decision-makers and those working to extend women's participation in the development process to improve this future. Identifying the origins of difficulties and dealing with them as they arise via effective policies and action involves:

a. Filling the huge gaps in the knowledge, statistics, specific indicators and analytical studies on adolescence in Arab countries

b. Integrating adolescent girls' and boys' views in a picture of adolescence in Arab countries, and creating interest in gender/adolescence issues

c. Showing how gender discrimination starts in the family, school and society, and how male and female social roles are formed in adolescence

d. Highlighting difficulties that come with puberty and developing knowledge and behaviour as to reproductive rights and their effect on physical and mental health

e. Offering government policy-makers, workers in civil society, researchers, media, youth organizations, adolescents and young people a body of knowledge about adolescence so they can contribute to drafting policies, action programs and projects that bear in mind the priorities and opinions of adolescent girls and boys

f. Encouraging interested parties to make further studies of adolescence, using diverse methods and approaches, to build up a statistical database for understanding adolescence and proposing medium- and long-term strategies to enhance the abilities of adolescent girls and boys and other groups in society.

CAWTER knows, realistically, that these goals may not all be attained at one and the same time; advances in knowledge of some subjects may end in proposals or recommendations about policies and actions, while knowledge in other fields may be limited to identifying major shortcomings and gaps and drawing attention to the need to study them in depth later on.

## Defining the scope of the research

The Report does not aim to produce or reproduce a theoretical definition of adolescence. It accepts a set of definitions used in the various approaches to adolescence.

From the start, the researchers had to decide what age group the study would focus on. There is no accurate age definition for adolescence; most approaches see it as related to puberty, but it varies according to several characteristics, among these personal ones. Puberty may start at nine or happen rather later (13-14). Adolescence is usually seen as ending with "adulthood", which is a vague concept, usually replaced by the legal age of maturity, i.e. 18, in some cases 21. All these definitions obey certain conventions, depending on which aspect is prioritized in a given study.

But the age-brackets used internationally for calculating development indicators, and the more commonly used economic and social indicators, respect special criteria. For example, the International Convention on Children's Rights uses the 0-18 age group (Unicef and the children's agencies and councils particularly). In United Nations literature, young people fall within the 15-24 age group (the area of concern of the United Nations Population Fund and other agencies concerned with adolescents, young people and reproductive health). Where work is concerned, people fall into three groups: 0-14: those below working age; 15-64: the labor force; over 65: those too old to work. For education indicators, the division reflects the education level: primary (6-11), intermediary/middle (12-14), and secondary (15-17).

Thus we can see that for research adolescence is not an independent age category; it either falls into the children category (0-18), or comes partly within the youth category (15-24). For children's studies, actions and policies have focused on the under-15s; for youth policies, the over-18s. Our research is restricted to an area that is not sufficiently covered by studies and actions - the 15-18 age group.

We chose this age group to avoid repetitiveness or contradictions, defining the field of research clearly to draw conclusions and make comparisons. This does not imply defining or limiting adolescence to this age group. But it was used to select the sample of adolescent girls and boys interviewed, though some flexibility was allowed, since some interviewees were a few months under fifteen or over eighteen.

National, regional and international statistics are usually drawn up on the basis of 5-year age-brackets, or educational levels. For statistical indicators the 15-19 age group was used as being the closest to the interviewed group, as were secondary school pupils. Thus the adolescents in this Report belong to the 15-18 age group in the field study, the 15-19 age group as regards general indicators, and the secondary level as regards educational indicators.

Methodology and the working, method: A qualitative study with a major interest in the quantitative dimension

Several factors were taken into account when defining the subject of the Report, selecting the countries involved in the field study, and defining the appropriate approach and methodology. CAWTER and the work team who supervised the preparing of the Report defined the general working method and methodology to fit the special character of the project, a wide, multi-faceted prospective study:

1- Commitment to the research tradition established by the First Arab Women's Development Report, to follow up data on the various human development indicators in the Arab countries and on development conditions in these countries in general

2- Deriving additional indicators on adolescent girls and boys from the numerous statistical sources, analysing general trends in conditions of adolescence in the 22 Arab countries, to widen the context of the field study, which involved a few countries only

3- Conducting a qualitative study using quasi-directed interviews of adolescent girls and boys from a sample of some Arab countries. For various reasons seven countries were selected: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen. They were chosen on objective grounds related to the need to involve the various regions (Maghreb, Mashreq and the Gulf) and levels of development (high, middle and less developed)

4- Using a style of research and analysis based on interviews with adolescent girls and boys. Their opinions and stories were used, plus quotations from the interviews to allow readers to form their own views and analyses. This involves the adolescent girls and boys in drafting the Report; their opinions are elements that can build up scientific knowledge and produce practical recommendations on adolescence-related issues

5- Concentrating on analysing gender discrimination in social roles and showing how these are formed in adolescence. CAWTER sees this as vital; it is in line with its basic mission. Field researchers were asked to keep to the proportion of 2/3 girl and 1/3 boy adolescents when selecting the interviewees.

The Report has two main sections. The first is a field study, involving seven Arab countries. It is a qualitative study based on interviews with 138 girls and 59 boys in the 15-18 age group, with 27 interviews with specialists, parents and educators and 6 focal points. National research teams were formed in the seven countries (except Egypt, where one researcher was considered sufficient) to prepare national reports on adolescence in their respective countries, based on a standard format. The second section analyses general development indicators and indicators related to adolescent girls and boys and their trends. It contains detailed statistical tables in the form of appendices prepared by a statistics expert. Researchers used other analytical tools (earlier studies, questionnaires, surveys, focal points) plus parallel activities organised by CAWTER - workshops and round-tables with experts participating. The members of the team worked together at meetings and shared ideas via e-mail. The work was coordinated by the CAWTER team and the Report coordinator, with valuable technical and scientific assistance from the advisory team and a number of experts working with CAWTER.

## Orientations of the interviews and the qualitative study

The Report deals with adolescence as experience and covers its various aspects and the factors and variables that affect it. Six main themes were chosen by the national teams for their interviews:

- Identity and self-image
- Family relations
- School and work
- Puberty, reproductive health and love
- Culture and behaviour
- Attitudes and values

The national reports covered all these themes and their subdivisions. When selecting the interviewees, the national teams were asked to bear the following variables in mind - socio-economic situation, geographic milieu (urban/rural), religious or ethnic identity (when appropriate), education and work, and any other variable the national team thought important for that country.

In the regional report, the same six themes were used. The interviews were analysed on the basis of the national reports. The variable of affiliation to a given country was added to the other variables and seen as essential, even though the analysis was done not by country but by subject. Thus the summaries and results reflected the contents of the interviews across national boundaries, while reference to national characteristics backed these summaries up when necessary. The Table below gives the features of the sample used in the survey and the spread by country.

## Research difficulties

Various difficulties and problems arose when the Report was being prepared. At the preparatory stage, these concerned the general conception of the work, methodology, work tools and training for the national teams who would carry out the national studies. Workshops were run for the supervisory committee, the nucleus of the work team and the CAWTER team to design a standard methodological guide for the national teams. The main difficulty was how to reconcile the qualitative analysis and the

## Table1.1 : caractéristiques de l'échantillon

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | | | | | | |
| | 35 | 25 | 10 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 13 | 35 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | 285 |
| | 26 | 18 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 15 | 2 | 9 | 0 | 3 | - | - |
| | 21 | 15 | 6 | 0 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | - |
| | 23 | 17 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 18 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 125 |
| | 30 | 20 | 10 | 7 | 12 | 7 | 4 | 26 | 4 | 0 | 0 | - | - | - |
| | 20 | 16 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 11 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 5 | - | - |
| | 42 | 27 | 15 | 11 | 8 | 14 | 9 | 33 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 12 | 1 | - |
| | 197 | 138 | 59 | 38 | 47 | 58 | 52 | 159 | 15 | 10 | 13 | 27 | 6 | 410 |

quantitative statistical analysis within one Report and have the two analyses dovetail. This required lengthy discussion, lasting in some cases until the fieldwork started. Another difficulty was how to guarantee that all the national teams kept to the common methodology, while leaving them a margin of flexibility to reflect differences in researchers' specialisations and in the countries involved in the study.

The choice of researchers and of the national teams revealed another difficulty: the lack of sufficient information on researchers in the field of adolescence for the approach adopted by the Report (that is, not being restricted to the psychological dimension of adolescence). Researchers' specialities ranged from sociology, psychology, clinical health and demography to development. There might be only one researcher (Egypt), or a team with a principal researcher helped by assistants (Tunisia, Lebanon, Bahrain and Yemen), or a research center (Morocco and Algeria). The advantage was that this produced a substantial degree of interaction between different views and specialisations; the disadvantage that it was hard to reach common evaluations as to methods of work and analysis.

Another major problem was the time taken to form the national teams and carry out fieldwork. Some teams were forging ahead with their work while others were still being trained. This made coordination difficult and follow-up on commitment to a common methodology rather complicated. Sometimes this common methodology was neglected, making the research material less coherent and hard to exploit fully. But the diversity of specialisations and approaches was in general beneficial to the Report.

In the implementation phase, particularly during the interviews, other problems appeared. Samples had to be chosen according to the agreed variables, ruling out extreme cases that did not reflect the behaviour and attitudes prevailing in a society and trying to avoid seeing the sample as representative of a given country. Researchers encountered adolescent reticence on certain subjects and sometimes parental opposition to their children being interviewed. In compliance with the directives in the methodological guide, researchers tried to conduct the interviews in places the adolescents found comfortable, away from parental control. But this was not always possible. Often the adolescents did not want the interviews recorded, or had the tape erased and destroyed in their presence. Sometimes age or gender difference hindered the interviewee's freedom of speech, especially in matters of sex and reproductive health. Most of these difficulties were in fact overcome; the CAWTER team and the coordinator got the primary material and the national reports. The coordinator had an additional difficulty - differences of language and dialect - since some of the interviews and reports in the Maghreb countries were in French and local dialects were used to ensure that views and feelings came across as accurately as possible.

In the first stage of preparing the regional report, there was agreement on its design, chapters and themes, the use of the interviews and on harmonizing the interviews and the analysis of the general indicators and statistical tables for all the Arab countries. To a certain extent this was successful. The

Report thus emerged in its present format (this will be dealt with later). There was also agreement on the common lines to be followed by researchers preparing the regional report; the specificity of approach and style peculiar to each researcher and his speciality (sociology, psychology, development) would be kept but the Report should be homogeneous in terms of basic concepts, content and presentation. CAWTER's work team and the coordinator had to make a considerable effort to guarantee this homogeneity, while keeping the content as provided in the texts prepared by the researchers. Also, two chapters were written in French and then translated into Arabic. Researchers found it hard to interact, it being impossible for them to meet in the same workshops in the last phases. Nor was there sufficient interaction between researchers through electronic channels of communication. Work was done through the coordinator and the CAWTER team.

Once the chapters had been drafted, the spade-work of writing up, coordination, content homogeneity and presentation style, filling in the gaps (especially those related to quotations), and searching for back-up material from other studies and statistics fell to the follow-up team composed of CAWTER and the coordinator. They had to make the interview summaries and autobiographies into publishable texts. Then experts were consulted on the chapters, and their comments borne in mind in the final writing. Also, the Report had to be published in an attractive, scientific and user-friendly way. It would be used by researchers, decision-makers, families and the adolescents themselves. How could these requirements be reconciled, the various parties coordinate, and the work emerge in its final form?

The work team found the challenge both exhausting and enjoyable, involving both work and passion.

الفتاة العربية
الواقع والآفاق

# Theory

Four thousand years ago, a priest in Pharaonic Egypt left a hieroglyph for us to find:

Our world has reached a critical phase: children do not listen to their parents. Doubtless, the end of the world is near. (Egyptian priest, 2000 B.C.)[1].

Parents today complain in exactly the same way about their children's disobedience. Four thousand years have passed, Egypt (and the world) have changed in their "civilization", society and institutions, economy and way of life, systems of government and political institutions, religion, culture, etc., and we hear the same plaint.

A thousand years later, in another part of what was to become the Arab world, a Babylonian father voiced a similar complaint:

This generation of young people is essentially bad. The youth of today is bad and lazy and will never be like the youth of yesteryear. It is unable to preserve our culture. (Text carved on a brick in at least 1000 B.C., found in Babylon ruins)[2]

Again this similarity in the parents' view of the young, in the nostalgic comparison of two successive generations, where the children's generation is seen as superficial and irresponsible. We could be talking about today, except that the text is 3000 years old.

Comparing his own generation to the present one, a Lebanese clergyman, a man of culture and activist interviewed for this Report, said:

The Palestine issue and calamity have affected us; in it lay the good of the nation: we grew up with both the injury and the dream, one resulting from the other. We faced the human issue, that of the disadvantaged, of those who toil. We struggled for Arab unity. We founded a club, a dispensary, and a theater. We wrote a text and acted out our age, modernity, and classicism ....Today, a public issue once central to the mentality of a whole generation no longer exists. Public issues and the question of justice are no longer raised. When adolescents are deprived of public issues, they focus on their own concerns. And when we returned to our own personal concerns, we set a bad example. (Lebanese clergyman, 2002)

On the other side of the Mediterranean, where the European Enlightenment found its sources and ideals after the darkness of the Middle Ages, Plato described the relationship between the young person, his father, and his teacher:

The father dreads his child; the son considers himself equal to the father, and harbors no respect or consideration for his parents. All that he wants is to become free. The teacher fears his students; the students shower insults on their teacher. Young people want immediately to take the place of the old, and the old agree to this with resignation, lest they appear conservative and despotic. Above all, young people demand that barriers between the two sexes be relinquished in the name of freedom or equality (Plato, 427-347 B.C.).[3]

Plato's text suggests a similarity between father's and teacher's positions and implies that adults resign their roles for fear of seeming old fashioned. In this text, unlike the previous two, it seems that the values of the young are dominant, not because they are superior, but because the young use the slogans of freedom, equality and liberation to excuse their domination, impulsiveness and aggressiveness towards adults!

Plato's text introduces the dynamics of generational struggle and the attitudes of the two parties involved. This is a contemporary problem; today's parents appear ready to hand their traditional authority over to their children, particularly in the industrially advanced countries and among urban well-off Arab families influenced by the values of modernity.

**(1)** Diaz B. and B. Lietard-Dulac, Contre violence et mal-etre, la mediation par eleves, Paris, Nathan, 1998. Quoted by Philippe Lebailly, La violence des jeunes; comprendre et prevenir, Paris, editions ASH, 2001.
**(2)** Ibid.
**(3)** Ibid.

Today, we are witnessing an absence or weakness of the transmitter's role adults have to help adolescents engage in social exchange. It is not a question of resignation and indiscipline; it is a question of an increasing inability to provide a reference system and structuring symbols regarding the work of society. As the father's role dwindles, so does the importance of values such as respect, obedience, discipline, and respect for institutions. But parents did not resign their educational role willingly; society freed them from this role...Brotherhood has replaced fatherhood.[4]

Fathers have come to behave like their sons. (Moroccan father, CERED, 2000)[5]

And if some modern youngsters spend their time having fun, their behaviour does not seem to differ much from the behaviour of young people in pre-Islamic days, as described by Jawed Aly in his encyclopedic work Al-mufassal fi taariikh al-'Arab qabla al-islam[6]:

Pre-Islamic youth, like youth in all times, is no different at all; not in their elegance and their showing off to girls. Rural and city lads used to hang around in markets and gathering places...to tease and chat up girls, much like young people anywhere do with young ladies (Based on various heritage sources).

These texts shed some light on generational relations in bygone times and raise questions concerning today's concept of adolescence, the first being: How can adolescence be a modern phenomenon when such a remarkable similarity appears in ancient texts?

Some relatively constant or cross-historical[7] traits (similar inter-generational parent-child contact, the role of friendship and love) arise from some of the characteristics of man as a bio-social type, and from features of institutions and social and cross-historical roles, especially the family, intergenerational communication and transfer of knowledge and tradition. This explains the similarity and continuity found. But some institutions and roles evolve in radically different environments. This general, sometimes apparent, similarity can hide deep differences arising from the conditions which create the overall context that defines adolescence and its development.

## Defining adolescence: the theoretical framework

The theoretical framework used in this Report to study adolescence and its related issues in Arab societies is the following:

**1-** Adolescence is viewed as a condition generated by the interaction of the adolescent and the physiological, cognitive and psychological changes beginning with the onset of puberty, with the social structures (family, school, the economy, job market) and the way society is organized (political institutions, ideologies and value systems). The issues and characteristics of adolescence are thus not static. A change in the factors that affect either party (individual and society) will produce a different description of the issue and characteristics of adolescence in a given society at a given time.

**2-** The variables for a definition of adolescence and for adolescent girls and boys as individuals living in a given society can be:

**a.** Variables resulting from the individual traits of adolescents themselves

**b.** Variables related to the features of the family as being the most important institution in childhood and adolescence

**c.** Variables related to the social institutions in adolescents' lives, and to society as a whole (school, job market, network of social, cultural and economic institutions, etc.)

**d.** Variables related to society politically; to ideology, culture, traditions and values governing social life including ideal types, representations of the present and future); to places of interaction, the dynamics of change or mechanisms whereby reality is represented; to interaction with the concepts of modernity and globalization, and to the degree of openness or seclusion.

**(4)** Ibid.
**(5)** CERED (2000), L'adolescence en question: Analyse des resultats de l'enquete sur les adolescents en milieu urbain.
**(6)** Jawad 'Aly, Al-mufassal fi taariikh al-'arab qabla al-Islaam, volume IV,(10 volumes), Beirut: Dar al-'ilm lilmalayin, and Baghdad: Maktabat en-nahdha, second edition, 1977.
**(7)** By cross-historical we mean various characteristics and phenomena whose existence is not limited to one particular historical period but extends to societies that have undergone major economic and social change.

When these factors interact, adolescence develops different features and interacts strongly with the overall social organization. Adolescence and youth and inter-generational relations fall into the following categories:[8]

1. Primitive, simple-structured societies of the 'democratic'[9] type. Primitive tribes such as those studied by Margaret Mead in the Samoan Islands are examples of such societies, where there is a correspondence between sexual and social maturity. The passage from childhood to youth and then to maturity occurs in a relatively simple way within the group, where social roles are clear-cut and not complex. Adolescence in such societies is not synonymous with crisis.

2. Ancient urban societies such as the Pharaonic, Mesopotamian and Greek civilizations. The quotations given above hint at a degree of complexity and conflict between young people and adults, essentially over attitudes towards the prevailing cultural institutions and social roles. The severity of the crisis depends on the social hierarchy, how flexible the social structure is, how far general and individual social mobility is possible, and how much cultural progress and mobility the society allows in times of progress or of stagnation and decay.

3. Societies based on a structured tribal constitution, one that is usually not democratic (distinguishing it from the primitive 'democratic' type), and whose patriarchal male character gives it a bias against women and children. The disadvantages of this pattern increase when combined with urban life[10], where simple traditional forms of inter-generational communication and transfer of knowledge lose out to state institutions, while male-related concepts are socially confirmed with restraints on social mobility. Stagnation and decay exacerbate such drawbacks.

4. Traditional, immediately pre-capitalist societies. These societies differ but share a patriarchal character. In them a build-up of the elements of a severe social crisis (economic, social and cultural) that prepares the ground for modern capitalism (in European societies) clashes with the forces associated with the traditional system. Adolescence emerges as a social category in the modern sense of the word.

5. Modern society, basically capitalistic but also communist and nationalist or pan-nationalist. Here adolescence exists as a social phenomenon, and the individual adolescent experience is increasingly part of a general phenomenon that is acquiring greater importance. Starting from modern times, adolescence has been defined in primarily social terms; we have to investigate social characteristics and change as a basic, decisive element in forming this stage, defining its characteristics, and influencing the course of its development.

## Adolescence as a new concept for a new phenomenon

Adolescence was not seen as a specific age period in all societies. In pre-modern times, people's lives fell into four categories - childhood, boyhood, majority, and adulthood.[11] Ikhwaan as-Safa divided lives differently: childhood (birth to four), boyhood (5 to 14), youth (15 to 30), the age of wisdom (40 to 50), and the age of property (50 to death).[12] Other divisions vary according to interest and field of specialization. But none sees what is known today as adolescence, a life phase independent of childhood and youth, as a distinct phase.

In Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Emile we find the first use of the idea of adolescence in a sense close to today's scientific one. Section Four of Rousseau's book calls this phase "a second birth". "... And we say we are born twice: the first time we are born to be, and the second time we are born to live; the first is for type, the other for sex. ... This tempestuous revolution is like the roaring of the sea that precedes the tempest from afar, announcing the changes that are to occur in the temperament, the increase in exasperation, the continuous agitation of the soul, which make the boy almost intractable...."[13]

**(8)** The division of societies suggested here is not restrictive or exhaustive. It is a functional division linked to the relational aspect between the adolescent and the society and to what can be considered the main points of contact associated with this age period.

**(9)** We mean non-hierarchical societies characterized by a high degree of member participation, organized by behavioural rules and a relationship system based on habits and custom. Because they do not resort to repression through agencies independent of society, and are based on a high degree of acceptance and understanding of behavioural rules by their members, these societies are indulgently described as democratic.

**(10)** "The phenomenon that we see today of women staying home and not mixing with men, their insistence on wearing the veil and so on, is specific to town-dwellers. People in cities and villages during the pre-Islamic period displayed some of these characteristics. But bigotry, the obligation on men to keep away from woman, and the separation of the sexes, developed in Islam as a result of changing circumstances, of Arabs mixing with foreigners, and of cases that made great families ensure that women remained in the home. Early on, however, women continued to take part in men's activities, sit with them, and talk to them even when they were strangers, because the desert environment did not allow for mistrust or suspicion. Girls and boys grew up together, played together, grew up together. The restrictions and limits that separate women and men did not develop among them. Such was the condition of bedwin women in the pre-Islamic period." (Jawad Ali, op. cit)

**(11)** Traite de Psychologie de l'Enfant, directed by Helene Gratitot-Alphandery and Rene Zazo. 5- La Formation de la personnalite, by Philippe Marlieu and Daniel Widlocher, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1973.

**(12)** Cited by Ahmed Abdallah in Qadhiyat ash-shabab misriyan, 'arabiyan, islamiyan wa duwaliyan (The youth issue in Egypt, the Arab world, the Islamic world, and world-wide), The Center for Youth and Social Studies, Cairo, 1994.

**(13)** Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Emile ou de l'education (Translated into Arabic by Adel Zaatour, Cairo: Dar al-maarif, 1956).

In the second part of the 19th century and the early 20th there was growing interest in this age category, beginning at puberty. It took on biological, psychological, educational and anthropological form. Stanley Hall's book Adolescence: Its Psychology (1903) is considered to be the first work to make scientific use of the idea of adolescence as established in contemporary usage. Then the American anthropologist Margaret Mead wrote on adolescence in primitive societies in the Samoan Islands and laid down the foundations of the anthropological and sociological approach in which adolescence is seen as a socially, historically and culturally defined phase. Mead argued that the crisis of adolescence is a function of the relationship between society, the adolescent and the conflicting expectations and frustrations, and does not result from the individual's psychological traits in this life phase.[14] Arab contributions came after this founding phase, because European societies were the first to feel the social and cognitive need for these studies, a result of societal change, which led to the production of studies on adolescence.

## New interest in adolescence

Interest in adolescent girls and boys soon went beyond medicine, biology and psychology to address educational, school and social needs and try to understand the psychological and physical disturbances associated with adolescence, as well as patterns of rejection and adolescent delinquency. The 1960s brought new ideas, particularly after the May 1968 student movements. Studies on young people and adolescents now examined social, political, ideological and historical aspects, for youngsters and adolescents had begun to be looked on as a category or 'generation' with specific features that made them a social phenomenon in any given country and in the world at large.

Patterns of economic consumption reinforced the perception of adolescents as a consumer group, treating them as a market for specific kinds of goods (sports and musical goods, clothes, fashion, food, electronic equipment, computer products, advanced technology, and globalized public information (satellite TV).)

Within the United Nations and international organizations, a number of global objectives were defined, some relating to adolescents and young people - population policy, reproductive health, educational reform, abolition of anti-woman discrimination, and narrowing the gender gap in education and in family and social behaviour.

Other, more political, views were linked to cultural reactions to globalization, the growth of intolerance, national and ethnic exclusion, and violence resulting from xenophobia, and contact between host country citizens and immigrant workers. Studies based on Eurocentric and Americentric theories probed 'other' cultures or social cases. Interest in the study of young people and adolescents developed in Russia and eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall, and in theatres of protracted and violent conflict (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Palestine). Arab migration to Europe and the Americas, and the September 11 events and their consequences, provoked greater interest in the study of Arab and Muslim youth.[15]

When studying adolescence we need to be aware of probable interaction between global, national and regional trends, since priorities and goals may not always coincide. The introduction to the first chapter of the national survey on youth in Egypt points out: "It became clear that locally prevailing assumptions regarding youth did not tally with the new facts. While several researchers and development agencies focused on the effects on girls of early marriage, the data showed that this was no longer so prevalent. Increasingly, young people faced both the problem of delayed marriage - exacerbated by the rising cost of housing - and widespread graduate unemployment, but the literature neglected this phenomenon, as did most of the youth agencies. International literature is lacking in models for dealing with the reality of Egyptian youth. It also seems that the literature neglects those important aspects in their lives that may lead either to deprivation or future opportunities (dropping out of school, job-related roles, entering on married life, etc.)[16]

The Report starts from national and pan-Arab issues but remains open to global theses, particularly advanced theories. It offers adolescent girls and boys a chance to talk about their adolescence and see their views integrated as an essential component of the views and problematics of adolescence and of the solutions suggested.

**(14)** This synthesis is based on several sources: Ghassan Yacoub and Leila Damaa Yacoub, Sykulujyat an-numuu 'indal-muraahiq,' Volume One, Dar-an-Nahar lin-Nashr, Beirut (n.d.); Mongi Zidi, 'Aalam al-Fikr, op. cit.; Ola Stafseng, Nordic youth research coordinator, Conditions and prospects for youth research in the 1990s: Policies and content (www.alli.fi/nyris5/olast.htm ); Traite de psychologie de l'enfant, op. cit., and the researchers' own work in the national teams participating in the CAWTER Report The Arab Adolescent Girl.

**(15)** Ola Stafseng, op.cit.

**(16)**. Al-intiqaal ilaa marhalat an-noudhj : mas-hun qawmi hawla an-nash' fii misr (Coming of age : a national survey on youth in Egypt), The International Population Council, The Regional Office for Western Asia and Northern Africa ; The Center for Social Research, The American University in Cairo; The Higher Institute for Public Health, University of Alexandria; The Department of Public Health and Social Medicine, University of Assiyut; Cairo, second edition, 1999-2000.

## Defining adolescence: various approaches

To understand adolescence we need to adopt a multi-dimensional approach that reflects the complex nature of adolescent life and behaviour, forming the individual and group personality, and adolescence as a social phenomenon common to psychology, education and sociology and the social sciences generally. We should exploit what has been proposed over the last two centuries; this can be broken down into five basic categories. These should be seen as complementary:

**1. Physiological approaches:** These concern the physical-physiological changes experienced in adolescence by man as a biological genus, and focus on physical and sexual growth, differentiation between boys and girls, etc.

**2. Psychological approaches:** These deal primarily with adolescents as individuals endowed with mental and emotional abilities. Physical change, puberty, the growth of the sex drive, the developing of mental abilities, the attempt to leave childhood behind and build up an independent personality, and the changing relationship between children, family and the immediate environment, are seen as basic. Adolescence is seen as a total change in condition, a stage of individual learning, and a time of fluctuating affiliation and search for identity and of tense relations between adolescents and family and people similar in situation and function. The "crisis" of adolescence, whether this is individual or group, is highlighted, as are specific behavioural patterns, feelings of rejection, violence, "delinquency" and other forms of social anxiety. These approaches also look at the cognitive dimension associated with the growth of mental abilities. Piaget's studies on the stages of mental development are important here. The adolescents' developing mental abilities (patterns of thought, assimilation, idealism, abstraction and logic) are seen as supplementing other traits (emotional, behavioural and psychological) that are examined by schools of psychoanalysis. Cognitive aspects are closely linked to educational approaches, schooling, and systems, stages and methods of education.

**3. Educational approaches:** These have historically been associated with the birth of childcare institutions, and particularly with children suffering from difficult conditions or whom war or disaster have separated from their families. They look at how schooling has risen, developed and expanded, and how programs, systems and foundations can be adapted to the educational project. Education is not seen as synonymous with teaching; it is not a monopoly of the school but "the social up-to-date practice of knowledge; it takes place in the school, in social work, in the neighborhood, and at home."[17]

The view that education involves training citizens or adults for their social roles makes it the responsibility of many institutions, the number and interpenetration of which grew as the role of traditional social institutions in modern society changed; the family's quasi-exclusive educational role declined. The school (and similar institutions) took over, expanding quantitatively and qualitatively, as did the media, social organization, and the complex social structures and functions that accompanied this. The result has been that the concepts of education and teaching are constantly changing and becoming more extensive and complex, thus highlighting interest in educational approaches.

**4. Sociological and anthropological approaches.** The use of anthropology was a turning point; adolescence was no longer seen from a psycho-physiological but a socio-cultural angle. The works of Stanley Hall (psychological approach) and Margaret Mead (anthropological approach) are landmarks here. Mead's anthropological approach opened up new horizons for a sociological approach, seeing adolescence as a social phenomenon. Her formative work (beginning in the late 1920s) challenged the prevailing view that disturbed and unstable behaviour among adolescents is caused by physiological changes and their psychological consequences. Mead studied primitive, simple-structure societies in the Samoan Islands and the Admiralty Islands and found that the concept of adolescence as crisis did not apply in these societies: the passage from childhood to youth took place relatively easily. Sexuality was seen as normal and not bound by taboo; the passage from childhood to youth involved special rites of passage and was fairly speedy, after which youngsters were integrated into adult society, where the social and economic roles were very clear and the choices limited. These simple societies lacked that 'crisis' on which the sociological approach to adolescence focused.[18]

**(17)** Jacques Pain , De l'école utile aux outils d'école : La pédagogie institutionnelle, in Nouvelles problématiques adolescents, Pratiques institutionnelles en recherche. Directed by Maryse Vaillant and Jean-Paul LeBlanc, L'Harmattan, 2001.

**(18)** See for example, Mongi Zidi, op. cit.; and Traite de psychologie de l'enfant, op. cit.

This resembles the pre-Islamic Arab tribe: "When the child reaches puberty, he becomes a man and is then permitted to do what men do. His parents celebrate the event in front of the statue of Oratal (Bacchus for the Greeks). The celebration culminates when his braids are cut off and laid in front of him. The youth has entered the phase of manhood and the worship of this divinity."[19] Ancient Arab-Islamic society saw in physical maturity the sign that boys and girls had left the world of childhood for that of youth and adulthood. They shouldered social and military responsibilities, and married early, on reaching puberty. The socio-cultural variable is basic for the emergence of that psychological and social tension which accompanies adolescence in modern societies, particularly industrially advanced societies. Crisis is the tense relationship between adolescents and society, and society must be studied to explain adolescence as crisis-ridden or crisis-free.

The anthropological approach was followed by more comprehensive sociological approaches, where adolescence is seen as a social phenomenon interacting with the components and dynamics of society. It can be viewed as a function of the change from a traditional to a modern society and to globalization, of the evolving roles of the family, school and social institutions, or of changing concepts and roles within the family itself. Using these approaches, the forming of a specific 'generation' of adolescents and their distinct types of behaviour and culture, the role of religious and ideological factors and political movements, and the (growing) influence of the peer group can be addressed. Sociological approaches can explain what is considered as antisocial behaviour, violence or delinquency.

Another approach is the demographic approach, prioritizing the practical study of adolescence as an age with special needs and problems (demographic features, rates of sustenance, population projections and needs regarding schooling and the labor market).

Other issues are adolescents' reproductive health and reproductive rights, unemployment, late or early marriage, early entry into the labor market; these are models of a special approach which may seem to be independent and come under development or human development. But this approach is less effective when used by itself and not within the more comprehensive framework of the sociological, or compound, approaches. The sociological approaches have allowed adolescence to be viewed comprehensively and in a complex way, enabling the adoption of an integrated, or compound approach, where the components of different approaches intermingle.

5. Integrated or compound approach. This is not a specific approach with predefined specifications and characteristics, like the previously mentioned approaches. The idea here is that the complex, compound nature of adolescence needs to be grasped, using a multiplicity of research and analytical tools. Unless the research belongs to a particular field (e.g., psychology, education), researchers wishing to study adolescence as a single comprehensive issue have to make a synthesis to develop an approach that is compatible with the multiple dimensions of this phase and the aims of the study. But this does not mean arbitrarily combining elements from the various approaches, or merging different approaches and specializations within a single report. Researchers still have to make a specific methodological choice and then integrate the elements and sub-methodologies of other approaches within one piece of research. It is a difficult process, requiring methodological consistency, an openness and ability to exploit a broad scientific and cultural basis, and an attempt to link the various aspects of the phenomenon in a single conceptual and practical context.

The sociological approaches are perhaps closest to the integrated approach; they allow physiological, psychoanalytical, educational and anthropological approaches to be included and articulated with the social environment. But the historical approach is also important. We do not mean the adolescent's individual history only (addressed by the psychological approaches) but the economic and social history of a given society. Nor are the political and economic dimensions necessarily part of the narrowly-viewed sociological, or today's developmental, approaches. All these dimensions must be taken into account. What characterizes the integrated or compound approach is its double starting point: the adolescent him/herself, and adolescence as a social category and a lived experience, and that the approach to this "life" must be constructed within the dynamics of the research project itself, taking into consideration its specific aims.

**(19)** Jawad 'Aly, op. cit.

## Adolescence in language

The term muraahaqa used in the contemporary sense in Arab studies and writings is a translation of the term 'adolescence' used in European and American studies over the past two centuries, which comes from the Latin adolescere, or growth, meaning physical growth but including the physiological-sexual aspect. It translates as muraahaqa, a happy choice given its semantic conformity with the concept in the early stages of its formation within the physiology-psychology binary. The root in Lisaan al-'Arab is the verb rahiqa with its sometimes contradictory meanings. The meanings of the noun rahaq do not include growth but do include nearing maturity (puberty). Thus we say of a boy nearing puberty that he is muraahiq and of a girl that she is muraahiqa. We also say that she is raahiqa and he raahiq when they are 10 or 11. The verb rahiqa can mean follow up, catch up with, approach; its derivatives include nearing maturity and puberty. What is remarkable is that originally the term meant, from the age and physiological point of view, the period preceding, not beginning with and following (the contemporary meaning) puberty. But rahaq has some interesting behavioural and psychological connotations. It can mean frivolity and contentiousness. Said of a person, it means ignorance, feeble-mindedness, impetuosity and frivolity, stupidity (originally foolishness and ignorance) and a propensity to do evil. It also means accusation (a person is said to be murhaq"when his religiousness is called into question) and sin: a rahqa is an adulteress.

The first meaning (approaching puberty) has been given a semantic extension to mean puberty itself and the following phase, based on the organic link that exists in European studies between the concepts of adolescence and puberty. The extension can be explained by the fact that the verb rahiqa has some behavioural connotations (frivolity, stupidity, rashness, departure from tradition-religion, asking too many questions, feeling sexual desire) which come within the traditional concept of adolescence. Linguistically, the term has biological (maturity and puberty) and psycho-behavioural connotations which the Latin has not. Extending the meaning of rahiqa beyond that given in Lisaan al-'Arab (where it applies to the phase immediately preceding puberty) to see adolescence as a phase beginning with and following puberty mirrors the extension of the psychological and behavioural traits that accompany adolescence for a number of additional years, with "stupidity and ignorance*" lasting longer than was previously the case. This time extension explains why adolescence has emerged as an independent phase.

*** In popular parlance, in some eastern countries, the term 'ignorance' is a synonym of adolescence. The female or male adolescent is said to be jahlaana/jahlaan (jaahil meaning ignorant), in the sense that s/he is obsessed with sex, fashion, clothes, make-up, going out, and similar behaviour. The description is used for adults who act like adolescents (yuraahiquuna alaa kibar). We speak of the jahala of the forties or fifties in reference to adults who show too much interest in the other sex and in fashion, leisure and similar concerns, traditionally the monopoly of adolescents. Thus in this sense, adolescence is not a phase, or sexual maturity, but a behavioural-cultural pattern.**

## Adolescence and modernism in Arab societies

Adolescence is a relational and social condition that involves two parties, adolescents and society. It cannot be understood without a grasp of the characteristics and dynamics of society itself. Society creates adolescence; the crisis that accompanies adolescence derives from a particular idea of adolescent social roles and the social institutions associated with adolescents' present situation and future choices. The more this idea is bound up with traditional conservative positions, the more individual autonomy and freedom become dominant values among the young and in society, and the more conflictual adolescents' relations with society.

Issues of adolescence have kept pace with the change from a traditional to a modern and then 'post-modern' society, with all its implications, including globalization and its various consequences. This Report will show similarities and differences in the dynamics of change from tradition to modernity in European and Arab countries. It will draw a distinction between modernity and the current form of globalization, and show how they have affected adolescence in Arab societies and how September 11, 2001 has affected Arab adolescent girls and boys.

## From tradition to modernity

Modernity is a historical process of economic, social and cultural change that has shaped modern nations, states and systems of political relations, and altered the roles of social institutions.[20] The modern individual and modern social institutions have emerged, with new roles and relations produced by such change. The modern concept of adolescence offers a proactive environment for the individual project, combining all the factors (often in the form of an invisible force) that are crucial for the image and orientations of the contemporary world.

Adolescents' lives have changed: "In the past, an average boy was often the head of a family at sixteen, a soldier in the royal army at fourteen or fifteen, or an apprentice with responsibility in his craft at thirteen or fourteen. Now the period of dependency is in some classes much longer."[21] Aly Ibn Abi-Talib was ten years old when the Prophet (APBUH) talked to him about the revelation; Usama bin Zayd was under twenty when the Prophet (APBUH) made him a military commander.[22] This is totally unlike our times. And it is not only a matter of the number of years but also of difference in 'social time'. It is confusing to apply the modern concept of adolescence to Arab societies of a few decades ago.

In 2000, a Moroccan father "considered that adolescence did not exist during his own youth, at least its features were not clear. This was due to the father's influence, the deep-rooted values of respect (gender distinction, respect for the father shown in hand-kissing, etc.). Now, however, adolescence is clearly seen, characterized by declining values and sexual mixing, changing educational methods and paternal behaviour, and fathers have come to behave like their children. Indeed, the decline in values has infringed on respect for fathers; the patriarchal system has been rejected and consequently relaxed"[23]

But basic differences do exist between European and Arab societies. Modernity as defined above concerns social dynamics, structures and institutions, and changes in culture and values. In the European model of modernity, the family has evolved to reduce the father's role and the values of absolute obedience.[24] These values and models were formed when society was in its ascendance, when the dynamics of progress stimulated youth and innovation. In such conditions, adolescence occurs in a social environment where adolescents are urged to develop a critical sense, personality and a life project of their own. We shall not deal here with the many important differences that exist between individual cases, or the families to which the adolescents belong.

In Arab societies it is different. Their history is so different that it is difficult to describe them as modern societies in the sense mentioned above: "During the last hundred years, a great change has occurred in Arab society due to the clash with modern western civilization. This change has not led to a new order replacing the old one; the old order was modernized but not radically changed, giving rise to the new patriarchal order and its dual-epoch civilization in which we live...This society has the external appearance of modernity but lacks the internal strength, organization and awareness that characterize the modern formations...However modern in externals (material, legal, esthetic) today's new patriarchal family and society appears to be, the internal structures of this family remain deeply rooted in patriarchal values, relations of kinship, tribe, sect and racial group...The established order in Arab society today is not a traditional order in the traditional sense, or a contemporary order in the modernist sense. It is a heterogeneous mixture of the old and new, of the traditional and the contemporary."[25]

**(20)** Samir Amin says: "Modernity started, then, when man escaped the control of the universal system; I should say freed himself from this control. There is no other definition of modernity in my mind than this philosophical break...and it is an unending (process)...Saying that man creates his own history negates/ invalidates tranquility, for there is no freedom without the risk of danger. It is for that only that modernity brought forth the best and the worst." Naqd ruuh al-'asr, Beirut: Dar al-Farabi, 1998).

**(21)** Traite de psychologie de l'enfant, op. cit.

**(22)** Ahmed al-'Abdallah, Qadhiyat ash-shabaab, op. cit.

**(23)** Quoted in the work of the Moroccan team preparing this Report, and the primary source: CERED (2000), L'adolescence en question: Analyse des resultats de l'enquete sur les adolescents en milieu urbain.

**(24)** "The extension of the middle classes and their liberal ideas at educational level (prohibition of prohibition) led to an educational model that gives a central role to self-independence, to individual and personal blossoming**, and to dialogue and free expression, since argument and discussion have become one of the fundamental rules in the modern family's working system (La violence des jeunes, op. cit.).

**(25)** Hichem Sharabi, op. cit.

## Between tradition and modernity

There are many similarities in traditional pre-capitalistic societies. The most obvious of these is perhaps that they are patriarchal. Patriarchy, according to Hisham Sharabi*, is "the central social characteristic of the pre-capitalistic social formation".

Below is a comparative outline of the major features of traditional and modern societies:

| Category | Patriarchy | Modernity |
|---|---|---|
| Knowledge<br>Truth<br>Language<br>Authority<br>Social relations<br>Social anatomy | Myth/belief<br>Religious/figurative<br>Explanatory<br>Neo-patriarchal authority<br>vertical<br>Family/tribe/sect | Thought/mind<br>Practical/critical<br>Analytical<br>Democratic/socialist<br>Horizontal<br>Class |

**Source: Hishaam Sharaabi, op. cit.**

* Hishaam Sharaabi, op. cit.: "It is obvious that patriarchy, as a socio-economic category, refers to a traditional, pre-modern society. Consequently, the two terms 'patriarchal society/culture' and 'traditional (or pre-modern) society/culture' mean approximately the same thing, both terms being defined as the opposite of a qualitatively different society/culture, i.e., of what is modern."

In Arab societies, this creates a high level of dissociation between legal and institutional forms and reality, and strengthens the tradition/modernity binary, particularly for young people and adolescents who are caught in the midst of this mutual attraction.

Despite recent changes, especially after independence, the Arab family has kept most of the roles it traditionally had, including that of intermediary between state, society and individual. Social relations in Arab countries remain "characterized by personalism, and the concept of group prevails over that of the individual and of society. It is the group and not the individual that constitutes the unit/currency exchanged in social relations and commitments."[26] There are taboos and proscribed topics, particularly politics, religion and sex, "the forbidden trio",[27] and the strongly male character of the prevailing Arab culture.[28]

"Adolescence appears to be socially unplanned for. It does not derive from social change, is not articulated round any recognized social situation, and has no role. Adolescents form a large class in society because early marriage is prevented or delayed and schooling is compulsory. Otherwise, nothing in society, educational institutions or the family, or professional dynamics has prepared us for this new phenomenon. Despite some aspects of modernity in its daily life, the family has remained traditional and conservative, and adolescents find it hard to break away, because to this day the family provides protection and basic safety for the individual. This kind of environment certainly does not encourage the individual to develop, in the modern sense of the concept."[29]

Arab adolescents are not helped by this. The weight (political, economic and social) of the family prevents adolescents gradually acquiring autonomy as they move from childhood (almost total dependence) to maturity and personal independence of the nuclear family. The social organization, strengthening the group and marginalizing the individual, hinders the forming of the adolescent's personal project where s/he becomes an independent individual. The "forbidden trio" encompasses most fields of interest that appear in adolescence. Forbidding politics cuts the adolescent off from existing reality, societal organization, participation in decision-making, and harmony between words and deeds in public life. The religious taboo prevents critical thinking on issues associated with new values and culture and tradition. The sexual taboo inhibits the young, insinuates that what is forbidden in public can be done in private, and deprives adolescents of their right to discover their bodies and to practice their reproductive rights, keeping them prisoners of the prevailing sexual myths. The strong

**(26)** Haliim Barakat, op. cit.

**(27)** Ath-thaluuth al-muharram, borrowed from the title of a book by Yassin Bou Ali; also in Haliim Barakat, op. cit., referring to the same source.

**(28)** See for example, The Arab Human Development Report.

**(29)** See the work of the Algerian team preparatory to this Report.

male character creates the various social roles of women and men, repressing adolescent girls in particular, thus affecting adolescent boys. As mentioned earlier, discriminatory gender practices grow more severe with puberty, pushing boys and girls into different roles that can lead to a dissociation between the sexes and thus to the reduction of the areas of contact, harming both of them and thereby narrowing the gap between their lives and their emotions. This harms their personalities during and after adolescence, as was confirmed by the field study undertaken in the context of this Report.

Arab adolescents lack traditional knowledge through inter-generational communication and interaction with the traditional family institution - means which were effective in the past. They lack modern means of gaining knowledge and taking on roles since these means are not used in society, except to a minor degree among families which are able to find a special solution to this split. Take, for example, the adolescent girl who is unprepared for the onset of her periods. She has not been told about this by her mother, as her mother was by her own mother, unashamedly and naturally, as part of the mother's traditional task. Nor can she receive sexual education at school, as she is supposed to do in modern society, this being unacceptable because of tradition. Of course, one cannot generalize here, because Arab societies and the Arab family are constantly changing to produce countless complex behaviour patterns that cannot be categorized under a small number of models. But the issue is a real one, however numerous family and individual responses to it are.

## 1.3 Adolescence exits; there is no such thing

Despite their differing positions and educational levels, there is some similarity between the views of academics and those of people who argue from their own experience, in not recognizing adolescence as a phase. This goes as far as denying that adolescence exists, in the poorer classes. Does the text below really apply to existing societies? The Yemeni mother below refers to the possibility of complete conformity between the individual and society where sound religious education, that creates full and ideal harmony, is available. Is this realistic, given that both opinions, each with its own viewpoint, deny that adolescence exists in traditional societies?

"There is no such a thing as an adolescence problem, particularly in families which follow the teachings of Islam... which made sufficiently clear the sound foundations of a correct education and the need to understand each phase of growth, whether physical or psychological. I do not agree with calling this phase "adolescence". It is like the other phases one goes through. It should be natural if the family is aware of its role and puts its children on the right religious educational path, because turning one's back on religion and an absence of religious education generate problems and crises, while following the teachings of religion produces well-brought up children who have no problems or psychological complexes."

**(Yemeni mother)**

"Adolescence is a new concept, one that is defined primarily in social terms. Puberty is biologically defined. The evidence for that is that in poor countries where young people do not pursue their education, there is simply no adolescence. There is only puberty, that is to say, when girls reach puberty and become able to have children, they marry to assume their reproductive role. And when boys are able to work, they enter the productive field. Thus this society functions properly, and their personalities and roles are precisely defined."

**Robote, quoted by Boris Cyrulnik30**

## 1.4 From adolescence to 'adultescence'

Defining adolescence by time raises several questions about the different aspects and approaches mentioned above. This definition varies according to the center of interest and priority given to some particular aspect. If we focus on the physiological changes and the appearance of sexuality, then the start of adolescence is bound up with puberty and its symptoms, and ends with the forming of sexual identity and emotional and intellectual maturity. Though it is difficult to be accurate as to when the process is complete, it can be determined terminologically by a specific age that refers to legal and social maturity. But if we give priority to cognitive growth and the

**(30)** Boris Cyrulnik, Resilience et capacite d'evolution, in Nouvelles problematiques adolescents, pratiques institutionnelles en recherche, directed by Maryse Vaillant and Jean-Paul Le Blanc, L'Harmattan, 2001.

appearance of the independent personality and behaviour which usually accompany the end of childhood and are concomitant with adolescence, then, as studies and educators' observations have indicated, "children's intelligence grows rapidly during their first years in nurseries, kindergartens and schools; their intellectual performance improves; they read and speak earlier than previous generations of children. As a result, today we see a pre-pubertal adolescence: children grow well and seek self-affirmation while they are biologically still children. And in spite of this they begin to call for recognition of their autonomy and self-identity."

But if we argue that only the ability to build an independent individual project shows that adolescence has given way to maturity, then the age at which adolescents attain independence is several years later than the legal, biological and emotional age. So some people are suggesting a new concept more suited to the current situation, where the period of dependence or pseudo-dependence of the young is drawn out. It is the concept of 'adultescence' or muraashada** (from raashid, meaning adult).

This describes the long adolescence (achievement of adulthood/independence delayed because of the lengthening of schooling, youth unemployment, and postponement of marriage) rather than the phase following sexual maturity and physical growth.

The focus has shifted from the starting point (sexual maturity) to the end point (social adulthood expressed in material and moral independence). This justifies the shift from the concept of adolescence (muraahaqa) to the concept of adulthood (muraashada).

* Boris Cyrulnik: Résilience et capacité d'évolution, in Nouvelles problématiques adolescentes.
** Développement de l'enfant et de l'adolescent, in Traité de Psychologie de l'enfant.

## Achieved globalization as the antithesis of modernity

How do we describe our contemporary world in the grip of globalization? In his book Le nouveau désordre économique mondial aux racines des échecs du développement, Georges Corm draws a picture of the contemporary world that resembles the feudal class- and yield-based order of Europe in the Middle Ages, prior to the industrial-political-cultural revolution which produced modernity and its societies. "There were more princes, powerful and influential leaders, and wealthy people by the end of the twentieth century than there were in any other period in human history. Their wealth is derived uniquely from royalties and not from any kind of productive activity, or from contractual concessions that protect specific social categories, as was the case during feudal times." (31)

Corm sees today's world as dominated by an economic and political hierarchy that makes contemporary globalized society unlike the modern society that emerged between the industrial revolution and the late twentieth century. Today's world is controlled by the lords of finance and the stock exchange, heads of state and of government, senior civil or military servants, entrepreneurs who know how to get important contracts, those who took advantage of the 1973 and 1985 oil booms, networks of dealers in drugs, arms, manpower, white slavery, and chief executives, directors and senior employees in giant international banks and corporations. Modern "court buffoons" - singers and their retinues, cinema and TV stars, fashion models and sports stars - entertain the new royalty and their subjects. Those entrepreneurs who produce in the private sector, and all producers, scientists, and researchers, form the last thread linking today's economy to the monuments of the age of enlightenment and the industrial revolution, and consequently to the values of liberalism.(32)

The central idea here is the difference, or opposition, between the modern community model (as it developed over the last two centuries) and the post-modern social model (particularly that of neo-liberal globalization). Whereas the welfare state, the values of justice, social solidarity and citizenship, full employment and stable jobs, and balance between the economic and the social in development strategies, were ideas commonly accepted in the last two centuries, today's globalized model has opposite values that stress individualism and the absolute priority of economic efficiency; money and profit are the highest values; consumerism is encouraged and a new Social Darwinism, where competition is tough and only the fittest survive, dominates the international market.

**(31)** Georges Corm, Le nouveau désordre économique mondial aux racines des échecs du développement, La découverte/essai, Paris, 1993.
**(32)** Ibid.

We are witnessing the dismantling of the welfare state and the idea of solidarity and their replacement by a severe social and economic polarization of rich and poor, at both international and national level. Poverty is growing. Division into winners and losers is considered natural and normal. The individual's situation depends on his own abilities and skills, and the economic or social order assumes no responsibility for him.

This brings change at every level in the current situation and future expectations of people in all population and social categories, particularly the young and the adolescents. Thus the emergence of new phenomena (in terms of size, spread or quality) can be observed in their extreme form, violence and delinquency, as expressions of adolescents' and youth's sensitivity as to the values of their society and the effectiveness of its institutions, and the future possibilities. At international, regional and national level, adolescent issues are bound up with the questions and challenges imposed by the contemporary world. These are very different from those raised by the world in the past.

Globalization, with all its consequences and mechanisms, gives a common framework and context for societies to develop, though they may differ in their positions and reactions to globalization. Globalization ignores national boundaries, helped by a revolution in the mass media and communications that enables it to influence, even create, transnational behaviour and concepts for adolescents that become an internal element in all societies.

In a recent study on youth violence,[33] the effect of these changes is probed, particularly the mechanisms of impoverishment which are killing off the social integration and regulation that used to prevail, in working class neighborhoods too. Formerly, "individual and group destiny among the popular categories used to be interconnected and included under the perspective of continued social progress. Now, however, the young find themselves in a situation where they negotiate individually for their future in conditions devoid of guarantees for social advancement. For the first time, the current generation of young people is likely to hold social position and rank lower than that held by the previous generation, namely: unemployment, and marginal and unstable occupations."[34]

This is not an abstract conclusion but the outcome of field studies showing that there is a positive correlation between delinquency rates and unemployment rates, with growing violence in urban disadvantaged neighborhoods. This is bound up with the overall changes resulting from globalization, such as the difference in fundamental values and references governing the activities, attitudes and reactions of adolescents and people generally.

The ideal model of the previous period was based on a belief in social progress for the development of societies. "Indeed, this idea (of social progress) played the role of reference model for identity, as well as a unifying role for society, because it was an acceptable idea in the French society based on community values such as social justice and solidarity between everyone."[35]

This idea was not specific to Europe; other societies adopted similar ideas, whether in the socialist state version in socialist countries (the Soviet or Chinese model), or in the forms it took in the developing countries (e.g. the Arab countries). Arab countries took some of the state structures, institutions and laws, and some cultural and value aspects, from the European model of modernity. They were also influenced by the Soviet example and by national and pan-Socialist ideas. And they were inspired by their religious heritage and a whole set of traditions and values, among them mutual assistance and solidarity and the idea that the state, or any other governing entity, should assume social responsibility. Some of the changes taking place in contemporary Europe against a background of globalization, the mechanisms of this globalization, and its outcomes, resemble the changes in our Arab societies, in terms of both processes and results.

The dismantling of the welfare state and the decline in the belief in the inevitability of social progress led to a qualitative change in the expectations of the middle classes, who had had a positive role in building up the modern state and society. Like the upper classes, they preferred "stability in high-standard neighborhoods, opposed social integration in schools, and rejected the creating of popular housing estates in areas close to the neighborhoods where they lived". The phenomena of independence or social exclusion are clearly visible in the modern city, in the country as a whole, and in the world. The world is divided into geo-social zones (North/South), and the country into rich and poor zones. The modern city is no longer coherent; social, urban and planning discrepancies appear between its poor and wealthy, planned and random, neighborhoods, and between city center and suburbs. Interaction between the inhabitants of the different sections is difficult.

**(33)** La violence des jeunes, op. cit.
**(34)** Ibid.
**(35)** Ibid.

The poor cannot influence the course of events, now that workers' and farmers' unions, and the bodies that used to empower them and help them negotiate and control their destiny, have been 'curbed'. Today's poorer adolescents lack the tools with which previous generations organized in national and local professional, union and political bodies for expression, self-achievement, and fulfillment of ambition. As enabling frameworks for working parents, these bodies had been a balancing factor in the parent/child relationship, reinforcing the parents' role in inter-generational communication. This role is voided when the adolescent sees his parents powerless against the local and global order.

Poverty and unemployment weaken the parents' position in intergenerational communication, and create new conditions in which adolescents move, exposed to extra-family effects that attempt to fill the referential gap resulting from the decline of the parental role in the nuclear family. And in the absence of movements that can provide guidance to youngsters and adolescents, "the world of institutions is eroding to the benefit of the street world".[36] Where such political or social movements do exist, their power is growing, particularly if they are based on religion or on popularizable ideologies which feed on (national, tribal, or factional) traditions or on local history, and are not considered absolutely unacceptable by the family. Membership of such a movement bolsters the adolescent's position in the family when confronting the parents, and can make him/her influential in family decisions.

Globalization is worsening the dualism of Arab society. A minority imitate the consumer pattern of living it promotes; the majority is unable to do so, and in a cultural reaction, clings to its cohesive identity. The family-religion binary resurfaces, but with a change of roles (modernity and post-modernity, with globalization as one of its forms). The family had previously opposed cultural and social change and researchers used to see a cohesive family structure, with the family using religion to strengthen it.[37] But this changed during the post-modern phase; membership of the family or tribe seemed insufficient to protect the individual from the effects of globalization and the mass media, particularly satellite TV, giving religion a new importance as a basic critical element for constructing self-identity among the new generation.

The contradiction is very clear in the Arab Gulf. Its societies are still organized around the tribe, but of all the Arab countries they are most affected by and integrated in economic globalization. The region has changed profoundly in only five or six decades: individual and community prospects have opened up from the limited local level of the clan or tribe with globalization, oil, and satellite TV. "In times of great social change the young, whatever their social, economic or regional origin and gender, are questioning tradition and modernity...They are attempting to turn their various dissonant societies into what they feel they belong to. The family remains the basic unit but is usually backed by a sense of national identity. Religion, however, is usually more vital than family and homeland, bringing the other, conflicting, allegiances together in this normative category. This is why many adolescents say their Islamic identity comes first, seeing it as the basic factor defining their lives and giving them moral purpose."[38]

Today's adolescents see a conflict of modernity and tradition: "This generation sees itself as caught between the institutions of the former generation, viewed as traditional - the family and religion - and the new, modern institutions of the state and the market. Young people agree in seeing the world market as a bearer of modernity, and their own societies as traditional."[39] Oddly, however, some think there is more modernity than tradition in their countries, observing the growing role of the economy, market and other formal manifestations of modernity. But they suffer from the loss of social and economic security that accompanied the oil boom and seek security in traditional social structures. These provide both psychological and social and economic security in societies where employment in the state and its modern institutions do not yet provide such security.

There is confusion as to what constitutes modernity. Market values appear as synonymous with modernity, and since the cultural and social values of globalization and the market cannot provide an alternative reference and value system (for the individual or for society), these, unlike the values of modernity, are deconstructive for society and polarizing for youth. Only a well-off elite can find solutions in those values, while the majority will be driven to a stricter interpretation of tradition.[40]

**(36)** La violence des jeunes, op. cit.

**(37)** The contributions of Haliim Barakaat, Khalduun En-naqiib and Hisham Sharaabi, for example, go in this direction. The latter provides supportive examples such as the inability of religion to put an end to the revenge tradition widely found in the tribal structure.

**(38)** May Yamani, Changing identities: The challenge of the new generation in Saoudi Arabia.

**(39)** Ibid.

**(40)** "Comments made by members of the new generation increasingly express/reflect an individualistic moral attitude, personal achievement, while recognizing and regretting the collapse of social solidarity. The market has become the opposite of the family, and society more limiting to the young. The terms used for evaluation have been adapted to the mentality of that market instead of the society" (May Al-Yamani, op. cit.).

In the Gulf oil societies the problem is more acute than in other Arab countries. They are more coherent internally (a strong, cohesive tribal structure, full integration in the values of the consumer market). The basic factors of the social and political history of these societies are more clearly defined than in the other Arab countries.

In Arab countries there is a variety of external influences and channels of interaction, from the economy and information openness to the heavy migration and direct interaction between the two shores of the Mediterranean (particularly for North Africa and Lebanon). But the high rates of poverty and unemployment that exist in countries such as Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Morocco, and Mauritania trouble social stability, raise concern about the future and directly affect adolescents. Add the dynamics of political, religious, nationalist, socialist and liberal movements. Add the effects of occupation, war or embargo. The issues of globalization confront Arab societies with new qualitative change while they are still adapting to the world transformations of the last decades. Arab societies are entering the age of globalization as societies that are neither traditional nor modern

## The effects and consequences of September 11, 2001

Before September 11, 2001, globalization was almost exclusively viewed as economic. But the events had consequences that changed the course of globalization itself, producing what came to be called the militarization of globalization, or security globalization, where greater importance was given to its political and politico-military aspects.

Whereas the discourse of globalization had been conducted in terms of the market economy, post-September 11, 2001 discourse became ideological, political and cultural. The 'clash of civilizations', the 'fight against terrorism', 'preventive war and preemptive war' were the new terms; the United Nations was sidelined, and these ideas were widely implemented around the world.

The Arab region was particularly affected by this. Its impact on Arab adolescents was perhaps greater than on other adolescents, for they were experiencing a stage of expanding awareness and the ideal values they were forming did not fit the merciless new world where the discourse of diplomacy and right had yielded to that of force.

But this confusion is not only one of adolescent awareness and behaviour; it is a real confusion facing the world and national societies, institutions and underlying principles. It is a confusion and restlessness that makes the future itself appear uncertain.

Arab adolescents are in the 'eye of the (global) storm'. Local issues merge with regional and global ones. Individual and group emotions mix with politics to determine how the young react to the political and military effects of globalization and its effect on their daily lives. Their behavioural reactions appear as reactions towards globalization itself. There is a return to religion and its associated behaviour that is more marked than was the case with previous generations. This goes against the usual course of development and progress. The attack on Iraq and the Iraqi people,[41] and the injustice visited upon the Palestinian people, are present in the daily lives of the adolescents and raise difficult and complex questions:

- that of fake values and double standards
- that of injustice, undemanding attitude towards it and powerlessness to remove it
- that of the legitimacy of combating injustice, and the ethics and effectiveness of that combat
- finally, the greater question regarding society and its protective role.

These are pressing questions raised by adolescents in Arab countries, and to which they try to find individual or group answers.

**(41)** This text was completed before the third Gulf War and the occupation of Iraq. But these developments add to the importance of the issue raised and to its strong presence in the lives of the adolescent girls and boys, and in those of all Arab citizens, whatever the differences in their evaluations and attitudes towards these developments and their outcomes.

المستقبل

Part Two

# The Field Study

Chapter One

# Identity and Self-image

# Identity and Self-image

## Introduction

This chapter observes how adolescents fashion their self-image and build up an identity and attitude to various social systems, as they enter on the age of reason, unable to access it except through the difficult process of reflexivity[1]. This process involves a distancing from oneself and an internal dialogue; Giddens[2] sees the ability to do this as a feature of the modern individual. Adolescence requires a minimum of «working on oneself» because, in thinking about and evaluating him/herself and discussing her/his qualities and defects, the adolescent behaves as an active agent of his own development, viewing himself as a distinct self that cannot be reduced to the social image reflected to him by his environment. Reflexivity means positioning oneself and distancing oneself from other people's judgments, while using them to build up a self-image.

In this chapter we have asked the following questions: Is the reflexive work of self-definition by which adolescents assert themselves as «emerging individuals» possible in Arab societies? On what kind of axiological and social references does it stand? Is it self-description or self-evaluation? Since self-description is not neutral, does it inevitably lead to self-evaluation? How can adolescents carry out this self-evaluation? What part do others play in this; how do they intervene in the making of the self image?

## 1. Self-image

Kind, polite, sociable, good, helpful, sympathetic, brave, respectable, shy, sensitive, naÔve, rebellious, impatient, nervous, etc. This is how adolescents tend to describe themselves. It does not matter how accurate these adjectives are; using them is often part of a self-eulogizing rhetoric, where even defects can have a positive connotation. But self-description is a difficult exercise, and the respondent engages in it only after hesitation and on the investigator's insistence.

Some adolescents, like Samya (15, Bahrain) recognize that they are unable to assess themselves and leave it to others to do so. Boys seem more laconic in describing themselves, finding it hard to find the right words and therefore making general comments; Amru (16, Egypt), says «they have little self knowledge.» When they do answer the investigator's question, they say they are «like other people» (see the Moroccan survey), using the adjective «aadi», normal, (sometimes in Arabic and sometimes in French), a term widely used by Moroccan and Tunisian adolescents. Moroccan adolescents use the term 'aadi (feminine 'aadiya) as implicitly the opposite of fakhuur, the term used to describe vain, self-glorious people.

How can we explain this difficulty, sometimes inability, to speak about the self? The initial difficulty is aggravated when they respond to the interviewer's request; self-description follows what Erving Goffman[3] calls the requirements of self-introduction, and reflects the adolescents' wish to make the self-portrait correspond to a specific idea of the prevailing standard or morality and offer the interviewer what s/he expects. Self-description is a perilous, laborious exercise in which not all adolescents can engage, given the problematic nature of reflexivity.

Some adolescents do not know 'who s/he is' but 'what s/he is not'. Ahmed (17, Tunisia) does not recall any outstanding event in his life; he is «normal», «like everybody else». But he recognizes one quality: he is not miserly, a quality he expresses negatively.

When adolescents are asked to describe themselves, 'others' play an essential reference role in the description of the self. The adolescents' reflexivity gets mixed up with the image others have of them, and it becomes difficult to distinguish what comes from internal conviction and what merely echoes the opinions of others. This tendency of the self-image to coincide with others' views shows how important the 'significant others' are.[4] The result is a decrease in the level of reflexive thinking, which we noted in most of the adolescents in all the Arab countries involved in the field study. This problem arose whenever the respondents lacked the resources (schooling, culture, material resources, experience etc.) that would have helped them emerge as independent individuals. Some were astonished by two of the questions, one about how others saw them, the other about self-evaluation. Few really questioned others' judgments.

**(1)** By reflexivity we mean a process of internal thinking or a process of self-examination a person undertakes in a kind of internal presence, known also as reflexive thinking.

**(2)** Anthony Giddens, La Constitution de la Société, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1987.

**(3)** Erving Goffman, La mise en scène de la vie quotidienne. 1. La représentation de soi, Paris: Minuit, 1973.

**(4)** We are here using the distinction made by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann between «the significant others» and «the generalized others» in their La construction sociale de la réalité, Paris: Méridiens/Klincksieck, 1989.

Another sign of the adolescents' difficulty in thinking reflexively was their inability to admit to defects; this reflected less a sense of self-satisfaction than a weak critical sense and an inability to disengage from the self. Tala and Lynn (17, Lebanon) jokingly expressed this very positive evaluation: «I am good, and those who think I am not friendly and sympathetic are certainly wrong,» Tala told the researcher. Lynn said she was «brilliant and gave others complexes.» Many adolescent girls are comfortable with this ideal self-image, like Najet (18) and Fadwa (16) from Tunisia, Nesreen (17, Lebanon), Fatima (15), Suheir (16), and Aziza (17) from Egypt, and others.

Muheeb (16, Yemen) hates the way others look at his handicap but says «he has no defects». Muna (18, Algeria) says she does not know her defects: «I know my qualities, but as to defects, I don't believe I have any ... I have not been able to discover them.» Aysha (17, Algeria), who was in a rehabilitation institution, agrees that she has defects but refuses to unveil to a «stranger» (the woman interviewer): «I cannot talk to you about what is bad in me!»

Sometimes they try to deny criticism of their image. Others find Abdelkrim (16, Tunisia) kind, sympathetic, jovial, witty and good; he agrees. But when they call him lazy, he differs: «When it comes to serious matters I am not lazy.» Huyaam (17, Tunisia) deplores her family's negative perception of her, attributing to insomnia, not laziness - an unfair accusation - the difficulty she has waking up in the morning.

Bassaam (17, Egypt), who lives in an unplanned suburban Cairo neighbourhood, shows how certain traits (a tendency to be violent) can be made into qualities for a positive self-image: «It's true...I am a bandit (futuwwa), but I like people and I am never unfair to them, but if someone steps on my toes I'll scratch his eyes out. I defend the victims of injustice; in the neighbourhood people respect and fear me.» The term futuwwa refers to a combination of chivalry, physical strength and ethics that implies manliness. Bassaam's self-image is that of a Robin Hood rather than a bad boy.

Admitting to faults is often a matter of style, not self-criticism. Ali (18, Yemen) boasts about his recent conversion to a militant vision of Islam and says his main fault is to want to correct what he sees as objectionable (munkar). Some adolescents say that what others see as defects (e.g., frankness, sincerity) can be misunderstood attributes. Meysa (18, Algeria) says her altruism is a fault: «My defect is that I don't think sufficiently of myself; I think of others.» So do Sawsen (16), Iqbaal (17) and Hany (17) from Yemen. «My fault,» Sawsen says, «is that I'm straightforward, I always want to tell the girls what I think and advise them, but they get angry, even after I tell them I didn't mean to hurt them. I'm just like that, Subhaanallah; I have my ideas and want to express them.» Ibaara (18, Barain) is the same: «My major defects..are that I am talkative and particularly spontaneous; I say what I think deep inside, keeping nothing to myself.»

Moroccan adolescents evoke this same temperamental impulsiveness and outspokenness, and say it often puts them in difficult situations. The data shows that only a minority of adolescent girls and boys are able to make a careful self-examination and show that they accept their faults. The interviews revealed that these 'supposed' defects could be dealt with via bashfulness, shyness or nicknames.

Ibtissam (18, Morocco) defuses the discomfort of the interview with laughter to improve her position, caught between the need for sincerity and the need to present a pleasing image of herself to the researcher. She uses the nickname given her by others to speak of herself as if she were someone else. Her use of the third person plural reveals the rhetorical stakes behind this kind of discourse. «They tell me that I am a tomboy, or the boy of the family ('azri edduaar),» she laughs. «I go out with boys...and I dress like them. They say I'm not a girl, but a girl who looks like a boy.» How is the self judged here? Is Ibtissam's discourse self-criticism or self-eulogizing?

In their interviews, the Yemeni and, to a lesser degree, Egyptian adolescents seemed better at the difficult exercise in 'self flagellation', or listing the faults they admit to having. Have they a greater capacity for self-analysis than other adolescents? We don't think so. Their attitude probably results from a greater internalization of the parental judgements. Adolescents' harsh self-assessment often reflects low school achievement. They admit to faults that disturb adults - laziness, disobedience, impatience, lack of perseverance, anger and rashness. This shows how closely adolescents can echo their parents' reproaches concerning school work and deviant behaviour, in a social context where obedience, self-control, and respect for family authority remain basic qualities.

Mahmoud (18, Bahrain) seems to confirm this. «I am essentially very emotional and fragile when hit hard,» he says. «I'm also straightforward and sometimes ambiguous; but my parents think I'm insolent, disobedient and bad. Sexually, I feel that I am instinctive and impulsive, and I often masturbate. When I'm alone in my room, I'm not the same person; I do everything to satisfy my instincts, from food to sexuality.» He tells how he discovered masturbation through a street boy who attends the same mosque, and says that since he discovered it is forbidden in Islam, he has tried to stop.

What faults recur in adolescent girls' self-portraits? First, nervousness. This they call lack of self-control because the family sees it as such. «I'm a bit nervous and get upset,» confesses Christian Narmeen (18, Egypt). «This is what they say about me, although I think I am not that impatient. But there are things I can't stand. What am I to do? My mother is also angry at me because I am not very religious and I don't go regularly to church.» Hala (17, Algeria) says she is «rather» unbearable. «I get angry very easily, and when I do, I always scream. This is painful to the people I love, but I don't really mean it; that's all.» Monia (18, Algeria) says that because she talks too much, she sometimes says things that hurt and which she does not mean. Jamila (17, Morocco) thinks her lack of self-control, resorting to violence in conflict situations, is probably due to her bad social situation and her sad story. Another Moroccan says she lacks self- control: «I know it is something I should absolutely not do, and yet I do it.»

But adolescents like Akram (16) and Selwa (18) from Egypt mention impatience and a continuous desire to do something else: «I get tired very rapidly,» says Selwa. «I don't have much patience to do many things. I may start something very enthusiastically but very soon get tired.» What is meant here is not fatigue but boredom and impatience.

The interviews reveal another form of personality weakness. Fariha (16, Algeria) says she finds it difficult to make decisions. Sawsen (15, Yemen) also mentions this lack of self-confidence. Fethy (16) and Huyaam (17) from Tunisia express an inability to follow their projects through. Fethy bewails his lack of decisiveness, particularly compared to adults' steadfastness and determination. «My great defect,» he adds, «is that I cannot make decisions quickly even when I know the decision is right.» He sees this lack of decision as the result of past experience, when he did not take time to think. He likes examining instruments and products and repairing small things. He is curious and likes to make discoveries and innovate, but his constant hesitation prevents him carrying things through. He complains that his father is seldom there; when he is, he is difficult and authoritarian. While he and his brother do not always know what they want, in the father's mind everything is clear.

Another element that recurs in adolescent girls' self-descriptions is sensitivity, often described as a defect. It is a sign of psychological and emotional instability and indicates that self-control has not been completely learnt. Fahima (17, Yemen) and Nadia (18, Algeria) fear this sensitivity reflects psychological disturbance; they often cry. The interviews also show that in adolescent girls, the attributes of the self are largely the product of a socialization characterized by sexual discrimination.

Farida (17, Tunisia) has an irresistible tendency to cry. «I never cried for anything in particular,» she explains, «I cry for several reasons at the same time, or for no obvious reason. And every time I laugh and have a good time, I end up crying.» Not without irony she says she always needs some kind of balance: «If I laugh in the morning, I cry in the afternoon, and vice versa. I find relief in laughing and crying.» Hers is a dual vision of life: happiness and sadness, darkness and light.

Only for some adolescents does talking about their faults offer a real opportunity for self-analysis. Rafeef (17, Lebanon), Waood (15, Tunisia), Sabika (17, Bahrain), and Farook (18, Egypt) are from socially, culturally and economically advantaged families. Possibly adolescents with greater resources are readier to engage in self-evaluation and better equipped to carry out the work on the self required by adolescence.

Rafeef is the daughter of parents who teach at the American University of Beirut, though originally from a rural milieu. Like a philosopher, she questions everything and accepts nothing without first subjecting it to logical analysis and independent scrutiny. People are often wrong about her, she says, finding her «composed, kind and happy» though she is «selfish and introverted». Her greatest defect, she laughs, is that she is a rebel and a revolutionary who is against everything.

Waood (15, Tunisia), the daughter of a Tunisian diplomat, gives a nuanced, half-toned but positive picture of herself as happy, sociable, supportive and sensitive to her relatives' and friends' difficulties and problems, but with faults. One is her reserved, severe temperament which prevents her showing her feelings. «It's a male trait,» she says, «because a woman or girl has to show her feelings and be delicate and sensitive.» Her second defect is selfishness. Her family think she «wants everything for herself, she has a tendency to seize everything meant for the whole family, and refuses the obligation to share», a description she partly agrees with.

Sabika (17, Bahrain) and Fariha (16, Algeria) also admit to selfishness, Sabika in particularly severe terms: «I am kind, but I can be very nasty... My greatest defect is selfishness; I can't stand seeing somebody with something I haven't got.»

Farook (18, Egypt) shares this tendency to self-diagnosis via introspection. He is an engineering student from a well-off Assiut family in southern Egypt. He thinks his major defect is his tendency to dominate others. «When I find someone with a weak personality,» he says, «I want to lord it over him. When I can exercise my authority over a person, I do it, without any respect for him. But I have been trying to correct myself since some of my relatives noticed this defect and told me about it.»

Other faults mentioned in the interviews are nursing grudges, possessiveness and jealousy. Nadia (17, Algeria) asserts that she is jealous and does not want her friends to get the same grade, or her sister to have more pocket money than her.

## 2. The self and others

The building up of the adolescent identity, and the reflexivity it assumes, does not happen by itself, in solitary reflection, but requires the collaboration of others.

Depicting themselves, the adolescents made fairly explicit comparisons with 'others' (sometimes the family, particularly siblings, sometimes the peer group) to show their qualities and faults. Sociologists call this social comparison, from the works of Festinger on it; it has been used to show how the individual uses others to compare and evaluate self[5]. Self-evaluation is also achieved through the image others send back to us, built on the judgements and attributes they allow us. The adolescent self-image is thus subject to two factors: social commitment as an essential source of self-judgement, and social comparison, making it possible for the individual to assign a certain value to himself through the complex mechanisms of classification and ordering.

This raises certain questions. What credit do adolescents give to others' views of them, and how does this relate to what they really think they are, what they see as their real selves? How do they deal with other people's (sometimes cruel) view of them?

Most boys refer to the family and the peer group at the same time, whereas girls tend to take the family as their main reference. This is not surprising: unlike girls, whose involvement in public space is limited and often fleeting, boys have greater freedom and use it to build up a network of social relations outside the family, to establish «dialogical relationships» that enable them to achieve self-discovery[6].

The part others play in «enabling the adolescent to achieve self-revelation»[7] is sometimes explicitly admitted. Fethy (16, Tunisia), who distrusts unhealthy acquaintances and who praises family ties, takes his family as a mirror in which he sees his own image. Waood (15, Tunisia) agrees. She is said to be vain and scornful of others. She dislikes this side of herself but does not deny it because «it is other people who hold the truth about us».

But other adolescents say that the judgement of others does not constitute a reference in the construction of the self-image, and that they give no credit to the image reflected to them by the surrounding world. This seems to be exaggerated and may not reflect their real attitude, but we should look at the logic behind these statements.

Why do some adolescents think the judgement of others should be disregarded? The first reason is that the judgement is not credible. Fareeda enlightens us: people tell her that she is beautiful, charming, has a nice smile and a nice figure. But she pays no attention because «they do that with everybody out of flattery». This behaviour does not derive from the others' «hypocrisy» but from the self, which prevents that hypocrisy from touching our reality. In describing her impression that she has

**(5)** Festinger, Théories des processus de comparaison sociale, in C. Facheux, Psychologie sociale théorique et expérimentation, Paris, Maloine, 1971.
**(6)** François de Singly Le soi, Le couple et La famille, Paris, Nathan 1996, p13.
**(7)** Ibid., p. 14.

a dual personality and that her image does not correspond to what she really is, Fareeda refers to the duality of the self or of a two-level self. She describes her feeling of being multi-faced. People who do not know her well can be surprised when they discover that she is different from what they thought. They take her for a frivolous girl who likes to have a laugh and play around, only to find that she is different, more serious, and can talk about the serious things of life. When they get to know her well, they realize she has particular views on life and is different from other people.

Adolescents are critical of the tendency to judge others by appearances. «One of the girls thought I was pretentious,» says Imen (16, Bahrain). «One day, we had a chance to talk and I helped her solve a personal problem. The next day she came and asked to be forgiven, because she'd wrongly thought I was pretentious. I was amazed to learn what she thought of me, especially since I had never talked to her before.»

Ghalya (17, Algeria) suffers because her class mates consider her «a bad type...because I have my own look» and thinks people have «a tendency to judge others without knowing them...one should not judge by appearances.» Fahmya (17, Yemen) shares this idea: others can say what they like, but they ultimately access only a little bit of our reality. One can fake joy and happiness or hide a deep sadness without it being noticed. To justify her claim that people's judgements are not always sound, Iqbaal (17, Yemen) says that untrue stories are told about her, for example that she is in love with her friend's brother, which cannot be true, given the age and size difference between them.

Sameer (16, Tunisia) is uneasy with his friends' view that he is a hard worker, a swot; nobody understands him and his changing moods. «I'm sometimes serious, sometimes happy and amusing...I'm disciplined but sometimes I misbehave,» (i.e. hard to type).

Now, what about the role of social comparison in constructing a self-image? How far does comparison affect self-evaluation? With whom do adolescents most often compare themselves? Their relatives, or an image of the generalized other?

Our analysis of the interviews shows that comparisons are made according to a scale of proximity moving from the family outwards to an increasingly anonymous otherness, and that adolescents are comfortable with this hierarchical classification.

Haneen (17, Tunisia) first implicitly compares herself to her classmates and then to her maternal and paternal families. Najet (18, Tunisia) also uses comparison as a means to self-knowledge comparing herself to her two older sisters: she sees them as unlike herself, shy, uncommunicative and withdrawn. Paul (18, Lebanon) is politically committed and stresses his difference to others of his own age.

The adolescents' self-image is also defined in relation to a normative and axiological universe. They tend to define themselves as «good «or «sensible». This «gravity ethic» influences the girls' self-presentation and leads many of them to define themselves through a negative comparison with the image of a rash, frivolous girl.

Comparison is clear in the way Seereen (17, Algeria) and Fadwa (16, Tunisia) see themselves. Sereen, whose father is a taxi driver and whose mother a housewife, says people see her as a «good girl» who associates with girls like herself. «I go straight home from school.» Fadwa, who comes from a rural milieu, says people find her sensible and well-behaved; she does not go out with boys. She attributes this to her strict upbringing, recalling with pride that she learned only to go with good, «chaste» girls. She uses the term sharaf (honour) to mean chastity, preserving the honour of the group[8].

Sara (16, Lebanon) also wishes to give a moral image of herself. From a poor Beiruti family, her only «capital» is her body and reputation, which must be preserved. Fatuma (16, Morocco) sees society as waiting for her to make the smallest mistake, and is careful not to be influenced by those who might drag her into delinquency. She internalises this «fear of slipping» and the moralizing discourse it carries.

Najet (18, Tunisia) illustrates this polarization that divides society into the clean and the unclean (moral/immoral). Jihad (18, Tunisia) is another example, seeking respectability and social recognition. He dropped out of school and has a hard life, vainly trying to get work as an assistant turner. «My high school friends like me and consider me a good, «clean» lad because they never saw me behave badly.» What he wants is respect; he dislikes associating with people his age who are known for their over-

**(8)** Regarding this notion of honour in Maghrebi societies, see Raymond Jamous, Honneur et baraka :les structures sociales traditionnelles dans le Rif : Cambridge University/Edition de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1981.

familiarity, rudeness and violence. In terms that recall Mary Douglas's analysis of the logic underlying ideas of stain and impurity»[9], he describes Tunisian society and the world generally as increasingly «hybrid and mixed», making it impossible to distinguish the good from the bad. That is why, he adds, «I take my time before I make friends.» Though they do not divide the world so clearly when describing themselves, most of the adolescents refer to moral categories - honesty, respectability, good morals.

Interestingly, in adolescent girls' discourse self-image does not derive from certain individual qualities or moral values alone, but is sometimes determined in terms of social competency. This is evident in the Egyptian interviews, where the adjective gadaa» (courageous, competent, helpful) is recurrently used. Other adjectives express harmony with the social environment or satisfaction with self as regards relationships.

Particularly in Bahrain, Yemen, and Morocco, adolescents describe themselves as «sociable», esteemed and appreciated by others. They emphasize their ability to make people feel comfortable, and to make and keep friends. «I get rapidly used to people and win their friendship,» says Suheer (16, Egypt). «Of course, sometimes I make mistakes and get misled. But I think good faith is better than being suspicious of people.» The self-description can assume a moral character, emphasising politeness, good manners and above all (Iqbaal (17) and other adolescent girls from Yemen) kindness, forgiveness and tolerance of those who hurt them.

For Hussaam (18, Yemen) and Sameer (16, Tunisia) the tendency to integrate the peer group is accompanied by a certain caution, added to the parental discourse of the need to choose friends carefully and keep them at a distance if necessary. «I think I'm polite; I don't smoke, chew qat or associate with hooligans,» says Hussaam. Sameer says he has established a code of mutual respect with others. Parental influence is also seen in the adolescents' self-assessment as regards how they do at school, this being more important to girls than boys; it is more often present in the Bahraini, Yemeni and Egyptian interviews.

## 3. The quest for the authentic self and self-construction

It is thus clear that to construct themselves adolescents swing between reflexivity and the mobilization of various forms of otherness. But this relational and social aspect of self-construction does not necessarily lead to a desire to conform or to the internalizing of the requirements of the social order. Indeed, it often involves violating the codes of the groups to which the adolescent belongs in a quest for an authentic, autonomous self.

As several interviews showed, when adolescents have the means and freedom to construct their selves, some do so by questioning authority or by negative self-reference, not saying what they would like, but what they would not like, to be. They do this from different angles, but still with the intention of breaking away from the «social weights» and the self that has been pre-defined; Waood (15, Tunisia) sees the right to make a mistake as a means of self-education. Some teenagers, like Fareeda (17, Tunisia), excel in the art of opposition. Her family think she is stubborn - she never gives up, even when she knows she is wrong. She was even more so when young but has learnt to admit to being wrong when necessary, without yielding on everything. She thinks she is like her father in this and they often clash because he does not know how to give in either; even against her mother's wishes, she tells him what she thinks, knowing that he will not be pleased and may become violent. What matters to her is not suppressing anything. She refuses to be the product of her parents' education, wanting to be herself, to «invent herself» autonomously, like someone who is sure of herself.

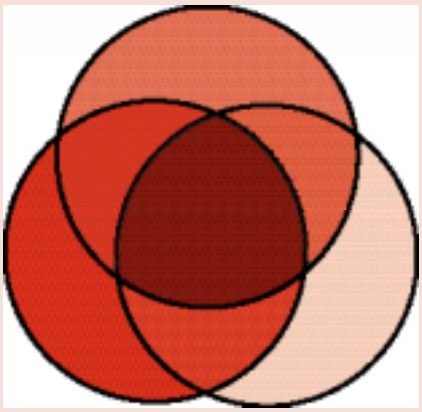
Other adolescents are less fervent. Mustapha (17, Lebanon) feels a need once in a while to impose himself. For Lebanese Daana (17) and Nadeen (16), the desire for self-assertion and personal autonomy vis-a-vis the family group is mitigated by a tolerance of others. «I don't want to impose my will on anyone,» says Daana, «because I hate anyone forcing his will on me.» Self-assertion by opposition is often accompanied by a quest for the authentic self. Adolescents follow two paths to the feeling of being individual: what Foucault calls «self-concern»[10] (concern with the body itself), or discarding the appearance (largely imposed by others, particularly the peer group) for an intimate, inaccessible self. Fethya (16, Tunisia) looks at herself in the mirror constantly, touching up her eyebrows, dyeing her hair and taking care of her looks, despite maternal disapproval.

**(9)** .Mary Douglas, De la souillure: Etudes sur la notion de pollution et de tabou. Paris, la Découverte, 1992

**Frame 2.1**

## Building the self, between independence and autonomy

In shaping individual identity, one factor is common to all ages. It is the quest to assert the self as a distinct entity. But different age groups give different weight to each of the elements that make up the self: autonomy, independence and originality. In adolescence, the former child acquires greater autonomy; the crisis of adolescence helps him build a world of his own, distinct from that of his parents; he adopts the «youth» culture of his friends and thus moves towards autonomy while still dependent on his parents. In contemporary society, adolescents have to reconcile great autonomy and little independence. By contemporary standards, the age of reason occurs when the three elements coexist. But there is a fourth element, the emergence of the real, coherent and authentic ego, which results from a combination of the first three elements, and serves as a standard to evaluate the self: This is what I am, this is my life, and this is unique to me.



**Source:** François de Singly, Les ,ges du soi, in Etre soi d'un ,ge à un autre. Famille et Individualisation. Volume II, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2001.

Success in the quest for the authentic self requires, first, that the adolescent know him/herself and accept this self through some kind of reflexivity. A romantic desire for isolation and a special relationship with nature seem to help. Thus, Rafeef (17, Lebanon) fosters her femininity, seeks solitude to meditate and think, and feels the need to form personal opinions. The quest for the authentic distinct self often involves a feeling of being radically different: «I feel so different,» Rafeef says, «that I can't help feeling some kind of sympathy with the handicapped and the mad.»

Marwa (18, Algeria) also feels different, in her view of the world and in her appearance: «I tolerate a lot of things,» she says. «Take homosexuality, or the veil, for example: I accept both of them. It is true that the practice is not normal, but I am not against it...I don't want to dress like other people. I want to dress my own way. I simply do not want to be compared with them.» For Marwa, and Ghalya, another 17-year-old Algerian, this feeling of being different is actively sought. Ghalya, describing herself as rather odd, says she is different from other people and does everything she can not to be like them: «I want to have my own distinct personality. Look, you can see that in my physique (she laughs) and other things....I don't have the same occupations as others, and when I really believe in something, I fight for it.» «Personality» and «strong personality» are terms used by girls like Sihaam (16, Morocco) to emphasize their difference, and their ability to choose, defend their choice and accept the consequences of these choices.

Mahmoud (18, Bahrain) feels the same need to be different and dominant. «I don't want to imitate or depend on anybody,» he says, «nor do I want anybody else to be a copy of myself. I think I'm strong, able to handle difficulties. The problems I face make me stronger. I want to stand out and impose my personality.» Daad (17, Lebanon) says she wants to keep to her room and spend hours reading, thinking and «practicing her favourite sport... silence». Many adolescents try to build up a real self by themselves, avoiding the «noise» or interference of the outside world.

Fareeda (17, Tunisia) describes her personal world, a solitary one where others and their ideas are unimportant, and love of nature and need for privacy prevail. «I love nature,» she says, «particularly at night, and I hate the sun and light; at night, when I feel ill at ease, I go onto the roof to watch the sky. That's the only thing that comforts me.»[11] Her interest in the «pop psychology» and astrology in magazines illustrates her desire to explore the depths of the self's potential.

**(10)** Miche Foucault, Histoire de la sexualité. 3 - Le souci de soi. Paris, Gallimard, 1984.

**(11)** See Gilbert Durand's analysis of the night pattern of imagination in Les Structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire, Paris: Durand, 1992.

Other adolescents say they need help in this reflexive work. Waood (15, Tunisia) has not seen a psychologist but would like to talk regularly to someone who understood her; a specialist would have the distance necessary to understand her. She thinks she needs to understand her personality and learn to communicate with others.

## 4. Resources of the self

To construct themselves, adolescents have two kinds of resource: objective and subjective. They realize that they will not get more from life than the «capital» they start with. Most of them know, like Jihaad (18, Tunisia), that they will not become «someone» without prior resources. «We all have the right to dream,» he says, «and everybody has desires and dreams.» He likes football and imagines himself as a major player in the Club Africain, his favourite team. If he had money, he would set up his own business: «When you have money everyone esteems you, but when you have nothing, you're nothing.» He knows he has to take risks or he will never make it.

Najah (16, Tunisia) echoes this: she won't be an ignorant housewife, she will perhaps be a fashion designer. Ideas of self-possession and of property generally seem to merge in her mind. Robert Castel in his work on the conditions of individual emergence develops a theory that we become an individual in two ways: either through excess, when resources or skills are available for strategies and projects; or through shortage or lack, when a person exists outside circles of affiliation, or protective groups. In the first case the emphasis is on the self; the second is marked by 'atomization'», where the person becomes an individual in spite of himself.[12]

Some of the adolescents who had a clear idea about what they wanted to become told the interviewers that the objective resources they needed were not only economic but included school success and the socio-economic level of the family, i.e. a private place the adolescents could freely and intimately use.

While many adolescents, like Lebanese Ramy (15) and Nadeen (16), do not know how lucky they are to have their own room, others use this private space to create a world of their own. It seems that adolescents do not realize the importance of having a private area until they are deprived of it. Lynn (17, Lebanon) shares a room with her sister and longs for a place of her own where she can satisfy her love of reading. But «I managed to create a space for myself,» she comforts herself. «The family realize how much they can know about me; the rest is none of their business.»

Adolescents from well-off or socio-culturally advantaged families have some autonomy. This is so for Raany (16) or Rafeek (18), two Lebanese adolescents. Rafeek's father controls everything and tries to weaken his son's commitment to the religious party (Hezbollah) but enforces respect for the privacy of every family member and the personal ownership of places and objects: «Nobody has the right to take my shirt or my record without my permission.»

As expected, boys manage better than girls to achieve some kind of autonomy outside the home, through a network of social relationships and the use of public space. This is what Ashraf (18, Lebanon) has done. Girls constantly ask for a minimum of personal belongings and the right to have their own «secrets» and stories, but do not always succeed, as Tala (17, Lebanon) indicates.

By subjective resources is not meant individual determination and energy alone but the model that exists in the adolescent's environment. This explains the difference between Waood (15) and Najah (16), two Tunisian adolescents. Waood admires her father's calm, culture and all he has done to succeed. Najah rejects the model represented by her mother (a divorced cleaning woman) and defines herself and her future in opposition to that model. She wants her future husband to be polite, from a respectable family, intelligent and like herself in temperament; she intends not to make a wrong choice of husband, as her mother did.

The Lebanese interviews show how important models are in contructing the adolescent identity and in the quest for autonomy. Ashraf (18) has a father who is a brilliant university teacher and respected political activist; Deena (15) greatly admires her father, an officer in the Lebanese Army; Rany (16) is much impressed by his uncle, an emigrant successful in the world of business and sports.

**(12)** Robert Castel et Claudine Haroche, Propriété privée, propriété sociale, propriété de soi, Paris: Fayard, 2001.

## 5. Self-image at the level of aesthetics: 'normal' - 'could do better'

How do adolescents describe themselves physically? The terms «normal», «like everyone else» recur in the interviews (except in the Lebanese ones), plus others depicting the body as «a given», a basic capital which cannot be much changed and to which one has to resign oneself. Character is formed by the person himself. But ugliness and beauty are the gift of an invisible Creator and must be accepted.

The words of Najah (16, Tunisia) are moving. She despises her sister's making fun of the skin problems that affect her looks, considering this unacceptable: «Ugliness and beauty are of God's making; we have to be content with what He gives us, not make fun of those who have handicap or a defect, for they are not responsible for them.» Zakiya (18, Bahrain) laconically says: «We can only accept what God has given us and thank Him for it.»

But Muheeb (16, Yemen), whose self-image seems to be dented by a handicap to his hand, declares that he is content with his looks and regrets that other people consider him «different» and shun his company.

Jihaad (18, Tunisia) says he is «neither beautiful nor ugly»; «I think I'm quite good-looking and thank God, my Creator, for that. My merit is that God has put me on the right path: no drinking, no girls.» These stereotyped ideas recur in the Moroccan interviews - physical beauty is worthless compared to «the beauty of the soul» - and probably reflect the dominant social values.

This refusal to join the game of assessing shape and beauty is partly the result of the conditions in which the field study was conducted. But the answers were affected by the dominant value discourse and the religious background, whereas they are, in this age phase, supposed to reflect a wish for the admiration of others. The answers also reflect the gender effect on the construction of personal identity. Boys' attitudes vary from a real lack of interest in aesthetics and a fake despising of them; more boys than girls are unaffected by physical appearance, as if «man's value» lies elsewhere. Mohamed (17, Egypt) says «physical appearance is the least of his worries.» But this male belittling of shape and beauty is belied by their desire for beauty in a girl when they come to talk about partners (as other chapters will show). (Girls do not require beauty in their partners.) Hence we need to be careful as to what the attitudes expressed mean, how far they are accurate, and whether they voice the real attitude of their authors or are stereotyped answers reflecting the need to give the interviewer a good opinion of the self, on the one hand, and the idea that beauty is a given that can't be changed and must be endured (adapting to, and relieving, the deep internal contradiction), on the other.

But attitudes change when it comes to things that can't be influenced (weight, size, shape, hair color, etc.). Many adolescents, especially girls, mention obesity. Reem (15, Lebanon) hates the way she looks; she is overweight, and ashamed of herself. Mouna (18, Algeria), whose weight has caused her problems with her peers, says: «I am a bit fat, and people make fun of me, saying 'There goes fatty the cow', and keep insulting me.» In other cases, adolescents' refusal to accept their physical and aesthetic appearance even affects how they relate to their social environment.

Waleed (18, Bahrain) is emotional about his difficulty integrating in society: «I love people and want to be friends, but they shun me and think I'm ugly. I dislike my shape and accent; people reject me because my mother is Indian.» Zeineb (18, Lebanon) is expecting a divorce and no longer likes to be told she is beautiful. Her beauty is one reason for the failure of her marriage, and she is paying a price for it.

Which adolescents are ready to assess their own physical appearance? Analysis of the interviews shows that those girls who agreed to the self-evaluation exercise hold diametrically opposed positions: those with resources use a discourse that reflects self-confidence; the socially, culturally and economically disadvantaged girls see the aesthetic capital as important and think it should be taken into consideration.

Narmeen (18, Egypt, Christian, shop assistant) straddles the two positions. She works to pay for private lessons and prepare a dowry. «As you can see, I'm superb,» she laughs. But (not to be accused of exaggeration and presumption) she goes back on this: «No, I'm just nice, I'm normal.» Ilham (17, Egyptian, married) hides behind the words of others to assert her beauty, saying: «People say I'm beautiful.» The Algerian girls vary, some assessing their physique positively in a gradualist logic that starts with shy, suggestive phrases such as «I don't see myself as ugly» (Nadia 18, and Meysa 18), and others saying unequivocally and daringly: «I see myself as beautiful and cute» (Hala, 17).

In Lebanon, adolescents seemed to be more worried about their figures, talking about diet, balanced nutrition, sport and cosmetic surgery, but trying not to look «futile and superficial» in the eyes of the interviewer[13].

## 6. Relationship with the past: between amnesia and pain

A common feature is the adolescents' feeling that they are prisoners of the present. Eric Hobsbaum argues that this is characteristic of the late 20th century: «Destruction of the past, or more precisely of the social mechanisms which tie contemporaries with past generations, is one of the distinctive and most confused phenomena that characterize the end of the twentieth century. Most young people live in a sort of permanent present without any organic tie to the general past of the time in which they live.»[14] Indeed, the adolescents find it hard to identify important events in their lives or present these landmarks in succession or in any order of development. The short memory syndrome recalls what Michel Maffesoli calls «presentism»[15]. The absence of any analysis of daily life and personal experience makes it difficult to produce a story of the self.

When adolescents do remember specific events these often awaken painful memories that shake them out of their lethargic relationship to time. Jamila (17, Morocco) has a deep wound from which she says she can never recover: her father was sentenced to thirty years in prison for raping her older sister. Only a few adolescents have happy memories (a love encounter, trip, etc.) that have marked their lives. Though the events they mention vary (death, divorce of parents, etc.), in the telling they always focus on what happened «before» and «after», as if to stress the irreversible nature of the event and the fact that «things will never be the same again».

The death of a grandparent is a sad event that recurs frequently. Jassim (18, Bahrain) talks of the deep sadness that comes from the loss of grandparents: «I was deeply affected by my grandmother's death...it changed my view of many things and reminded me that death exists. I'd never experienced the death of someone so close.» Ashraf (18, Lebanon), who has fairly much escaped family control and taken up political and social causes, recalls his grandmother's death as the only event to mark his life. Deena (15, Lebanon) sees her grandmother's death as the most important event in her life: «Since her death everything has changed. The family is no longer the same. We no longer visit or meet together.» Heeba (16, Lebanon) describes her grandfather's death in moving terms: «Grandfather spoiled me; he liked to stroke my hair. One day, very sick and on his deathbed, he asked me to come nearer and kissed me on the cheek. I shall never ever forget that kiss.»[16]

Farouk (18, Egypt) speaks of funeral rites and what he remembers about those unique moments, treating his grandmother's death as if it was an initiation into adulthood. «I loved my grandmother as if I were one of her own children... During the burial and the ceremony of condolence, I had an essential role, unusual for someone my age. Since then, I have taken on responsibilities beyond my years.» Sumaya (18, Egypt) sees the death of a relative as painful but representing «an opportunity» to learn what one has to do to join the adult world.

Huyaam (17, Tunisia) talks of the deaths of her real and her adoptive fathers: «To me death means losing certain things forever...what I have really lost with the death of my two fathers is the confidence they had in me.» She has lost a kind of esteem and recognition that bolstered her self-image.

Lebanese Hana (15) and Sarra (16) see death as creating a sense of being definitively abandoned, whether the deceased was a family member or friend. Other events (divorce, emigration, separation) can cause this feeling. Here the example of Najet (18, Tunisia) is telling. She found difficulty in talking about herself and the important moments in her life. «I need to think...I don't know.» After moments of silence, laughter and hesitation she overcomes her embarrassment and

**(13)** See Chapter Five on the culture and behaviour of adolescents.

**(14)** Eric Hobsbaum, (The Age of extremes) L',ge des extrÍmes: Histoire du court xxème siècle. Edition Complexe, 1999.

**(15)** Michel Mafessoli, La conquÍte du présent. Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1998.

**(16)** Regarding the place of grandparents in the lives of adolescents, see Chapter Five on the adolescent and the family.

remembers two events: her sister's wedding, and the time she spent with her grandmother when she was just six. «This was both good and bad.» She was sent to live with her grandmother so that she could study, but fell ill because she could not bear the separation from her mother, to whom she was very attached. After three months, she was sent back to her parents. The separation is still a painful memory, despite her teachers' understanding and the affection of people round her.

Other adolescents speak of similar separations. Lebanese Tala (17) and Rany (16) recall their leaving Lebanon as very difficult. Nouran (17, Bahrain) describes her father's emigration as unbearable. Fawzi (18, Bahrain) painfully recalls breaking off with his beloved, who left him to marry someone able to start a family. With visible bitterness, Hanene (18, Bahrain) describes her early marriage and equally early divorce.

Parental divorce is seen as very painful, as is the deterioration of family life it leads to. Nahla (15, Egypt) says: «What has most affected my life is my parents' separation; what makes it even more unbearable is that they still live together under the same roof, not speaking to each other...I still remember what happened. It was an awful quarrel; we were lost between the two of them. My brothers were terrified. Our life has completely changed.» Raamya (15, Bahrain) bewails the impossibility of reconciliation: «When my parents divorced...I hoped one day they'd get back together. When I grew up, I realized this was impossible.» Nihaal (16, Bahrain) recalls her father's violence to her mother and how, as a child, she would accompany her mother to her grandmother's house each time she left the marital home. Then she hated her father, but now she loves him.

The interviews revealed other forms of suffering and violence, some caused by fate, such as road accidents. Algerian Mona and Nadia (18) recall two accidents. In some cases, the family or community were the cause of suffering. Mahmoud (18, Bahrain) recalls the «black Thursday» when he was unjustly accused of having sexually interfered with the neighbours' son, six years his junior; he was said to have kissed him on the mouth. His parents did not give him the chance to say what had happened and to regain respect in their eyes and those of his friends.

Azeeza (17, Egypt) suffered in another way: «What I'll never forget is the day I was excised. It was as though something of me was severed and injured deep inside. The memory is still vivid, as if it just happened. I think I began to hate my grandmother then. While my mother was at the market, my grandmother took me and my sister out 'to visit a neighbour'. We were in a terrible state when we came back. I remember not eating or speaking to anybody for two days. I will never forgive her that.»

Some of the family violence related by the girls seems trivial but in fact leaves indelible memories. Zakya (18, Bahrain) recalls the day she was beaten by her mother for coming home late, while Ibtissem (18, Morocco) remembers the systemstic violence her parents inflicted upon her in the form of punishments. Ever since Fatima (16, Morocco) dropped out of school she has been forced to do household chores.

Our interviews contain few examples of happy events. Paul (18, Lebanon) still remembers how four years ago he met a girl, two years his senior, in a youth camp. Imen (16, Bahrain) and Marwa (18, Algeria) describe - each in her own way - their first love encounter and the intense tremor they felt on receiving the first letter from their beloved. Ilhem (17, Egypt) recalls what she considers the most important event in her life, her wedding: «I was bashful and happy. I felt I had something more than the other girls my age; I was afraid too.» Other happy events are sometimes related, such as obtaining a degree or travelling.

Although family events represent landmarks in adolescents' lives, some relate other kinds of event. Waood (15, Tunisia) associates the break in her personal history with outside events. The second Intifadha and the horrors it brought shocked her deeply: the American society she had admired so much disappointed her, and she is now aware of the injustice and aggression that prevail in the world. Nesreen (17, South Lebanon), a Maronite, was similarly shocked by the Israeli occupation and the bombing of the village of Qana[17]. Othman (18, Yemen) says the most important event of his life was a kind of redemption. «I was lost...my life had no meaning. I was rejected by everyone, particularly my family. Praise to be God who put me on the right path. I am now an important person at home, in the mosque, at school and in my relationship with my parents. The bad boys I used to associate with now respect me and want to be like me.»

**(17)** Israeli forces bombed a center of the UN peace-keeping forces in Qana, South Lebanon; dozens of women and children had taken refuge during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. In 1996, a refuge was bombed causing the death of over a hundred people.

### The adolescent and the group

In the first years of adolescence, adolescents tend to conform to the group to which they belong. They try to look and behave like its members. This is gradually associated with an attempt at self-assertion and consideration within the group itself. This behaviour increases as the adolescents become more mature and more experienced.

Adolescents like complete friendship and faithfulness. They belong to specific groups and repress any conflict within the group, seeing this as secondary compared with a greater one (should this happen, particularly with the school authority). We notice that adolescents reinforce their allegiance and respect to the group, showing fidelity and solidarity with its members in facing the outside world.

Adolescents give great importance to their relations with both sexes; they feel disturbed by strict social control and the control of parents and teachers. Strict control in our societies is common, and the family is strongly attached to values and gives educational orientations a moral and religious character to ensure more cohesive behaviour. This does not negate the presence of some elements of father/child generational conflict.

What adolescents are usually blamed for is their great frivolity and rashness in taking decisions concerning various aspects of their lives. Many adolescents make mistakes, sometimes big ones, for which they pay with their lives. The behaviour we now notice includes boys' obsession with sex and having sex with girls, and this obsession also involves girls. The reasons for this are numerous, the most important being idleness, the influence of the information media, and unemployment. These factors expose adolescents' relations with their parents and with their religious heritage, leading to behaviour unacceptable to parents, and a tendency to continuous opposition. Thus we notice that the adolescents' relations with their parents are not always what they should be, particularly when the control exercised by parents is strict, which can lead to dissent and aggressive reactions. We also notice that adolescents' relations with religion and the religious heritage are weak due to the influence of the media and the adolescents' interest in novelties which are more important to them than the religious heritage.

**A psychology teacher, Yemen**

## General Conclusion

The field study shows that how adolescent girls and boys build their identity and develop their self-image differs according to their social and economic conditions, life courses, and means they possess to make choices and deal with problems and difficulties. It is hard to say that there is one type of Arab adolescent.

There are three basic ways of developing: the submissive adolescent is committed to the traditional family group and integrates its standards and values, views and judgements, conforming to achieve peace of mind and avoid tension or conflict. Full integration in the family group means that the peer group's influence on the forming of the adolescent personality is marginalized. S/he resembles an adult in her/his behaviour and values.

The second course is the reverse. The adolescent leaves the beaten track and rebels, rejecting adult ideas and attitudes, and strives to shape a distinct personality and an authentic identity, seeking new models of adolescent behaviour to speed the pace of social change.

But results may not come up to expectations. The rebellion may not necessarily lead to the construction of an independent personality or contribute to social change, except when other conditions are available. Sometimes, adolescents seek individualization and distinction through exaggerated imitation of, and integration in, what is supposed to be youth culture. They dislike being «different»

and want to embody a specific group value even if this is different from those of adults[18]. But insofar as it marginalizes parents and family, full integration in the peer group «prevents the development of the individual project which means distinction from the group to which the individual belongs.»[19] Thus, the problem is more complex than it first seems.

There exists a «compromise» way, adopted by adolescents who seek to take family and society into consideration and respond to their expectations, and yet definine/determine a distinct identity that does not hide adolescent requirements.

Describing this as a «compromise» is not negative; the emergence of the individual in today's world can require a compromise between the individual and society. In Karène Chalan's words: «The difficulty faced by the contemporary individual lies in the way he determines the criteria and regulations that enable him to reach an equilibrium between independence, autonomy and relations with the other»[20]

Internal thinking is difficult. In the first, submissive, process, thinking is limited since the individual fully (or almost) identifies with the family group. In the second process, it grows since the adolescent strives for a compromise between the self and the other. In the third course it reaches a climax and the adolescent uses his own objective resources to describe, evaluate and develop an authentic image of the self.

Social comparison plays a central role in this process. The image of the self is built through reliance on the «significant» or «generalized» other as a reference, via imitation and submission, via a relative distancing from others' judgements, or via complete severance with these judgements and an attempt to build an identity and develop a personality away from stereotyped attitudes and ready-made ideas.

**(18)** Alain Clemence, François Rochat, Caroline Cortolezzis, Patricia Dumont, Michelle Egloff, Claude Kaiser, Scolarité et adolescence : Les motifs de l'insécurité, Hampt-Bern 2001.

**(19)** Robert Bidart, Autorité parentale et citoyenneté : La question des compétences parentales, in Nouvelles problématiques adolescentes. Directors Maryse Vaillant and Jean-Paul Leblanc, L'Harmattan, 2001.

**(20)** Karine Chalan, Pour un usage sociologique de la double généalogie philosophique de l'individualisme, in Nouvelles problematiques adolescentes, op. cit.

PART TWO:

# FIELD STUDY

CHAPTER II

# PUBERTY, REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND LOVE

## Male Adolescent Freedom and Female Adolescent Control

# PUBERTY, REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND LOVE

## Introduction

The first part of this Report went into the various approaches defining adolescence as a complex individual and social phenomenon; they agreed that there was a strong, direct link between adolescence and puberty.

The approach adopted does not treat puberty as a single independent factor for defining adolescence but as one of a set of interrelated and intertwined factors; the changing roles and behaviour of adolescence cannot be attributed to one factor alone but as arising from complex, multi-faceted factors. This combination has effects that go beyond the sum of its parts. Puberty and adolescence are a kind of "bio-social chemistry"; adolescence itself exists only thanks to, and as a product of, this chemistry.

### 1. PUBERTY AND THE PROCESS OF ADOLESCENCE

Puberty refers to certain observable physiological, psychological and mental changes: growth of the body, development of the genitals, appearance of secondary sexual characteristics, hormonal changes, and ability to ovulate and produce sperm. It is accompanied by a development of the intellectual, cognitive, emotional and affective capacities. The changes affect the lives of adolescents strongly and are more complex than they at first seem; their impact is not direct and linear but involves a number of collective representations, beliefs and symbols. It relates to changes in how adolescents see themselves, other people and the relationship between people and institutions. Adolescence as a social category emerges where physiological puberty and particular social and cultural processes (the beginning of practical qualification for social roles in the family and school environments) meet. Such developments constitute the overall framework for this category and concept to emerge; the scope of analysis can be widened to include physiological, psychological and social aspects.

The socio-cultural framework alone cannot explain adolescence in all its aspects. Each individual has his/her personal, individual and family history which, interacting with the overall social framework, produce the concrete features and characteristics of that particular adolescence. Variables such as sex, socio-economic level, the socio-cultural complex or the housing environment, produce different adolescences.

In Arab societies, puberty and its effects must be set within the changes these societies and their value systems have recently undergone, especially as regards marriage and relations between the sexes. The most obvious change has been the increasingly late age of marriage, observed in most Arab countries. The average age of marriage for young people in these countries is between 25 and 30 for both sexes. Thus, a decade usually elapses between puberty and marriage; it can be two decades. Prevailing value systems and traditions and laws do not allow open, stable sexual relations during this period, despite the existence of the sex drive and interest in the other sex. Prohibition of sex during the emergence and development of sexual and emotional identity was not a major issue for past generations in that only a few years separated puberty from marriage (and life in those societies was simpler than it is now). Early marriage was a practical social mechanism to bring sexual relations within the framework of marriage. Some attempt is being made to revive this mechanism to deal with the problem of late marriage in Arab societies, as appears in programs organized by some associations and institutions in Arab countries (particularly religious ones, Islamic and Christian) to get young people to marry. Some governments and parties are using this mechanism to solve problems such as AIDS and sexually-transmitted diseases, extra-marital sexual relations, celibacy and late marriage. The associations and institutions often provide help and assistance to encourage marriage (organizing collective marriage ceremonies, extending loans to meet the cost of weddings or obtain lodgings, providing job opportunities and helping solve the

problem of exorbitant dowries). These proposals are unlike the solutions reached by European societies, which have a more flexible position on value systems, laws and behaviour concerning sexual relations and extra-marital cohabitation, recognise the rights of children born outside marriage and treat 'partners' similarly to married couples as regards rights.

These new problems weigh heavily on adolescents, on how they see relations between the sexes, on the possible and acceptable, or prohibited, form of such relations and on their representation of marriage; this will emerge in the course of this chapter.

## A) Puberty: the difference between boys and girls

How do adolescent girls and boys experience puberty and its changes? As a radical estrangement from childhood, the pre-sexual stage, or a new stage that follows on from it? Or does it give them a gradual but concrete sense of their sexual identity?

Generally speaking, for girls and boys puberty is not the same. It comes to boys more easily and naturally and gives them early and obvious pleasure. Boys and their families find joy in it, and a sense of pride and self-confidence. Boys "develop an interest in constantly changing their looks"[1].

But girls seem to go through it as a necessary evil. For them, puberty generally means entry into the adult world, an end to play, a requirement of responsible behaviour. Puberty may mean (early) marriage in Yemen and in other countries, as is the case for Zeineb (18, Lebanon). In conservative families it can mean wearing the veil, staying at home, and less freedom of movement and social relations, though this can vary. Hanin (15, Yemen) sees puberty as a tie; she cried when she started menstruating in seventh grade, "because I don't want to be a grown-up and wear the veil."

But girls' responses differ according to their environments, experience and social and cultural affiliation. If they belong to relatively affluent, open and educated milieus, and their personal experience has been uncomplicated, they usually go through this phase with a freedom that enables them to deal more easily with their bodies. Puberty in this case represents natural, obvious maturity. Girls may then feel happy, as did Sarra (16, Bahrain): "I went and told my father" and he explained what had happened.

Boys, however, go through this phase with a kind of excess. Achraf (18) and Paul Valéry (18) from Lebanon, and Mahmoud (18) from Bahrain, masturbate and have relations with the more accessible girls. In Tunisia it was suggested[2] that a boy will not be able to control his desires forever, given the temptations, especially in times of (psychological, educational, professional, family-related) stress. Some say girls who refuse to have sex should be shunned. And when in need public places can be visited, "in extreme situations, Glory be to God, one cannot help it, so one goes to 'public' places, they would be less harmful..." (pupil, Ma'arif ash-shabab, Tunis).

For Jassim (18, Bahrain), puberty was a generally quiet period but "my nervousness increased a bit and my personality was formed". There can also be a wish to learn one's religious duties and "distinguish between right and wrong", as Abbas (18, Bahrain) says. But it is usually associated with positive feelings, since boys are given greater consideration and respect, even physically: "People listen to me when I speak because now I am bigger," says Amir (15, Egypt).

This does not mean that puberty is a wonderful experience for all boys. Wassim (17, Yemen) was scared after his first wet dream; his mother advised him to recite some verses of the Koran before going to sleep and told him that it was "urine that is excreted from their bodies when they are asleep". Ahmed (18, Morocco) dropped out of school and took to the streets for three months, "after which I came to my senses and realized that my conduct was unacceptable and returned to school". Rani (16, Lebanon) was surprised because he could not understand what had happened, and hid his surprise until a course on sexual education at school explained things.

The new generation of adolescents is dominated by a dualism that reveals an inner conflict. Whereas they all mention their growing sexual desire, their wish to frequent the other sex, and their consequent needs, the options available to them for satisfying their desires are contradictory. One option is to repress their desires until marriage and compensate through reading, sports or studying; the

**(1)** Ma'arif wattijahat wa soulouk ash-shabab fi majalat assihhah al-injabiah (Conceptions, Orientations and Behaviour of the Young in the Fields of Reproductive Health), Report on Population and Development Series, Research, Studies and Development Unit, League of Arab States, March 2002, Tunis. In Arabic.

**(2)** Op.cit.

risks involved in satisfying the desires and getting into relationships are stressed. Thus, exhortations like: "He must concentrate on his studies" or "He must have a personality, a strong will. He must have self-control."[3] This is especially so in rural areas, where the reserve that is a feature of relations between the sexes is generally more acute in all Arab countries. On the whole, boys and girls tend to wait for marriage.

But in countries such as Tunisia, Lebanon, and Morocco the situation is different. Here, there is a call for wider social relations between the sexes to be accepted and for families and the social environment to understand the importance of those relations and to consider them a healthy phenomenon ensuring psychological balance.

The issue, however, for girls and boys, also depends on individual experience and the family environment. This explains that their memories of puberty differ, despite the presence of common characteristics derived from values and traditions that are, to a large extent, similar in most Arab countries and social milieus.

## B) Memories of puberty

In most cases, the field researchers experienced some difficulty in getting adolescent girls and boys to speak freely about puberty. This difficulty was worse when sexual issues were addressed. Although part of the difficulty was the researcher/respondent age difference, part was due to culture and behavioural systems where talking about sex and related subjects was seen with reserve or unease, if not a sense of prohibition.

Thus the adolescents gave brief answers about their memories, bodily changes, experiences and intimate feelings. Sometimes they used general terms to summarize their experience and avoid embarrassment, or said they lacked information and knowledge, or were shy about talking about such things, particularly with strangers older than they. In a few cases they refused to answer questions. This was so for Faruk (18) and Abdullah (17) from Egypt. Faruk merely said it had been a very difficult period and that he preferred not to say anything more.

The responses also revealed a separation between aspects of puberty and sexual desire, involving a complex relationship with the other sex. This separation was a way of protecting themselves and avoiding the embarrassment of admitting that bodily changes were connected to feelings towards the other sex, and that there was a link between friendship, love and sexual desire. All the adolescents seemed to prefer to deal with each aspect in isolation. Puberty for girls became a purely natural process, the beginning of menstruation, and as a natural process an acceptable subject (particularly with female workers who shared that experience) to talk about. Adolescent girls usually linked puberty and menstruation, even seeing them as one and the same thing. Adolescent boys did not see a strong link between puberty and ejaculation. They repeatedly saw sexual desire and erection as expressions of puberty that preceded voluntary or involuntary ejaculation (wet dreams).

Another way adolescent girls avoided going into detail was to belittle the importance of the menstrual period. Amel (18, Morocco) saw it as "normal as though nothing happened". Da'ad (17, Lebanon) said: "Nothing happened. That is, my period came and I was a bit surprised, but my mother was close to me and, as I remember, there was no problem. My mother told me it was natural and I shouldn't be afraid." This shows that more importance was given to changes in maturity and self-awareness than to biological and physical change, the menstrual period being seen as natural.

Adolescent girls spoke about their first menstruation and how they and their relatives had dealt with it. Most responses were brief, mentioning fear, tension, incredulity and tears. One reason was their surprise at the onset of menstruation and the fact that they did not know in advance or did not expect to reach puberty so quickly. Most had a sad or disturbing memory of puberty. But where the girls had been prepared by their parents, the memory was often linked to joy and a feeling that they were now women.

The conclusions of the field interviews conducted as part of preparing the Report agree with those of statistical surveys done in this area, e.g. the Survey of Egyptian Youth[4], where the reactions of girls to their first menstruation were as follows:

**(3)** See the Tunisian study conducted within the framework of this Report.

**(4)** The Survey of Egyptian Youth refers to The Passage to the Maturity Phase: the National Survey of Youth in Egypt, prepared by the International Population Council, New York, USA, Cairo, 2000.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Fear, shock, crying** | **60.6%** |
| **Natural, neutral reaction** | **35.5%** |
| **Happiness** | **4.2%** |

In the Algerian sample, over half the girls said they did not remember anything. Roughly half had experienced fear and pain and said that boys started to take an interest in them, while only one said she felt happy to have grown up. The situation was not much different for adolescent girls in other countries.

The girls varied in how they saw the first menstruation. Many felt like Raya (18, Lebanon), a modern girl enjoying a large degree of liberty: "It didn't mean much to me". Even where menstruation was accepted, they felt something "wrong" had happened, "discomfort" for Rafif (17, Lebanon), even "disgust" for Sarra (16, Lebanon). In extreme cases, there was a total rejection of the onset of menstruation, as for Samira (15, Lebanon). It was "somewhat embarrassing" for Suheyr (16, Egypt), or confusing, "I was shaken", or frightening. Huda (18, Egypt) said, "I was so frightened I almost died." Nura (15, Bahrain) said, "I was frightened and didn't feel safe until I had told my mother." "I was scared and couldn't help crying" (a Tunisian girl)[5].

The feeling was sometimes expressed neutrally and sometimes as a distress, discomfort, laceration or "illness", as described by Wu'ud (15, Tunis). Sarra (16, Lebanon) wished that she had not "warmed up"[6] (not menstruated) for the pain and the sense of dirtiness she felt gave her a sense of disgust and discomfort.[7]

The following question needs answering: what, in addition to parental neglect[8] or failure to tell their children about this phase, causes these feelings of sadness, fear and discomfort? It seems that sometimes the girls' fear and bafflement were made worse by the mothers' reaction. The Tunisian survey cites the case of a country girl for whom the onset of menstruation was frightful, not only because of the surprise but because of the reaction of her mother, herself afraid of the reaction of the father. The mother repeatedly asked her daughter if she had done something to cause the bleeding: "I was terrified by my mother who kept asking me: Where did you go? Did you do anything...and I was swearing and everything...."

Rim (15), from the Beka'a region in Lebanon where tribal relations are still strong, experienced a similar situation. Puberty had shocked her because of the reaction of her mother: "Where were you? And what did you do?" These reactions are explained by the need to preserve the girl's virginity and the fear of being unable to control her correctly - by restricting her movements and warning her against boys and protecting her from them.

## Psychosomatic symptoms

The menstrual period is sometimes accompanied by psychosomatic symptoms, like headaches. Wasma (17, Yemen) became aware of the changes in her body when she had a headache that, according to the doctor, was caused by her anxiety about her bodily changes. Her parents asked her to amend her behaviour so that from a "spoilt" girl she would become a mature woman. Wasma felt she had undergone a great change, becoming more flexible and less strict and obstinate.

From the interviews it emerges that in Yemen puberty represents an important change in a girl's life, particularly if the family conditions are unusual (divorced parents). Wala (17) cried when she realized that she was pubescent and noticed the changes affecting her body, but adjusted to this without telling her stepmother. A week went by before she could tell her mother her periods had started. She also developed irregular periods when somebody asked for her hand and she felt he would be instrumental in depriving her of her education.

Irregular periods are more frequent when menstruation occurs at an early age to girls who are not prepared for it and are surprised by the change and its effect on their bodies and lives. Then the change embarrasses them. Najla (17, Egypt) says: " It was no graceful affair because I reached puberty at an early age and I was physically different from all my friends. I was very self-conscious at school and did not want to go out." Hanan (18, Bahrain) says:

**(5)** See above Conceptions, Orientations and Behaviour of Youth in the Fields of Reproductive Health.

**(6)** This is a literal translation of a word in Tunisian Arabic meaning falling ill.

**(7)** Sarra's menstrual period was interrupted and she had to undergo surgery.

**(8)** This is an indication of our societies' uncertainty as to which they should favor: tradition or modernity. Informing young people of the "facts of life" was traditionally done by the parents, through various rites, or by clerics who used to deal with the finer sexual issues that one might come across.

"I felt it was an offense to me being a little girl." Aziza (17, Egypt) links it to her circumcision, which she hated (as she hated her grandmother who had forced it on her): "I attained puberty some months after that business of the circumcision, that is, early. But because puberty was linked in my mind with circumcision, for quite some time I hated my body and myself, and when the menstrual period came I did not go out. And then it was finished: I grew up."

## Control and restriction of movement

For girls, puberty means strong social control as to, for example, dress and going out, particularly at night and with boys, or attending school, if the school is far from home.

Whereas for boys puberty brings social recognition - "As soon as I started dreaming and wet dreaming, I knew I had become a man," says Hassan (18, Morocco) - in most Arab societies girls are denied much freedom of movement. Zohra (17, Yemen) says: "I used to play in the street. After puberty, my movements and actions were restricted." Girls move into the women's world with all that this entails in terms of custom and tradition, stopping playing and behaving rationally and responsibly. "Mother told me I had become a young lady and should be strong and take care of myself and watch my health in preparation for marriage," says Ilham (17, Egypt). Nadia (16, Egypt) says: "Many things were forbidden to me now my periods had started. I was an adult and was supposed to watch what I was doing. But I was only thirteen and I wanted to continue playing and behaving as before."

In Yemeni society, this not only disconcerts girls but makes them feel discriminated against. Nawf (17) says that she hated herself at puberty because she had more responsibilities and duties than boys: "I was sad and prayed to God to make me a boy." Her bodily changes made her introverted; she hated boys. Though she later accepted the situation, being mates or friends with boys was distasteful. Puberty is a watershed: the social roles of men and women, latent during childhood, become operational. It brings physical changes and also stereotyped social roles, grounded on the biological difference. The sharper the gender separation and the more divergent the social roles, the greater the chance that this separation, plus puberty, will give rise to negative feelings about puberty and the relations between the sexes.

Stereotyping involves a "sense of responsibility", as when a link is made between sexual maturity and traditional women's roles (doing household chores). Najet (18, Tunisia) says that once she reached maturity she felt she was "carrying a heavy load"; she felt closer to her mother. When maturity and early marriage coincide, girls take on all the responsibility and quickly become wives and mothers.

## The role of parents

The interviews show that only rarely did parents prepare their children for sexual maturity, merely warning their daughters of the possibility of bleeding when they approached a particular age. It was as though they did not want to deal with the subject out of wariness or sometimes neglect.

Most adolescents said they had not got their information about sexual maturity, menstruation, wet dreams, etc. from their parents or even teachers; a few said their parents had made allusions or had a direct talk with them. No major differences between town and country or educated and uneducated milieus were found. Some rural traditional environments prepared girls for sexual maturity, while some educated ones did not refer to the subject until it had been experienced.

How do adolescents pick up this information? In most cases, it comes in dribbles and is learned by listening quietly to what goes on in the family, or through older siblings or friends. Friends are the main source of information. Reading is another. Sometimes adolescents are informed at school, safely and scientifically but relatively belatedly.

But a striking example of the problem of information came from a Tunisian girl. Her first period came when she was in class; she thought something inexplicable and terrible had happened. Her classmates were equally ignorant. When the teacher was asked, he said she must have injured herself on a nail ("a nail scratched her"). This shows that "there is a need to upgrade the knowledge of the teachers themselves and to train them how to pass on knowledge to the young." It is therefore not surprising that menstruation should be linked with annoyance, embarrassment and confusion.[9]

**(9)** Conceptions, Orientations and Behaviour of Youth, op. cit.

In some cases parents said they had spoken to their children about puberty, but the adolescents concerned made no reference to this. And as stated in the Survey of Egyptian Youth[10]: "The small part played by mothers and fathers in passing on this information is apparent when we compare the responses of the young people with those of their parents (mother and father) of the same gender. It is striking that only 7% of the boys who knew something about puberty said that they had learned what they knew from their parents, whereas 42% of those fathers said they had spoken to their sons about the changes accompanying puberty.

The Tunisian Survey of Family Health indicates that relatives within the family play a small part only in giving the young (especially boys) information about sexual health. Relatives outside the nuclear family pass on information about sexual health to girls. Only 12% of mothers seem to have taught daughters about reproductive health, but 24% of relatives. The Tunisian Survey concludes that for daughters the sources are more varied than for sons. School has a major role in informing about reproductive health and is the source of information for 64% of girls and 62% of boys[11].

## Puberty: fear for girls and joy for boys

Generally speaking, puberty produces fear among girls and joy among boys. Mondher (17, Yemen): "On my first wet dream two years ago, I told my father and felt relieved. I grew a mustache"; he started getting more respect from others. The Tunisian Survey of Family Health reports a Tunisian pupil: "I discovered that I had become sexually mature. I could now ejaculate. I was happy... I had become a man." Another Tunisian pupil: "One can now love, feel the sex urge and desire."

Though discussions of this period were brief, most comments made by boys were positive, unlike those made by girls, who became the target of suitors. As a result, thinking about marriage became their main concern.

But even girls feel some joy. Raya (18, Lebanon) was unhappy and embarrassed at first; she did not tell her mother, away from home. But her grandmother told her a story about girls welcoming their puberty. She wondered why "they made so much of the matter" but felt better about it, especially when she bought a black bra and started "wearing nicer things...Girls feel joy over these things". She felt she had grown up and started to see that boys gave a lot of importance to this change. "They like it and it's nice for girls too; their bodies become nicer because of it." She agreed that some superficial sexual experiences usually begin at this age. This happened with her.

Ibtissem (18, Morocco) sees puberty as bringing about a total change. "I felt I had become different. I had grown up. I was now able to make friends and try out different relationships with boys. I paid more attention to my looks and would not go out unless I was wearing something nice. I changed my clothes every day."

## C) Attitudes to puberty

Through fieldwork, it was possible to observe a change in attitudes to puberty. Traditionally, puberty was welcomed in a ceremony to mark a girl's reaching puberty. But the current attitude is one of embarrassment and confusion on the part of the mother, causing the daughter to be frightened and confused.

Celebrating the passage from childhood to youth used to mark the beginning of adulthood. Talah (17, Lebanon) and Raya (18, Lebanon) agree. Talah had her first period on her twelfth birthday, at school. Though all of her schoolmates had reached puberty, she was ignorant: "Mummy had not explained it to me in detail. I was alarmed. I panicked and I went and told the headmistress." Talah was surprised to learn that this mistress, who kissed her and explained what to do, and who was nearly sixty, had had a party to mark her daughter's first period. Her mother agreed with the headmistress: "Mummy told me that for a long time they celebrated the event; it meant that a girl was now able to bear children". It seems that it was formerly fertility that was important. When Zeineb (18, Lebanon) reached puberty, she told her mother, who said it was natural and meant she could get married and have children. It was a happy occasion; her mother ululated in joy. But she did not tell the neighbors; the early puberty might restrict her growth and spoil her marriage prospects. Parents might postpone announcing a daughter's puberty if they felt they were unprepared for it, seeing it as a sign of fertility and that the girl was ready for marriage.

**(10)** Op.cit.

**(11)** The Tunisian Survey of Family Health, Main Report, League of Arab States (The Arab Project for Family Health and the Tunisian Ministry for Public Health), The National Council for Family and Human Settlements, 2002. The Survey covers a sample of 7,000 families representing all the regions in the country, including cities, villages and rural areas.

The mother of Ilham (17, Egypt) ululated in joy when her daughter became a "young lady" and was able to marry. Sally (16, Egypt) says the first period is very important in the countryside: "Among farmers, this subject has a powerful resonance for girls. Since I was the youngest of my sisters, they gave a big party for me." The signs of sexual maturity were thus dealt with differently in the past. Today, restrictions are still imposed on girls in rural areas and the lower social categories when they reach puberty, but the festive aspects that mitigated the restrictions have died out.

Do girls see the group celebration of puberty in contemporary society positively? Huyem (17, Tunisia) rejects the festive character of the event. She has modern ideas about marriage (the right to choose a husband) and disapproves of early marriage: it stops girls studying and gaining experience of life and is one form of women's worsening situation. She is against making pubescent girls wear the veil. She mentions the rites of passage on the island of Jerba (southern Tunisia) where her sister-in-law comes from: they throw away the girl's old clothes and buy new ones at the onset of menstruation. They give parties and offer drinks to female guests and from then on forget everything the girl has learned at school. They dress her in the traditional futa and start buying jewellery and preparing the trousseau. The girl becomes a body, a "thing". Huyem also rejects the traditional rites of passage where the girl has to undergo humiliating tests as she attains the status of married women[12].

## The prohibited sexuality

The distinctive feature of the adolescent girl is sexual maturity and a sexual identity. How do the respondents experience this phase? How do they deal with their sexuality and gender when sex is a taboo subject? Both male and female investigators were embarrassed asking girls this, feeling they were intruding on a minor's "innocence and virginity". Hiba (16, Lebanon) told the (female) researcher she was not shy, but said about sex: "I don't understand what you are saying...and I don't know these things". Similar answers came from those who "did not understand the question"! Some simply refused to answer, like Faris (15, Yemen), who found it "extremely embarrassing". In Egypt, half of the girls said they found talking about sex difficult, though they could sometimes do so with girlfriends or mothers. It is the same in Bahrain. Hanan (18) wore the veil so as not to be "the object of anyone's sexual desire. I have not tried sex and so I feel no desire towards anyone". Nura (15) says: "I cannot speak about sex and I do not like sex."

Though sexual relations and affairs between adolescents in all the countries covered by the study could be inferred, and were sometimes openly mentioned, such relations were usually seen as a transgression. Nayla (18, Tunisia) sees sex as "indecent and unclean". Rafif (17, Lebanon) says she hates sex and wants to "shed" her body (and rise as a spirit); she thinks "we have sex once and are forced to bear"; she hates giving birth. Feridah echoes the traditional religious view of sex that it is necessary for procreation but the girl must not experience desire: "Women only want motherhood, but men want pleasure." This is unlike the Islamic approach, that recognizes sex and one of its objectives, i.e. pleasure for both men and women[13].

The attitude towards sex continues to be rather negative and is against openness; self-respect and respect for others can only be attained through distancing oneself from people of the other sex and not having sex. Faris (15, Yemen) sees sex as at least some kind of "involvement"; he had a sentimental affair with three American girls and thanks God that he "did not get involved with them". He compares American and Yemeni girls: Yemenis are shy but American girls "do not mind anything". Jihad (18, Tunisia) is afraid to have sex because of the problems it raises: if he had sex with a girl of "loose morals" and she got pregnant by someone else, she would "regain her honor" at his expense. Thus, sex is governed by the duality of legitimacy and illegitimacy. In reply to the investigator's question Jihad asked: "Which kind of sex do you want to talk about, legitimate or illegitimate?"

But in their answers adolescents differ about sex and love. The sex variable alone cannot explain this difference. Combined with others (country/city, wealth/poverty, religion and cultural and economic level), the difference can be explained.

Those from affluent families and town-dwellers tend to be readier to talk about sex than those from the poor classes. Boys talk more freely than girls. Differences exist between countries: in Yemen, society is conservative and traditional; in Morocco, more liberal (some might say permissive). Some milieus in Lebanon, Tunisia and Egypt are more flexible about tradition because of western influence.

**(12)** Mahfoudh Dorra, Rites alimentaires, rites matrimoniaux dans la société tunisienne, in IBLA review, 1992, vol.55, no. 170.

**(13)** Bouhdiba (A) : La sexualité en Islam, Puf, Paris, 1972.

Mostly, views on sex are implied, not articulated openly. There is conservatism and the idea that sex should follow marriage. Mahmoud (18, Bahrain): "I have not had sex with any girl. It will take place in a legitimate marriage, permanent or temporary." Nehla (15, Egypt) does not see free sex as right: if a boy has good intentions, he will ask for the girl's hand in marriage.

Another position that, by implication, does not condemn premarital sex, is expressed by Talah (17, Lebanon): "Naturally, the boy wants to have it with the person he loves; the same applies to the girl"; she refuses sex without love, but intends that love should lead to marriage. Monia (18, Algeria) wants to preserve her hymen to offer it as "the most beautiful gift" to her future husband. But she also says: "Before marriage, I still don't know whether this will take place or not."

Adolescent boys take varied stances. Paul Valéry (18, Lebanon) only wants to have sex with the girl he will love and marry, as does Rafik (18, Lebanon). Both are religious, one Christian, the other Muslim. Achraf (18, Lebanon) thinks cohabitation will solve many problems: two people in love may live together for a definite period without engagement ("imprisonment" as he put it). Amr (16, Egypt) sees sex as a "pleasant experience", but tradition does not approve of "these things" and in the end the girl gets hurt. Hassa (18, Morocco) limits the sex act to the legal framework; it is "necessary within the limits of what is legal".

The typical male public position involves keeping sex within the marital bounds, with an implied tolerance about men's sexual desires and the satisfying of those desires within limits. The typical female public position is more conservative. Sex is hated, repulsive, ignored or a necessity a woman must bear because she cannot stay unmarried. Marriage can be a suffering and torture one must bear.

Here the gender difference emerges: sex is for men, and women must put up with it to continue the species and for the smooth operation of society, initiated by the man. Feridah (17, Tunisia) says she was influenced by her teachers' views: "A woman's noblest goal in sexual relations is reproduction." In Arab societies sex seems not to be seen as a women's right and or as a relationship of partnership and exchange between two parties. It is a men's right and a women's rash practice.

This raises a question about the woman in A Thousand and One Nights who collected the rings of men with whom she was on intimate terms under the very nose of her gigantic husband who was keeping watch over her. So where is the lustful woman of popular literature? The woman who is "all evil"? Do men change women after marriage? Is what is declared different from what is done? Have women changed to absorb internal oppression? Or is modern conservative education influenced by the western Victorian[14] legacy rather than that of Islam?

This is an intimate subject and is hard for adolescents; they may prefer, under the circumstances, to adopt positions that are closer to the stereotypes and to what is prevalent and socially acceptable. But some interviews revealed frank opinions and experiences. Khadijeh (18, Morocco) has not had sex with her boyfriend but will do so if he persuades her to, even though she prefers not to until "officially engaged". She is afraid he may leave her for another girl if she does not have sex with him. Her approach to sex is gradualist: "He now possesses a quarter of me, after engagement he will possess half of me, and after marriage all of me." Hassan (18, Morocco) tells how a girl 5 years older than him aroused him; he started "going about" her using "all his devilish ways" until "Allah achieved his purpose", for she had aroused him.

The relative nature and diversity of the views appears, as does the difference between what is declared and what kept secret in conformity to the prevailing discourse.

## Virginity as sacred

Most discussions about sex were linked with marriage as though it were impossible to think about sex outside the marriage context, i.e. the social, religious and moral system. The basic gender difference comes from the idea of virginity. Girls think that for boys sex is "for fun", but not for girls, since the hymen or the concept of virginity is still important in Arab societies[15]. Thus, in conservative milieus, the level of respect enjoyed by the family usually depends upon the "virtue" (virginity) of its women.

**(14)** Queen Victoria (1819-1901) was known for her long reign over Britain (63 years). Her reign was marked by a strict commitment to moral and behavioural principles that were not free from hypocrisy, such as looking upon sex as a sin whose unique function is procreation.

**(15)** There is no better evidence for that than the "crimes of honor" which are still popular in more than one Arab country, particularly where tribal relations and traditions are still very strong. The existence of alleviating circumstances for the killer when a girl is killed for reasons of "honor" helps to perpetuate the practice. The legal articles are borrowed from Napoleonic law (European law) contrary to the common belief that it is derived from Arab or Islamic sources or traditions.

Hana (18, Tunisia) says: "The hymen is important in our country. In Bizerta (town in the north) the mother makes sure her daughter was a virgin the day after the wedding" for it is a source of pride for the family[16]. Hana repaid her family by loving her tutor in an "honorable and platonic" way and not behaving dishonorably until he got officially engaged to her. Girls do not preserve their hymens only because of the importance of honor or to preserve social traditions but to improve their negotiating position with future husbands. Though the sex act exposes girls to pregnancy and harms their negotiating position with their future husbands[17], the hymen is the major asset in "bargaining for a husband", "the opportunity that can't come twice." While it is important in all milieus, it is a vital necessity among poorer, conservative classes, the girl's compensation for all her parents have done to bring her up and educate her, a way of thanking them for their trust and of avoiding bringing shame to the family.

In Lebanon, Nadine (16), who regularly visits her parents in the US, has a similar view of virginity. She says the way virginity is looked upon "here is different from the way things are in America" and accepts putting off sex as a basic fact of her society that she does not wish to discuss or violate, at least publicly. Though she goes out with a boyfriend, staying out at night, to whom she may eventually be linked, this does not mean she is having sexual relations. When he was 16, Ashraf (18) had sex with a girl who he thinks loved him, but whom he did not love. Now he is 18 and in love with a girl with whom he does not have sex, maybe because he loves her and has chosen to preserve her "dignity". Sexual relations are an affront to women's dignity but confirm boys' virility and increase their self-confidence. Feridah (17, Tunisia) sees sex as a "weakness on the part of women and they must transcend it and confront it". She wonders at the same time how so much importance can be given to this piece of skin, and in such a demeaning manner.[18]

## 2. MALE ADOLESCENTS: YES TO SEX; FEMALE ADOLESCENTS: YES TO FEELING

In Tunisia[19] girls think boys have strong feelings and sexual desires that they cannot control but which they express frankly and openly to their friends, even boasting about them and about their real or imaginary sexual prowess. They also believe boys will date and have sex with girls without loving them. Boys think girls can be seduced easily. But girls say they are able to control their emotions and reveal them or their adventures only to close friends. They think it normal for both sexes to masturbate.

Boys recognize that girls are subjected to control and that they should be cautious and vigilant in having sex or even making friends, for they could thereby lose their chance of marriage. Like Raya, girls criticise the boys' contradictory attitude towards sex, considering it positively as a natural biological need and negatively as having sex for sex alone. "And as a consequence, they deal with girls as though they were nothing." Boys see sex as natural, but girls cannot satisfy their desires like boys. Girls dislike being treated as "objects". Monia (18, Algeria) is put off having sex by her fear of boys' bad intentions: "I used to be subjected to all sorts of vexation from men of all ages when I went out. I am not, as they think, a sexual object."

While some aspects of sex can be looked at in countries like Tunisia, Lebanon and Morocco, it is very difficult in a country like Yemen, where adolescents are generally conservative and see extra-marital relations of any sort as impossible.

In Bahrain, there were many cases of adolescents having emotional and sexual relations, but these were failures, according to the persons involved. Sometimes these failures had negative consequences, such as feelings of hatred of the other sex or a mistrust of love. Hanan (18) had an unsuccessful love affair that led to an early marriage ending in divorce. She says: "I secluded myself because a man humiliated me and gave me the name of divorcee while I was still young. After that I was able to get over the matter and resume my normal life." She thinks it will be impossible to have another serious, successful relationship. Walid (18) had sex with a girl 3 years older than he who insisted on a full sexual relationship. He deflowered her with her consent; this made problems for her when she wanted to marry another man.

**(16)** Palestinian film director Michel Khalifi deals with this subject in a bold way in his film "Irs al-Jalil" where the village people are celebrating outside the bedroom of the newly-weds after the wedding and waiting for the bride's mother to come out with the stained bedsheet. The young boy is impotent because of the stress, so the bride breaks her hymen with her finger. The bloody sheet is shown to the public to preserve the dual honor: the bride's virginity and the groom's virility.

**(17)** Who, on the slightest misunderstanding, would refuse a deflowered bride.

**(18)** A female gynecologist said that many Lebanese girls aged 16 and 17 came to her to have the torn hymen sewn up. She also said that many girls wanted abortions. Similar practices exist in other Arab countries. attesting to the continuing importance of virginity in Arab societies.

**(19)** See above, The Tunisian Survey of Family Health.

Clearly there are gender differences regarding sex. Boys' views on sex and girls are not hedged about with taboos and frankly include the concept of pleasure. Samir (16, Tunisia) thinks that "sexuality has become for young people all over the world a form of pleasure pure and simple." In the interviews done in Morocco some respondents talked about a kind of mutual hypocrisy: "Mock me and I'll mock you." Each has a different goal: boys want to satisfy their desire and girls to keep their virginity. Ikram (18, Morocco) describes males as "real dogs". Lynn (17. Lebanon) says she seduces boys and describes them as "animals who cannot control their instincts. As soon as they see a female, it is finished. They want to have her no matter what. Or when a girl goes past them, they immediately feel something... No, we girls are different. I feel that sex comes last" (i.e. crowns a full relationship). Lynn is a "flirt"; she sees herself as a "bitch", arousing boys, "but one should not give a boy anything, for if you go out with him and give him everything immediately, he will get bored of you and reject you". Lynn learned this from her mother and friends and others, who often ask her: "Did you give him anything?"

Concerning boys, the main conclusion is that they do not have relationships of mutual respect based on a future project. Sex is how they realize their manhood. They have a strategy of "starting a relationship and ending it quickly", as Hassan (18, Morocco) says. But there are other types of boy and relationship. Hind (17, Morocco), a servant, says: "There are boys who want to go out with girls without asking for anything or asking for what is reasonable, and there are those who want that from them. Some girls risk it and go out with them and some of these do not want that, so they get scared and they retreat."

In Yemen, girls say, a relationship has certain limits. Rahiq (18) thinks that "a love relationship is possible if it is restricted to the couple expressing their feelings for each other". She admires a boy but does not show him her feelings.

### A) Sex: three directions

The interviews showed three attitudes to sex: it was important for all adolescents equally; it differed for girls and boys; and it was nasty.

Those with the first attitude - Achraf, Raya (18) and Nadin (16) from Lebanon - say they have had sex or some slight physical contact and agree with Mona (18, Algeria) that a sentimental relationship and flirtation are important for one's balance. They think girls and boys have pretty much the same sexual requirements. They usually belong to educated middle-class milieus influenced by western culture and ideas on equality, yet are aware of their countries' specific features and requirements and thus do not approve of free sexual relations. Achraf (18, Lebanon) thinks "it is only in an ideal world that sex can be the same for both sexes...some people in our society seek irrational, uncontrolled sex, and this is due to social pressures and frustration."

Nesrin (17, Lebanon) feels that boys and girls are the same but that the girls feel responsible; boys "don't care". Raya (18, Lebanon) pretty much holds feminist views and talks unreservedly and openly about sex. She thinks society is to blame for the difference. Girls have the same need for sex as boys, but "society makes them say I don't want it, I don't need it. And as a result of the long repression, they end up believing what they are saying, and sex becomes shameful."

Sexual relations seemed more widespread in the Moroccan sample than in other countries. Some girls think relations between the sexes "can only be sexual, or there will be no relations. And if a girl does not accept, there are others who will." Some think girls' statements about their virtue are just a façade; they have friends who have had sex in hotels or at home; they also say some girls have had abortions.

Those with the second attitude concede that there are differences between the sexes, and prefer to leave sex until marriage. Dinah (15, Lebanon) says: "Boys have sex for fun at the age of 17 or 18. But girls take things more seriously. I feel that sex is important for both. But girls view it as sacred. A girl prefers to belong to one man only throughout her life. But for boys, it makes no difference." Rani (16, Lebanon) sees sex as important but prefers to leave it until after marriage. Rafiq (18, Lebanon), who is religious, opposes extra-marital sex: "A girl's honor is her most important possession. A boy can marry more than one girl but she can only marry one person, hence her freedom is limited."

Those with the third attitude are negative about sex or think it disgusting and "nasty". Rim (15, Lebanon) thinks it is "tasteless", done under compulsion. Talah (17, Lebanon) sees "sex without love as a sin, even within the framework of marriage, for sex is disgusting and it is love that makes it different." Wa'ad (17, Yemen) is "not concerned" with sex. Almost all reject free relations between the sexes, stressing the need to abide by custom, tradition and the directives of the Koran. Generally speaking, they approve of "exchanging sentiments within the limits of the institution of marriage or between those engaged", (i.e. in "a legal commitment"). Extra-marital sex is "wrong". Hussam (18, Yemen) says: "If there is nothing wrong about it, the situation is normal. That is a normal relationship, words against words. But if there is something wrong about it such as cheating and betrayal, this is unacceptable."

Two types emerge: the very young who do not yet understand what sex is about, like Rim (15, Lebanon), and those who see it as potentially frightful, like Najet (18, Tunisia): "Something close to sin, a dangerous slope we embark on for some reason, then we let go and become addicted, as though it were smoking or alcohol."

## B) Sexual molestation

For some, discussion of this issue was possible and acceptable. Various cases of sexual molestation were mentioned, though we assume that not all the adolescents revealed their experiences.

In Lebanon, only a few have not heard about, or been a victim of, sexual molestation. Despite the proscriptions and bans that surround sex, molestation is more prevalent than we think. The relative ease with which the subject is handled in Lebanon may be due to reporting by TV stations and the other media. This has created a wave of condemnation where the producers of these programs are accused of spreading immorality, but has also helped many girls and boys to talk about the different kinds of sexual molestation they have been subjected to or heard about.

Girls from Yemen also referred to cases of sexual molestation, sometimes at school. Most said they had not been molested since they avoided places frequented by boys, and usually only went out accompanied by their parents or elder brothers. Yemeni girls said the molestation had been verbal only, perhaps admiring comments made by a teacher to a female pupil. This indicates that no clear distinction is drawn between sexual molestation or rape performed on a minor by a person in a position of authority, and accidental comments and annoyances.

Yemeni girls find 'molestation' offensive and reject the demands of their molesters. Shaza deals "harshly" with those who molest her "in word or deed"; once she told some boys molesting her: "If you were men and had an atom of manhood in you, you would not harm people's daughters in the street. Imagine it was your sister." Wahye (15) sees words of love and flattery as a kind of molestation, "particularly when I go to school, well, minor things do happen, but no one caught up with me, just words."

If girls do not complain about sexual molestation, does that mean it does not exist?

Some cases of homosexual molestation occurred in Lebanon involving Paul Valéry (18). One father killed his daughter after abusing her sexually; he was a neighbor of two adolescent boys who were interviewed. There was some talk during the interviews of sexual molestation of girls at work and at school, involving older relatives or family friends. Boys mentioned cases of people exposing themselves.

The case of a Moroccan who abused his virgin daughter, leading to the breakup of the family and the girl's joining a rehabilitation center for adolescent girls, was mentioned. In Egypt, some girls said older men had sexually molested them, usually family friends, tutors or total strangers. The interference had happened several times between childhood and early adolescence and had a negative psychological effect. None had told their parents (to avoid problems). The interview had allowed them to reveal for the first time what they had experienced.

If sex is a taboo subject, molestation and fornication are even more so. But not talking about them does not mean they do not exist. Feridah (17, Tunisia) said she had been sexually desired by a bachelor maternal uncle when she was 6; he had touched her, tried to kiss her and asked her to strip. She had told her mother, who made her feel that something between them had snapped forever. She decided to keep quiet in the future. She is from a humble family and was told by her mother that it was better for a girl to die than lose her virginity. She wondered how a meaningless physical object like the hymen could be so important, and this led to other implicit questions: how to explain her mother's ambivalent position? How could "one of the protectors of the law" or "one of the guardians of her supposed virginity" attempt to molest her? How can she explain her mother's silence and implicit censure of a 6-year-old?

## 3. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SEXES

If sex is subject to such control, and if so many adolescents are keen to experience a love relationship, then what is meant is platonic love. Nawf (17, Yemen) is for a love relationship "which would be limited to innocent glances"; she has already experienced platonic love and the 3-year relationship ended without any harmful effects. Now she hopes to resume it. Adolescents generally separate sex from love.

As to affective relations or friendship between the sexes, most Yemeni adolescents reject free boy/girl relations and advocate commitment to "customs, traditions and the directives of Islam" within marriage or between engaged couples. Shaza (18) says: "Sentimental relations lead to ruin; fancies can make girls into victims." But none of them denies having had a relationship or sentimental experiences. Boys seem more experienced in sentimental relations than girls. Some agree to a limited form of friendship or colleagueship within the family. In some Yemeni milieus, friendship is suspect and parents can even take their daughters out of school. This happened to Iqbal (17), from a poor Aden family, because she had made friends with a boy. The experience left her so bitter that she cried during the interview.

Egyptian girls represent a middle position with respect to friendship, some seeing it as "a beautiful and normal thing" despite the difficulty of making such friendships in a society that finds them unacceptable. Some very religious girls see such relations as unacceptable from "the moral point of view". Only a minority see sentimental relations as unreservedly "beautiful"; most condemn them if they take place outside marriage. Most girls think that in the relationship the girl is more likely to suffer because girls are more sincere. Thus girls prefer to keep their relations secret, even when these do not go beyond "platonic love". But girls from well-off social classes, who have a great degree of freedom, are in favor of sentimental relations. Jamila (17, Morocco) thinks these are not taboo for the bourgeois class; her wealthy girlfriends receive their boyfriends in their homes as a matter of course. And in Lebanon, urban educated middle-class social categories tend to accept innocent love relationships between adolescent girls and boys.

Though friendship between the sexes is suspect in some Arab countries, most Lebanese adolescents approve of social and friendship relations with the other sex, finding them "more enriching"; they "help control the boys' behaviour" and allow the nature of the other sex to be known. Girls say this kind of friendship enables them to get interesting advice, free from the jealousy of other girls, because boys, unlike girls, do not exploit what they know. Fethi (16, Tunisia) describes friendship with girls as easier than all-male friendships. He admits it may develop into "something else". Mixing and friendship between the sexes is not usual in the country and the popular, poor areas where control over girls is more stringent. Majda (17, Morocco) is an uneducated rural girl who sees sentimental relations as dangerous because they are not "in my path". Amira (15, Lebanon) is from a rural popular milieu and thinks an engagement is the main thing; love without a prior official or informal[20] engagement is impossible - "they will be mocking each other."

Najet (18, Tunisia) believes that in relations of friendship and love "differences are interesting and enriching" as long as they make it possible to know the other and his/her way of thinking. In a love relationship, she continues, "we must study the relationship carefully, examine the other, and decide whether we should consider him/her seriously or not." But she thinks that boys bring problems and are not much help: "A boy cannot listen to you when you are suffering from a problem and thus cannot help you. His own problems are bigger and more difficult than yours."

**(20)** When the two families start exchanging visits in order to establish a link in the future.

Yumna (17, Tunisia) prefers the friendship of boys because she can learn from it and understand men better. About love she says: “Some girls become weak when their friends leave them and are reduced to wrecks” running after a boy “less important than they are. Girls are weaker, more sensitive and they cry at the slightest thing.” She advises them to concentrate on other things, “for life is full of interesting things such as studies, the family and the future”. But she was clearly moved when talking about the boy she used to love, separated from her by her grandmother, and whom pride prevented her from meeting again: he was the first person “I could tell everything to.”

## A) Relations between the sexes: undeclared war

Relations between the sexes sometimes seem to be undeclared war. Najet (18, Tunisia) sees them as “a double-edged sword”, especially for girls, for a boy can mix with many girls to choose from them later, but a girl “must think carefully before getting involved in a relationship. The rule is to withdraw with the least possible damage.” It is all a matter of “war tactics”.

Lynn (17, Lebanon) sees sentimental adventures as battles: “Tighten then loosen.” In Morocco the fight takes another turn in the city: a girl who has no male friends is described as “suffering from a complex”.

Though the relations are seen as a “transgression” and as demeaning for girls, today’s young people continue to hold on to them despite a lack of mutual trust.

Hind (17, Morocco) sees two kinds of boy: those who inspire confidence, and those who treat girls as objects. Girls who do not object to getting involved in a love experience see two kinds of love: innocent and not innocent. Girls are happy with a relationship “because he does not have bad intentions” or because he does not look at her in a “dirty” way. Dirtiness here means having sex without love.

Girls incline to the romantic or sentimental love they see in TV serials. Love “gets under one’s skin” says Najet (18, Tunisia). Or there is “passionate love”; this is what boys want. Ahmad (17, Tunisia) say boys are not “a single bloc”; some look for “fishing” (amusement), others for “vice” and others are “natural”. Girls in his view look for “vice”.

Girls have a different view. They want a relationship that preserves their dignity and helps them control their desires. Girls, says Najet (18, Tunisia), unlike boys, are more able to control their desires and dispense with sex. Abdel Rahman (16, Tunisia) agrees, noting a radical difference between boys and girls: “A girl should not declare everything, modesty is one of her basic attributes; she should retain ambiguity, contradiction and wiles.” Boys, he maintains, can express their sexual desires. This conforms to the traditional view of the sexes and the difference between them. Hiba (16, Lebanon) says: “Boys like thoughtful girls who do not act on impulse” and who deserve their parents’ trust, “even if they have to throw themselves into the sea.”

Not to get entangled in a love relationship that is socially and personally costly, a girl may require extraordinary qualities in a boy. Feridah (17, Tunisia) wants a young man of whom she will “become fully enamored” with some unusual charm that will attract her. But the young man who will attract Wahida is that “bearded dark” boy who will inspire in her basic values and religion, instilling in her a sense of trust, for she thinks it unlikely that someone with religious principles could expose her to danger.

In most cases, boys experience love in a more positive way than girls, as a relationship of trust and source of a sense of security, peace and comfort. Fethi (16, Tunisia) views it thus. Love may also act as an “incentive” to stimulate a boy to build “something” for the future, asserts Abdel Rahman (16, Tunisia). But girls experience love as conflict rather than a peaceful experience. Huyem (17, Tunisia) says: “The person with whom I broke off wanted to marry me. But he wanted to cast me in a mold and control me. Boys want to be the boss and act like despots.”

In this relation of mutual attraction some girls watch “the gradual emergence of the true nature of those we love”, according to Feridah (17, Tunisia). A man is not what he seems at first; as time goes by, he shows his true self and tries to dominate his partner. He does not want her to look at other men and wants her to see him as sacred. Sometimes he becomes violent; Feridah thinks that in every man there is a measure of violence.

Sumeyeh (14, Egypt) relates her experience with a friend with whom she had "a long relationship which lasted 11 months" and was problematic. The basic problem was that her "boyfriend" felt he had a rival to whom she was paying too much attention "because he used to stay with me at home and we would study together and he was closer to my family. This made him jealous and he felt that the second was usurping his place within the family and everything else. But in spite of that, for the first five months our relationship was very nice. We left each other because I am now more open to what's happening around me and I am beginning to understand a lot of things. At first we were friends because I was shy and would therefore belong to him alone. Afterwards I made friends with all his friends and things changed. This disturbed him a lot. He tried to infuriate me by talking about other girls. Even though I knew he was doing it deliberately, I got angry and jealous. So we were forced to leave each other." Wu'ud (15, Tunisia) thinks girls are romantic and overflowing with emotion. Boys experience these feelings and dreams but grow up and change for the worse, while girls retain their capacity to dream and to feel.

## B) Love: positive and negative experiences

In Bahrain, both sexes had negative attitudes to love and reservations about any commitment to the other sex. Some adolescents' childhood sexual experiences are accompanied by a sense of guilt. There is a tendency for girls to postpone love until after studies. Semiah (15, Bahrain) says: "I was about to start a relationship when I was in sixth grade; a boy wanted to start a relationship with me but I refused because I listened to the advice of my female teachers who said that love relationships bring problems and nothing more. So I hated the idea of having a relationship with anyone."

In Yemen, there was resistance to dealing with this subject. According to Shaza, "love relationships may lead a girl to her ruin." Wa'ad says: "Frankly, I don't believe that there can be friendship between boys and girls. Especially in our country, Yemen, it is impossible for a girl to be friends with a boy." Like many adolescents, she thinks "love is possible only between a man and his wife". The interviews conducted in Yemen showed that friendship was confused with love, whereas in Lebanon and Tunisia friendship meant the feeling of affection for a girl or a boy.

Despite the conservatism of adolescents in Yemen, satellite TV has undermined the system and led to relations between the sexes. The prevailing position continues to be that relations can exist within marriage or the official relations related to it. But some adolescents admit to sentimental experiences, some of which have failed.

The same attitude was observed in Lebanon but was presented in a way that revealed obstacles lying in the girl's lack of inner maturity, not external prohibition. Da'ad (17) says: "Friendship differs from a love relationship; while it is possible to make many friends, a love relationship requires greater maturity or experience, which means that it cannot be established straightaway." She prefers sex, and even kissing, to take place after marriage. She sees no harm in friendship between the sexes, but the young man must remain a friend and not turn quickly into a "boyfriend", one gains experience with time; it is still early for that.

Generally speaking, adolescents in the Gulf prefer to respect the limits defined by social law and tradition, though the situation is more open in Bahrain, and adolescents in Tunisia, Egypt and Lebanon are more able to embark on experiences with the opposite sex, though caution remains the safest and most appropriate compromise.

Caution is not the only position possible. In Lebanon, most adolescents from educated middle-class urban families have had experiences. Some were immature expressions of admiration. Others were serious love affairs. Nesrin (17) fell in love at the age of 131/2 and may end up marrying the boy. Some were able to start a love relationship and stand up to pressure to preserve it despite coming from a conservative milieu with a tribal character (Beka'a region in Lebanon). Refusing to see their daughter tied to a young man whom they object to for one reason or another, a family may reprimand the girl or stop her going to school even during exam periods. This happened to Dana (17); family opposition did not stop her passing her university entrance examination while maintaining her relationship with the young man she still loves and means to marry. She says: "I suffered but we are still together. My parents have suspicions but they do not know for sure. I cannot make them understand the situation except in this way. It is true I lied, but I had no choice. I am prepared to do anything for him. I feel he respects me in the full sense of the word, and in an extraordinary way."

We find that there are two kinds of love for adolescents: “love for love” and “playful love”. Lynn (17, Lebanon), who comes from a family with serious marital problems, has love affairs. She had her first love experience at the age of 14 with her sister’s 23-year-old companion. But she is also conservative. Asked about kissing, she said: “He did try, the sweet man. Mummy told me not to let him; he will say things about you. She was right. So when we came to it and he tried to kiss me, wow, no, nothing doing.” But she has no objection to kissing someone who she thinks “deserving” (with characteristics that entitle him to a kiss). She has her own principles in love. She thinks that it is unreasonable to “talk” to an uneducated person, “you need to learn to talk to somebody who understands your intellectual level.”

Adolescents describe as “innocent love experiences” those which take the form of an attraction to a boy or girl of the same age, usually about 13. After these early experiences, adolescents reach the following conclusion, in the words of Rafif (17, Lebanon): “Love is something else.” Boys take early love more seriously than girls, remembering it as the first, most beautiful love. The only girl Mahmoud (18, Bahrain) still dreams of is the one he met when he was a child in a summer resort and to whom he declared his love. Paul Valéry (18) and Rafik (18) from Lebanon say that for girls age matters; girls do not love or accept love from younger boys. But they themselves have no objection. Rani (16, Lebanon) has a number of female friends but dares not declare his love to any of them lest he should lose a loved one and a friend if things go wrong. He says any one who claims not to have had a love experience is a liar. Nada (16, a Palestinian girl in a refugee camp) has girlfriends who have had love experiences at school though the headmistress exercises severe control over their behaviour. She herself admires a young boy who courts her in the market place. But she thinks a girl must be “cautious in this environment”.

## C) Friendship or love

Sometimes the line between friendship and love is blurred, particularly at the start of a relationship. Lynn (17, Lebanon) says that with her friendship quickly becomes love: “Friendship between the sexes is difficult.” Rim (15, Lebanon) thinks friendship is at times “love that we conceal”. Rafiq (18) and Paul Valéry (18) from Lebanon are friends with two older girls (who “won’t love younger boys”). Fethi (16, Tunisia) thinks friendship may develop into love: “It changes afterwards as projects change.” If friendship does turn into intimate love, it is difficult to recapture because the girls feel guilty. Neyla (18, Tunisia): “Love inevitably spoils friendship.”

“Love between two people is one of the most beautiful things,” says Paul Valéry. Lynn thinks love may supply the tenderness missing in a girl’s environment and says that in her many relationships she needs “conversation and tenderness...I flirt and try to be gay when I see him and go out with him, even though by nature I am not a coquette. We don’t talk much on the phone. He never harms or touches me, he knows how I feel about this. He has a lot of faults I hate; I find him reckless, and he loves me because I bring him back to his senses.” Love also means total trust in the loved one and the ability to listen. Yumna (17, Tunisia) says “we should say everything to the person we love”. Rani (16, Lebanon) sees love as exchanging feelings.

Love implies harmony of thought and culture. Hanin (17, Tunisia) could not love a boy doing science because they would not share a love of literature. Wu’ud sets impossible conditions for falling in love: the boy must be gently spoken and tender, “everything that represents man in the full sense of the term”, though experience has shown her no-one is faultless. Talah (17, Lebanon) sees love as a “combination of things: respect, understanding, and concern for the interests of the other party, all at once.” At this age, the idea of “love for love’s sake” is tempting. Talah says: “There are girls who do not really love, they like the experience itself.” Raya (19, Lebanon) entered a relationship and a light sexual experience because her friend encouraged her: “The first time, sure, I felt embarrassed... but I summoned up my courage and followed my mate’s example.” Love has a psychological function for adolescents.

Marwa (18, Algeria) wants to develop via social intercourse, “going out and joking, since this is important for one’s balance”, although she believes that Islam bans sexual mixing and demands submission from women. Love for other adolescents is preparing for the future. Dina (15, Lebanon) is

having an affair with a person two years older: "This is the problem. I feel he must be older. I am thinking of the future. If we want to get married, he will have to be older. I believe that he will not be able to ensure his future easily. Similarly, I cannot see myself married before or without getting a job."

## 4. MARRIAGE AND THE QUALITIES OF THE MARITAL PARTNER: A NEW POSITION

"Marriage is half one's religion" is a cliché that defines the traditional purpose of marriage - having and raising a family. Feridah (17, Tunisia) says, "Marriage does not last without a child. So after a period of shared life, it is difficult for the wife to adjust to such a situation."

A different view was observed in Lebanon, Egypt and Tunisia, especially in high-class society, where marriage is no longer an unquestioned necessity and is losing its appeal, and where celibacy no longer means abnormality and flouting tradition[21]. Criticism reflects the worsening of family difficulties due to changes in the functions and requirements of the family. Majda (17, Morocco) is wary of marriage: "Most married people complain about poverty. Marrying to escape poverty makes one fall into poverty. I also discover problems: men who beat their wives, childbearing and its problems, and divorce." Raya (19, Lebanon) does not think much of marriage, due to problems between her parents, which made her feel "she had no family". She hates the idea of partners staying together "merely because they are used to it." But she will probably marry. But Achraf (18, Lebanon) rejects marriage on principle, believing that cohabitation is better. Da'ad (17, Lebanon) sets conditions: the marriage partner "must be cultivated and understand her requirements. A woman must always enjoy a certain degree of independence." She is against women staying at home and would sacrifice her future partner if he asked her to leave her job after marriage.

Attitudes to marriage are changing in the Arab world. In Lebanon, for example, girls no longer "link" their existential fate with marriage, even for form's sake[22]. It can be argued that the girls' attitude is unchanged: what they "show" does not reflect the real position on marriage, its priority, and late marriage leaving them spinsters (negative connotation). But even if this is true, the girls' refusal to link their existence with marriage is telling. A trend is obvious and marks the beginning of a change in values and mentality. For a girl to accept the idea that she exists as an independent individual, whether "celibate" or married, is a big change in itself. This is what the modern Arab girl in an urban, educated, affluent milieu has started to discuss.

In general, three types of discourse related to marriage were observed. The first sees love between two persons as an essential condition for marriage. The second sees "rationalism" as essential, with marriage a common relational project whose success depends on the right choice of partner. The third marginalizes the personal in favor of the (traditional) collective; relations of social exchange, kinship and sense of future security through a carefully selected alliance are basic criteria.

### A) The phenomenon of late marriage

According to statistics, the phenomenon of late marriage affects many Arab countries. In Morocco, the average age of marriage was 18 in 1960 and is now about 27. In Tunisia it is 29.2 for women and 32.5 for men. Average age on marriage rose from 23.3 (women) and 28.5 (men) in 1970 to 27.5 (women) and 30.9 (men) in 1996. In Lebanon it is 28 for women and 31 for men[23].

Despite the relative increase in age of first marriage in Yemen, where the average for both sexes is 24, the situation on the ground points to a continuation of the trend towards early marriage in the Yemeni family[24]. Many of the female respondents indicated that they were preparing for marriage or had already been married.

It seems that early marriage is still widespread in the Gulf. With the exception of Bahrain[25], where a rise in the age of marriage has been observed, it has hardly changed, rising from 21.9 in 1990 to 22.3 in 2000. The continuation of early marriage can be due to the lack of encouragement in the Gulf generally of sexual mixing.

**(21)** At the climax of the liberation and secularism movement in Lebanon it was difficult for a young bachelor to rent a flat in the residential area of the "respectable" families. And there are still special places where bachelors can live easily without provoking the suspicion of the surroundings. The issue is more complex with respect to unmarried females.

**(22)** Muna Fayadh, "Al-Fatat Al-Azibah" (The Celibate Girl) in Proceedings of the Conference on 'The Family: Reality and Prospects,' 4 - 5/11/1997, Imam Sadr Research and Studies Center, Beirut, Lebanon.

**(23)** These statistics were contained in the different national reports and surveys provided by national teams in the concerned countries.

**(24)** The results of the first session of the population census in Yemen (1990/92) indicate that the median age on the first marriage for girls is 16, which means that half of the women in the 20-49 age group marry at the age of 16 at the least.

**(25)** See the study by the national Bahraini group.

The habit of marrying the eldest girl first helped delay the age of marriage of girls in traditional societies. Hind (17, Morocco), a girl of rural origin, says her marriage cannot be considered while her older sisters are unmarried. Marriage to relatives is an indicator of the movement away from or towards the traditional model of marriage. In Tunisia, this is declining, as adolescents increasingly oppose the traditional, family-planned marriage. Marriage to paternal or maternal cousins dropped from 18.2% in 1970 to 13.5% in 1998 according to the Register of Births, Marriages and Deaths, and is concentrated in rural milieus. In Lebanon, the ratio of husbands related to their wives through kinship was 15% in the year 2000; it was 8% in the capital Beirut and close to 29% in the poorer rural areas[26]. This trend declined in the early seventies and rose during the war years (1975 and 1990) when there were few places for the sexes to mix and there was a return to the narrow family and regional frameworks.

## B) Obtaining parental approval

The Tunisian Survey of Family Health brings out the change in types and approaches to marriage as the circle of acquaintance via neighbors and relations shrinks from one decade to the next, causing "a decrease in the role of the family in choosing their daughter's spouse (which was 89% in 1971 and was 72% in the last decade)[27].

Many adolescents had views on marriage though they were not concerned about it at present. They saw marriage as a personal matter, not to be decided by the family. Marwa (18, Algeria) attaches importance to her parents' opinion but considers the final decision to be hers: "The selection of the husband is a personal matter." She is prepared to break with her parents because of this, "for if they respect me, they will respect my decisions". Some said clearly that the choice was theirs alone. Hassan (18, Morocco): "A man marries the woman he is satisfied with. It is he who will live with her, not his parents." Jihad (18, Tunisia) will not let his parents interfere in the selection of his life partner because he is the one concerned. Fakhri (18, Yemen) gives no weight to his parents' opinion about choosing a future wife. Wassim (18, Yemen) agrees: "I don't think parents should choose one's wife. They used to play a role. But things have changed; one has become free to choose one's wife. Parental interference may ruin the marriage; they may interfere for reasons of money or kinship."

This points to the emergence of the individual as an independent being with his own views on crucial choices. Marriage is no longer a public, social affair determined by the interests of the two concerned families, as it was in traditional societies; it is now built on the basis of love and understanding between the two parties[28].

Generally speaking, in cultured, high-class society there is a tendency to choose without consulting the family and a total rejection of their interference. Achraf (18, Lebanon) thinks his parents "will not be involved in this issue". Rafif (17, Lebanon) asserts: "Parents have nothing to do with this", though she has no doubt that they would accept her decision. Hind (17, Morocco) thinks that, increasingly, choice of partner is based on harmony between the individuals, not on the group interest. This harmony increases the chances of a successful marriage.

Other adolescents think it necessary to respect and consult one's parents, particularly the mother, about the choice of partner, "provided they do not impose their views". Where adolescents accept making the approval of their parents a condition, they do this not in obedience to something imposed but in recognition of the affective bonds that tie them to their parents. Girls suffer a kind of existential perplexity: they want to choose a husband freely but they want to please their parents. The matter is not only sentimental; it concerns the weak position a wife will be in if she follows her own views alone in choosing a partner. She will lack the support and protection of her family and will have to take responsibility for a failure: "You chose him, it is your responsibility." Girls may thus prefer to stay under the protection of the group. Others believe in preserving affective ties with the parents while calling for them to respect the individual's views on the choice. This is a sign of maturity and readiness to shoulder the responsibility of personal choice. Some parents remain obdurate. This means they are unable to accept their children's independence and maturity.

In general, respondents in all the countries covered by the study expressed this trend. In Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco some girls refused marriage, or made it conditional upon proportionate participation by both parties. Many girls gave priority to studies and work over marriage, or placed it on the same level, though for some, work was a way to improve the conditions of marriage. Najah (16, Tunisia) does not want to marry before improving her level so that her husband may not one day scoff at her and make her feel inferior.

**(26)** See The Situation of Children in Lebanon, 2000, Central Statistical Administration, United Nations Children Organization, Beirut, 2003.

**(27)** The Tunisian Survey of Family Health, op.cit.

**(28)** - Ariès, (Ph), L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime, Seuil, Paris, 1973.
- Shorter, (E), Naissance de la famille moderne, Seuil, Paris, 1977.
- See also, Muna Fayadh, Attifl Al-Mutakhallif 'Aqlyen Fil-Muhit Al-Usari Wa-Thaqafi (Mentally Handicapped Children in the Family and Cultural Environment), Arab Development Institute, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983.

The situation is rather different in Yemen[29]. Most adolescents like their parents to help them choose, with a marked tendency to seek and take the advice of the mother, father and older family members, "because of their expertise, experience and concern for children". Faris (15) thinks "the opinion of the family is essential"; Hussam (18) says: "Of course there are things I can't see, but with their experience they can. They definitely know more than I do." Faruk (16) believes that "parental opinion is important because they will choose a good wife for him." Randa (16) thinks "her parents know best what is best for her". But they usually refuse to be forced or to have a husband or a wife imposed with no consideration for the party concerned, or for the sake of family interests. There are few places where the sexes can mix, and there is male/female segregation at the gatherings and occasions that offer opportunities for meeting people, so most of the boy respondents relied on their mothers' help. Early engagement or marriage was rejected, even by married female respondents: they saw early marriage as an injustice perpetrated against them. Narjess: "I got married straightaway...I was pretty young...he was very young too, 16...it was unfair...my parents did not give me the freedom to choose, I was placed before a fait accompli ... but my husband is very understanding and tolerant, like me he puts up with a lot, and we are patient." As to premarital experience, she says: "When I got married, my parents said nothing to me, when they say nothing that means that one teaches oneself." But does not freedom to choose imply freedom to know the other sex and the idea that the sexes can mix? Da'ad (15) says: "A love relationship between a boy and a girl is possible and natural, but it does not take place in Yemeni society."

The situation is not much different for boys in Bahrain; most give great weight to the parental opinion. But this does not preclude the existence of other positions. Some, like Fawzi (18), reject parental interference: "I can't see that my parents have a role in selecting her, and I won't marry someone whose faith is different from mine." Muhammad (16) is more flexible: "I make my choice and then consult my parents; I will see their point of view, the reason for their difference and their opinion." Jassim (18) says he will decide, but will be bound by his parents' opinion because he loves them and wants to make them happy; if they disagree, he will try to persuade them. Walid (18) will submit to his parents' authority if they oppose his choice, even though he stresses the importance of love and understanding in choosing his future wife.

But girls are more inclined to accept the parental choice. Few cling to their personal freedom of choice. Nura (15) says: "I will choose, but if their opinion differs from mine, I will listen to them. This is in my interest; even if I am not convinced, I still have to listen to them." Samia (15) believes that "her parents have an opinion which may be followed, for a father may be right or wrong." It is as though the matter is one of pure chance, not a conscious decision made by herself.

In general, opinion was divided about girls' independence of decision-making, since those who go on to higher education are usually allowed to make their own choices. Others are subject to the traditional paternal system. In the interviews, a marriage crisis was referred to. Majda (17, Morocco) says parents "will give their daughter to the first comer because of the paucity of marriage". Late marriage may be an expression of this crisis, one of difficult living conditions, widespread unemployment, falling productivity generally, plus the spread of consumerism. Reference was also made to "a kind of resignation": parents are avoiding responsibility.

**Box 3.2**

## A kind of adolescence

We didn't stay at home. We used to go out till two o'clock, as dawn was breaking, and our parents didn't ask where we'd been. We had our own rules and our life in the wild away from our parents. We had our own city, built by the gang we had formed. It had its leader and its rules, including traffic regulations, and a special place or room for each of us (built with clods of earth formed by the tractor plowing the field). The traffic regulations defined access to the city through well-defined roads; whoever made a mistake was reprimanded, beaten or sentenced to prison, a kind of deep hole in the ground. The prisoner's family would play the game and prepare food for him.

**(29)** In the survey of female and male adolescents' views on the issues related to marriage, most female respondents indicated that the choice of a husband was still made in the traditional way, that is, through the parents, taking into account the opinion of the girl. The sample in Sana'a (this is an urban sample) indicated that work, school and visits provide opportunities for choice among boys and girls. But most females stressed the importance of the girl's opinion and of getting to know each other through the family. They rejected the idea of getting married at an early age, the age of puberty. See the study conducted at the University of Queen Arwa for Academic Sciences, Dirassa Ijtimayaa-Meydanya hawla Fahm 'Anassir Al-Thaqafat Al-Muathira fis-Suluk al-Sukkani fi'l-Jumhurya al-Yemenia (A Social Field Study of the Elements of the Cultures Affecting Demographic Behaviour in the Republic of Yemen), Sana'a, 1999.

When I reached fourth grade intermediate, there was no type of violence I had not experienced: of nature, of people and of love. When I joined the teacher training school and I was fifteen our relations with girls became very romantic; during the gang years our manners had been very rough. We wanted to touch a girl, innocently of course. Though we had no feelings yet, we would go to the pool in our village in order to swim and touch each other with the girls. We would go under the water, the girls in their dresses, and play with them. I can't imagine this happening today. Society is more closed, not open. There is no more life in the wild or in the fields. Relations in the wild are open; "we picked up" girls easily. We used "to wag the tail" at newly-weds, "climb" up trees to see people naked.

In Beirut, we became romantics. The city is a frightening and strange society. I stayed in a house across the street where a beautiful girl who went to school and who was watched by her maternal uncle lived. Her parents could clearly see that there was a student from the teacher training school living across the street from them, and that their daughter was standing at the window. I would sit in the room and in front of me was the window frame and she would stand in it. Two years of misery.

There is now definite deprivation. I suppose sexual freedom in a conservative society was greater than it is now. The country provides more freedom than the city. Few young people are granted freedom in Beirut. If one of them wanted to start a relationship with a girl in the city, he would need a residence. But who among the young has an apartment? In the country the problem does not exist: a meeting may take place in a grass-covered garden or under a tree.

Adolescence is dreams, ghosts and fears. In my adolescence I was immersed in imagination and romanticism and reached a stage where I imagined love. In Beirut the girl disappeared, the conditions are not right. In Balcad I used to run my hand over her in the cinema, simple dalliance. For some there is the car. But the car is something terrible; my most horrible memories have to do with cars. To compensate, I got deeply into fashionable reading: The Outsider (Colin Wilson) and Sartre ...now the situation is different and I find adolescents to be very conservative and miserable. Their adolescence is more miserable than mine. Because the many offers and the girls exhibited from the different parts of the world increase their misery. Adolescents are impressionable and our world was poor and less provocative. We used to live in a world without a girl. She was not to be found anywhere. Now there is the deceptive external world that suggests numerous relationships, and this is not true, so it generates a sense of deprivation and resentment. But I feel this is a weak generation. In our days, there was scope for us to express ourselves; there were alternatives if we did not like the world we were living in. The possibility of changing the world was also there and one of us could undertake it. When war broke out in 1975, I felt I would be changing the world. I feel that this generation is rebellious but desperate. Our generation was rebellious without despair and its dreams were close to it and it could achieve them, it could start a revolution. America was defeated and other countries were liberated - Asia, Africa, Latin America, Vietnam, the Congo, Algeria and Cuba. And we were thinking: Why not, why not here as well?

**A poet from southern Lebanon**

## C) Qualities of the marital partner

Various qualities are desired by adolescents in their future partners: intellectual (harmony, broad-mindedness, liberalism); moral (piety, refinement, respect); psychological (love, concord, tenderness, character); material (a job and material stability); and general (generosity to the partner, or beauty, color and shape).

These qualities originate in the adolescents' social and cultural backgrounds and are linked to their expectations of themselves and of life, and their maturity. In Yemen, adolescents listed moral and psychological qualities (polite, religious, educated, respected, affectionate and loving). In addition to these qualities, they wanted the girl to be beautiful. Adolescent girls stressed material aspects such as wealth, though some emphasized education, culture, respect for marital life and maturity.

In Tunisia, qualities concerned the husband's personality and the type of relationship. Najet (18) wants to test the boy before committing herself, to make sure he deserves her love. Wu'ud (15) wants sweet talk and gentleness. Feridah (17) wants to be in love with him, as if unable to compose a set of qualities, unsure that these exist in reality. Huyem (17) broke with the man she had intended to marry because his choice was based only on her belonging to a good family so he could "mold" her.

Qualities like "courteous", of "good family", "intelligent" and "having the same character" recurred. Some girls, like Feridah (17, Tunisia) and Talah (17, Lebanon), look for character and authority. Sirin (17, Algeria) wants him to be "normal." Huyem (17, Tunisia) looks for someone to "share the difficulties of life and help her".

Clearly the tendency now among Arab girls is to insist on a partnership at all levels. Some list the qualities they would like in a future husband. Da'ad (17, Lebanon) demands qualities that require time and effort to achieve. Her ideal partner must be cultivated, understand her needs and must leave her her independence. She rejects anything that resembles tradition for women, like staying at home. She wants him to be a man of principles, broad-minded and cultured. She wants him "dark-skinned, eyes of a rare blue, and tall, taller than me, of course. He must not eat much, he must practice some sport and must not smoke." He must also be "well-bred" (polite).

Adolescence can be accompanied by all kinds of unrealistic expectations; the feeling of love seems romantic and simple, but is utopian. Ahmad (18, Morocco) wants "a love story that never ends". Some give importance to morals and think "appearance is not important". Majda (17, Morocco) wants a partner who is "reasonable, doesn't smoke, doesn't drink, and doesn't run after girls". Some Moroccan girls are more realistic. Aicha (17, Morocco) wants a husband who will not treat her harshly.

Some girls say they do not trust people with money. Hind (17, Morocco) says: "We may find someone with money, but we cannot rely on him. As far as I am concerned, I want somebody who is simple and good." Such statements seem to come from people who have come of age, experienced life and summed it up in a concise maxim.

Girls repeatedly voiced the need for concord but were unable to define this. Marwa (18, Algeria) says: "If I chose him, it was because he corresponded to my idea of the person I wanted to love." Dina (15, Lebanon) is looking for concord and respect, thus expressing a greater trust in self and in life.

The emphasis girls from modest milieus place on material and emotional stability may be because they are lacking in their surroundings. Fedwa (16) and Fethia (16) from Tunisia and Amira (15), Nada and Hiba (16) from Lebanon agree on the same requirements: "He should make a good living, he should have a steady job, he should be good, he should respect her and treat her well and his family should be good to her...." This applies also to male adolescents from the same milieu.

In Bahrain, girls want looks and wealth, while boys stress beauty and femininity. But the religious element is acquiring importance: boys insist on the importance of the future wife's wearing the veil and girls want the future husband to be religious and morally upright. Conversely, Bahraini girls from liberal milieus say they should not be forced to wear the veil. Semia (15) wants an understanding husband: "he should not interfere in the way I dress or force me to wear the veil. He should not stop me working or pursuing my studies." Fawzi wants a "reasonable share of beauty and she should be cultivated and knowledgeable; I do not care about the veil."

Egyptian girls set realistic conditions. Some deny that the ideal husband exists. But the conditions they set are achievable, not ideal: a sense of responsibility, tenderness, honesty, faithfulness, and closeness in thinking and interests - "possible" qualities, not inspired by imaginary romanticism.

## D) Attitude to engagement

Engagement seems to have lost its importance in open-minded milieus which offer both sexes movement and easy meetings, and the possibility of going out together or in company of others. If a marriage decision is reached, it will be declared shortly before marriage; the engagement will only last the time needed to complete the preparations for the wedding. But engagement is still important in conservative and rural milieus, particularly in societies that prohibit the mixing of the sexes.

Among the respondents, Yemeni adolescents dealt with the subject of engagement most. They said love or passion was possible for those who intended to marry or were engaged. Respondents from Tunisia said engagement was a long period of frequentation, favoring it particularly because they had reservations about pre-marital sex. Najah (16, Tunisia) sees the function of the engagement period as allowing the couple "to discover each other and thus avoid any surprise that might lead to divorce".

Talah (17, Lebanon) expresses the popular view that engagement is now seen as an announcement of an actual relationship, not just an experimental phase; she prefers to take her time: "I dislike the idea that somebody comes to our house and they say he came and asked for your hand. Even if I liked this person I might see this negatively: in this day and age, how can you still come and ask for my hand from my family? Since you know me, why don't you speak to me; we may not agree, who knows?"

The interviews with Lebanese girls revealed that no suitors had presented themselves to girls from educated, affluent families. The opposite was true for girls from rural or popular milieus. If a girl is known to be friends with someone, people do not come and ask for her hand. It is as though friendship with the man is a boundary between what agrees with, and what differs from, the traditional concept of engagement.

## E) Motherhood and fatherhood

Most of those interviewed wanted to marry, raise a family and bring up children. But Achraf (18, Lebanon) does not see himself as a father. Talah (17, Lebanon) says: "Motherhood is wonderful, as long as one can shoulder the responsibility. I want to have children, provided that I don't make them homeless, and I know I will bring them up and they will be successful in the future." Rim (15, Lebanon) seemed more realistic than those who spoke against against parenthood: "Everybody now says they don't want to marry and have children, but in the end, they will change their minds."

In Egypt, girls and boys had different opinions. Boys seemed happier with the type of education they had received from their parents. Thus, Muhammad wants to teach his children what he learned. Boys used such phrases as "teaching them how to be brave", "provide protection" and give "self-confidence". But the girls' replies indirectly criticised the parental style of education. They prefered frankness in dealing with their children, using the phrase "not to fear". Ilhem (17) will "listen to them and be friends with them. She will not give them orders and she will do her utmost so that they live in a comfortable environment." Narmin will teach them how "to listen to each other, or how each of them will give the other a chance to express himself. And then even if a child was unable to do what he wanted, at least he would have said what he wanted". Are adolescents speaking about their children or about themselves?

## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

A strong link between puberty and adolescence was shown in the words of the adolescents, and in various approaches to adolescence and their definitions of this link. Divergence, if there is any, does not concern the link itself but its explanation, its place in analysis, or its interaction with other social or cultural factors. This Report sees puberty as a turning point in life, coinciding with the onset of adolescence, and starting, and proclaiming, the move from childhood to social and physical maturity.

In their testimonies, adolescents differed in how they looked at puberty and, more generally, sex. In the discussions of puberty with boys, sex was taken for granted; with most girls the situation was different. In general, both sexes gave brief replies, betraying their embarrassment and a combination of difficulty with and ignorance of sexual issues and reproductive health. It seemed at times that boys talked to male companions about sex, swapping knowledge and experiences, seriously or in jest, with jokes and banter. But girls seemed more reserved and serious. The tiny space left for discussion of sexual and reproductive issues in the family is an indication of how little parents were prepared to convey knowledge and prepare their children for a new phase of life. Fathers seemed less able than mothers here; daughters did become aware, thanks to their mothers, of the onset of menstruation and how to deal with it.

The absence of family discussion about sexual matters raises two basic problems. One is the adolescents' lack of reliable sources of information about sex. This raises another question, which this study fails to answer: have parents the necessary knowledge and sexual culture for them to answer children's questions which need more than a superficial explanation of erection, ejaculation, ovulation, menstruation and pregnancy? There also seems to be a serious shortage of educators in the field. This is why adolescents tend to seek the help of friends, older siblings, the mass media, books and magazines (good and bad) and films to obtain information about sex and reproductive health; very often, the information is not very scientific..

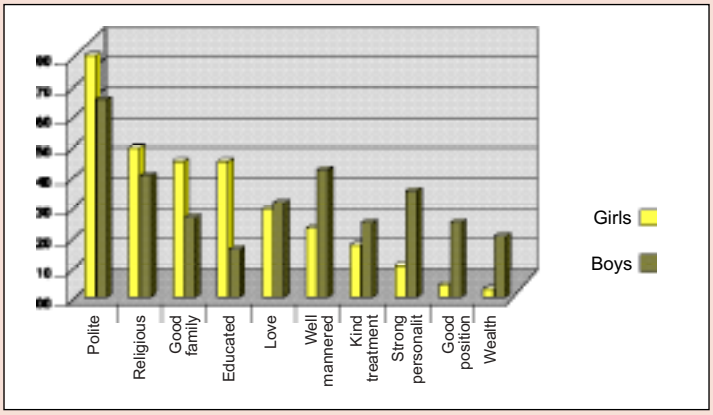
The second problem is socio-cultural. It has been shown that changes in family relations in Arab societies have not necessarily led to greater dialogue between parents and children on sex and reproductive health. Nor have they led to the production of advanced means to prepare boys and girls for puberty and the development of sexual identity. Some testimonies showed that the traditional system of past decades included traditional, but more effective, means of communication. They also showed that embarrassment, shyness and reluctance to speak about sex within the family are relatively new, for traditionally puberty was welcomed with festive rituals. This was mentioned in the testimony of Huyem (17) on the celebration of puberty on the island of Jerba, Tunisia.

This raises the issue of temporal discrepancies in social changes and their cultural and behavioural expressions, and the complex problems caused by social, demographic or cultural change in a particular field if unaccompanied by a change in the social system or framework as a whole, giving rise to a discordance between the parts and the whole. This is particularly true as regards parents, the family and other traditional forms or institutions for preparing adolescents for physical and social maturity. Thus, in traditional society, there was a closeness in time between the physical and social aspects of puberty. The value system in the local social environment was pretty consistent, and the disparity between it and the national systems relatively small. Rituals were collective, expressing a collective lifestyle in local traditional society; ideas of the individual and specificity were not important. But with the shift to 'modernity', basic changes have taken place. Among these are the loss of a single value system (a result of modernization and the opening up to the mass media and to other cultures) and the emergence of a sense of individual uniqueness with the growth of a special space for sexuality, love and marriage, no longer a public reality. Rites of passage violate specificity and individualism; their negative function has become dominant. But the changing society has not yet produced alternative mechanisms to prepare its adolescents for these changes. Traditional methods are discontinued or ineffective, and modern methods and means are not yet widespread. This is one aspect of the 'confused' state between modernity and tradition in which Arab societies are caught, and to which reference has been made more than once in this Report.

## Box 4.2 EGYPT: THE QUALITIES OF THE PARTNER

Boys and girls agree on giving priority to politeness as a quality of the partner, but boys give it a higher priority. Boys want their life partner to be religious and from a good family. Girls, on the other hand want their partner be well-mannered and have a strong personality.

| EGYPT | | |
|---|---|---|
| Girls | Boys | Qualité |
| 62 | 79 | Polite |
| 34 | 43 | Religious |
| 19 | 37 | Good family |
| 30 | 36 | Educated |
| 25 | 22 | Love |
| 35 | 16 | Well mannered |
| 18 | 9 | Kind treatment |
| 27 | 5 | Strong personality |
| 18 | 3 | Good position |
| 14 | 2 | Wealth |




The girls' wish that boys be well-mannered shows that they are looking for better treatment than is usual in society. The request for a strong personality reflects their desire for independence from their family and for ability to face the difficulties of life. The girls' wish that their partner have a good position indicates stability and the fact that the husband is responsible for providing the requirements of life (18%). Only 3% of girls request that. Boys still seem to want their partner not to have a strong personality (only 5%). This reflects a continuation of the traditional view that the man must have a strong personality and the woman must be gentle, affectionate and obedient. Finally, the wish for the wife or husband to be a relative is in gradual decline. This does not necessarily imply a development at concept level, but may reflect discouraging experiences in relations with relatives.

Transition to the Maturity Phase, National Survey of Youth in Egypt, World Population Council, 1999-2001. The sample studied included over 9,000 boys and girls whose ages ranged between 10 and 19.

### Al-Haj Metwalli and polygamy

Egyptian girls took an interest in the Al-Haj Metwalli TV series (it defended polygamy), even though in smaller numbers than their mothers' generation. Some said the series did not merely entertain people during Ramadhan but spread dangerous ideas (it ended with a decision in favor of polygamy as a realistic option).

### Three Egyptian females express their opinion about the TV series

#### Nahla

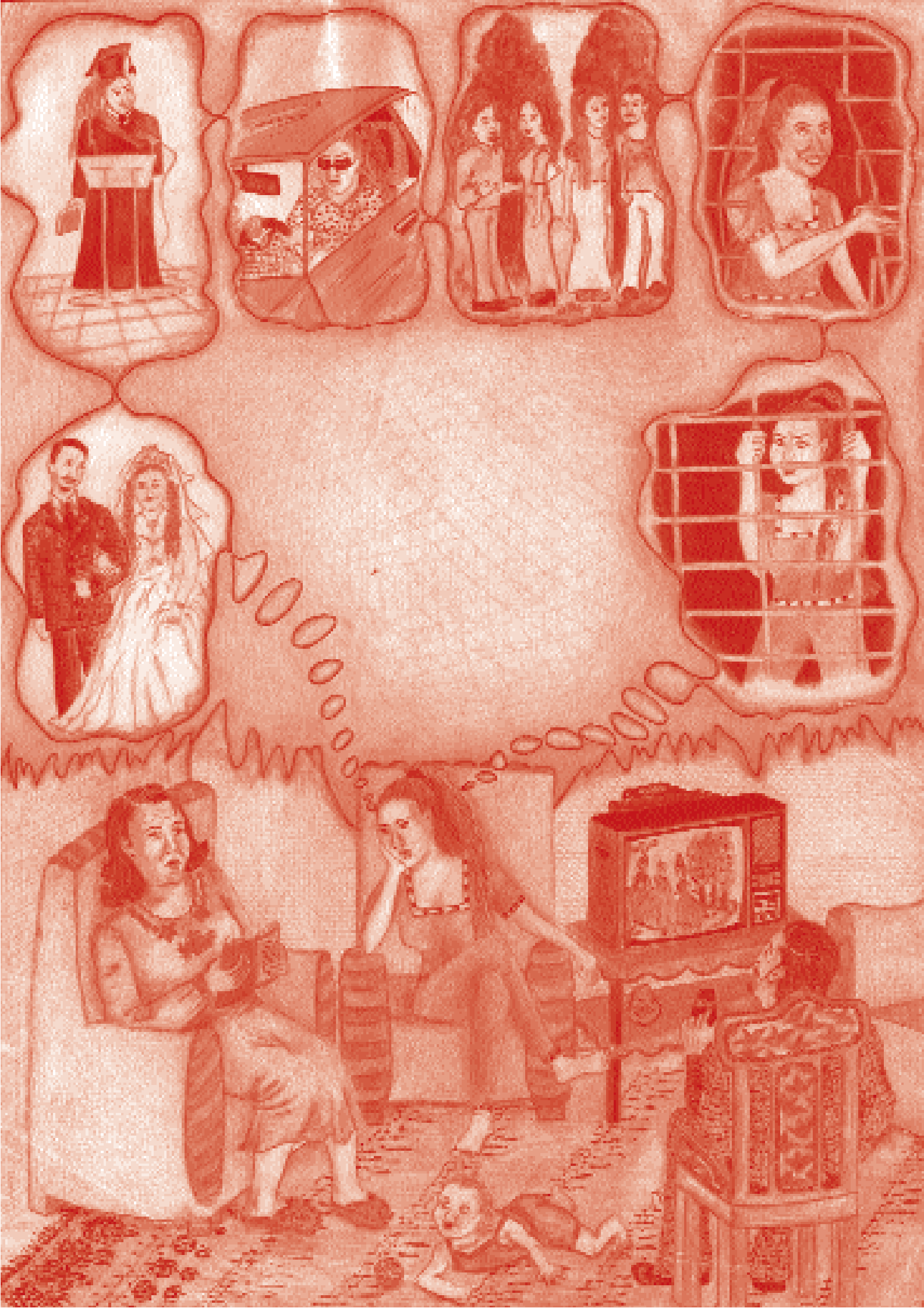
"I watched the series and the programs dealing with it. I think Mother liked the series and many people at school were saying that it was a model of justice. Even some schoolmistresses said so. The series is ridiculous and the ladies in it are all crazy."

#### Dalal

"The trouble is all the ladies were watching the series and were laughing, and each one of them expressed her admiration for this or that wife."

#### Souhir

"I felt that people were taking it too seriously. Obviously the series revealed what people thought deep down without disclosing it. It was as though men were waiting for such a series to have the courage to declare their desire to marry more than one wife, and that it would be possible for their wives to be on good terms and that no problems would arise between them. Strangely, we heard such a language from people who were educated, had university degrees, had been married for many years, and whose children were grown up."



SECOND PART

# FIELD STUDY

Chapter 3:

# Family relations: cordial disagreement

# Family relations

## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is defined as a transitional process from an almost total dependence on the family, where social relations are confined to the family circle, under direct parental control and responsibility, to independence and adulthood, thus a widening of the circle of relations and frames of reference, and liberation from the family yoke. This transitional stage is marked by a more diverse education of the former child in gender-related social roles and behaviours, and a preparation for a future socio-economic role. The process may take several years.

When building up their individualized identity, teenagers are strongly influenced by the home environment, by relations within this environment and how these gradually develop, and by the interaction between the family and actors in the adolescent world (friends, school, work, religious institution, political and social movements, media, etc).

The teenager/family relationship tends to be influenced by such outside protagonists, since the adolescents start listening to outside ideas. Contrary to what many people think, the family continues to play a vital part in their lives, even in the industrialized societies of western Europe. We may believe we are surrounded by wild children but the reality is very different. The newspaper Le Monde published the findings of a study on values and expectations of young people in the 15-24 age bracket, which revealed the paramount place of the family. 82% of the young people questioned said that the family was “extremely significant” and 15% that it was “relatively very significant”. In the 15-17 age bracket, 85% saw the family as very significant[1]. Recognition of the importance of the family is thus one of our starting points: we cannot explain the harmony/obedience or opposition/confrontation between adolescents and their families as other than signs of the family’s centrality, especially for Arab societies.

Family relations are based on well-defined situations in which family members take on allotted roles, responsibilities and authority, depending on status (father, mother, grandparents, children) and a host of variables (sex, age, educational level, contribution to family income, influence outside the family). They are also determined by the surrounding social climate. The family is thus governed by this asymmetrical hierarchization of the relationships between its members. This is usually seen as natural and self-evident, since it is assumed that the reciprocal rights and duties and authoritarian roles will be automatically accepted. This is a major source of conflict inside the family - a conflict of generations (parent/children) or a struggle within the same generation (boys/girls, elder/younger siblings).

In the traditional picture of family life, relations are hierarchized; other factors are marginalized; emotional roles, rights and duties are not negotiable. This is the patriarchal family, where the father (or the oldest man, taking on the role of head of family) wields exclusive power. But as one comes closer to the concepts of modernism, roles, responsibilities and participation in decision-making are determined in the light of a number of variables which integrate the status, and thus determine functions and roles. Other factors of interaction, negotiation, progressive adjustment and evolution lead towards a widening of the base of participation in family decisions, as the child’s personality is formed and his/her intellectual and mental faculties sharpened. Adolescents do not reject the authority of their parents absolutely. The field study shows that they are fairly ready to accept it. But they do not accept that parents have the exclusive right to make decisions merely by virtue of their being father or mother, without recognizing teenagers as individuals and granting them room for maneuver to negotiate their freedom and role. The position of adolescents is difficult: they want to affirm their identity and get ready to have a certain social status. They have to break free from the world of childhood that they indeed wish to leave. It would seem that the conflict of generations is inevitable, although it can be more or less acute[2].

**(1)** Le Monde, nos. 21-22, November 1999; quoted by Robert Bidard: Autorité parentale et citoyenneté. La question des compétences parentales; in Nouvelles problématiques adolescentes; Pratiques institutionnelles en recherche; directors Maryse Vaillant and Jean-Paul Leblanc; L’harmattan - 2001.

**(2)** Scolarité et adolescence : les motifs de l’insécurité; Alain Clémence, François Rochat, Caroline Cortolezzio, Patricia Dumont, MichËle Egloff, Claude Keba: Hampton-Bern 2001.

This depends on a set of socio-cultural, family and individual variables, plus the personal experiences specific to each case. This combination of factors is so complex that it is hard to make any general statement, except where overall trends are concerned; this is highlighted by the field study. What complicates things for adolescents is the duality in their relationship with the family. Inside the family circle, relationships reflect emotions and feelings rather than reason, logic or interest. But reason and interest are becoming increasingly important and the teenager's maturing mind tries desperately to find a logical explanation for everything, including family relations and roles. Adolescents realize that the absence of personal interest within the family is natural, especially as regards the extended family, with all its problems and conflicts. They are torn between different frames of reference and realize that there is an abyss between what is said and what is done.

Arab societies' interaction with modernity and the changes it brings have prepared the ground for adolescence as an age bracket and a social category in its own right (as the Report has shown). But the social field is an area where often antagonistic or incompatible values clash, since strict relations of authority and parental control may make way for dialogue and negotiation and lead to a kind of educational liberalism, or the reverse.

Adolescents are torn between two cultures: the first is modernistic, exalts self-fulfillment and stresses personal responsibility and free will; the second is traditionalist and conservative and wants the individual to be fully integrated, merging entirely with the family clan or other group or community. The family must choose either to help adolescents build up a real personality, or to choke the adolescents' (especially adolescent girls') desire for independence and emancipation. This is the assumption made in this chapter, and to check it we shall analyse: the educational motivations of parents and their perception of the status of girls as compared with boys, parental control and relationships of trust between parents and children, the distribution of educational roles and division of authority between parents, the attitude of adolescent girls towards their fathers, mothers, grandparents and close relatives, the brother/sister relationship and sex discrimination in the family, the distribution of household chores and, finally, sex education as an integral part of the process of socialization.

This chapter addresses a number of questions: What is the place of adolescent girls within the family in Arab societies? Which forms can the authoritarian relations between parents and adolescents take? Is there a gender difference in social education?

## I - Forms and places of parental control

Has the grip of the family become loose enough for adolescents, especially girls, to emerge as autonomous agents able to find self-fulfillment and handle their conflicts with their parents? Or have strict educational standards produced adolescents who live in a state of stress and dependence, even submission and conformism? First, what do we mean by parental control?

Control is used to enable the family to ensure that the adolescent behaviour conforms to the dominant standards and values of the society of which the parents consider themselves trustees. Parents control their children's behaviour when they require them to perform certain 'suitable' acts or prohibit them from performing other 'unacceptable' ones. This control is greater or less depending on the parents' skill, educational objectives, intelligence and how they see teenage status and role. It can be merely dictating obligations and prohibitions, or accompanied by other methods to enforce correct behaviour. Motivating or preaching can replace control. Some parents adopt a communicative style: frequent discussions, possibility for girls to defend their point of view, negotiations to make parental instructions accepted.

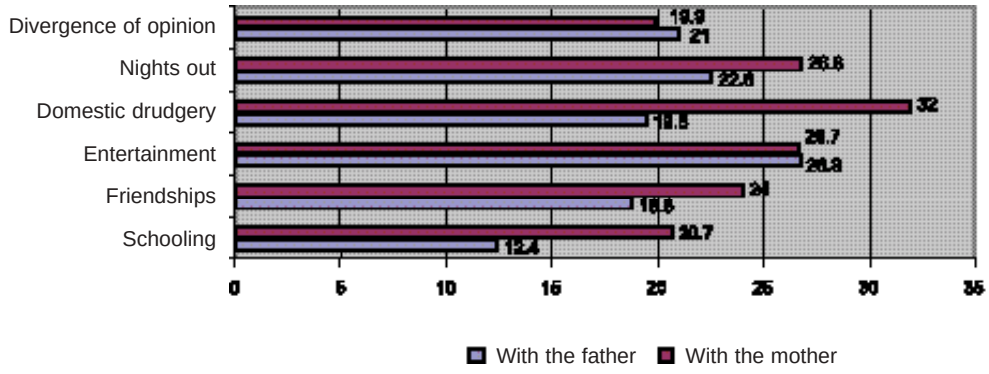
All aspects of everyday life are concerned. Control relates to private places or the "spaces for learning mutual respect"[3], like one's own room, a drawer where teenagers put school or personal things, how they dress, telephone calls, their network of friends or the company they keep, their relationship with the other sex and their choice of spouse. All the adolescents questioned underline the fairly insistent intervention of parents in these things. But their reactions differ, from obedience and apparent submission to criticism, negotiation or dispute. The interviews revealed convergences and divergences and showed that the control is more or less strict according to specific socio-cultural factors, be these general or particular.

**(3)** Simply (F ; De), Le soi, le couple et la famille, Paris, Nathan, 1996.

The strict control girls are subject to as regards going out and frequenting public places is often mentioned. For boys, the control relates more to schooling and what parents think could harm it, particularly having undesirable friends. Parental control varies from one milieu to another. Sometimes, it seems very strict and sometimes flexible, except for, for example, the reserve required of girls, omnipresent despite the difference in the criteria used (from the hijab to the latest fashion). Work by the Population Research and Study Group in Morocco showed that perpetual parent/child conflict occurs about schooling, whereas extreme cases concern domestic tasks (in relation to girls and in particular with the mother: 39.9%), then come nights out, friends and public places with rather close rates (being closely related aspects). What stands out is the frequency of disputes about household chores compared to going out and friends. Socialization has affected the rules governing going out, company and outside activities, an area where there is little conflict. Objectively, certain things cannot be done in rural milieus, or are too expensive for most people and cannot thus be the subject of perpetual conflict. Statistics on these issues tend to reflect urbanized milieus and social classes where the income is more than enough for the family's basic needs. The interviews highlighted this. Adolescents of both sexes from urban environments and the middle class appeared to be more sensitive to parental control. Their reasons for conflict with their parents transcend the household and relate to outside activities. The high rate of conflict about household chores shows that girls are dissatisfied with the division of tasks within the household, although they do their full share of domestic drudgery. The diagram opposite shows that in Morocco disagreements with mothers are more frequent than with fathers, except for divergences of opinion, which are definitely more frequent with fathers, as decision-makers and heads of the family.

On the other hand, levels of conflict with the father and the mother are closer in areas like entertainment and leisure activities.

## Diagram 1.2.: Reasons for conflict with the parents - Morocco




**Source:** (Population Research and Study Center - 2000). [4]

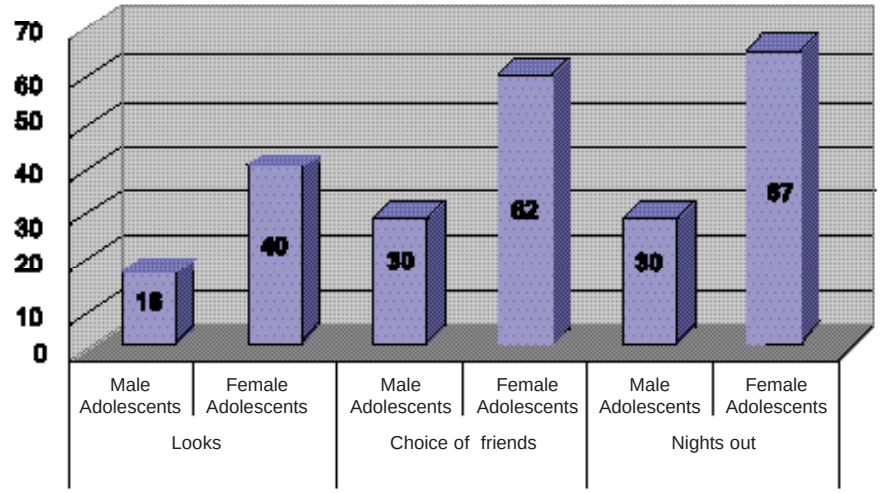
Mothers take control of the family circle and emotional issues. There is permanent father/son (29.9%) and mother/son (33.9%) conflict about nights out; the rates are appreciably higher than for girls, due to the fact that the nights out issue does not in practice arise for girls in certain social milieus, or because girls adapt to the rules and customs, as we have said.

Opinion polls carried out in Lebanon and Bahrain as part of preparing the Report revealed a disparity in terms of conflict (and thus of parental control over their children). The frequency rate for (perpetual or recurrent) conflict is 63% in Bahrain as against 45% in Lebanon. And in Lebanon, parents seem less particular about how their offspring dress (26%) than in Bahrain (43%). As regards company, Bahrain's demographic and geographical features (few people, exiguous territory, internalization of dominant values) cause adolescents there to minimize disagreement with parents over the choice of friends (4%), whereas there is permanent friction about the issue in Lebanon (44%). The interviews conducted in other regions revealed that choice of friends is an equally thorny problem; Bahrain seems to be a special case.

(4) CERED, (2000), L'adolescence en question: Analyse des résultats de l'enquÍte sur les adolescents en milieu urbain.

Although Lebanon is seen as one of the most open and least discriminatory countries as regards man/woman relations in the area of socio-cultural practices, a huge gender gap does exist as regards conflict, conflict being the exercise of control by the parents as well as the rejection of that control by the children (teenagers).

## Diagram 2.2.: Reasons for conflict with parents by sex - Lebanon




**Source:** Lebanese studies conducted in the context of preparing this Report.

## A) Control of company and access to public space

Is the family in present-day Arab societies able to help adolescent girls along the road to autonomy, and how?

Parents develop strategies to either leave young people fairly free to relate to the outside world or to control this access and confine (girls especially) to the private space. Arab societies have long experienced a strict separation of the private and public spheres. But things have changed with the schooling of girls, women's access to the labor market, etc. Presence in public space is claimed by women generally and adolescent girls in particular. At least, it is the claim which they expressed explicitly and for which they pleaded.

The interviewees say their families recognize them as individuals and admit to enjoying some independence in the private sphere, where the girls' status seems higher. But not all girls can assert themselves; this seems to be reserved for those from households with developed cognitive and intellectual faculties. Parents allow girls a private space and some time to themselves, and even encourage this. This can result from a form of bargaining, where the strict control imposed on girls as regards the outside world is traded for room for maneuver at home. From what teenagers say, parental control tends to be relaxed, especially in the private sphere. Conversely, the frequentation of public places remains severely controlled, except for school and professional places, where parents appear more tolerant. Boys are usually not monitored by their parents, except in very rare cases.

Ahmed (17, Tunisia) tells his parents why he is going out, but not what he does. It is the phone calls made by a friend of Ahmed's that his parents dislike, and so his friend just calls once to invite him to his place. Ahmed's parents do not like him to see this friend often, but he does not know why. Hassan (17, Morocco) does not feel restricted as regards clothes or going out. His parents intervene not to protect him but to warn him of possible risks. Each morning when he leaves home they say, "Be careful and go where you want". From a well-off Yemeni family, Farès (15, Yemen) often travels with his father and knows the U.S., where his brother lives. He is very free, has a mobile phone and spends a lot of time outside with his friends, who, like him, failed in their studies. He smokes the narghileh but his parents make sure he does not become addicted to qat; his father initiates him by taking him with him on special occasions. His elder sister takes care of his things; his mother has the central role in the family, and guides and advises him on the female friends he frequently sees.

Parents are more tolerant with boys, encouraging them to relate to the outside world. Control is mainly limited to friends who might get more influence than the family. For girls, control usually means them not going out and gaining the social experience that opens the door to independence and emancipation. Egyptian girls say the control exerted over them does not concern their personal effects or what occurs inside their private space, but going out, the company they keep, their friends and their entire relationship with the outside world.

Mothers badger their daughters with questions and make them ask leave to go out and tell their parents where they are going and with whom; they have to be home at a certain time and in the evening cannot go out alone. There are bans on telephone calls. Nadia (16, Egypt) says she "can do nothing without telling my parents. I go to school and come home with my parents or cousin. After school, I do not have the right to go out or attend to personal business alone. If I decide to go out, they go with me, telling me they're not trying to watch me but are frightened something could happen to me." (Amel, 18, Morocco) says girls may be laid siege to by society and family, who "tend to exaggerate the danger of the outside world". Harping on dangers may be self-defeating: "My mother never stops her shouting and suspicions. At the least delay, she questions me and shouts that I'm straying from the right path, I'm starting to smoke, I'm going with boys...by saying this she makes me think I've become what she says I am. I know many girls and boys who turned out badly because of their parents."

Because they are harassed outside the home, other girls accept being forbidden to go out without protest. There is a chasm between what is experienced in private space and what in public space. Parents have a dual attitude: liberalism at home, restricted freedom outside. This gives rise to an absence of leisure time and a sense of confinement, relegation and loneliness.

The outside world is presented as dangerous, except for protected places like schools. Any desire by girls to free themselves from the family circle is thwarted by the invocation of physical as well as moral risks. The gap between the public and private space is particularly marked in societies that have experienced political and social disturbance, like Algeria. Linda (17, Algeria), says: "I must be back by a certain time, depending on which day of the week it is, who I'm with, where I go. So I generally go out with my friends... if not I should cut it short; when I go out somewhere, I start by telling myself I must be back by half past four, and if I'm at school I come home at five, straight away." Maisa (18, Algeria) agrees: "I wanted to go out on New Year's Eve but they didn't let me because it was in the evening, usually they know what I am, etc... but it is like that, it is a state of mind, they are afraid... they say to you the evening is debauchery time and everything... whereas the morning is not so, but what one can do in the evening one can also do it in the morning, but they do not understand."

## B) Conflict of generations

Generation conflict comes either when teenagers awake to their own identity, or when they adopt frames of reference unlike those of the parents. The natural divergence of opinions due to difference in age and experience and culture degenerates into a confrontational relationship (confrontation is not necessarily seen as having a pejorative meaning). If the ideological and ethical frames of reference of parents and children are similar, this lessens the confrontational nature of the relationship, and tends to increase reciprocal requirements. Conflict is hidden and unconscious when the teenager's independence is drastically limited. This is because personal emancipation, and the desire to exercise one's independence, is a precondition for generational conflict, a phenomenon that goes beyond simple divergence of opinion.

SouhaÔr (16, Egypt) links generational conflict to changing times and needs. Fatma (15, Egypt) links it to type of family: "The more educated the family, the less obvious the conflict of generations, or at least conflict can be resolved peaceably." Aliss (17, Egypt) says: "The more the parents and the children are on friendly terms, the less conflict there is between them." The answers are simplistic, particularly Fatma's idea about education preventing conflict; things are actually much more complex, since the clash of generations (going beyond unconscious contradiction or the parent/child clash on some specific question) is more frequent in urbanized environments and the middle class. Poor families are too taken up by their everyday worries to even think about the conflict of generations. Sana (15, Egypt) agrees that she "herself, her parents and her brother are too busy fighting against misery". Ilham (17, Egypt) sees the conflict as related to the family's social status and the children's openness to a culture different from that of their parents, more frequent in cities like Cairo than in Upper Egypt: "The

conflict of generations exists in your area, Cairo, more than in our area, Upper Egypt. Here, problems start when the boys go off to Cairo and come back wanting to be well-dressed, go out and act as they did in the capital. But Upper Egypt is a much harder country."

The conflict of generations is clearer in the 'modern family' model. It does not necessarily signal repression within the family, nor is it symptomatic of the poverty of that family. It is often caused by the gap between parental hopes and expectations and those of the children. Raya (18, Lebanon) does not feel closely watched by her family or under pressure; they are understanding and open. But she feels there is a gap, perhaps due to her requirements being vastly greater than theirs. One main subject of controversy is education; each has a different point of view. She sees her parents as "the kind who don't easily understand that they must sometimes be less authoritarian." She wants them "to remain with her until she knows what she wants and becomes independent." Achraf (18, Lebanon) belongs, with his father, to a political and ideological current that has changed their initially confrontational relationship into one of harmony; Achraf idealises his father (though he does not say so); of course there are minor disagreements. Rafiq (18, Lebanon) belongs to an influential religious party, which worries his father, but things never go further than words, for the clout and fame of that party precludes the father's clashing with his son. But the conflict of generations in Arab societies should be handled with care, in particular avoiding the idea that the parent/child clash is only based on the child's passion for modernity. This narrow view hides other explanations: religion can be used by children to assert their difference from the older generation.

Mondhar (17, Yemen) uses the same terms and grievances as adults to talk about teenage behaviour ("juvenile delinquency", against giving pocket money, cars and mobile phones to teenagers, disaffection with religious instruction, etc.). But he recognizes that there is a conflict of generations in Yemen. "Indeed, I see in our society this famous conflict of generations, between parents and children, because times have changed and because all and sundry do not belong to the same epoch. Omar Ibn Khattab tells us to educate our children differently because they were created for a time other than our own." The interviews showed that there are two ways of perceiving the conflict of generations. Some teenagers compare it to a social phenomenon; those who do so are usually from elements with scientific qualifications or sociopolitical experience. But most see it as synonymous with confrontation with the parents and rebellion against parental control.

## C) Reactions to the control of the parents: from submission to revolt

As to parental control, the attitudes of both sexes reflect the material and symbolic resources at their disposal, and their awareness of their value and hopes of autonomy. School, economic independence and the network of sociability or the peer group, thanks to the possibilities for comparison which they offer, allow adolescents to reach this autonomy.

How much credibility do adolescents give their parents? What strategies do they adopt to deal with them: revolt, submission, tricks, strategic calculation, negotiation, or contract of trust?

Not saying everything seems to be the tactic advocated by most teenagers to protect themselves and keep a space of intimacy and freedom. Nahla and Aziza (15 and 19, Egypt) stress the need to conceal certain things and keep some of their privacy from the scrutiny of their parents. This can be a first step towards the teenager's asserting his/her identity as a distinct individual (building a common space negotiated with parents to guarantee the teenager's independence is impossible). This is a leitmotif in the Moroccan interviews ("Do not say everything") for all social backgrounds, even the most conservative, where family bonds seem strong. Jamila (17) expresses the need for privacy: "Between me and myself" or "I keep it for me." This is not so much lying as protecting one's private space and avoiding confrontation with the parents.

Lies: Some teenagers say frankly that they sometimes need to lie. Nermine (18, Egypt) admits that she lies for fear of her parents and to avoid clashes; "parents cannot accept that things have changed and are not ready to hear it, to retract or to understand the attitude of their own offspring." She also thinks that feelings of frustration can cause teenagers to make mistakes. Shaddad (16, Yemen) agrees: "Naturally, they ask me a thousand questions especially if some problem occurred during my

escapade. But I hide what happened from them and make excuses to end the discussion right away. I tell them for example that I was at a friend's place to do our homework together... This means lying is the best way to get out of a tricky situation." The contract of trust implies that parents do not need to know everything and that teenagers do not need to say everything. But an implicit or explicit focus on openness is always a feature of the mother/daughter relationship. Feeling obliged to say everything, where no subject is taboo, can be an obstacle to the construction of another type of relationship.

Perseverance and insistence: Yemna (17, Tunisia) shows persistence in the face of family control: "Of course, one always has to respect one's father. When they make me do something, I say I'm not convinced and at the first opportunity I'll do the opposite. But I prefer to discuss things first." But she often has to listen, not talk. Her mother often supports her but her paternal grandmother agrees with the father. When her interests are at stake, Yemna lets the atmosphere become relaxed and then returns to the attack. She does not argue when she is sure the other's point of view is sincere, but refuses to submit if she has doubts - "Not everything people say is true." Her father and grandmother have "the mentality of past times" and do not know that the world has changed and that "what they could do before they cannot do now... Even if a father wants to educate his daughter on rigorous lines, he must talk to her and not make her obey just like that; they must talk things over and be mutually convinced."

Learn to accept things and ask for less: Samira, a Lebanese teenager who wants to be an obedient, "model girl", has a rule: only ask for what you can get. "My father and I never disagree. I give in to all my mother's desires...I do what she wants; when she wants to take me with her and I don't feel like it, I go with her. I can't oppose her. For example, my mother must agree to the places I go; if she thinks a place is not good, she can stop me; so I don't ask for things she can refuse." Amira, Hiba (15) and Nadaa (16) from Lebanon say they give up many things they like, submitting to their mothers to have peace. Submissive behaviour is a feature of those who were brought up in an authoritarian, coercive way and who, if they disobeyed, were punished by fathers or brothers. Certain Moroccan girls, agreeing with their parents about the risks of sexual harassment in the public space, seem to accept without discussion restrictions on the company they keep and their freedom to go out.

Imène submits "voluntarily" to her mother's bans on going out. Conformism and submission can also be behaviour patterns of male teenagers in authoritarian societies. Walid (18, Bahrain) says: "My mother, my brothers, the district, the state, this is power which is imposed on me and which I must respect. They may be wrong but I am obliged to submit to them because they are bigger than me."

Tricks: When pressure is strong and a mother wants a daughter to conform to her taste, the adolescent girl resorts to a trick, feigning obedience but once outside changing her appearance and behaviour. Nermine (18, Egypt) says her mother wants her to dress traditionally but she hates it because it makes her look older than she is. Ahmed (17, Tunisia) (a 'victim') denounces paternal authoritarianism and sees abuse of power in his family. Since he cannot fight it, he "puts up with it" with some hypocrisy. Authority at home, he says, means not being able to come home after midnight.

Negotiation and persuasion: With a father who is traditionalist but open to discussion, Najet (18, Tunisia) tries to negotiate in an "educational" attempt to make him change his mind. She often disagrees with him, because he judges women by their appearance and has a negative image of them. Najet argues with him to prove him wrong; she tells him that "physical appearance is not everything", that a girl can behave "well" though dressing "wrongly" and that wearing the hijab is no guarantee of good behaviour. He has outdated ideas on the status of man and woman (a woman should not go out); she thinks women have rights and should defend them in an interaction which enables her to express her point of view.

Accepting what is reasonable: Reasonable control by parents can be accepted as proof of interest, even love: "My parents do not go through my things or listen to my phone calls. But I go out only after telling them where I'm going, with whom, and when I'm coming home. If they don't question me, I feel they're not interested in me" (Sémia, 15, Bahrain). Linda (17, Algeria) says parental authority and the trust teenagers have in them is legitimate: "I think one must do as one's parents say; if they give advice, it's because it's good for us, they know what they're talking about and don't want to hurt us. We must always obey our parents, not other people, because they are bad."

Doing everything to please one's parents: One of the compromise strategies devised by girls to escape parental control and open up to the outside world is joining a peer group. A carefully selected group of friends seems to reassure parents and offers teenagers a chance to meet other people and learn new standards.

Revolt: In an attitude of revolt and refusal, some girls question the normative, authoritarian education they received, especially teenagers who see the family as a strong institution but a closed circle. Hela (17, Algeria) says: "I'm afraid my parents don't trust me. I know what I'm doing. At times, when I am far from home, from school, they think maybe I'm doing things at school, away from home, that is, I do not like it when they say that because I am old enough and I have...I face up to my responsibilities...when they see me with a boy they do not like, I always say to them I know very well what I'm letting myself in for." Meriem (18, Algeria) refuses to be indefinitely treated as a minor: "At times they don't let me go out at all and that is stifling, having to obey all the time, and it becomes unbearable, then I disobey."

Disobedience and running away: After disagreement with parents over their way of life, some teenagers leave home to live with friends or family members, while others see decohabitation as an intermediary stage. Mohamad (17, Egypt) left home: "My father expects me to make traditional choices: an engineer earning well, with a good wife, children, etc. But my mother wants me to do what I feel like, i.e. leave and make a living, then settle down." His parents being divorced helped Mohamad make such a decision; it is much less easy to leave when the parents form a stable couple. Generally speaking, being trusted by their parents is a real obsession for male, and still more for female, adolescents; this drives them to behaviour that will reassure their parents: self-discipline and self-control under all circumstances and in public, compliance with agreed codes of conduct, to reconcile the wish for independence and desire to please the parents.

## II - Relationships of teenagers with their parents and family cohesion

The various strategies teenagers adopt to face, circumvent or subject themselves to the family show that they do not all accept the family authority but more or less consciously try to build new relationships with the parents to obtain greater personal freedom. In a culture which values the family and the parental roles, how is teenager/parent harmony achieved? Teenagers recognize the vital role of their parents: "My father and mother are the most important thing in my life," says Nermine (18, Egypt). "They were the first people I knew and they taught me what I know, but as one grows older one finds that life is bigger that one's family and that there are things one will never learn from them, for one's parents are always afraid for their children, and don't speak frankly or say everything." It seems that while recognizing the parental contribution and the value of the parental model, most teenagers keep aloof from socialization by the family that helped them take their first steps in life.[5]

Most of the interviewees in the field study have this attitude. Even where there is a conflict of opinion, the parent/children relationship is not usually blamed, except in unusual cases where the parents are excessively severe or violent, or misuse their authority, or where the family has split up.

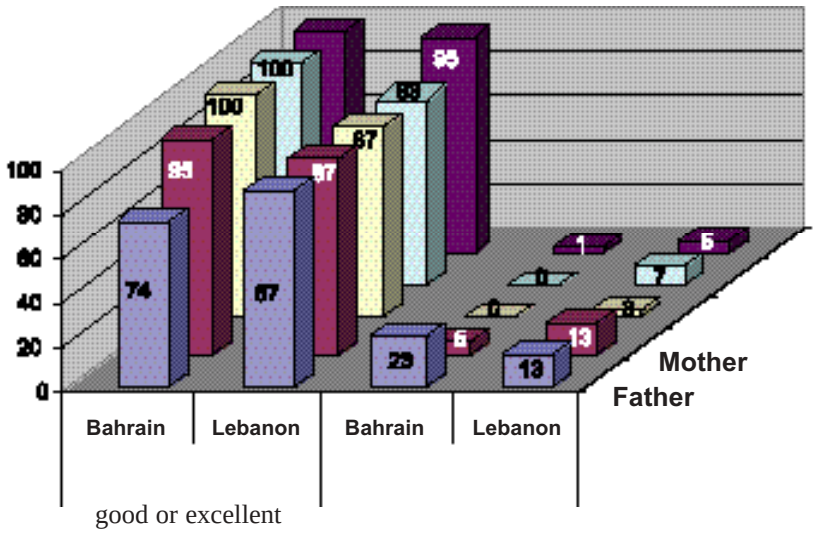
Emotions and morals prevail in the children's attitude to their parents, much more than logic, reason or a critical analysis of the emotional contribution of the parents in bringing up the teenagers. This is natural, normal and perfectly comprehensible from the angle of social relations and roles in Arab societies, though there may be a certain disparity resulting from specific social features or experience. Though they readily recognize this, teenagers often use the past tense in talking about how their parents brought them up, indirectly or unconsciously showing their desire to move on to a more independent stage. This indicates their desire to build up an independent personality on their own. In Syria, 57.5% of the boys and 62.7% of the girls describe their relationship with their parents as one of "affection and harmony", while 35.1% and 31.6% see it as "based on mutual respect".[6] In Egypt, 83.3% of the boys and 77.3% of the girls also see it as based on mutual respect. In two field studies conducted in Bahrain and Lebanon, it appeared that 74% and 87% of interviewees of both sexes see their relation with their fathers as very good or excellent, and 95% and 87% see that with their mothers as rather good if not excellent [7]. This tallies with the general trend observed in the detailed talks with the teenagers, and shows that the majority attach great importance to their relationship with their parents and hope for harmonious relations.

**(5)** Shepherd (P) and Luckman (T), La construction sociale de la réalité, Paris, Méridien/Klineksieck, 1989

**(6)** Problématiques éducatives et sociales et santé génésique de la jeunesse, projet d'éducation démographique, Syrie, 2000.

**(7)** An opinion poll carried out in Bahrain and Lebanon made it possible to evoke a number of questions raised in this Report. In Bahrain, the questioned panel consisted of 285 female and male adolescents (13-18 years), and in Lebanon, of 125 female and male adolescents (15-18 years). The panel was selected according to criteria similar to those applied to the selection of the panel of female and male adolescents concerned with the study. The results of this survey were retained as a secondary source to support or refine the analysis of the contents of the interviews.

## Diagram 2.3.: Relation with the family and friends




From the answers given by teenagers in various Arab countries, girls are clearly more attached to the family than boys. More girls than boys say they hide nothing from their parents; they share everything with them and are trusted by them. They describe the parental attitude towards them as confident, even though they may not go out and are closely watched. Trust seems to be what is desired and claimed by teenagers more than an actual fact.

Teenagers judge their parents by the relationship rather than the role, reproaching them for excessive discipline and lack of broadmindedness, and asking for more respect and less violence. Girls more than boys tend to attribute their parents' emotional skills to their cultural capital: highly educated parents are seen as most understanding and "relational", and those who are illiterate have trouble gaining their children's esteem and are compared to other parents or teachers to their disadvantage.

When disagreeing with their parents, teenagers tend to produce excuses and extenuating circumstances - the difference in way of thinking, the traditional roles of fathers and mothers. Mothers are supposed to worry about their children, to be afraid for them and to incite them to prudence and patience. Fathers are expected to be firm on certain principles and to exert some authority to feel the satisfaction of duty done and that they are playing their paternal part. Children take a lenient view of this behaviour as long as things remain normal (once again the word 'normal' returns like a leitmotif or secret formula to avoid difficult questions).

## A) The relationship with the mother: agreement and tension

Teenagers think their relationship with their parents is good on the whole, with a few reasons for difference. They assess it according to a set of most eclectic factors, including social climate, personal qualities of father and mother, and specific nature of the relations with the child. The quality of the marital bond is a factor to be taken into account.

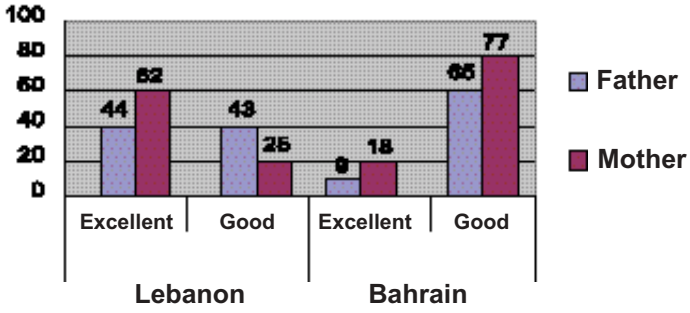
In families that have broken up or where there is conflict and violence, the adolescent has no real choice for comparison or evaluation. If one parent dies, the children immediately build a stronger relationship with the survivor, and an elder brother or sister or a grandparent usually assumes a dominant role. In the event of divorce or separation, the children will decide who is responsible for the separation and thus who is guilty and who the victim. This will also depend on who takes responsibility for the children. There is a certain fellow feeling with the mother, as long as it was she who left the conjugal home and the father remarried. Then there is a strong emotional tie with the mother and tension with the stepmother.

In families where there is violence, the children generally feel sorry for the (victim) mother. But in certain cases, the son can empathize with his father, especially in families strongly marked by patriarchal concepts, and the daughter with the mother. In most other families, a certain disparity can be seen in the evaluation of the relationship with the father and the mother, generally caused by specific features of family members and internal relations, without the same evaluation necessarily applying to every field and with the same intensity. But most interviewees, especially girls, say their relationship with their mother is better than that with their father. This can be because the mother is usually at home, in accordance with the social division of labor, and is attentive to the details of the daily life in the household, more particularly of the daughters, and is thus able to establish special relations with them. Because girls spend most of their time at home, and because they are socially prepared for the role of wife and future mother, there is a greater possibility of interaction with the mother.

A girl's identity seems to be structured more by the relationship with the mother than by that with the father. The mother is the main agent of the daughter's socialization, the most significant other. She is model, adviser, source of information and companion on the road to social experience. She listens, strengthens, advises, approves, encourages, mediates and also judges, criticizes, prohibits, etc. The two opinion polls carried out in Lebanon and Bahrain as part of this Report showed that in Lebanon 87% of those concerned see their relationship with the father and mother as good or excellent, whereas in Bahrain this varies between 74% for the father and 95% for the mother. It is more positive for the mother in either country if a distinction is made between 'good' and 'excellent'. In Lebanon, 62% of the panel see their relationship with the mother as excellent and 25% as good (total 87%). For the relationship with the father, the figures are 44% for good and 43% for excellent (total 87%). In Bahrain, 9% say their relationship with the mother is excellent and 77% good. This corroborates the result found in the interviews done in the two countries, that the quality of the relationship with the parents is closely dependent on the changes the family in Lebanon and Bahrain has undergone. The answers can allow the impact of globalization on the Arab family to be measured, showing how other factors affect the relationship with the father and mother.

The two examples quoted show that even if relations with both parents are good, the relationship with the mother remains more solid and cordial. This leaning towards the mother appears more clearly in Bahrain, and is generally related to the absence of the father, who is completely taken up by his work and the struggle to support the family in a consumer society. The widespread use of foreign servants in Bahrain does not seem to have weakened the child/mother relationship. Maybe it has helped to eliminate a source of conflict - domestic chores. But this is not so for the educational roles of the mother and father, for dialogue with the children, and even less for relations within the family, which, it seems, are adversely affected by recourse to foreign servants.

## Diagram 2.4.: Relationship with the father and the mother: case of Lebanon and Bahrain

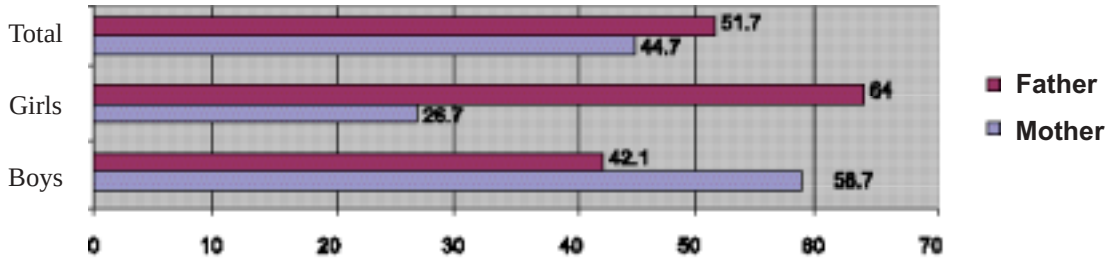



Meriam (14, Bahrain) thinks her relationship with her mother is "good", even "friendly". "We sometimes go out together. But sometimes I'm irritated by things she does. As for my father, my relationship with him is one of courtesy. He represents the antithesis of my personal convictions." Jassem (18, Bahrain) agrees: "My relationship with my mother is strong, because I feel I am closer to her, because our personalities are more alike and because we think the same way. My love for her is very strong and I feel that she did much to make me what I am. We understand each other and I can tell her everything." In Bahrain, the special relationship with the mother extends to near relatives; relations with the mother's family (maternal aunts and uncles) are better than with the father's (paternal

aunts and uncles). Thus, Meriem: “I prefer my maternal aunts to my paternal aunts. They are closer and sometimes we go out together.” Mohamed (16, Bahrain) agrees: “Our relationship with my mother’s parents is very close, particularly my maternal uncle and aunt whom I regularly visit. I’m not as satisfied with my relationship with my father’s family as I am with my relationship with my mother’s, because their style, way of life and thinking are different. Sometimes this upsets me but I force myself to visit them, trying to forget my objections.” If a relationship of mother/child trust is necessary for tightening the bonds with the mother’s family, this in turn reinforces the mother’s status in the eyes of her children, who are brought within the network of relations of the mother’s family, and adopt its values and way of life.

Mothers seem to inspire more confidence than fathers and are generally turned to when help is needed. Girls talk to and consult their mothers because they feel closer to them. Mothers are more present and available than fathers and mediate between fathers and children, especially girls. They have the delicate duty of introducing daughters to health and sexual issues. They sympathize with their daughters, following their daily schooling, guiding and directing their choices and their public behaviour. The household survey in Syria[8] showed that 51.7% of girls and boys (15-24) ask their mothers to help them with a personal problem, against 44.7% who ask their fathers. 26.7% of girls say they turn to their fathers, whereas 42.1% of boys turn to their mothers. 64% of girls appeal to their mothers; 58.7% of boys appeal to their fathers. The high proportion of girls resorting to their mother indicates a search for compassion and protection within the family, especially when under pressure from father or the siblings. NaÔla (18, Tunisia) prefers her mother and looks exclusively to her for comfort and support vis-‡-vis her father and her brother, who tries to dominate her with the approval of his father.

**Diagram 2.5.: Percentage of young people seeking assistance to solve a personal problem - Syria**




Mother/daughter relations have sometimes been seen negatively and as an obstacle to the girls’ emancipation. But the mother is seldom seen as an obstacle to the personal development of her daughter. Most Egyptian girls say their success in studies and professional life is due to their mothers or to fulfill their mothers’ dreams. But there can be tension between a mother and her daughter. Samia (15, Bahrain) says her two parents are middle-ranking executives, and are educated and broad-minded, but she often has disagreements with her mother: “When I want to go out with a friend whose mother my mother doesn’t know, I must use particular energy to persuade her to let me see this friend, because my mother is hard to convince. Arguments sometimes occur towards the end of the holidays. A week before the academic year starts, my mother lectures us on the need not to stay up late.” Like other girls, after protests she finally accepts her mother’s discipline because she thinks her mother’s insistence is “reasonable”.

Linda (17, Algeria): “My mother likes to see the company I keep, who I hang around with, because she is afraid for me. Well, she trusts me...but sometimes...because at this age one is very impressionable, she likes to know who I keep company with and what kind of friends I have.” It seems that the positive attitude towards the mother is not automatic but is primarily based on affectivity and the search for understanding and support within the family, in addition to advice and guidance. But the situation turns in favor of the father or third parties when the sons/daughters/mother (and father) field of action widens, when the mother controls her children strictly and when this control extends to the public sphere, where to be generous with one’s advice and directives implies possession of a substantial cultural and relational capital. The constant search by girls for arguments to justify their mothers’ behaviour and their own attitudes is a recurrent phenomenon. Mothers’ lack of understanding and authoritarian behaviour as regards education is attributed to their lack of social experience.

**(8)** Recensement de la santé familiale en République Arabe Syrienne, rapport préliminaire, Primature, Bureau central des statistiques, Ligue Arabe, 2002.

Similarly, their low educational level and inexperience of the labor market does not prepare them to accept that their children have grown up and now need care and freedom rather than affection and love. Generally, girls feel that their mothers do not always appreciate their freedom of expression or their qualities and talents. Those who enjoy a certain independence seem more critical of their mothers, who do not recognize their need for independence; this makes them less partial to the mother. But the preference for the mother does not necessarily obey a lasting hierarchy; there can be "comparative preferences" in various fields, and the relationship with the parents can vary according to whether the public or private sphere is involved and according to the reason for the disagreement.

Jassem (18, Bahrain) has a very positive attitude to his mother. But his response then reveals something else: "But sometimes, I feel that she is far from me, maybe because of events which she experienced personally and because she fills her head with ideas and calculations about events which occur, occurred or will occur. That's why I feel she's distant. I didn't experience her past and my relationship with her is one of affection and harmony, an open relationship. The same is true for my relationship with my father, because he's an intelligent and open man like my mother. The difference is that I can dispel any rift between him and me. I can discuss anything with him." Sarra (16, Bahrain), whose views were partly formed by the divergence between her mother and father, says: "I get along more easily with my father because my mother is too afraid for me and tends to complicate things. My father is a model for me. Problems arose between my mother and my father, driving my mother to leave the marital home. So I had to take over all the household duties. At that time, my father was distant. I had to take on all the household chores and look after my brothers and sisters." Nahla (15, Egypt) draws a distinction between the public and private spheres to define the relations and respective roles of her father and mother: "For sure, my mother is like all the other mothers. She provides us with food and drink and takes care of our clothing. It's her we quarrel with. My father never hangs around the house for long. But it seems to me that all the ideas I have come from him. It is he who sometimes gives us courses, who takes us to friends' places or to the cinema. My mother doesn't go out much."

Thus evaluation originates both in what the teenager expects from his/her relationship with his/her father or mother, and in the importance attached to certain characteristics rather than others. Ambitions for the future must also be taken into account. The expectations of the girl who sees herself as future wife and future mistress of a house differ from those of a girl who plans to be an active individual economically, socially or politically.

## B) The relationship with the father: an existential distance

The interviews showed that the teenagers' dichotomous views when assessing the relationship with the mother and the father can be exaggerated and over-simplified. They also showed that an inclination to one of the parents is sometimes justified by things inherent to distinctive social characteristics, the value system and personal expectations.

In traditional families, the father/child relationship reflects the limits laid down by society for young and old, parents and children (according to the age pyramid). These limits blur when subject to the intense emotional and existential ties that link members of a family. They also depend on the educational roles which compel parents to communicate with their children to prepare them for their social duties and hand down to them the values and behaviour which they hold in trust. In traditional families, the distribution of roles on the basis of sex (horizontal) makes mothers closer to daughters and fathers closer to sons (whom fathers must prepare for adulthood). This explains the greater distance between fathers and daughters.

But a new kind of relationship emerges in 'modern' milieus when the father swaps authoritarianism for reconciliation. Fathia (16, Tunisia) says she prefers talking to her father, director of a training agency, finding him more understanding and lenient than her mother. She explains this difference by her father's job and her mother's spending all her time at home. When she identifies with her mother, she behaves like a true mother; when she compares herself to her father she sees in him a kind of social ideal.

Despite criticism, parents remain a model, and several teenagers declare that they will bring up their children as they were brought up, thus expressing a need for stable references and rules. The figures of the socializing authority remain credible and their legitimacy is not questioned, as long as it

is not seen as abusive or arbitrary. The asymmetric status of parents and teenagers is accepted as long as mutual respect is preserved. The father's (or mother's) authority is a function of their status as adults, with their long experience and ability to judge with understanding, and their status as parents, which entitles them to best decide what is appropriate for their offspring. Often religion is invoked to consolidate the parental status as somehow sacred and make obedience almost a ritualistic obligation. Othman (18, Yemen) says: "God enjoins us to obey our parents; obedience to parents is thus a duty." The father is what is meant, because Othman, like many boys of various nationalities, believes that the woman should stay at home, her role being limited to looking after her children and husband and obeying the latter. The duty of obedience does not refer to her. Real authority rests with the father. This attitude appears particularly in the Yemeni interviews, in view of the tribal nature of the social fabric and its effect on relations between members of the family clan, where real authority can be held by another man in the family in its wider sense, if not the father then perhaps the grandfather or an influential uncle.

## The relationship with the father

When grievances against the father are mentioned, lack of contact, distance or perhaps violence are stressed. Majda (17, Morocco) says her father was distant and dominated the entire family because he belonged to "the old generation...My father got old and one can only accept his behaviour because when somebody ages, all he has left is his voice to shout with... we must be patient." One respects and recognizes the authority of even an old and illiterate father because he embodies the honor of the family; such feelings may structure the girl's relationship with her father, though they are not openly expressed.

Yemna (17, Tunisia) explains her hostility to her irascible father: "I don't feel he's close to me, he always says to me: I bring back money and I feed you; what more do you want? He believes that his role ends there. I would like...I don't know...the love of a father. When he comes home, I hide in my room and never eat with him." Yemna justifies this by the fact that her father's work in Algeria meant he was often absent; she lived with her mother, who took care of everything while he merely sent her money. She does not miss him and is indifferent when her mother talks about him. What she most dislikes is his violence. When her parents quarrel, she joins in and gets as many slaps as her mother (who seeks her support). Yemna remembers the rare moments when she felt close to her father: when he gave her some pencils as a reward for her good school results, and when he gave blood when she was sick. This, especially, is why she does not openly reproach him and hides her feelings.

**BOX 2-5** **Qualities of the father and the mother**

L'analyse du contenu des interviews tunisiennes a permis d'ébaucher un portrait robot du père idéal et de la mère idéale :

| QUALITES DU PERE | QUALITES DE LA MERE |
|---|---|
| - Etre présent, rappeler à l'ordre mais jouir de capacités intellectuelles et affectives.<br>- Inspirer la confiance, reconnaître ses enfants et en cas de besoin apporter le réconfort.<br>- Savoir dialoguer sans user de la violence.<br>- Etre là quand on a besoin de lui et encourager ses enfants.<br>- Etre plus humain et moins à cheval sur les principes, s'abstenir de donner des leçons de morale et de sermonner les autres. | - Etre prête à sacrifier son propre bien-être pour le bien de ses enfants.<br>- Avoir de l'autorité et de l'influence sans être tyrannique.<br>- Etre ouverte, user du dialogue, communiquer et être toujours à l'écoute de ses enfants.<br>- Etre proche et amicale de ses enfants.<br>- Etre apte à détecter les dons cachés de ses enfants. |

This box contains a subtle proportioning of qualities inspired by traditional and modern frames of reference. The qualities attributed to the father and to the mother are influenced by society's being divided into two distinct spheres, private (where the mother reigns) and public (where the father reigns). They still rest on the old duality authority/man, sacrifice/woman. But they include strong modern connotations, stressing dialogue, communication and balance in the parent/child relations, unlike the archetypal traditional family.

This rather moderate description of the ideal father and ideal mother applies more to societies which have changed greatly as they move towards modernity. Up to a point it supports the conclusions drawn from interviews carried out in the other countries, where the expectations of adolescents of both sexes are akin to these qualities, except for the poorest, the conservative rural milieus and the communities where tribalism and male chauvinism prevail. There, moderation is unacceptable. It gives way to authoritarianism or the will to break away, especially in families dislocated or confronted with difficulties. The special status of the family is unanimously accepted by the teenagers covered by the study and appears in their testimonies. When the social system is authoritarian, this enables fathers to impose their views without feeling at all obliged to provide explanations. In fact, parents do not completely exercise the authority their status gives them, leaving adolescents a margin of freedom. The reason can be the father's (or parents') absence, giving up or even incompetence. Fathers are unable to exert their authority either because the young people oppose the established order and standards (considering them to be obsolete and anachronistic), or because the parents willingly agree to grant their children greater freedom so they can create personal codes of conduct. But even if such a margin of freedom can exist, is it the same for girls and boys?

**C) The broken family and its impact**

The impact of the family is clearly felt by adolescents, especially in the case of dysfunctional or broken families. Many cases were noted of families with insoluble problems leading to assault, battery or divorce, and the remarriage of the father or mother. Several cases of a parent's death were reported. In all such cases, the events had a lasting effect on the teenagers, who said so plainly. The disappearance of a parent, or separation, can radically affect the adolescent, who considers her/himself as fully or partly in charge of the household, especially when s/he is the eldest. It can also deepen the emotional ties with the surviving parent.

In other circumstances, particularly where there is perpetual conflict or divorce and remarriage, there is tension between children and stepmother or stepfather. Girls especially express negative feelings about such situations, for which they were unprepared and which can appear to them - as they said - obscure and incomprehensible. Conflict between parents destroys all those accepted ideas which, in the child's subconscious, idealize the image of father and mother and defend marital harmony, and can occur just when the child's personality is being formed. Quarrels between father and mother are often the worst memories adolescents have. Ward (17, Yemen) says: "Among the painful situations which very strongly marked me, I would cite the conflict between my father and my mother. They quarrel all the time. But this time, their dispute ended so badly that my mother said to my father: (All right, repudiate me!). She went off, going as usual to her parents'. My father was beside himself. I felt that he really wanted to repudiate her. I even saw him writing the divorce certificate and I was later able to make sure of it. I didn't say anything to him. But my maternal uncle came a bit later and interceded with him and my mother. They were reconciled and my father said he never wrote a divorce certificate. I was deeply saddened by it. I think that my father retracted because he's got a weak personality whereas my mother has a very strong one. We like our father because he is good and tender to us. My mother is an exact copy of her own father and always wants to get her own way." Ward's words reveal certain negative aspects of intra-family relations within the traditional extended family, aspects whose importance is often minimized; the tendency is to stress the emotional and interdependent aspects.

Wala (17, Yemen) embodies an extreme case of family difficulty. She is the daughter of her father's second wife (he married four times) and clashes constantly with the fourth wife. She never understood why her father repudiated her mother. "There had never been any real problems likely to lead to divorce. Neither I nor my sisters had ever seen our parents quarrel. Everything happened suddenly, without warning. The one and only cause of the repudiation of my mother and the hatred my father had started to feel for her was my elder half-sister (born of my father's first marriage)...Then my

father took another woman, but the marriage only lasted two months because she was not beautiful. He even said they had foisted the elder sister on him. Although she was good-natured, my father was distressed at what people might think of him for having exchanged my mother who was very beautiful for someone who was not beautiful at all and for having preferred her to my mother, who had made a lot of sacrifices for him. After repudiating this wife, he waited nearly six months before marrying his current wife. The invasion of this woman completely upset the order of things. She was splendid. Problems began three months after the marriage. All our conflicts with the parents center on our resentment of her because she makes a fuss about doing the housework, leaving it till my sister and I do the chores after we come home from school. Sometimes she even makes the house untidy deliberately. She also broke the door of the room I live in with my younger sister." Wala considered dropping out of school though she was a brilliant pupil, but was dissuaded by her sisters.

Wala's case is interesting (father's repeated marriages and his criteria for choosing brides) but also refers to a problem that has never been examined thoroughly in Arab countries - the psychological and sociological consequences for children of family breakup. It is as though objective thinking on the issue is taboo, notwithstanding its intrinsic importance and the scale of the problem in Arab societies, where it is difficult to obtain reliable statistics. The problem is solved as a purely social phenomenon, subject to case-by-case treatment, either via family mediation, or by getting rid of resistant, irreconcilable cases. The two mechanisms do not always pay sufficient attention to the interests of the children (except for the sacrosanct principle of the mother sacrificing herself for her children); any decision made may not necessarily be in their best interests.

**BOX 2-6**

## ANONYMOUS FAMILIES [9]

THERE ARE IN FRANCE OVER ONE MILLION CHILDREN OF SEPARATED COUPLES. 45% OF EX-SPOUSES REMARRIED. 37% CHILDREN SAW THEIR FATHER IN SECOND WEDDINGS AND 66% HAVE A HALF-BROTHER OR HALF-SISTER. PIERRE BOURDIEU SPEAKS OF "NAMELESS FAMILIES...THESE FAMILIES WHICH ARE BORN OF THE DEBRIS OF A FORMER FAMILY, WHEREAS PATRONYMICS WERE INVENTED TO EXPRESS A STATE AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS OF FAMILIES WHICH CEASED TO EXIST... WHAT THEN SHALL WE CALL A CHILD, SON OF THE SPOUSE OF THE FATHER AND BORN OF A FIRST MARRIAGE? OR WHAT SHALL WE CALL THE HUSBAND OF THE MOTHER OR THE WIFE OF THE FATHER (...) HOW SHALL WE ADDRESS THESE PEOPLE?"

Maha (15, Egypt) had cultivated, intelligent parents, especially her father (who affected her deeply). The couple quarreled but still live under the same roof without speaking to each other. Maha finds this unbearable and wonders whether this solution, adopted "in the interests of the children", is really better than divorce? Bassam (17, Egypt) has problems that relate to his half-brothers (from his mother's second marriage after the death of his father). "I'm the eldest in the family. After my father died, my mother married a man who stayed with us for five years before ditching my mother and starting a new life with another woman without divorcing. My mother had two children from this marriage. I didn't know how to behave with them; they made me uncomfortable. I didn't regard them as my brothers. But after my step-father left, I started to spend more time at home with them and I learned to like them. They see me as their big brother." When his mother decided to marry once again and leave the household, Bassam quarreled with her.

Mustapha (18, Lebanon), asked about major problems within the family, mentions his conflict with his "maternal aunt" (father's wife), who shouts at him. Line (17), who lives where the bonds between clans are still strong, reports a scene of extreme violence, and apologizes for not being able to tell the female investigator about it, probably because she is embarrassed: "My father's parents told him my mother had deceived him. It happened five years ago, on New Year's Day. My father had drunk (alcohol). He went home and got his gun and threatened to shoot us. He said we weren't his children.

**(9)** Robert Bidart: Autorité parentale et citoyenneté. La question des compétences parentales ; in Nouvelles problématiques adolescentes, pratiques institutionnelles en recherche ; directors Maryse Vaillant and Jean Paul Leblanc; L'Harmattan, 2001.

We had to take refuge with the neighbors. Then the police came and the problem was settled in a friendly manner. We are constantly anxious. We live in terror but we've got used to it." Lina uses humiliating terms to describe her father. Of his relationship with his family, she says: "His family is all the world to him. That's it. He doesn't speak to other people and has no relationship with anybody outside his own world. He's reactionary, superficial and totally unbalanced." She keeps repeating, "I'm sorry, but I'm only saying what I feel." Najda (16, Tunisia) has similar feelings, comparing her father to a monster because of his violent behaviour to her and her mother. She says she hates her father and is forced to show solidarity with her mother.

But family problems, though significant, especially in the case of broken families, must be kept in perspective; attention should not be limited to extreme cases of physical violence or separation. There are more frequent situations where delinquency and the relaxing of family ties affect the children, though to a varying extent. The question is also what the children themselves expect from the relationship. Raya (18, Lebanon) is a modern, emancipated and cultivated teenager, who does not see the family as very important in her life. She looks for philosophical arguments to make her case but finally attributes this, at least partly, to the fact that the relationships within her "embryonic" family are very loose, closer to the model of the modern family that respects the children's special natures. There is no conflict between the parents (except an old story) but Raya just does not feel she has a family. This has probably formed her idea of what marriage and the foundation of a future family should be. The brother/sister relation to a large extent depends on their relation with the parents, the behaviour of these parents with regard to their children and the family situation generally.

## III - Relations with siblings and the search for equality

Brothers and sisters are, in the same way as parents or grandparents, 'mentors' who accompany teenagers in their quest for identity. Relations with siblings can offer emotional resources and models for teenagers to build their identity.

Relations between siblings can vary between conflict, solidarity, competition, complicity or hostility. They are a function of the relationship with the parents. Fathers who have given up or are old or absent delegate authority to their sons or (failing this) elder daughters. Younger people seldom accept family discipline from elder children, especially brothers. Girls who find it normal to be supervised by their father refuse to be so treated by brothers or sisters.

Siblings form a mini-society that can either help boys become independent of their parents or reinforce authority and hinder access to autonomy. In most of the countries surveyed, teenagers are marked by their relations with their siblings and by ties of blood and kinship generally; others build new relations of complicity and friendship with brothers and sisters.

### A) The brother/sister relationship: confrontation or complicity?

"The relationship between brothers and sisters can prove more delicate in adolescence than in the other age brackets, because it is at this time that age differences become extremely significant[10]. The relationship changes with puberty, the forming of the sexual identity, and the increased importance of the gender distribution of social roles. Yemna (17, Tunisia) gets along well with her 15-year-old brother; they can have tiffs, which she thinks are her fault because she is "very selfish". She takes his things and wears his clothes; he cannot wear hers. She and her mother try to control the company he keeps but he will not be pushed around and does as he likes. Yemna is close to him and tells him her little secrets. And when he makes a new conquest he tells her about it and she gladly plays the part of the older sister confidante.

Zeineb (18, Yemen) thinks she has a strong relationship with her two brothers but a better with her three sisters: "I prefer my sisters to my friends. I tell my secrets only to them. We form a united group and have the same interests." Zahra (17, Yemen) says that with the passing of time she has built up a close relationship with her sister. "But when we were small, we were always at each other's throats. Today, she belongs to my circle of friends of both sexes. This is so that she won't tell my father what I do outside the home. Now, when I want to go somewhere and my father opposes it, it is she who supports me." A cordial relationship, based partly on interest and complicity. The brother/sister relationship can have its competition and conflicts which may even degenerate into pitched battles, particularly in early adolescence. The interviews conducted in Yemen enabled us to check this aspect,

**(10)** Rugo, (Marcel), FrËres et súurs, une maladie d'amour. Paris, Fayard, 2002.

which we met in all the countries covered by the field study. Where the age difference is significant, which often happens with the eldest brother, an agreement can be established with the younger siblings: the eldest is accepted as a second father who advises, gives pocket money, and supervises. The paternalistic attitude of her elder brother does not prevent Saida (18, Tunisia) finding an area of agreement via the reciprocal, though assymmetrical, exchange of small amounts of money. "Occasionally he gives me money in exchange, but very seldom and not as much as I give him." We may wonder how far this dissymmetry affects the brother's conciliatory attitude. The elder brother of Sali (16, Egypt) also enjoys special status: "I love my elder brother very much because he explains the facts of life to me, takes me along with him and shows me the city and reads me what he writes. In fact, he is a second father without the attributes of the traditional paternal role: authority and distance."

Brothers frequently restrict their sisters' personal freedom in public. They can be replaced or backed up by uncles. The brother controls, announces and enforces codes of conduct, gives permission to go out, intervenes in his sisters' lives, searches their things, and supervises their friendships and how they dress. The brother/sister relationship often deteriorates with adolescence, for the brother sees himself as guarding his sister's honor. The grounds on which brothers affirm their superiority and coercive authority is their maleness. They are taught very early that belonging to the male sex entitles them to impose their views on women. Girls see having a much younger brother as lucky, for they thus can escape fraternal control.

Thara (16, Yemen) says her relationship with her younger brother differs according to whether they are in Yemen or away: "When we travel, things are normal. But here in Yemen, given that I wear the hijab, it's he who answers the phone and opens the door. He tells me not to go out alone, 'I must come with you'. This despite the fact that he's much younger than I am. I believe it was we who first gave him the opportunity to act like this and he finally got used to it." Nermine (18, Egypt) says that though she accepts the parental monitoring, she is amazed that this right should pass to her younger brother. "Of course it's awkward, especially when you see your little brother claiming to be a man and behaving like one, asking who is that boy? Or who is that girl? Where are you going? Isn't this illogical and ridiculous?"

Najet (18, Tunisia) can clash with her family over futile things like wearing trousers because her father, and especially her brothers, disapprove. But she is stubborn, especially with the brother who is only two years older than she. She respects more the views of her other, older, brothers, who control her goings out. She feels closer to her youngest sister (one year younger) who is her friend because they share the same ideas. Hanan (17, Tunisia) is watched by her brother, two years older; she feels he exerts more pressure on her than her father. She sometimes quarrels with him because he wants to govern her behaviour, dictate how she dresses and if she can go out, or, for example, ask why she returned from school so late. She gets along well with him when he is in a good mood, and thinks he is less unbearable than before and no longer so strict.

The Algerian teenagers stress their brothers' tyranny when they talk of "the brothers" as a group with the same ethics, not individuals one can have personal relations with. Hela (17) says it is hard to be a girl in Algeria because one does not feel respected. She is the fifth of her siblings, with three elder brothers: "When a girl complains it is especially about her brother who stops her going out with a boy; for...finally...because in fact he's afraid of...his sister being hurt or...protecting her. Because he's a boy, he knows roughly what he does with girls, he's right, there...he wouldn't like his sister to undergo that, that's it." Later in the interview, she says what she most wants to see change is her brother's behaviour: "He's 19, two years older than me, he keeps following me, he interferes too much with my life, he watches me and all that I do not like... especially as regards boys and everything. And we aren't on speaking terms because of that. He doesn't trust me; for him, having a relationship means having sex." Linda (17) agrees: "There are brothers who do not want that (dealings with the other sex), except if he really wants to marry her, if not... there are brothers who are like that, they have this frame of mind, it all depends on education and the environment where the girl is."

Some Moroccan girls say that more than fathers (often disqualified by unemployment), it is brothers who exert authority, abusively and sometimes using verbal and physical violence.

El Harass (1997) writes: "Currently, there are many young people who defy the authority of their fathers, without necessarily having grounds to put forward like wages or training. These young people also tend to assume almost the monopoly of all the decisions which relate to them by restricting the intervention of their fathers to officializing the fait accompli...It is difficult for them (fathers) to

handle the problems of adolescence because they live in fear of losing a son or seeing a daughter fall into prostitution. They suffer from their inability to run the lives and future of their offspring, lacking the necessary means to improve them[11]. Many things could explain the erosion of the father's authority to the advantage of the brothers, e.g. social instability and the emergence of political (including religious) movements. This usually reinforces the younger brother's role, reflecting his growing political and social status in a social environment less tolerant of women. Sociological studies of Algerian society have shown this. In her work on family values, social violence and political violence (1998), Dalila Djorbal says that "the family is the institution that was most deeply shattered. The image and the roles of the various members were mixed up...Brothers gained the status of defenders of family and religious order and honor, a phenomenon which became more marked in recent years. Fathers lost their status of authority to their sons." She mentions the "privilege of violence" of the men of the family, which extends to other men, who will badger or correct girls and women in public: at school, at work, on public transport and on the street.

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Siblings form a mini-society that can either help boys become independent of their parents or reinforce authority and hinder access to autonomy. In most of the countries surveyed, teenagers are marked by their relations with their siblings and by ties of blood and kinship generally; others build new relations of complicity and friendship with brothers and sisters.

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**(11)** El Harras (M), (1997), Comprendre les futurs socioculturels affectant les comportements en matiËre de démographie et les implications pour la formulation et l'exécution de politiques et programmes de population, rapport d'une enquÍte qualitative.

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they are in Yemen or away: "When we travel, things are normal. But here in Yemen, given that I wear the hijab, it's he who answers the phone and opens the door. He tells me not to go out alone, 'I must come with you'. This despite the fact that he's much younger than I am. I believe it was we who first gave him the opportunity to act like this and he finally got used to it." Nermine (18, Egypt) says that though she accepts the parental monitoring, she is amazed that this right should pass to her younger brother. "Of course it's awkward, especially when you see your little brother claiming to be a man and behaving like one, asking who is that boy? Or who is that girl? Where are you going? Isn't this illogical and ridiculous?"

Najet (18, Tunisia) can clash with her family over futile things like wearing trousers because her father, and especially her brothers, disapprove. But she is stubborn, especially with the brother who is only two years older than she. She respects more the views of her other, older, brothers, who control her goings out. She feels closer to her youngest sister (one year younger) who is her friend because they share the same ideas. Hanan (17, Tunisia) is watched by her brother, two years older; she feels he exerts more pressure on her than her father. She sometimes quarrels with him because he wants to govern her behaviour, dictate how she dresses and if she can go out, or, for example, ask why she returned from school so late. She gets along well with him when he is in a good mood, and thinks he is less unbearable than before and no longer so strict.

The Algerian teenagers stress their brothers' tyranny when they talk of "the brothers" as a group with the same ethics, not individuals one can have personal relations with. Hela (17) says it is hard to be a girl in Algeria because one does not feel respected. She is the fifth of her siblings, with three elder brothers: "When a girl complains it is especially about her brother who stops her going out with a boy; for...finally...because in fact he's afraid of...his sister being hurt or...protecting her. Because he's a boy, he knows roughly what he does with girls, he's right, there...he wouldn't like his sister to undergo that, that's it." Later in the interview, she says what she most wants to see change is her brother's behaviour: "He's 19, two years older than me, he keeps following me, he interferes too much with my life, he watches me and all that I do not like... especially as regards boys and everything. And we aren't on speaking terms because of that. He doesn't trust me; for him, having a relationship means having sex." Linda (17) agrees: "There are brothers who do not want that (dealings with the other sex), except if he really wants to marry her, if not... there are brothers who are like that, they have this frame of mind, it all depends on education and the environment where the girl is."

Some Moroccan girls say that more than fathers (often disqualified by unemployment), it is brothers who exert authority, abusively and sometimes using verbal and physical violence.

El Harass (1997) writes: "Currently, there are many young people who defy the authority of their fathers, without necessarily having grounds to put forward like wages or training. These young people also tend to assume almost the monopoly of all the decisions which relate to them by restricting the intervention of their fathers to officializing the fait accompli...It is difficult for them (fathers) to handle the problems of adolescence because they live in fear of losing a son or seeing a daughter fall into prostitution. They suffer from their inability to run the lives and future of their offspring, lacking the necessary means to improve them."11 Many things could explain the erosion of the father's authority to the advantage of the brothers, e.g. social instability and the emergence of political (including religious) movements. This usually reinforces the younger brother's role, reflecting his Thara (16, Yemen) says her relationship with her younger brother differs according to whether growing political and social status in a social environment less tolerant of women. Sociological studies of Algerian society have shown this. In her work on family values, social violence and political violence (1998), Dalila Djorbal says that "the family is the institution that was most deeply shattered. The image and the roles of the various members were mixed up...Brothers gained the status of defenders of family

and religious order and honor, a phenomenon which became more marked in recent years. Fathers lost their status of authority to their sons." She mentions the "privilege of violence" of the men of the family, which extends to other men, who will badger or correct girls and women in public: at school, at work, on public transport and on the street.

## B) Relations with the elder sister: submission or competition?

With the sister, the relation varies between competition and complicity. When they are close in age, girls say they feel closer to their sisters, who are confidantes and, especially, friends. The eldest sister exercises the right to approve the privacy of the teenage girl. The youngest is suspected of being the parents' favorite. The sister is confidante, companion, and guardian, willing to listen and share. In the absence of her parents, the eldest sister tends to dominate, give orders, take charge of the home, and not to let her juniors disobey.

The elder sisters tend to interfere in the younger sisters' private lives. Fadwa (16, Tunisia) is subjected to the curiosity and questioning of her elder sister, asking her what she does. She caught her several times going through her things, despite the fact that she insists on members of the family getting her permission before touching her personal things.

The elder sister has higher status than the young, replacing the mother. Ward (17, Yemen) as the eldest of five brothers and sisters has the responsibility of watching them and taking care of them, especially since her parents often disagree about managing the budget and her mother frequently leaves the marital home. Ikbal (17, Yemen) is also the eldest and takes care of her siblings' material and educational needs: "Whenever there is the slightest problem, my parents start shouting and threaten to put an end to my schooling. Also, at school when they ask for my legal guardian I ask my paternal aunt (who finished her studies and is working) to accompany me without telling my father, who would force me to stop school. He took me out of school a year ago and I had to ask my mother to persuade him to let me go back the following year. Then, I try not to make problems at home. I feel different from my brothers and sisters. None of them is beaten, but I am hit and humiliated and when I ask why, they say I'm the eldest and must assume all the responsibility. At home I do everything, I wash the linen, I do the housework, I tidy the home, I do the ironing... and when I tell my mother that I'm exhausted and I ask my sister to help me, she starts screaming and calling me lazy."

Eldest daughters are encouraged at a very early age to take on an adult role, be responsible, act as mother, etc. They intervene in the daily care and force the younger ones to do their homework, because they know they have more authority than the father, who may be illiterate. Farida (17, Tunisia) learned how to exert her authority over her sisters, to pretend to be strong. When she sees how her parents behave to her sisters, Farida thinks things are best as they are. She criticizes their educational style and reproaches them for being lax and punishing unwisely, for several reasons at the same time. She thinks punishment should fit a well-defined fault, to be effective and not cause a feeling of injustice. Her sisters usually accept her authority; they may dispute it sometimes, but do not like to annoy her or see her cry. Her influence is such, Farida says, that they trust her taste (not their mother's) in choosing clothes for the AÔd. She feels responsible for them but would like to see them break free from her authority and learn to manage by themselves.

To show how her sisters depend on her, she says that her younger, 15-year-old sister said she would not be able to continue her schooling if Farida left to pursue higher studies away from home. The relation between the two sisters is mutual: her sister may interfere in her life, remind her that it is time to start finding a husband, worry that nobody has asked for her hand, suggest she marry a doctor, etc. Farida's attitude reflects the upheaval of roles that has made her the mainspring of the family and allowed her to exercise her authority to keep it together. Several boys and especially girls replace the parents, taking charge of their younger siblings. Nadia (18, Algeria) lives with her retired divorced father, brother and twin sister. She says her mother left home when she was 8 and that since then, "I'm in a sense the woman of the house, that's how I feel, I don't know, I take care of the house, I look after my father, I look after my sister." She would have liked to be the younger twin because her sister, born two hours after her, is spoiled. Soumaya (18) and Saloua (16) are two Egyptian girls who are the eldest of the children. They say they have good relations with them and are like second mothers to them: "I'm on good terms with my sister," says Soumaya, "but we can't be friends because I'm ten years older than her." But if we had asked the younger one, what would she have said about her relations with the elder? Alyssa (16, Algeria), the youngest of the family, is negative, seeing her sister as dominating, a psychological burden because she meddles in all her affairs.

Similarly, Jihad (18, Tunisia) feels as responsible for his two younger brothers (there are 5 children) as his parents. One of his brothers is an apprentice mechanic with his cousin and the other is in 5th year of primary school. After several failures, Jihad stopped school but believes that studies are important and so puts pressure on his young brother to succeed in his studies. He has a good relationship with this brother, whom he thinks intelligent and level-headed; the other has "no brains" and commits petty thefts, which Jihad corrects in time. His two brothers take his advice and he does not clash with them. When they do not agree on a TV sporting program, he leaves it to them and goes to his uncle's to watch the match. Moreover, when he goes out with girls, he uses his young brother to tell his parents.

Discussions with teenagers about the brother/sister relationship enabled us to identify a number of behaviours and models that are defined according to the status each sex has among the siblings. If our interlocutress is the eldest, she uses her position to exert an almost parental authority, but she does not live life to the full and takes on the responsibilities of an adult. But if the girl is herself subjected to the authority of an elder sibling, she either resigns herself to this and lives in relative peace, or revolts and is likely to be faced with various facts. Between the two extremes a number of median strategies exist, such as same sex solidarity, forming a homogeneous group, or breaking with the family and finding a solution among friends.

## IV - Interaction with the wider family

When teenagers talk about their family, they include their parents, brothers and sisters, grandparents, uncles and aunts and sometimes even cousins. The more traditional the social milieu where a teenager develops, the more the extended family concept exists. Conversely, the more modern the milieu, the narrower the field of relations becomes - the nuclear family and close relations. The circle of family and parents influencing teenagers and intervening in bringing them up is wider in a country like Yemen. It also depends on whether the environment is urban or rural (wider in the last case). The idea of extended relations is subject to the influence of factors which can act in opposite directions: availability of financial and economic means implies a modern model, in other words a nuclear family conscious of its individuality. But these financial and economic means also imply that money will be a catalyst for rising to a higher family status within the network of extended relations.

The number of parties who intervene in educating a teenager in the extended family context implies a large variety of trends, educational choices, experiences and behaviour, from encouraging independence and personal development to the reverse. Grandparents, uncles and aunts, as well as parents, can be a help or a hindrance to teenage autonomy. Some family members back up the parents, replace them or satisfy the teenagers' new requirements, e.g. by offering a peer group. For girls in particular, when access to public space is limited, cousins (like sisters) are friends, companions and confidantes. With the grandparents too, relations change and are rebuilt; recently, the patriarchal family gave them considerable authority and power. Today, this adolescent/grandparent relationship is taking a chosen, not imposed, form.

The residential proximity of grandparents facilitates their active participation in being responsible for and educating their grandchildren. In modest families, grandparents, as much as uncles and aunts, provide support and protection against insecurity.

The testimonies of many girls from the countries covered by the study show that when expression is impossible in the family, or because of rules of decency, girls can take refuge in the extended family, with aunts and cousins taking the place of mothers and sisters, supporting them or acting as confidantes or initiators. Adolescents' exchanges with the family network are not only material but have emotional and symbolic aspects. Grandparents give as much as they receive, often informally. Many maternal grandmothers become second mothers when mothers take on a job. Grandparents can side with their granddaughters against fathers, encouraging them to complete their studies and work, for the same reason as their brothers.

This study shows that grandparents are important in the teenagers' world, more at the emotional level than as guardians of the authority of the family group. It also shows that, as with siblings, the bond with the grandparents is defined by the bond with the parents. In the interviews, several teenagers talk about grandparents with whom they live or lived and with whom they continue to have a special

bond. Some bear the first name of a grandmother or grandfather, a symbolic incarnation of the bond with the grandparents. The bond depends on how teenagers use their family history when building their identity, and also how the grandparents revive the family past, giving the teenagers a sense of continuity.

Analysis of the interviews enables us to distinguish a first type of adolescent who, well on the way to autonomy, wants to break free from parental supervision and stop the intervention of the grandparents, seeing these as guarantors of a traditional order which has been rejected along with the past and the family heritage. Relations with the grandparents are formal only. Samir (16, Tunisia) says he does not want his grandparents to interfere in his personal life too much; he always conceals things from them. Things he considers private he also hides from his parents, keeping them for himself or sharing them with a friend.

The second category includes girls with authoritarian grandparents who still want to run everything. Such grandparents are discredited by their grandchildren. Yemna (17, Tunisia) lives with her family at her paternal grandmother's, whom she thinks hypocritical: she wants to look pious, always praying, whereas in reality she is completely different; her behaviour is in total contradiction with the moral principles she professes. Yemna reproaches her for not loving her mother and for trying to separate her parents, and says she starts violent domestic fights and then looks on. Because Yemna sides with her father, her grandmother dislikes her (he and Yemna prefer her brother, to whom she gave the first name of her dead son). Yemna is angry with her grandmother for interfering and repressing everyone. She put the phone down on Yemna's boyfriend and broke their friendship. For these reasons, Yemna does not feel any bond of any kind with her uncles and aunts on both sides of the family: "I don't have any close relative...even if I have many relatives." But she speaks more tenderly about her paternal grandfather, who died when she was 5 and who talked to her as to an adult, telling her the facts of life. His death was a shock which she says she still has difficulty surmounting (though she did not cry the day he died).

The third category includes teenagers who have with their grandparents a relationship of complicity, alliance and appreciation that makes up for the parents' lack of attention. The teenagers' identity fits within a continued family history and is largely built on identification with the grandparents. NeÔla (18, Tunisia) is defended by grandparents in her conflicts with her brother, who constantly spies on her. They remind him that she is not a child, she is not ignorant and she knows what she is doing. The grandfather even argues that she must know more than her brother, who did not go far in his studies.

Woud (15, Tunisia) has maternal grandparents who live near their home and come fairly often to see them. Woud likes her maternal grandmother, to whom she feels close, but finds her grandfather severe. In her maternal family, the girls had all they wanted but did not go far in their studies. Judging by the way he encouraged herself and her cousins to go on with their schooling, Woud understands that her grandfather regrets not having pushed his daughters to complete their studies. It was also to force her not to drop her studies that the grandmother of Hana (18, Tunisia) opposed her engagement. But there is not just one model in terms of behaviours of the grandparents and close relations. All depends in fact on individual cases and certain distinctive local characteristics.

## V - Gender socialization

Traditional societies prefer boys because they perpetuate the family name, receive and hand down the heritage, and look after the parents when they are old. In practical terms, this preferential treatment of boys is on the wane but is still found in some families that cling to traditional values, in rural families, and especially in those where there is one son.

"Twenty of you aren't worth your brother," the father of Ibtissem (18, Morocco) reminds her. This sums up the strong discrimination between brothers and sisters in traditional families which bank mainly on boys. Ibtissem feels disliked by her family because her parents prefer her young brother, because she was forced to leave school when her father refused to pay her school fees, and because her mother put her in a dressmaking school which she did not like.

Discrimination between girls and boys within the family harms the brother/sister relationship by creating conflict and confrontation between them and with the parents, and because it encourages feelings of gender solidarity or of unhealthy competition. This depends on the discrimination (intensity, extent) and on the teenagers' awareness of it. Sexual discrimination is widely found. But what is essential in this chapter is that young people, particularly girls, are brought up to see it as normal. The concept of discrimination itself remains fuzzy for some of them. Parents can manage to teach their daughters that this is basic reality. Lamia (15, Yemen) says that from her parents "I learned everything. I learned for example that a woman does not walk alone in the street, does not speak to strangers, does not roar with laughter and must obey."

The interviews in Yemen gave us the greatest number of answers showing that girls are brought up to admit that discrimination is normal whether they themselves become aware of it or whether they internalize it to the point of not realizing it. Farouk (16): "In our family, the girls have the same rights as the boys...No, the girls don't go out alone. They go out only accompanied by a male member of the family. As for me, I go out normally. They must ask for permission. If they have to go out, somebody must take them where they want to go." But Wassim (17 years) is aware of the discrimination and mentions some of its hidden aspects: "Of course, the treatment received by boys and by girls differs from one family to another, for food as well as play, freedom or work. Even in love, we boys are treated differently. At the table, we are entitled to a better piece of meat and are free to play more often than the girls. We do very few things in the house. Sometimes, the girls don't play much because they have to do the domestic chores, whereas we do them only rarely."

Discrimination in the family is similar to discrimination in society. Farha (16, Algeria): "It's the parents who prevent their daughter from going out but it's also society that decides. Boys enjoy more advantages than us girls, they are freer to do what they want and nobody judges them even if they make mistakes. It's society that wants this." But discrimination also reflects the individual family experience. The cases evoked above were dealt with at length because they are significant, and constitute a reference which allows comparison. They refer to the model of the traditional patriarchal family in a social environment that continues to value this kind of behaviour. The models of transitional families in the various social environments generally have this common origin. But the interviews also showed that there is great flexibility and that the discriminatory education of the young is losing ground and varies from one field to another.

## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

To bring this chapter to a close, we return to the initial question: How far does modernity facilitate, in the case of Arab societies, the individual's participation in the construction of his own identity? This question takes on even greater significance when the aim is to determine the status of adolescent girls in these societies. Do they have the material and symbolic means and the essential freedom to be agents of their own development and the development of their personality?

Because the family is where the individual is socialized, we have tried in this chapter to identify the resources and opportunities which combine to enable teenagers to fulfill themselves in a modern world which is changing and developing at extraordinary speed.

Analysis of the remarks made by teenagers during the interviews shows that families do not all take part, or with the same degree of involvement, in constructing the identity. It also shows that teenagers can only create a distinctive independent identity when there are certain circumstances, conditions and resources. Arab families seem to be characterized by two kinds of resource: economic and cultural. According to whether these resources are or are not accessible, and according to the use families make of them as regards behaviour and attitudes, four types or theoretical models are obtained:

**1)** Rich and modern families: i.e., with considerable economic and cultural resources. These families have common features. There are those that help teenagers in their quest for identity, like autonomy and social experience outside the family circle and among the network of friendships with both sexes. There are those that stand in the way of such development, like insufficient dialogue and communication between family members, absentee fathers, consumerism, girls marrying before they complete their higher education and studies of a very advanced level being discouraged.

**2)** Rich families of traditional type: i.e., with substantial economic, but modest cultural, resources. There is a sort of conservatism where a handful of men dominates the other family members, where there is family authoritarianism against teenagers, particularly girls, and the girls are submissive and docile. Though not discriminated against in the field of education, girls are often forced to end their studies prematurely and marry relatively early. The family is the world where the girls evolve, since the friendship network is made up exclusively of brothers, sisters and close relatives. Socialization focuses on the domestic roles. One suspects that these factors do not help make the girls' particular status, even less their right to develop freely, recognized.

**3)** Progressive middle class families: i.e., with average or relatively poor economic resources but more than respectable cultural resources. These offer teenagers the best opportunities for self-realization. They are characterized by dialogue and parent/child communication and by the existential proximity between them, with a recognition that adolescence is special and has positive status, enabling teenagers to take part in decision-making and adopting the principle of negotiation to go out in public. The friendship network is recruited from both sexes outside the family circle, with an unquestionable independence in private spaces. This is consolidated by success at school and an education based on trust and directed towards personal development. One can describe such families as progressive and innovative.

**4)** Deprived traditionalist families: i.e., economically and culturally underprivileged, where girls, in everyday life and social experience, face all sorts of obstacles and hindrances, and are victims of flagrant discrimination. Brothers are preferred. These exercise total influence over the girls, even resorting to violence, especially when the issue is keeping out of public space. Limited economic and cultural resources produce poor school performance. The girls then have no choice but to take up a marginal job and be exploited economically, or to marry early with the adverse effects on personal development. It is paradoxical that this type of family tends to give adolescents a sense of responsibility when the parents abdicate or are absent. Thus the young take on the adult role too early, living in unplanned independence, which stems from objective and personal circumstances. This form of independence cannot be the result of personal choice or conscious, deliberate decision.

These specimens are poles around which Arab families cluster. Reality can result from a subtle proportioning of the elements of each of the four standard models described above.

**BOX 2-7**

## Drawings and designs

I get the impression that teenagers are perplexed: they are no longer children but not yet adult. This influences their relationship with their families; intra-family relations influence their behaviour at school and with friends. In some families, girls do not enjoy their most elementary rights, like going for a walk or wearing the clothes or shoes they like. They are shut up at home looking after the children, while their mothers make appointments for qat sessions. In Yemen girls cannot sit at the same table and eat with their fathers and brothers, who eat alone, and the girls eat afterwards. In some rural areas, girls do not attend school but work in the fields. None of the answers given speaks about the youngsters' problems or the nature of their relations at this difficult time of their lives. Our young people listen to music which is alien to their social environment. In this delicate age bracket (14-18) girls face many difficulties, in Yemen especially. From time to time, drawings by children even before they reach this age reveal certain truths about intra-family relations.

We asked children to draw a picture drawn from their experience at home, in the street and at the mosque. One girl drew a mother giving birth and dying in the same picture, indicating a lack of health care. Other children made drawings where a boy does his homework while his sister does the domestic chores. All these images are encrusted in our culture. It is necessary that we try to rectify these well-worn stereotypes (in which everyone believes).

At school we see children who, frustrated at home, shout at their teachers. This phenomenon has recently become widespread in girls' schools. Lying has also become widespread; the girls help and cover up for each other. Sometimes they go out without their parents knowing, just to escape from frustration and annoyance. When girls wish to purchase some item of clothing, underwear or cosmetics they cannot really choose what they want. So they get a friend to accompany them, often without their parents' knowledge. Early forced marriage can be like a crime: a girl who has succeeded at school can be forced to marry against her wish, to 'protect her virtue'. We must denounce the media's obvious lack of interest: it only shows Arabic versions of Mexican serials, popular among both young and old. Sometimes, there are particular problems - women giving birth to an illegitimate child. The attitude of the family which experiences this kind of situation is often contemptible. All this makes adolescents perplexed, undecided whether to imitate or reject such behaviour.

In one family, the son eats with his father and the girls with their mother, as dictated from time immemorial by local custom and habit. A girl should know her place, a prejudice alive even in cultivated female circles, where brothers exert authority over their sisters. But the conclusion we want to reach is that young boys should be made to do their domestic duties in the same way as girls.

**Testimony of a children's specialist - Yemen**

For a clearer picture, we should include additional data in the analytical process of classifying a given family or group of families. We could include as cultural resources a panoply of other factors (educational level, cultural pluralism, openness to other cultures, permeability to modern internationalist values along with their consumerism). Similarly, economic resources could include income level, how that income is gained (income or paid work), branch of industry (leading-edge technology, agriculture, services, etc). Thus, economic or socio-cultural factors, sometimes even (national or local) political factors, have a vital role in the family and its internal relations, which affect the parent/child relationship and the choices made by adolescents.

Another point must be raised - the family's relations with the other parties involved in the socialization of adolescents, in particular friends and school. The relationship between the parties is weak and no longer complementary, indeed, friends are often seen by the family as undesirable rivals. Just when teenagers see friends as increasingly important, since they offer a chance to break free from parental supervision and rules laid down by adults and to enjoy some space to build their own future, we observe that there is no attempt to find family/friend complementarity; instead, parents strive to reduce the influence of the friends or set up a rival influence. The reverse can also be true.

**Table 2-1: Characteristics of the families of female and male adolescents**

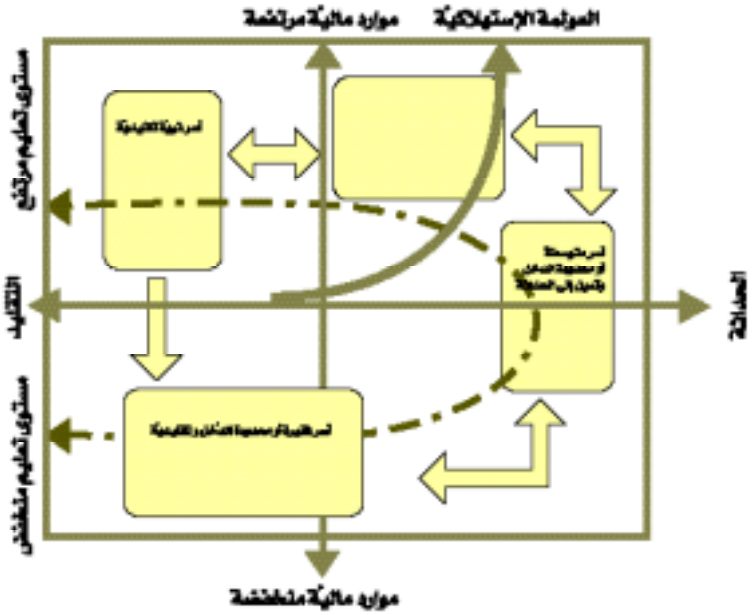
| | SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL RESOURCES (+) | LIMITED CULTURAL RESOURCES (-) |
|---|---|---|
| **Significant economic resources (+)** | - Modernistic families, "modern" way of life<br>- Limited presence of fathers<br>- Mother at home or works in family concern<br>- High level of consumption<br>Little internal dialogue<br>- Little discrimination between boys and girls<br>- Network of friendships, co-education<br>- Early marriage<br>- Average scholastic success<br>- Low sense of self | - Conservative families<br>- Girls introduced to traditional roles<br>- Domination of the men in the family over the girls<br>- Schooling of the girls interrupted<br>- Probability of relatively early marriage<br>- Influence of the grandparents and the uncles<br>- Male and female friends in the family<br>- Controlled access to public space<br>-Clash between fathers and daughters and confrontation between the parents |
| | **SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL RESOURCES** | **LIMITED CULTURAL RESOURCES (-)** |
| | - Progressive families<br>- Education directed towards self-fulfillment<br>- Dialogue and existential connection with the parents<br>- Daughter/father communication<br>- Autonomy of the sons in the private sphere<br>- Scholastic achievement of the daughters<br>- Freedom negotiated as regards marriage and friendship relations<br>- Late marriage<br>- Participation in decision-making<br>- Network of relations between the two sexes | - Underprivileged traditionalist families<br>- Giving up of the female adolescents and in some cases early entry into the labor market<br>- Domination of the brothers over the sisters<br>- Probability of girls' repeated failure and interruption of schooling<br>- Early or late marriage<br>- Family violence<br>- Flagrant inequality between boys and girls<br>- Controlled access to public space<br>- Assumption of responsibilities given up by the parents<br>- Independence/giving up<br>The formation of an independent identity can be due to the test and to the decision of the parents |

Compared to the influence of friends, school, as an educational institution, is seen more positively by the parents, who are readier to cooperate with it and give material and moral support to guarantee their children's academic success. Parents count on the school to fulfill their ambitions and ensure their children's social advancement. But the parent/school relationship is poor. Parents seldom sit on the parents' committees, do not establish relations with the teachers and the school administration, and rarely visit the school, usually when there is a particular problem and at the request of the administration or the teachers.

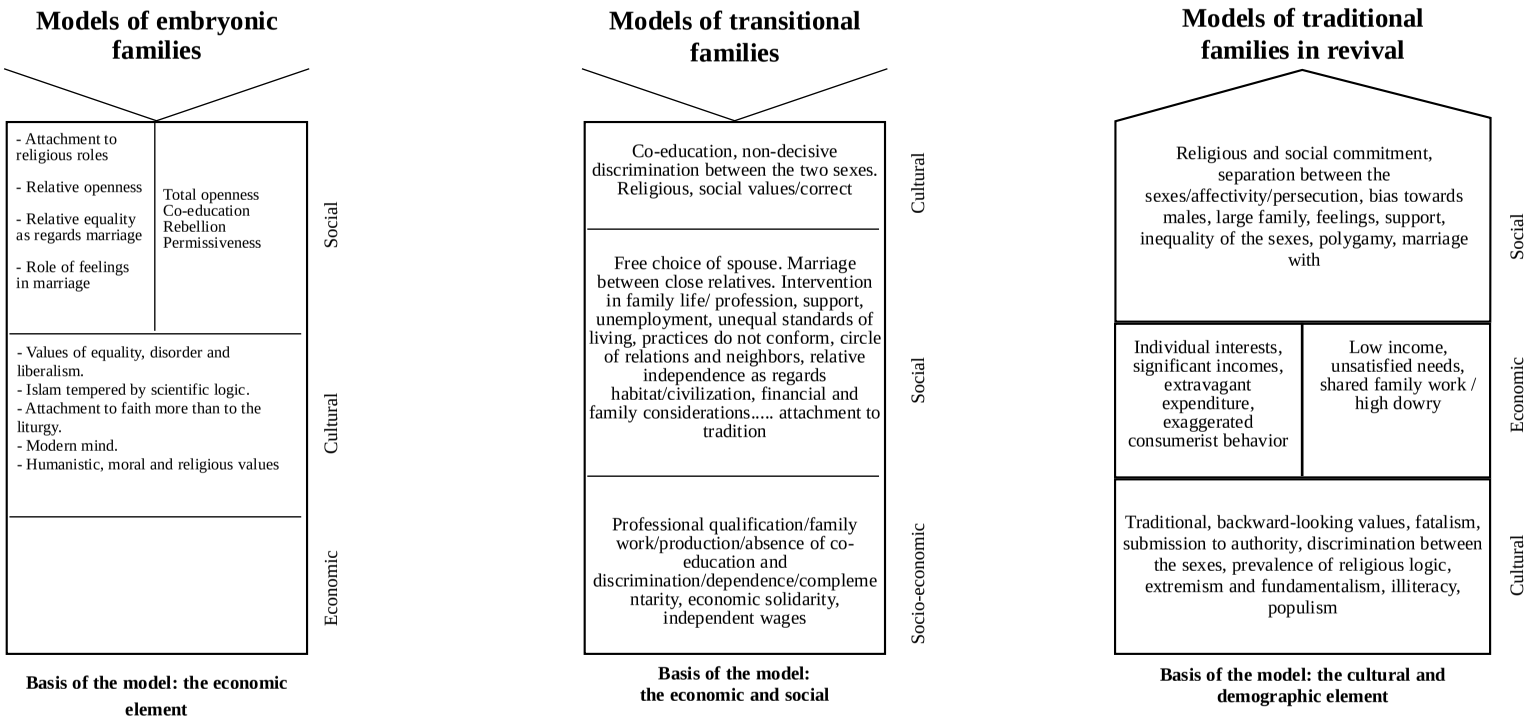
There is thus no real dovetailing of family and school, although their educational roles are in theory complementary, and although the educational process is basically a uniform process as regards adolescents of both sexes.

Generally speaking, very few adolescents actually enjoy the right to build their identity as individuals with independent personalities. Roughly speaking, the family's educational criteria incline towards authoritarianism. Similarly, teenagers, especially girls, are educated according to the traditional model, which keeps them in a state of material and moral dependence on adults. While some teenagers criticize the rules laid down by their parents, the teenagers who frankly reject those rules are rare.

## Diagram 2-7: Models of Arab families



## Diagram 2-7: Models of Arab families



Part Two

# The Field Study

Chapter Four

# School and Work:
## Choice and Uncertainty

# School and Work

## Introduction

The school has a vital place in adolescents' lives. Most people spend their adolescent years there. From the historical-social point of view, school education was an important mechanism for developing adolescence as a socially, behaviourally and culturally specific phase. And the school is still the most important factor in the development of the adolescent, making possible the critical mass for boy/girl interaction and enabling teenagers to organize in movements or gangs that reflect the conflictual relationship with society, its institutions and its culture. This explains why many researchers link the rise of adolescence to the spread of education in its institutional form, the school. The relationship seems very close in Arab countries; the teams in several of the countries involved in the field study concluded that "adolescence is the outcome of schooling".

In Arab countries, modernity occurred primarily through the transfer of legal forms and institutional frameworks produced in Europe.(1) Universal education and the building of schools constantly appeared on the agendas of the renaissance phase of the early years of the century and the post-World War II independence phase. Certain procedures also contributed to the development of adolescence as a social category in relatively short periods of time (sometimes a single generation). In Algeria, the post-independence decision to forbid early marriage and make education compulsory until sixteen had a crucial role in forming adolescence, at a time when other fields were not moving towards modernity.(2)

### 1. The school functions

Society has assigned three basic functions to the school: transfer of knowledge, giving qualifications for the job market, and training for citizenship and social roles. There is a vertical relationship between teachers and the administration, and teachers and pupils. A fourth role exists - gathering adolescents in a horizontal relationship between schoolmates.

Thus, the school is an environment where movements of rebellion against the school and the family, and against society, develop. In this sense the school is where the basic aspects of the adolescent's personality, culture, attitudes and behaviour are formed.

The family/religious institution/school triangle is the most influential factor in the adolescents' lives, where the material, social and moral authority constitutes a sort of route or filter for influences from society or the outside world. But the family and religious institution are older and their roles more stable and consistent; the school vehicles powerful elements of change.

But these (innovative or conservative) roles exist within the broader context of influences and mechanisms at national, sometimes world, level, especially in the age of globalization. In the formative phases of Arab history in the 20th century, education was one of the fundamental bases of the Arab renaissance and national independence projects. It produced elites and citizens to fit the political project. Education thus had a role in changing structures and mentalities and developing traditional institutions. From among the teachers and learners emerged the elites that carried out political change in most of the countries.

Schools thus act to modernize society, adding science and criticism to the tradition, popular culture and religion that determine awareness and behaviour in traditional societies. Schools can develop and change the family and religious institutions. But in times of regression or stagnation, schools are unable to bring about change and mostly reproduce the status quo. A problem then arises as to the forming of the adolescent's personality.

Adolescents are supposedly under the balanced influence of three institutions, the family, the religious institution and the school, each exerting its own particular influence in building up the

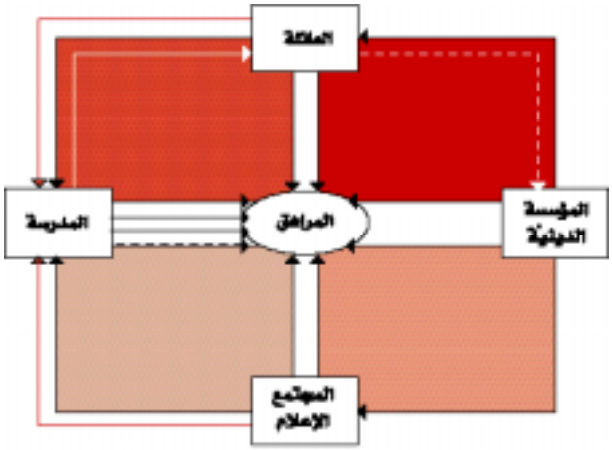
**(1)** See the chapter on adolescence in Arab countries.

**(2)** This is what the Algerian study indicates.

adolescent personality. But this balance is illusory; politics infiltrates religion, politicized religion infiltrates the family, and both infiltrate the school. Its role of creating an equilibrium based on science, modern concepts and criticism no longer exists.

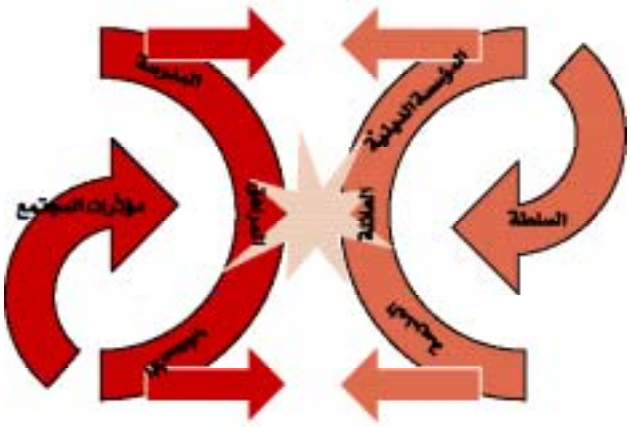
The result is a decline in the quality of education, since the critical sense is no longer permitted. The problem is made worse by the increasing role of the information media, particularly satellite channels, in building knowledge, behaviour and awareness according to trends that often escape the control of the local community, family or school.

**Fig. 2.8: A possible form of the relationship between school, family and religious institution, and the adolescent in a phase of social stagnation.**




This increases the pressure on adolescents as a group and as individuals, and can lead to clashes with the family and institutions. It may also lead to a rapprochement between the three institutions, in an embodiment of authority; this limits critical awareness and the forming of the individual personality. Adolescents can be affected by social, political and ideological movements based on the negation of this personality. But this is temporary and transitional, because no framework, no matter how closed, can prevent interaction with outside influences. In fact, schools seem more able than other educational institutions to interact with those influences. This interaction can sometimes create points of contact between the innovative elements inherent in the school itself and the religious and family institutions.

**Fig. 2.9: Elements of the clash between adolescent, family and religious institution as institutions representing social and cultural authority.**



Schools oscillate between reproducing the status quo and innovation; this leads to situations where adolescents as a group and as individuals clash with society and its institutions.

Schools face a crisis because the four functions are separated, and undergoing changes, and because priority is given to economic goals and job market needs over other functions of a social and epistemological nature. The development literature tends to associate education with work and concentrates on cost-effectiveness.

### a. The knowledge function

The school has a central primary function: the transfer of knowledge. A qualitative difference exists between schools, katateeb (plural of kuttab, traditional school), and the religious schools that preceded them. Schools break the monopoly that pupils and educators in traditional societies had of science and hierarchical selection. They build up a new awareness among the young, and are a channel for national and international social influences. However, as schools stopped forming critical awareness and innovative behaviour, and separated science from scientific awareness, they were reconciled with the traditional institutions and lost their attractiveness to adolescents. Evidence shows that the schools are losing their function of transfer of knowledge and building scientific awareness, because of political, family and religious interference in the curriculum and disciplines to be taught.[3] The political discourse makes education subordinate to the priorities of economic development, calling for reform of the educational system on the basis of specialization, and prioritizing technical education and practical specialties, skills not knowledge, vocational training, and the pragmatic use of skills at the expense of organized, structured knowledge.

### b. Training for the job market

Schools must also transfer scientific knowledge; this is necessary because technological development and the production process require an increasing variety of skills to handle sophisticated machines and equipment and use electronic goods and computer software. Schools must thus comply with the job market's standards of supply and demand. This means a constant revising of the curriculum, which generally lags behind technological development (particularly in the Arab countries) and the educational system, whose output does not suit the local (and world) job market. The discrepancy between what the school offers and what the job market needs does not apply to all schools equally. In private elite schools (an exception) education has added value, in that it trains for the job market (a new trend of globalization). Whereas schools have attempted to reduce social inequality and promote social mobility via education, we find that a two-tier system of schools (elite/public, for the rich/for the poor) can produce a new kind of social inequality, given the unequal training these schools provide for the job market. This reinforces the vertical dual division within adolescence and polarizes it into sometimes mutually opposing cultural and political currents. The advanced countries see this as a matter for concern, for schools used to be effective in bringing about social integration. "Parents have excessively high hopes of the school, feeling that the school's judgment on their children's success or failure will largely determine their future." Degrees are increasingly important in a job market where the number of degree-holders is growing and competition for a limited number of jobs is intense. Thus there is fierce competition in education and a rejection of anything likely to decrease competitive ability in the schools the parents chose. "The danger is the school becoming a place for competition for diplomas that allow entry to the job market, not training responsible citizens equally, citizens with a critical sense and approach to the knowledge he acquires.[4]

### c. Training for citizenship and social roles

Here schools are intended to support authority, training pupils for socially defined future roles and to be 'good citizens'. They are used by the elite to consolidate power (or oppose it in cases of inter-power conflict). This is done in two ways. The first involves curriculum content and concepts and values promoted, particularly in history and civics, religious classes and the humanities. The second is behavioural: schools train pupils to accept authority, promote the values of order and discipline and legitimize hierarchy. This traditional school system is still in existence, especially in Arab countries, except for the vanguard schools, which allow a margin of democratic life and relative participation.

**(3)** Examples include the intervention of religious institutions and family communities in US schools. Dropping Darwin's theory, or preventing sex education in school, happens in several Arab countries.

**(4)** Marco Oberti, Ségrégation dans l'école et dans la ville, in Nouvelles problématiques adolescentes. Pratiques institutionnelles en recherche. Directed by Maryse Vaillant and Jean Paul LeBlanc. L'Harmattan, 2001.

The result is often frustration and apathy among pupils; they may drop out of school, or become disorderly and rebellious and clash with each other and with teachers.

Despite the major changes resulting from recent trends in educational science, schools remain institutions based on order and discipline. "Remember schools are not designed to be enjoyable places for pupils. Compulsory attendance means pupils must remain seated in a closed room. Most trends in education agree that school education requires a basic system that involves keeping pupils tied and motionless for most of the day. Class breaks are the only times when pupils are allowed to move with some degree of freedom, and even sports classes are still largely based on the same principles."[5] In societies in crisis or going through periods of stagnation, this negative aspect of the school is dominant, since citizenship training takes the form of training in obedience, discipline and unquestioning respect for order.

### d. The school as a framework of horizontal relationships between pupils

Schools represent a legitimate universal mechanism of leaving the family for a larger sphere. Contact is with teachers in loco parentis and peers, who replace siblings and perhaps parents as a new, more attractive source of information and behaviour. Horizontal relationships at school open onto unexpected dynamics, particularly in urban schools, where there is more freedom and thus an opportunity to build up an independent individual identity.

The relationship with school friends may break the triple taboo (politics, sex and religion). Sex is a favorite subject of discussion for adolescents, and this challenges the postulates of the family and religious institutions.

But school friends may transfer conservative awareness, often in a religious-political form. A number of interviews indicate that as regards wearing the veil, the influence of female school friends is greater than that of parents (who may be less strict). Thus, religious institutions, particularly if politicized, can infiltrate the school more easily than they can the family.

This enables adolescents to infiltrate the family to the benefit of the religious-political institution. Parents, more than their children, usually prefer modernity or the traditional non-politicized form of religion and social mores. But friends often reinforce the clash with the status quo, whether from a near-modern stand, or from a more radical, fundamentalist stand.

## 2. Relations with the school

Schools are not just places where pupils get an education; they are their whole life and are often remembered as a place of sweet or painful memories, which sometimes represent a personal turning point. Fattouma (16, Morocco) says: "Yeah...I left school and I now toil at housework and have no time to go out." Tunisian adolescents often see the ninth year[6] as a turning point in their lives, feeling that it marks the end of "childhood" and the transition to secondary education, as Sihaam (17) and Fareeda (17) describe it.

School is associated with friendship, with wonderful years and frustrating ones. Tharaa (16, Yemen) thinks the best year is "ninth grade, which deeply affected me because in it I experienced true friendship. We used to help each other and feel there was pleasure in life."

Friendship is a stimulus for success (to remain with classmates). Most pupils do not want to change school for this reason, but a change could be seen as positive, enabling pupils to make new friends or move away from the narrow context of the village.

The school year represents stability, a structured division of time, experience and knowledge, and a basis for adolescents to build up memories and personal experiences. Its symbolic importance for adolescents by far exceeds the educational process in its narrower sense.

**(5)** Alain Clémence, François Rochat, Caroline Cortolessis, Patricia Dumont, Michele Egloff, et Claude Kaiser, Scolarité et adolescence: Les motifs de l'insécurité, Haupt-Bern, 2001.

**(6)** The last year in the middle or intermediate level, which corresponds to age 15.

### a. Relationships with the teachers

Teacher/pupil relationships seem to be ambiguous and disparate. The teacher's authority at school is the equivalent of the parental authority at home. He hands down knowledge; he helps the pupil develop the foundations of his personality, enabling him to feel his own value and to succeed in work and society later on. He is also an educator with his own methods and personality, affecting pupils positively or negatively. The pupil/teacher relationship is a function of the latter's personality, and consequently oscillates between indifference, conflict and cohesion. The teacher can be an example to be followed.

Traditionally, the teacher was seen in relation to knowledge: excellence as a result of access to sources of information and of his advanced level of education compared to those around him, principal and almost exclusive transmitter of knowledge and skills. But today things are different, as the declining economic and social importance of the teaching profession shows. Teaching is now a profession with a modest income, dominated by instruction. The general rise in the educational level has not only reduced the gap between teacher and parents, but may have reversed it to the benefit of parents and older siblings. As information sources have multiplied, pupils' modern technology literacy is sometimes greater than that of teachers. This weakens the teacher's role and undermines the basis of his authority and influence.

## The teacher: situation and image

One cannot generalize, but the more a society forsakes its traditional features, the more visible the contradiction between the real situation of the teacher and the image required of him. This contradiction is less visible in more traditional societies like Yemen.

The adolescents involved in the study do not see teachers as very important but have different views: some teachers deserve love and consideration, some have made a good impression, others are hated. Adolescents see this disparity as the result of the teacher's personality and of certain conditions which marked their relationship. The main objections to teachers are their lack of enthusiasm for their work, their low scientific competence in the disciplines they teach, their poor methods of teaching and class management, their authoritarian attitude to pupils and their use of verbal or physical violence.

Baahir (16), Souheer (16) and Azeeza (17) from Egypt describe the teacher's psychological condition: "They are all unhappy with themselves, more than we are." Abdallah (17, Egypt): "Many teachers work in rural areas and are unhappy about it." Lebanese Nesreen (17), Deena (15), Riyaa (19) and Rafeef (17) see teachers as ordinary people, not as ideals. Teachers are seen as incompetent, untrained in new methodology or laboratory equipment use. Hana (15, Lebanon): "The physics teacher seems confused and lost in class; his performance is so-so."

The pupils seem demanding as regards to knowledge; unlike previous generations, they have the means to assess their teachers' performance. This problem recurs almost everywhere. Myriam (14, Bahrain) says: "I've never in my life seen a woman teacher who is able to explain the lesson properly, either at primary level or at intermediary; not even the inspector or director is able to do this. They have never entered our lives or influenced us in any way. We have had many differences with the women teachers because they always look down on us and despise us. Are we insects to them? Sometimes the teacher makes mistakes, and if we want to correct her mistake, she refuses. Why? We all are human beings and we are not infallible."

Mahmoud (18, Bahrain) explains his teacher's defense mechanism: "Sometimes the teacher presents questions to which he doesn't have convincing answers, so he tries to impose them on us, which leads to arguments between us." Adolescents agree in criticising the teaching methods in their schools and teachers. Ashraf (18, Lebanon) objects to the idea that the teacher's role is just "throwing" the lesson and going out, when he is supposed to monitor class discussion to enable his pupils to generate ideas by themselves.

The other criticism adolescents make of teachers is indirect and widespread in their descriptions of teachers who influenced their lives. It usually involves the teacher's personality, authoritarian relationship with pupils, and style. It also involves, to a lesser degree, the teacher's command of his subject. This sheds light on pupils' preferences and priorities as to the relationship they expect to have with their teachers - a non-authoritarian one, unlike the traditional one they have with their families. Conflictual issues are similar to those causing conflict with parents at home, rather than related to the educational process itself. The pupils' descriptions of a good teacher, particularly the girls' descriptions, refer to the parental functions, as we shall see later.

Describing a good teacher or good school, the following key phrases recur: father, brother, mother, big sister, friend, good character, understanding, calm, does not yell, visits us at home, pays attention and listens to pupils, has an exciting method, talks about issues that are outside the narrow context of the lesson, romantic (i.e. sensitive), tries to explain, cultivated, strong personality, etc. The bad teacher is the traditional teacher who teaches the lesson as if unwillingly, does not listen, disregards the pupil's feelings, and does not master his subject or teaching methods. Is the teacher the administrative authority, or the educator?

In the Yemeni interviews, family vocabulary is used to describe the good teacher. "There was a teacher who taught me in sixth grade. She was good-natured and respectful. I used to consider her as my older sister, and she used to treat me as her brother," says Faaris (15). Hussaam (18) considers his favorite teacher "like a father". Naazik (17) thinks the best teacher "permits us to work with her as if she were a sister, not a teacher; she is good-natured, we talk to her and don't really feel she is a teacher". Ward (17) likes the teacher of social science, and Walaa (17) likes the teacher of Islamic education; both take their teachers as models. The Islamic education teacher has positively influenced Waseem (17), Wahy (15), Randa (16), Mondher (17) and Shamsa (16), while Fareed (16) disagrees with him constantly.

On the whole, arts teachers (Islamic education, Arabic literature, history, French, English or social sciences) are more often mentioned than science teachers. Science subjects require greater internal discipline, and offer less opportunity for interaction and discussion with pupils. The good science teacher is one who masters his subject and can teach and communicate information.

Fareeda (17, Tunis) prefers the Arabic teacher because she «can discuss his ideas, which is not possible for math». Fethiya (16, Tunis) likes the French teacher, who is tolerant and keeps his temper. Najeh (16, Tunis) remembers the math teacher as a romantic (calm and non-violent). Raana (16, Egypt) talks about her English teacher: "For the first time I met someone who does her job well, a cultivated person with an open mind, good at communicating with pupils as if they were her friends, and relates well to them. The same is true for the math teacher, who treated us all as adults; we all have responsibilities. He never punished any one, but he made us feel guilty if we made mistakes." Mahmoud (18, Bahrain) likes the Arabic teacher who added to his knowledge: "It was from him that I heard the word globalization for the first time; I benefited a lot from him."

A "good teacher" can make pupils like or hate his subject. Paul Valéry (18, Lebanon) says a math teacher was responsible for his doing badly in the subject; Rowan (15, Yemen) hates chemistry because she does not understand the teacher's explanation. Daad (15, Yemen) likes her English teacher's way of explaining and how he treats his pupils. "I wouldn't have got good marks in the subject...if he hadn't been so understanding with me." This does not mean that pupils cannot distinguish between the teacher's competence and his style and personality. The two are inter-related; adolescents saw both as necessary, in addition to a minimum ability to impose discipline.

## Ibn Khuldun's concept of modern education

**Excerpts from the Muqaddima (Prolegomena)**

### Education turns into a profession

In the early years of Islam and under the two states (Omayyad and Abassid) education was generally not a craft, but transmission of what was heard in the street and instruction, in the guise of information, of what was not known of religion. The people of nobility and Asabiya (solidarity) in charge of the community were those who taught the Book of Allah and the tradition of His Prophet Mohamed (MPABUH) as the reporting of news, not as professional instruction.

### ... For the weak

Over the years, the deducing of laws from the Texts grew as event succeeded event, requiring the adoption of a law to protect that process from error. Science became a skill to be learned, one of the crafts and professions. The people of Assabiya became involved with power and authority; others who were in charge of science were driven to it, and science became an income-providing craft. The well-off and powerful scorned becoming involved in education; it thus became the province of the weak, and those who practiced it were objects of disdain in the eyes of the people of Assabiya and mulk (governance).

### Education is associated with al-Umraan

The sciences multiply where al-Umraan (urbanization) spreads and al-hadhara (civilization) reaches magnificence, the reason being that the teaching of science....is a craft...and crafts spread in al-amsar (towns). And it is on the extent of al-umraan (urbanization), al-hadhara (civilization) and affluence that the quality and quantity of craft depend, it being something more than a living (ma'ash). Whoever naturally thirsts for science and has grown up in a village or a non-urban region where education as a craft is unavailable, for crafts are not found among bedwins... has necessarily to cross the seas to seek knowledge.

### Education has three levels: the basics, comparison, and comprehensive understanding

Teaching the sciences to learners is beneficial if done gradually. The learner is first introduced to things in every kind of art that are seen as basic to that art, with a general approach, until he covers all the aspects of that art, by which time he will have acquired habit (malaka) in that science. But it is a partial and weak habit, preparing learners for the subject. The teacher then takes the learner back, raising the level of instruction from the previous stage, with thorough explanation and clarification, not generalizing, informing him of the differences that exist and of their categories, until the learner gets a grip on the art and improves his habit. The teacher then takes the learner back a third time, after he has become firm, leaving nothing difficult, vague or inaccessible, laying it open, and concluding the art after it has become habit. This is beneficial education, requiring three repetitions, though some may acquire it in less that that.

### Tyranny is harmful to learners

Extremism in education is harmful to the learner, particularly young children, because it is a sign of bad habit. Whoever is brought up in tyranny is overpowered by oppression; he deprives the soul of its happiness, kills its vitality, makes it lazy, causes it to lie and be wicked, teaches it cunning and artifice. This becomes a habit, natural to him. The humanity he gets through association with others and training loses its meaning. Therefore, the teacher should not tyrannize over the learner or the parent over his child when educating them.

**Source : Ibn Khuldun, The Muqaddima - Introduction and Book I, Chapter Six**

## Conflict with teachers and discipline

Schools are where children learn obedience and discipline. Jassim (18, Bahrain) says: "To me, the school is the biggest clash with authority. At school, I felt for the first time in my life that there was an authority with which I had to coexist if I was to coexist with life." None of the interviews showed that democratic life existed in schools (student participation in electing unions or forming committees). This does not mean that democratic life is absent but that it is not widespread or effective. Schools appear as strict, hierarchical institutions where there is no possible opposition and decisions are final; any conflict between pupils and administration ends with parental intervention, and this reflects the balance of power between the parents (of the pupil in question) and the school administration. Some trivial disagreement in class can lead to conflict and seriously affect the educational future of the pupil. The very idea of objection or rebellion frightens some teachers and administrations in that it affects the dignity and discipline of the school. This can explain a school's overreaction to minor offences.

**Frame 2-9**

### The school, the prison and the army barracks

In Control and punishment: The birth of prison, Michel Foucault reveals the link between the monastery, school, hospital, prison, workshop and military barracks. All are institutions that control the body via a drastic system of discipline reinforced by sanctions. They are alike not only in relational organization and educational philosophy but even in architecture: rows of rooms on both sides of straight passageways; fenced and controlled recreation yards, raised platforms providing a view of everything going on in the room or in the courtyard; space organized according to a fixed, established hierarchy, etc.

The school is organized on the basis of detailed control of trivia, used as a way of enforcing discipline and control. This is the philosophy adopted by Jean Baptist de le Salle in his search for "the duties of priests in Christian schools". In the context of the school, barracks, hospital, and workshop, the particulars of life and body are given a secular content, and an economic or technical rationality, expressing thereby the dream of man who wants to be the Newton of small objects, details and works.

**The school, as a building, must be an evaluation factor ....**

**Source:** Michel Foucault, Control and punishment: The birth of prison (from the Arabic translation by the Center for National Development, Beirut, 1990

Nouraan (17, Bahrain) says that "teachers digress on subjects that are irrelevant and useless in our lives...I was hit by the teacher; she thought I was responsible for the hand-clapping that was going on in class. My mother intervened and then the Ministry and finally I transferred to another school." Nadeen (16, Lebanon) says of a teacher: "She was tough-minded. One of my school friends was crying and I was trying to comfort her. The teacher reprimanded me and told me to leave my friend alone. Things got worse, I lost my temper and I almost hit her. My friends held me back. The administration intervened and so did my parents. I asked for her to be transferred from the school because she did not understand us. Of course it didn't happen but she stopped dealing with me. She is the school principal and teaches education. If the person who teaches us education yells at us like this, what can we expect from other people?" Waheed (15, Yemen) reports another quarrel: "Once, I was in the bathroom and was late for class; the teacher was yelling and he hit me. I called my father to school. He talked to the teacher, almost threatening him, and they quarreled. I was deeply affected by this because he hit me in front of the pupils. Who was he to hit me?"

Similar stories recur, some more violent, others minor. Whether or not the teenagers' version is correct, what we should note is that trivial things become part of the daily battle between teachers (authority) and pupils (subjected to authority). This shows that the school's internal mechanisms are unable to handle problems of this kind. Where are the safety valves to avoid escalation (which inevitably ends with a victor and a loser)? Preventing such problems often depends on skills and experience in problem-solving. The structures of the school, its work system, and its relationship with pupils and parents have no mechanisms for negotiation, participation and dialogue, where all the parties work for the interests of the pupils.

## b. Adolescent behaviour and standards

Within the school, pupils create their own realm; being part of a group or gang they acquire a new strength and courage which urges them to test the balance of power between themselves and the school, and to challenge the system.

Within individual classes, and in the school as a whole, they subject the teachers and the administration to passive (whispering, ironic comment, covering up for turbulent friends) or active (gang or peer group behaviour in the classroom or school as a whole) resistance. The group share values that are often a protest against the harshness of the school system.

Adolescents see school success as important or very important, the key to success in life. Randa (Egypt): "Success is important, of course. It is school that opens or closes the doors of opportunity to us." Success means getting the right grades to go to university and take the desired specialty, or gaining social status, recognition and a scientific title, or getting a good job. School is associated with the future, in the widest sense of the term; for girls it affects the position as a woman in society, now and in the future. Success in school is necessary for a girl to gain status in the eyes of the family; failure can mean her parents will take her out of school and keep her at home until she gets married or joins the job market. Girls thus hope that school success will save them from the role society intends for them. When such hope dwindles, the girls' evaluation of school success changes: Lama (15, Yemen) says: "Success has moderate importance because, however much she studies, a girl must in the end marry."

This is how things seem to be for girls, as if society, which has designed specific future roles for girls, also grants them the opportunity to escape or change these roles through education. This idea seems to be much more present in societies where important gaps still exist between female and male education.

Girls do better than boys in secondary and higher education. Every year, the girls sweep the board in the honors and excellence lists and get most of the scholarships for studying abroad. Shaddad (16, Yemen) says: "In grades one to four...I used to rank first and compete with my (female) cousin for top place. But now the girls have become studious and I am out of the competition. I'm first among the boys, but in the class, the top places are held by girls only."

But pupils see success as having limits; many of the adolescents interviewed see success as necessary but superiority as undesirable. Dana (18, Bahrain) says: "Sure, success is important in my life. Superiority is not required, but I like success." Summayya (18, Egypt) adds: "Of course, success is important, but I am not very interested in being first. I like to succeed with good marks and be able to choose a specialty, but what will I do with the rest?" Dana (17, Lebanon), who never repeated a grade in her life, says: "I pity those who rank first. Pupils behave differently with those who rank first in class."

This attitude is pragmatic. Success is beneficial, but excellence has a negative effect on the pupil's relationship with other pupils, so adolescents spontaneously limit competition for top place, or favor a level of competition that does not involve rivalry.

### I get an average of 14 and my parents want 18 : What am I to do?

Pupils come to me feeling tired; they are pressurized by parents who want them to cram their minds with information while they are not yet able to think, analyze or deal with it. Sometimes, what a pupil is asked to do is beyond his power and ability. Parents do not realize this. Even when a pupil gets an average of 14/20, the parents are angry. They want him to get 18/20. This is not normal. The mother tells him, "You got only 14, what do you think people are going to say about me?" Sometimes, parents have no idea about their children's abilities, needs or desires, and are not aware of their abilities and capabilities.

**Source:** A psychologist, in a health bureau, in a Tunisian school

The 'popular' pupil succeeds without being first in class. Nor does he submit to the teacher or the administration without a certain impoliteness (particularly girls). He is good at his studies and 'half a trouble maker'. In adolescent school culture, adolescents admire those who defy the system without causing serious problems. This kind of person will often be the leader of a school gang. And within the gang, where he feels safe and supported, he can personally, gradually experience challenge and agitation as forms of self-assertion and personality-building. Rafeeq (18, Lebanon) sees himself as "a semi agitator". Rim (15, Lebanon) wrangles with, but does not fight, her teachers. Farid (Yemen) says: "In ninth grade, studying was rather serious but there was also trouble. I can't forget that year, I liked it at lot." It all depends on finding the golden mean: reconciling success in school with enjoyment of trouble: leaving childhood (where obedience is the basic principle) for youth (where rules are questioned and rebellion and rejection seen as values). But the standards of the administration differ from those of the pupils. What the former considers rebellion, the latter consider a right. "There was a quarrel between us girls and the administration," says Hanaan (18, Bahrain). "I was the leader. To the head-mistress I was the brain. She said I was impolite and that we were breaking the rules. But we were only taking one of our rights."

The golden mean excludes extremism; girls sometimes think the boys go too far in their own disputes as well as those with teachers. Some types of behaviour (insults, name calling and more violent behaviours) are predominantly male and are likely to lead to trouble, which harms studies and relationships, and may provoke parental intervention.

As to the possibility of disagreeing with teachers, one answer was frequently given. Haneen (15, Yemen) says: "No, there was no such disagreement; he is a teacher and we must respect him." Sarra (16, Bahrain) describes the school principal as a jailor rather than an educator: "In our school we have a supervisor who is there only to 'catch' girls who bring their phones with them, and to expel them, unfairly. She makes us afraid; I couldn't talk to her about my problems. Our supervisor is always standing at the door in case we are late; and she asks us to cut our finger nails if they are long."

Frame 2-11

## Teachers ... and schools in contemporary cinema

Contemporary cinema is interested in the school and in relationships at school, which form the subject of many films, some of which are serious and examine real problems mentioned in this chapter. Here are some of these serious films and the problems they examine.

### School without Walls, 1948
**Jean-Paul le Chanois, 1948 (director), Bernard Blier (actor)**

This is the true story of a farmer, Freinet, who lives in the Alps. He was injured in World War I at the Battle of Verdun and became a teacher. But because of his injury he could not teach standing. His ideas about teaching were innovative: he turned his class into a place of work, social interaction, knowledge sharing, and cooperation between the school and the village (Saleze). In a significant symbolic episode, the teacher sets on fire the seat on which he stood to be higher than the pupils and control them, and uses it as heating wood.

### To Sir with Love, 1967
**James Clavel (director), Sidney Poitier (actor)**

Sidney Poitier plays a black engineer who teaches a difficult class in an East End school in London. The film has a number of intertwined stories, some about racism (a black African teacher in a school for white pupils) and one about a pupil who falls in love with her teacher. Generally speaking, the film is about the teacher's use of an innovative, non-traditional way of teaching in a difficult class whose pupils are from marginalized groups. He emphasizes self-respect and mutual respect, enters the fabric of their family lives and environment, and gains their trust, while the school administration and some of the conservative families are angry. The film ends with the pupils succeeding and the teacher leaving the school.

### The Society of Dead Poets, 1989
**Peter Weir (director), Robin Williams (actor)**

This is the story of a teacher of English literature in an elite school which has a drastic (Victorian) system and a traditional teaching style. The teacher uses a lively teaching method, calling on pupils to tear the pages of tedious criticism out of their books and read poetry freely and with enjoyment. He awakens his pupils' poetical feeling; some show a gift for literature and create a secret society for the reading of poetry. A suicide takes place in the school, and the teacher is held responsible for it, because the victim was torn between his personal choices (encouraged by the teacher) and his conservative family and their expectations for his future. In one scene, reminiscent of Freinet's burning of the seat, Robin Williams asks his pupils to stand on the tables, as he does himself, symbolizing the end of hierarchy within the class and liberation from the traditional system of the school. The film ends with the disruptive teacher leaving the school, despite his success.

### Dangerous Minds, 1995
**John Smith (director), Michelle Pfeifer (actress)**

The film is based on the true biography of a school teacher - Lou Ann Johnson - in the marginalized neighborhood of an American city where the rate of delinquency is very high among pupils, most of whom have African, Spanish and Asian origins. The film discusses the challenge of educating the poor and the marginalized, and their struggle between getting an education, on the one hand, and delinquency and falling into the hands of gangs, on the other. A pupil in Lou Ann Johnson's class gets killed, and she has to face the power of the gangs. The teacher uses non-traditional means based on interest, commitment and gaining the trust of pupils and parents. Like the others, this film deals with the enthusiastic, non-traditional teacher who goes against the prevailing model of the teacher as careless employee.

### Music of the Heart, 1999
**Wess Craven (director), Meryl Streep (actress)**

Meryl Streep plays Roberta - a real person, a music teacher who wants to teach children the violin in a Harlem neighborhood in New York. Her idea is opposed in school (the traditional flute teacher) and by parents who do not see playing the violin as useful for children from poor ethnic groups. Roberta boldly and successfully pursues her project. The film shows the importance of music, and by extension of non-traditional subjects, in building up the pupil's personality and feelings of self-respect, and in keeping him out of delinquency.

Uncivilized behaviour, in its usual sense and as pupils understand it, is not unknown at school. Many interviewees mentioned violent behaviour (giving orders, yelling, some name-calling, insulting and beating, and in some cases beating by pupils of teachers). But usually parents intervene when things go too far. Hameed (16, Morocco) remembers with bitterness his teacher's words. Ashraf (18), Rafiq (18), Lynn (17) and Nadeen (16) from Lebanon mention many kinds of dispute with their teachers. Waheed (15, Yemen) was beaten by his teacher; he says boys fight among themselves too. Wesma (17, Yemen) says: "The headmistress is despotic in her relationship with teachers and pupils, and the girls are so aggressive that they sometimes hit one another; they are bad-mouthed and unruly." Chaddad (16, Yemen) says: "At first, he insulted me with the usual words, then he insulted my upbringing, not me, and I don't like anybody to insult my father or my mother; I wanted to attack him but my friend stopped me. I told my father, who talked to the headmaster and his deputy. Later, the teacher was sacked." Some arguments end badly for the teacher, as in the case of Chaddad (Yemen) and Ramy (15, Lebanon). In fifth grade, Ramy was expelled with his cousin for a week. When his absent father came back, "he went to school and had an argument with the administration. He told me to go back to school next day. The next day, they tried to stop me entering school, but I went in anyway". But the interviewees (especially girls) disapprove of direct conflict with teachers, thinking pupils behave badly to boast and to show off.

Cheating seems acceptable. Haneen (17, Tunisia) sees covering for cheats as solidarity. Lama (15, Yemen) "plagiarizes sometimes, if the subject is difficult and hard to grasp." But other types of behaviour are condemned. Najah (16, Tunisia) says boys at school are "rude and don't respect their elders or their teachers. They throw paper balls at them, challenge them and sing when leaving the classroom". Haneen (17, Tunis) thinks "80% of the pupils smoke, and some girls too; some boys inhale a kind of glue" (which smells strong and has a slightly narcotic effect). But "this doesn't happen in the math class...it only happens in the vocational streams where there are lots of rude pupils." The same activities recur in Lebanese schools - smoking, drinking alcohol and taking drugs. Dina (15) mentions "a school near our school with a good standard. Some pupils there were found taking drugs. Among them was an eleven-year old boy. He was sent to a psychologist. Before that, another boy committed suicide." Raany (16, Lebanon) reports: "Last year pupils in our class wrote insults and drew rude things on the second grade books, notebooks and painting files; very dirty words. All the boys in our class were expelled, on the charge that it was they, not the girls, who wrote the dirty words and drew the rude drawings. They were right to expel us, but some of us were innocent and had not taken part in this. I think the new generation's internal dialogue is frightening." Hussam (18, Yemen) says that "there were violent clashes between boys' gangs and girls' gangs and the administration had to intervene." Wasseem (17, Yemen) says: "In the village there used to be no girl/boy problems, because the boys thought it wasn't done. There are many problems in the college where I am now. Pupils break the windows, destroy the trees, and gather outside the college to beat opponents up; they yell and fight with teachers."

The interviewees said there were behavioural differences between private and public schools. Resistance in public schools seems more affected by local factors, while behavioural similarity is higher in private schools, attended by middle class and well-off children. For them, maybe, local factors are less important than the effects of modern consumption, prevailing worldwide and publicized by the media, or through direct contact with it.

The Moroccan study reflects these types of behaviour. It notes that "cigarette consumption is widespread, except among rural girls, and so are drugs (particularly hashish), which are spreading among boys more than among girls, particularly in private schools and among the well-off. Socio-economic affiliation is a basic variable determining pupils' behaviour. In state schools the atmosphere seems stricter than in private schools, and pupils do not have the wherewithal for consumer behaviour. "In the government schools," says Jamila (17, Morocco), "half the pupils are deviant and half well-behaved. But in this (private) school, everything is deviant; most of those from well-off families deviate from [the right] path. In state schools, pupils are poor. In this school, parents give their children money and they buy hashish and alcohol. If they didn't have money, they couldn't have done so."

Adolescent misbehaviour at school is affected by family relations, the local environment, the degree of affiliation in the peer group, and other factors. The interviewees reveal that violent types of behaviour are uncommon in small village schools, that destructive acts and indecent drawings are the work of a gang of pupils, that parents are responsible for the spread of smoking, alcohol drinking or drug-taking, and that pupils use powerful fathers against the school administration. But the interviews do not permit statistical correlations to be made between these factors/variables; rather, they should be listed and studied with more extensive and accurate instruments, because they are important. These factors have not been sufficiently examined in our societies. Studies conducted in francophone Switzerland on pupils in grades seven to nine in the middle school, for ages 13 to 15 (Branger and Liechti, Zurich, 1998), and in the southern United States for ages 13 to 18 (Salts, Lindholm, Goddard and Duncan, 1995, USA) showed that the more the adolescent engages in social activities such as going out with friends, the more violent the behaviour becomes. The more s/he engages in activities within the family, the less violent the behaviour. This is particularly true of girls who engage in creative activities. Other activities (maths, computer, art, TV) do not affect violent behaviour much (the Swiss study). But consumption of alcohol, cigarettes and light drugs, and school punishment, are positively linked to violence. The more time the adolescent spends outside home, the more frequent the violent behaviour. The worse the conflict within the family, the greater the violence; the stronger the bonds with the peer group, the more frequent the aggression; the greater the integration in the adult world, particularly the family, the less the violence (the US study). Both studies showed that adolescents who give importance to parental opinions show greater respect to their teachers; adolescents who listen to their friends and siblings commit more violence against the school"[7] There is reason to believe that such correlations exist in Arab societies, as can be concluded from the testimonies of the adolescents and their teachers.

**(7)** Scolarité et adolescence: les motif s de l'insécurité, op.cit.

Frame 2-12

### Buddy law is stronger than school law

The pupil explained to me, in simple terms, why she used rude language, saying, "I can't help using such language when I am with the girls. I see people my age behave in the same way. They recognize me or adopt me in the group only if I behave like them." The group has its laws. The adolescent has to be tough and arrogant for he gets no recognition if he is polite and good-mannered. Take another example, of a brilliant adolescent who excelled in his studies. The group around him does not value educational excellence. They denigrate what is positive, and esteem what is negative. He dropped out of school. His father could not understand. He came to complain about the change in his son's behaviour. The son said nothing. After several meetings, he simply said to me: "Don't bother, I want to be normal. I can't get away from my friends, and they think that I shouldn't try to excel, and should not go to school." As you see, all the conditions are there for him to excel, but he doesn't want to. He can't satisfy both his family and his friends, and he has chosen to satisfy his friends.

**Woman psychologist, health service in a Tunis school**

## C. Mixed schools and gender behaviour

A clear majority of the adolescents interviewed favor mixed schooling, though with some conditions. Some of these reservations were explained by boy/girl problems at school, or were justified on religious grounds and social tradition. The religious attitude does not rule out mixed schools. Wasseem (17, Yemen) says "mixedness in schools is normal. It is not forbidden by religion; what is forbidden is khulwa, a boy and girl being together without anybody else around. And I think mixed schools don't permit that. But when they are separated one would miss the other."

Adolescents, particularly in Yemen and Bahrain, have reservation about mixed secondary schools but not universities. "I don't believe mixed schools are good," says Sebeeka (17, Bahrain) but at university girls become open-minded. "At school, however, some are still immature and may take advantage of that, whether boys or girls." Mixed schools are most widely accepted in Morocco, Tunisia and Lebanon, where it is only rejected by a few girls who left school because of poverty or difficulties at school resulting from their inability to adapt.

Similar reasons are given for accepting mixed schools - getting used to the other sex, leading to normal relationships between the sexes, etc. Dana (18, Bahrain): "I feel mixed schools are better because now, when young men see a girl they behave as if they have 'created' something unseen before. But things are normal in mixed schools." Lynn (17, Lebanon) says "it prevents girls becoming crazy and bewildered" when they first meet a boy. Deena (15, Lebanon) thinks that in single-sex schools "some girls develop a psychological complex, and become bashful when they deal with boys." Rafeeq (17, Lebanon) finds the idea of a school for girls only silly and intolerant.

Adolescents think mixed schooling improves the quality of relations, discipline and healthy competition in the classroom, as well as personal relations. Fethiya (16, Tunisia) has a lot of things to tell her (male) friend, unlike other girls (too talkative); the peer group to which she belongs is composed of four girls and eight boys. Yumna (17, Tunisia) prefers the friendship of boys and says that her relations with girls have always been bad because they are jealous and spiteful. "Boys are more serious; they take time to think and have a richer experience. That is why relations with them offer more than relations with girls do."

But mixed schooling has its problems, which may explain a certain negative attitude to it, particularly as regards sexual behaviour among pupils or with teachers. Boasting, especially by boys, is widespread and may end in argument. Even teachers boast. Jamila (17, Morocco) describes a teacher who brags in front of the literature class and another who tells love stories to one of his female pupils. The types of behaviour reported by the interviewees vary in terms of their importance and how they are seen.

Some girls feel uncomfortable in the presence of a schoolmate of the opposite sex. “One isn’t at ease in a mixed school,” Heeba (16, Lebanon) says, “a girl can take off her school uniform or put on tights in a girls’ school, but she can’t with boys around.” Fareed (16, Yemen) says that “mixed schools are generally good, but not in the same class... because girls would know the boys’ secrets and complain about them... And there may be some susceptibilities. It is better for boys to be with boys and girls with girls, in separate classrooms; but the school can be mixed.” Girls have other reasons for opposing mixed schools. Shemsa (16, Yemen) thinks some boys come to school to watch girls, not to study. Randa (16, Yemen) sees it as not nice, for “boys in our society don’t speak nicely”.

Sex-linked behaviour raises problems, particularly for adolescents in Yemen and Bahrain. (This does not mean that such reservations are not present in interviews conducted in the other Arab countries.) Yemeni interviews allude to something like “harassment” or relations between girl students and teachers. Waood (15, Tunisia) thinks it is the parents’ responsiblity and the girl’s: she lacks experience and trusts the teacher. “The girl has to get used to relations with boys; parents who bring up their daughters strictly will have corrupt girls, because those girls will seek boys’ friendship. And the parents are responsible for that. Schoolgirls are adolescents, and adolescents dream of getting attached to their teacher, whereas for him it is impossible to think of her; for him, she is only a pastime. But girls do not take it that way because they lack home guidance.” Walaa (17, Yemen): “In private schools girls do not observe the limits of politeness; there are girls who have relations with boys. Yesterday, for example, my class leader found letters between two girl students, each of them attached to the other’s brother.” There was also a complaint that “some of the students carried letters from boys who do not go to that school”.

Interviews conducted in Bahrain showed more honesty, revealing certain practices that are more widespread in private schools. There were allusions to pregnancies in school, and to sexual perversion among girls who are ‘mannish’. Razan (18): “Yes, there are mannish girls. We had one girl student who liked to touch girls; she had a boy-like haircut, wore chains and smoked, and did other things.” Imen (16) says she “knew a girl who always talked about boys, exaggeratedly so. After a while, it became clear that she was pregnant. Friends have horrifying stories, and are well-known for several things.” Yesmeen (15) had the following dialogue with the researcher:

**Q**. Are there unusual things happening in your school?
**A**. Our school is well-known. Some 15% of students are perverts, and the rest not all good.
**Q**. What do you know about perversion?
**A**. A girl having sex with another girl. This is something usual and widespread.
**Q**. Explain to me what sexual perversion is.
**A**. It means that a girl goes with another girl and tells her that she is her lover; or girls tell one another that they got a beautiful girl. Last year, one girl was expelled; she was pregnant. These things happen very often in our school.
**Q**. What are the signs of this perversion between one girl and another?
**A**. One girl would sit in another’s lap and hold her; certain things happen in the bathrooms, etc.; smoking is very widespread, particularly among mannish girls.

Despite being frank, these testimonies merely reflect a set of contradictory factors reinforced by habit, tradition, the family, media and individual experience. But what is obvious is that most adolescents, male and female, prefer mixed schools. Fella (15, Yemen): “I think mixed schools are normal; it helps boys and girls to study by creating competition between them.”

Frame 2-13

### The middle school in Egypt

A Population Council study on school environment involving 75 middle schools in Egypt revealed problems faced by schools, staff and pupils. The study showed that many pupils took private lessons. 67% of pupils said that they doing this (75% girls and 59% boys), and 59% said that there was discrimination in the school, with 25% thinking the reason for this was that some pupils took private lessons. The percentage of pupils taking private lessons is 80% in good-performance schools and 40% in low-performance schools.

The study showed a gender disparity as regards exposure to violent language and punishment. 34% of boys, though only 14% of girls, said that they had been described as failures the day before the interview; 33% and 14% respectively had been punished.

90% of girls wanted to work after graduation, but only 74% thought their parents would let them to do so.

As for teacher performance, the study revealed that in the week preceding the researchers' visit, only 47% of teachers had been in the classrooms during the whole class; 76% wasted some time during the class hour, and 85% did so in the low-performance schools. 20% of the pupils were absent for at least one day during the week preceding the visit.

**Source:** The School Environment in Egypt: An analysis of the public middle schools case, The World Population Council, Regional Office for Western Asia and North Africa ROWANA, Center for Social Research, American University in Cairo, 2000. The study involved 75 middle schools using several research instruments, with a sample of 2,495 male and female pupils, 480 teachers, headmasters, social and health workers, and classroom performance observation. The average age of the pupils in the sample was 13.5; the sample was composed of an equal number of boys and girls.

## 3. Specialty, professional future and work

Some interviews (Tunisia, Yemen and Morocco) showed that society generally preferred scientific specialties over arts ones. Girls seem to choose either scientific or arts specialties, but boys rarely choose arts specialties. Scientific subjects are usually preferred as offering greater opportunities for specialization, and requiring more thought than arts subjects, where rote learning prevails. Vocational specialties, as some interviews in Tunisia indicate, are ranked lower, and "sometimes includes a higher proportion of unsuccessful, rude boys". In several Arab countries there is a negative view of vocational education, considered as second rate, for students who fail or want to leave school for early entry into the job market.

None of the interviewees could give a clear answer to the question about their future choice of profession. Safiya (17, Bahrain): "The period I am going through, which for me is a transition from secondary education to the university, is chaotic and frustrating because it involves choosing a specialty and getting the right opportunity." Generally, correlation between the educational process and choice of an academic specialty (thus the choice of future work or profession) is much clearer when the secondary and university system is multidisciplinary and requires a specific grade level for specialization (as in Tunisia, Egypt and Bahrain).

Adolescents in Lebanon mention as professions work in the diplomatic corps, sports, computers, the military and architecture. Girls hope for the theater, medicine, psychology, public relations, computers, chemistry or laboratories. In Yemen, there is a clear preference among girls for the medical profession, a sign of the high status of doctors in Yemeni society. But this is just a wish. Wahy (15): "Entering the Faculty of Medicine has been my dream ever since I was child." Various problems stand in the way, one of which is raised by Lamaa (15): "I want to study medicine and be a doctor, but this is difficult; my father may not let me go on studying, and it's possible I will marry before finishing my studies." For girls, other favoured professions are languages, computers, social work and working as ambassador. Boys hope for aviation, nuclear energy, computer engineering and science, electronics and commerce. In all cases, the standards of success include raising a family, acquiring a house and car, and being respected in society.

Among Egyptian girls, the favourite profession is teaching, though other professions are mentioned, such as design as a preparation for work in the clothing sector. Others describe the nature of the job without defining it: "a job that would help people", or "a job that would involve dealing with people". Boys most frequently choose engineering and business, trade or computers. Unusually, Bahir (16) wants to go to university to learn to be a cartoonist, since he wants to draw cartoons for children and adults (he hasn't talked to his parents about it yet).

In Algeria, girls' choices seem more diverse, including the bar, translation, journalism, veterinary medicine, diplomacy, medicine, the police or working in catering abroad. Boys are mostly interested in sports, saying they live for the moment and don't think about a future job.

In Bahrain, boys want to work in the liberal professions, the bar and commerce. Girls mention teaching, law, the arts, education, marketing and news. Some adolescents of both sexes say they are too young to choose, or do not know what to choose and will follow parental advice.

The choices made by Tunisian adolescents are more realistic, whether about school specialty or job. Girls in sewing factories hope to develop special skills; one wants to start up an agricultural project, another to be a nursery teacher. Fareeda (17) is hesitating while everyone advises her to study law (she is outspoken and talkative). Her father wants her to become a pilot, but she prefers medicine and education, though she knows the market is flooded with these specialties. Sameer (16) wants to study computers to work at NASA (the United States Aeronautics and Space Agency); Ahmed (17) wants to study computers too, because "it is a profession one can easily learn that brings in a lot of money." Haneen (17) wants to become an engineer, but knows it requires high grades. Hana (18) wants to be a fashion designer; she left school to work in sewing, went back to school to get a secondary school diploma, then traveled abroad to specialize in her favorite field. Marwaan (15) has a choice between becoming a judge or a military officer.

Work is generally seen positively; but work as a vital need, a priority, is still seen to concern men primarily, despite increasingly positive views on both sexes working. This is a relatively widespread conviction, even among girls, many of whom still rank raising a family and home duties over work, saying women must reconcile work and home duties if they do decide to work. This attitude reflects the view that work is something that has to be done to provide the necessities of life rather than something that builds an independent personality or personal achievement. But girls see nothing wrong with wanting to work if the future husband is able, alone, to satisfy the needs of the family.

The main motivation is economic, but there are other motivations. Suheer (16 Egypt) works as a salesgirl to pay for the private lessons she needs in secondary school. "I need the money," she says "otherwise why would I work? I surely don't want to work as a salesgirl!" Bassam (17, Egypt) started work when his father died: "I work as an engraver, and a clever one; there was a man in our neighborhood, a friend of my parents, May Allah have mercy on him. He had a large workshop, and used to make a lot of money. When he found out I was not keen on school he asked me to join him saying he would teach me a craft. I went and I learnt. First, I worked with him; now I sometimes work with him and sometimes on my own. He is a good man, and even when I work on my own he helps me." Abdullah (17, Egypt) tried to help his father financially by working at a printer's over the summer, but his father told him that he was responsible for him until he finished school, and wanted Abdullah to rest in the summer vacation to get ready for the next school term. Thus work can be postponed or avoided. Some girls see work as unimportant compared to raising a family. Houda (18, Egypt) will not work unless she has to: "It is important that the man works because it is he who has to provide for the home; I am not supposed to do that." Azeeza (17, Egypt) associates work with independence. "One has to work to earn money...I am not willing to stay home and see my husband keep me."

There are other motives, of course, but they merge in the individual's mind and we can seldom identify a coherent attitude based on one particular motive, and no other.

So we find girls who are aware of the need for self-achievement and personality-building through work. Suheer (16, Egypt) thinks it is work that gives value to a person and meaning to life. Azeeza (17, Egypt) thinks work expands people's faculties, gives an impetus to their lives and stops life being routine. Nadia (16, Egypt) thinks work gives women an alternative to, or refuge from, the difficulties of family life: "Work is very important...Work creates a person's own world. He doesn't have to depend on one thing all his life. When dad's worried, for example, he wants to drown himself in work, unlike mom. When she's worried she wants us all, mostly dad of course, around her. When she does not get that, she feels lonely."

In all the countries involved in the study, the adolescents' opinions resembled those already given. Rand (16, Yemen) approves of women working "depending on the kind of work, so that she can reconcile home and work." Daad (15, Yemen) approves provided this does not harm her family,

"because some women work and neglect their husbands and children; then the family must be preferred to work. But if the woman lives with a relative who can take care of the children, then the woman can work to improve the family situation." Walaa (17, Yemen) says of work, "through it I will fulfill myself and everything I have aspired to during my schooling." Fatima (17, Morocco) thinks "work is something important in a woman's life because it provides her with material and spiritual independence."

Those who have entered or are about to enter the job market see it differently. In Morocco all the interviewees see work as obviously important. Their discourse is linked to daily life rather than dreams of the future, but the dreams appear in their answers. Girls realize that marriage is fragile and, in consequence, a wife must be financially independent. Although motherhood and the wife's role are still seen as important, women need paid work to make ends meet. This fact recurs in the answers; almost no answers see work as a means to achieve personal maturity. There is a real fear of unemployment. Hassen (18): "I am ready to accept any job; we in Morocco can't choose the work we will do, we have to take any job that offers; we can't choose." Early entry into the job market is often the result of bad living conditions and being unable to go on studying, particularly for girls. Lack of the educational qualifications needed to enter the job market at the right time and do work they would like and that would pay better makes girls bitter. Khadija (18) wanted to study and become a journalist: "I did not go to school to become a doctor or a lawyer; had I done so, I would have probably been able to graduate...Whether or not I like the work I do, sewing is what matches my level of education." Hind (17, Morocco), a rural girl, could not go to school because it was distant and knows that her work as a maid "is the job that corresponds to her educational level".

Between ambition and reality is a gap that can be hard to bridge, that subjects the adolescents' discourse to an unfair bargaining with the self, and leads them to abandon their dreams with amazing simplicity. Suheer (16, Egypt): "If I pass the secondary exam, get a high average and enter the Faculty of Medicine, I will, God willing, open a clinic. But if I don't succeed, I'll work as a hairdresser." Ahmed (17, Yemen), who had to work after his father died: "I don't go to school because father died and living conditions changed; I left my village for the city to better my family's living conditions and add to the pension of my late father (may Allah have mercy on him). Now I work in a mechanics workshop, but the wage is low. I'm trying to improve my situation, having found a workshop owned by one of my friends' fathers. As for my hopes, I'm trying to concentrate on the workshop where I work, to improve my income."

Early work, which can seem an evil imposed on drop-outs, can be a solution. Aamer (15, Yemen), forced by his father to beg and finding it dishonorable, is now in a 'home':

**A**. Work is important to me. When I see a person begging and another working, the one who works earns the money; the one who begs is told to go and work and is humiliated.
**Q**. What are your projects after you leave the home?
**A**. They told us that the government will hire us to work in a textile factory.
**Q**. What did you want to do in the future?
**A**. I wanted to be a writer.
**Q**. What else?
**A**. A director.
**Q**. How do you think you will succeed in the future?
**A**. Through education.

Najet (18, Tunisia) works at an artistic job but complains about how badly she is paid in work she likes and where she can show her skill, enjoying it as a hobby. She started to work on and off when she was 12 to help her sister, and for the last four years has made dolls for tourists; she is paid 3 dinars each (c. $2); the market price is 14 dinars, which she thinks unfair. She likes the job and makes traditional dresses for the dolls, "without asking for money; I work to show my skills and because I like to work." But she contradicts herself: "I wouldn't work if I had enough money. I'm working because I don't have it; work's not a necessity for me."

Jihad (18, Tunisia), an apprentice mechanic, illustrates the tension that exists between apprentice and boss. His first employer fired him for stubbornness. His second wanted him to get to work at eight a.m., when the factory did not open until the owner arrived 45 minutes later. "I got there

at eight in the morning and waited beside the wall until 8.45. Sometimes I waited in the rain and wind, so I began to leave home late and arrive at the same time as the boss...I began to argue with him...he used to hit me...I didn't stay more than six months...I need two years of apprenticeship to get a diploma to be able to work...I hate being unemployed...I want to work, not stay in bed until noon, then in the café until evening. Man must do any work, and move."

The boss/trainee relationship is a vertical one not devoid of tension and violence. Though it is based on a traditional hierarchy within the profession or trade, it no longer has its traditional function. Traditionally, apprenticeship was a mechanism for transferring knowledge from the employer to the apprentice. But the system has become one of providing cheap labor, without any transfer of knowledge and skills taking place within objective time limits.

On the whole, early entry into the job market is not desirable for adolescents in that it represents a dead end in the process of individual development, except for exceptional cases where they are given real skills that qualify them for a job at a decent wage.

**Frame 2-14**

### A women's revolution, or frightening facts

What are they doing this holiday Sunday morning - a huge gathering of about 5-6,000 girls?

For a while, I thought I was watching the seeds of a women's revolution. They were all young and beautiful, in the age where girls blossom. Had they decided to rebel against male society, bringing down the temple on everybody's head, and raising their voices until they gained the rights to which they have so long aspired?

I asked the policemen there. They said: "They are candidates wanting to sign contracts with the General Directorate of Internal Security Forces as airport inspectors, and today is the day of the written exam." I was shocked, even more so when I inquired about some figures.

Only 23 airport inspectors were needed; the necessary qualification was the baccalaureate; the contract period was one year renewable; the successful candidate did not become a permanent member of the civil service; the salary was 550,000 Liras (the minimum wage is 3,000 Liras, about $200).

6,182 girls were competing for 23 jobs; 80% were university graduates (the baccalaureate only was required), each had spent at least 200,000 Liras on various expenses to apply.

These are really frightening facts.

**Abbas Salah**
**With modifications from the newspaper Ennahar**
**Beirut - July 19, 2003**

## General conclusions

### 1- The school

The school, formerly a mechanism for modernizing, is now exposed to a counter-infiltration making it vulnerable to world and local community changes. The school crisis is a global one, involving the school, its system and human powers, and the structure of its internal relations and forms. The crisis involves the role of the school in society, as well as its cognitive and economic functions, and the relations with its administrative and academic bodies, pupils and parents. This complex crisis can be understood only as part of global social change.

Teachers themselves recognize that it has become difficult, if not impossible, to teach because of the loss of reliable references, exaggerated individual rights, the gap between the adult world and that of children or adolescents, since "a special world for the young is being built with special symbols

and rules of behaviour (language, clothes, etc.)"[8]. The reference system which adolescents build up from various sources, including friends, differs in many ways from the references of family and school. Consequently, "the problems of the school, and more generally the problems of adolescence as manifest in the public field, are primarily preoccupations of adults who spread a definite conception of childhood and education,"[9] while adolescents may not view them as such. The framework regulating relations between the administration and teachers on the one hand, and pupils on the other, is of two types. In the first (traditional) type, priority is given to law, order and discipline; when pupils disobey they are punished. The second type prioritizes relations and encourages dialogue and negotiation. This law/relationship contradiction is clear in industrially advanced societies as well as in those Arab milieus influenced by modern values and educational trends. Here the school system is not automatically accepted, but requires negotiation and conviction on the part of pupils. Nevertheless, there is a great deal of heterogeneity between schools in the same country and in the different Arab countries; in consequence, Arab societies face two different kinds of problem about school and education. There is the traditional school in the full sense of the term, with boy/girl separation, widespread illiteracy, particularly among girls, bodily punishment, dictation and backward curricula, plus the problems of inadequate equipment, health conditions, and safety. And then there are the problems associated with the modern school (teaching methods, curricula and relations). What should be noted is that globalization and economic reform in the Arab countries deepen this dualism in the educational system.

The new liberal economics, the spread of consumer values, and the idea of success built on an individual project erode the modernizing role of the school. Instead there is a return to the school hierarchy (curricula and specialties), a social hierarchy associated with the provision of qualifications for the job market and the position the school prepares the individual for, not only on the basis of knowledge, but on the basis of the prior social advantages that define the choice of school. This is a vicious circle: the adolescent's social situation determines his choice of school; the school consolidates this choice and perpetuates the advantages via a disparity in the quality of the education given. The school makes the socially qualified person more qualified; the socially deprived receive a worse education and fail to become socially mobile through education.

We should note the current and anticipated prosperity of private schools in Arab countries, the growing distinction between elite and public schools, the spread of private lessons, the increased cost of schooling, and the rethinking of universal education as a right, perhaps voiding it of its content by making it mean the right to a low-quality basic education.

As regards the internal reform of the school system, insufficient consideration has been given to relations, particularly between pupils, teachers and the administration, or developing safety valves so that conflict can be solved via dialogue. There are few mechanisms whereby pupils can take part in running school or personal affairs; these are matters of priority to adolescents.

## Professional future and work

Adolescents perceive work as basic to their personal future. From what they say, work is not for the fulfilment of the self but a way to earn a living or get social recognition, or as a natural development (from home to school to a job). Girls especially did not see work as a necessity, not only because society frowns on it, but as a personal choice where the husband is able to earn a reasonable living. Work is associated with fatigue, or unlike what had been hoped.

Work in Arab societies does not necessarily go hand in hand with an appropriate salary, social insurance or union rights. Professions are subject to a hierarchical system and certain types of work come low on the scale; it is natural, thus, that work should lose much of its attractiveness, except for the autonomy it may provide.

On the other hand, pure economic logic and the logic of success based on an individual project are not the only factors involved, and mix with social, cultural and economic factors to give work a value and determine choices. Once again, there is consistency between thought, level of social development and real life.

**(8)** L'éducateur, special edition, 1999, in Scolarité et adolescence:Les motifs de l'insécurité, op. cit.

**(9)** Scolarité et adolescence:Les motifs de l'insécurité, op. cit.

From the interviews, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- There is an overlap between girls' and boys' choices, especially as regards professions associated with technology, languages and a diplomatic career. However, choices reflect the traditional gender division of labor; girls prefer social professions (medicine, education, literature) and boys choose engineering, entrepreneurship and commerce.

- Some adolescents are still hesitant; this is normal because of age, the desire and ability to pursue education, and other factors.

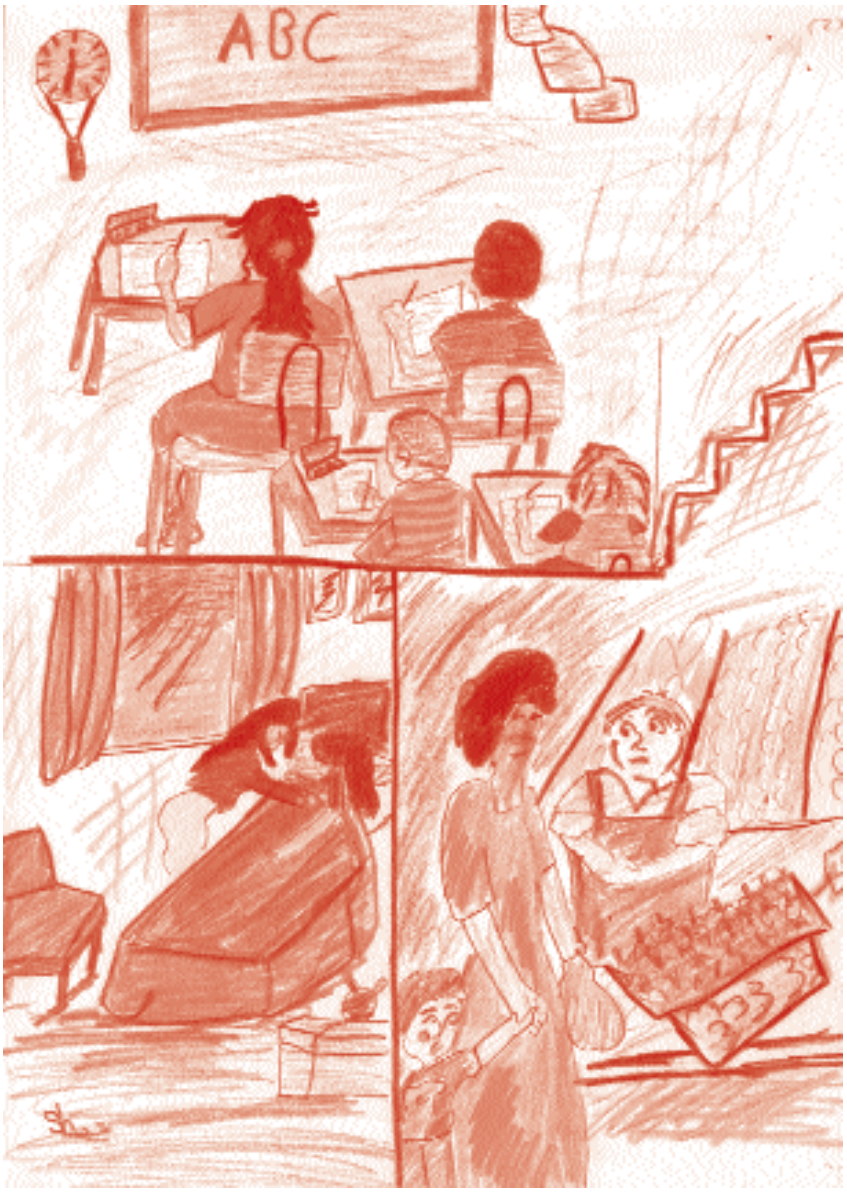
- Certain choices reflect the high value adolescents give to certain professions (medicine in Yemen) and titles (Doctor) with the social importance they bestow.

- The choices of Tunisian adolescents seemed realistic and were generally affected by the subjects chosen by male pupils, or the development of work being done by working girls. This feature did not appear in the other interviews. The interviews in Bahrain indicated a trend towards well-paid professions associated with the market and modern technology (computers and commerce). This reflects the economic situation and resources available in Bahrain; the profession which recurred among adolescents in Egypt was business-related engineering.

- On the whole, adolescents did not use phrases that directly indicated a material basis to their choice of profession. Sometimes they were satisfied with a job that guaranteed stability and success in the adolescent's social environment, success basically meaning raising a family, owning a house and car, and enjoying a good reputation and acceptable social relations.

- Although some choices of profession reflected a society's peculiar features, other common cross-national choices were noted, particularly work in computers, commerce and marketing, with a preference for fields that enable adolescents to work abroad or in the diplomatic corps (languages, political sciences, law).

These conclusions call for further research in the programs and policies that are promoting youth employment. They are unlikely to be successful since they do not correspond to reality or conform to the preferences of those most concerned.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Second part:

# Field study

Chapter Five

# Culture and behaviour:
## New centers of interest

# Culture and behaviour

## Introduction

The dominant culture of a society is reflected in the type of education given by the family, school and other institutions that educate teenagers and form their behaviour. We should add the influence of the society as a whole - in particular the growing role of the media, extending beyond the national boundaries to take on international dimensions.

In the past, the family had a crucial role in social education. It provided children and teenagers with various models of behaviour, opinions and values and was the main reference, especially in early adolescence. It constituted a start-up capital for interaction with the wider environment, following a personal itinerary, and building an individual system from the many influences received. Despite its importance, the family was gradually displaced by other institutions (school, the religious institution, and social and political institutions) and the peer group or friends, who became significant for the construction of teenage behaviour and attitudes.

Means of communication, in particular the media, are increasingly important in forming teenage behaviour: they reach a large audience of teenagers and transmit the same messages to millions. They are dense and continuous, reinforcing their cumulative effect and increasing the probability of seeing their messages and contents reflected at behavioural level. They have the power to persuade, because of the technical means at their disposal. Means of information are a power in that they convey a message issued by a higher system that is independent of the teenager, distant, similar to a black box the persons in charge of which know and broadcast the truth. They appear as a reference, a reliable source of information, knowledge and behaviour usually associated with notions of success and virtue, or force and effectiveness.

The media has invaded the public and private space and become an ever-present force; it addresses teenagers both individually and collectively, talking about their everyday life and future, presenting the world they imagine in the form of attractive actions and behaviour. Thus, teenagers form their behaviour drawing largely on the multiple messages conveyed by the means of information, in addition to the contradictory contents propagated by various institutions and sources, which pull adolescents in several directions.

This pull, which changes patterns of behaviour and practice in what one may call the teenage culture, is one essential aspect that this chapter tries to examine. The chapter also describes the combined effect of local influences and the media, as well as the stereotypes, accepted or rejected, conveyed by the latter.

The chapter develops three subjects:

1. Representation of the body, dress and food
2. Solitude and friendship
3. Centers of interest and leisure activities.

### 1 - Representation of the body and physical appearance

Adolescence is a stage of major personal change. Seen from the angle of the social order and the educational process, it is a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood, dependence and autonomy and then on to independence. The passage is neither simple nor spontaneous. It is a particularly delicate stage psychologically and educationally, because the bodily, hormonal, psychological and social changes experienced by teenagers are significant, various and contradictory. Young people need both to be free and to rely on others, to move away and to draw near, to assert themselves and to reconsider their relationship with their parents, to oppose and yet imitate the older generation.

We raise these problems because they mark the behaviour of adolescents and their interaction with the people and phenomena around them[1]. The problems affect their behaviour and their capacities and modes of expression. The Egyptian Youth Survey[2] says: "The boys and girls who freely express their opinions in front of their families and who are respected for that are more inclined to do so with their friends. They are more able to resist peer group pressure. They are more likely to acquire leadership characteristics. They are usually more ambitious, i.e. they are not fully satisfied with their present situation and are optimistic about the future. This category generally comprises boys, elder children, children attending school, urban dwellers, and young people from families of higher social standing"[3]. This shows the diversity of attitudes and capacities, and the effects of such variables as age, sex, social condition, schooling and life in town or country. All these elements play a part in forming the personality, behaviour and attitudes of teenagers of both sexes.

## A - Adolescence, a period of transformation

Teenagers' definitions of adolescence are varied. What dominates is the idea of transformation and the feeling that they are entering a new and transitory stage. They see it as a period of discovery, even if accompanied by feelings of distress and beset with difficulties. Raya (18, Lebanon) says the teenager seems "to leave his shell" to discover "the pleasure of seeing". S/he becomes free by escaping from the closed circle of the family. So adolescence is a period of reflection and self-assertion, which perhaps explains the contrariness, and the tendency to rebel and to break with convention.

It is therefore important to study the types of behaviour and modes of expression the new generation adopts to assert itself: How far do teenagers approach or move away from the behavioural patterns of their parents? Do they follow the parental model or do they seek new models to represent the self and the body, dress or food? Are they opposed to their parents and do they adopt different reference systems? Do they have their own references, and what are they? Are they treated as fully-fledged individuals or as dependent beings that must obey and conform? How do they react to these different types of treatment?

The chapters General context and Identity and self-image deal with some aspects of self-representation, showing that teenagers oscillate between the search for originality and the search for resemblance, leading them to merge with the family, peer group, or other collective (political, cultural, religious) identity. This chapter explores teenage behaviour and their attitudes on certain issues, illustrating, through practical examples, the problems and ideas presented in the two above-mentioned chapters.

**Encadré 2.15**

### Iraqi teenagers, between obedience and refusal

Several aspects of the lives of Iraqis and more generally Arab teenaged girls, are affected by the attraction of two opposite poles - obedience and refusal. There are many reasons for this, including the axiological contradiction that exists in Arab societies with regard to women: on the one hand, society sets great value on them, seeing them as sacred beings not to be interfered with; on the other, it devalues them as a second-class sex.

This cannot be explained by the men/women duality in which men have all power and women are marginalized in a closed system. We prefer to rely on a different pattern that shows the impact of society on stereotyped relations, because society with its men and women is hostile to women. Women take part along with men in the process of chaining themselves down and making themselves vulnerable to criticism, and act unconsciously, through society, against their own sex. This is based on society/male/female dialectics, with men in the center, acting as intermediary between women and society. This is why women's liberation depends on men's liberation. Men hold women down, and society pulls both of them. Women are the impotent element, and society exploits the power of men to its advantage.

In such a situation, the teenage girl is torn between two forces, one drawing her to yield to family and social tradition, the other pushing her towards freedom, scientific curiosity and individual autonomy. This is bound to create an inner conflict as well as conflict with her family (due to their lack of understanding of her desires). She hesitates with regard to work: on the one hand she wishes to break free from the stifling family atmosphere (strict traditions, with perhaps poverty); on the other, this release makes her apprehensive for herself and her family, because she fears the harsh criticism of society.

**(1)** See the works of Boris Cyrulink, whose work in etiology has been applied recently to various types of human behaviour, in particular:

- **Cyrulink (B)**: Sous le signe du lien. Paris, Hachette, 1989.
- **Cyrulink (B)**: Un merveilleux malheur. Paris, Odile Jacob, 1999.
- **Cyrulink (B)**: Les nourritures affectives. Paris, Odile Jacob, 2000.

**(2)** 'The passage to maturity,' National Egyptian Youth Survey. Op.cit.

**(3)** See also Mona Fayad, Al-Sijn Mujtama'a Berri, (The prison is a wild society). Beirut, Dar Ennahar, 1999.

It is necessary to understand teenage girls by considering the circumstantial character of this stage in their lives. It is vital that the media, in particular the visual media, help parents and families take an objective, impartial attitude to teenagers. It is necessary to counter the idea that girls should stay at home, and prepare them for a productive role via science and work.

**Source:** Excerpt from a study by Chaker Al-Bidhani, Iraq, The dialectic of obedience and refusal in the culture of teenage girls: the case of the Iraqi teenager. This study won second prize in the contest of young researchers on the Arab teenage girl organized by CAWTAR, alongside the preparation of this Report.

## B - Concern with the body and physical appearance

In primitive societies and ancient civilizations, the body was free. In the Middle Ages, it was concealed and subjected to severe constraints. With modernity these constraints were lifted, for freedom of the body was associated with the human rights culture and the development of European feminist movements. During the second half of the 20th century, the relation with the body became part of market relations, and many industries (cosmetics, clothing, fashion, food, news and advertizing and the sex industry) emerged. Though these industries have different objectives and means, and are differently viewed by society, the body is their subject of interest. With the advance of globalization, particularly as regards information, the distance between them is constantly being reduced under the impact of marketing and consumption.

Here teenagers are a favorite target, as consumers and as embodying the fantasy of eternal youth, beauty and life that obsesses today's adults. The top model industry is an example of this modern revolution, as top models are the living image of what the body must be in its way of life, visibility, and relation with itself and others. Top models have well-developed, harmonious bodies, "built muscle by muscle", like a puzzle[4]. The ideal body corresponds to the canons of beauty and imitates the desires it provokes[5]. This concern with the body has given rise to an obsession with thinness, a refusal of old age, and recourse to plastic surgery.

Body care is of crucial importance in today's private or intimate life, providing the individual with pure pleasure and narcissistic satisfaction, through the attention given to appearance and skin, the pleasure of the bath and the use of cosmetics.

Teenage girls and boys in Arab countries are not immune to this trend, since they pay great attention to their bodies, whether they admit it publicly or not. Generally, teenage girls wish to be thin and elegant (indicating the influence of the globalized stereotype of female beauty, unlike the plump woman of former times). Teenage boys want to be tall and athletic, in accordance with modern taste. In Yemen, most teenagers take an interest in their elegance, physical form and clothes, despite the traditional character of the society. Wassim (17) says: "Last year I had my hair cut Tyson style, then I went to the village. My father shouted at me, he insulted me and struck me, saying that I looked as if I was wearing a fool's cap." Da,d (15) says: "My mother starts to shout if I wear clothes which reveal large parts of the body." Nawf (17) says: "My favorite pastime is make-up. I'm also interested in the latest fashion news and beauty programs. I like compliments to be paid to me alone and I like to be always at the top and not to have a rival...Nothing pleases me more than somebody saying to me, 'You are beautiful'. I'd like to be famous, provided that it is in a respectable field." Fame seems to exert a magic power over the young and is frequently mentioned in the interviews, along with the desire to work in journalism, particularly radio and TV.

The Yemeni specialists interviewed in the context of the Report, who repeated on several occasions that the new generation likes appearances, confirm this. Despite the many teenage girls who wear the Islamic costume (hijab and abaya), which reduces concern with fashion to the use of make-up, we note that Yemeni girls tend to pay attention to physical appearance and their bodies. Most wish to be taller and thinner and fair, even if they do not do anything in particular to achieve these goals[6]. Some teenagers insist on being fashionable despite social obstacles, indicating their desire to have a given appearance and a new interest in the body.

**(4)** A game in which you have to fit separate pieces together.

**(5)** See Mona Fayad, Fakh Al-Jassad (The trap of the body), Beirut, Dar Riadh ErraÒs, 2000.

**(6)** According to a very small number of interviewed teenage girls in all the countries covered by the survey, a new trend calls for a return to the traditional ideal of a plump, white body that indicates happiness and prosperity. It will be observed that attempts are being made in certain fashion shows to return to the fleshy body.

But there are other attitudes to the body, dictated by a traditional or modern point of view. Raya (18, Lebanon), who is studying to be an actress, says she feels good about herself and no longer follows fashion; she thinks one's relation with one's body affects one's relations with others: "To accept one's body is to accept oneself; a girl can feel at ease, it doesn't matter if she is fat or thin." This reminds us of the feminists of the '60s and '70s who rejected "the tyranny of fashion" and wanted a woman's body to be left alone, without additions (including bras), and hair to be natural. These attitudes also indicate, differently, a valorizing of the body[7].

Apart from these aesthetic and philosophical considerations, the body has other dimensions, more common and more closely related to adolescence. The bodily changes that occur during adolescence can lead to feelings of distress or embarrassment. The Egyptian Youth Survey says that 12% of Egyptian teenagers, whether girls or boys, feel negatively about their bodies. They feel their body is not harmonious, or they are too fat (especially girls) or too thin, too small or not muscular enough (especially boys). Dissatisfaction with the face, complexion or other features drives some teenagers from well-off families to consider surgery to correct the nose (most popular), to straighten their teeth or to wear contact lenses, to approach as far as possible the ideal in the milieu where they live. These are isolated cases; what is more widespread is an interest in food and sport to prevent obesity, the use of cosmetics, and an interest in fashion and in beautiful and elegant clothes.[8]

## Concern with fashion

Teenagers like to look suitable and modern, even if their ideas on appearance vary. Dress causes conflict between parents and children, especially teenage girls, who are subject to greater control, and there can be disagreement with parents over haircuts. Farid (16, Yemen) feels he is being watched; he has not got to inform his parents of everything he does, but does it because he wants to do so. He is not allowed to style his hair according to the latest fashion or dress in an eccentric way. In conservative milieus there seems to be the idea that only women should beautify themselves, and that men who are interested in their looks are not virile. In countries that are flexible in dealing with tradition and where wearing tight clothes is allowed, young people frequently want to look modern. In Lebanon, Tunisia and Morocco, there is an interest in international brand names. Abderrahman (16), Marwan (15) and Mahdi (16), all from Tunisia, say that they like "labeled", "signed" casual clothes and "cat" shoes.[9] Samir (16) says he buys discontinued lines that fit his taste, fashion, and financial means. His parents sometimes think he goes too far, but "I can't help it," he says: he is driven by an irresistible urge. The tendency to consume appears especially in well-off classes, though we cannot generalize. Achraf (18, Lebanon) used to be fond of brand names but has grown out of it and wears what suits him. Young Egyptians are not greatly interested in fashion; this must be related to the general climate and the high cost of fashion, as Farouq (18) says: "It's necessary to have a suitable, normal appearance, but fashionable, no. Fashion is very expensive, and then you soon find yourself with things that are useless." "But everyone likes to look their best," says Amir (15). Concern with one's appearance can be related to the occasion and the group: Mohamed (17): "It all depends on the occasion. If I go to a marriage for example, I must look smart. But if I'm with my friends, appearance is not very important; they won't make remarks. The fact remains that sometimes I want to be smart."

Bahraini girls are interested in their appearance and follow the fashion from clothing to haircut, like Hanene (18), who "can't stand anything that's not fashionable", but this does not rule out different views. Fawzi (18) is interested in his physical appearance and fashion; Noura (15) is "only sometimes", for "dress isn't important, what is important is what is inside: the head and the heart". Mohamed chooses "what suits him", while Jassem (18) says: "I don't try to follow fashion; I am not the sort."

Following the fashion can mean adopting a different style to the norm; appearing negligent can be an anti-mode. Paul Valéry (18, Lebanon) let his hair grow unkempt, but has now changed and attaches more importance to what others think. He had followed a kind of protest fashion to assert himself through difference; now, he has joined the trend and is interested in his looks.

Generally speaking, teenagers are free to choose their clothes even if they accept the dominant classical taste. The clash with adults is usually over choice of hairstyle. Teenage boys generally consult their mother about their clothes. As for teenage girls, whatever their social and cultural background, they are closely watched as to how they dress. The poorer, more traditional and more conservative the social background, the stricter the control. Though she is about to become engaged, Amira (15,

**(7)** See the chapter Identity and self-image, where this question is dealt with and where it is noted that generally teenagers accept their physical appearance (beauty is a gift from God), with however a marked desire to be endowed with it, especially girls.

**(8)** 'The passage to maturity'. National Egyptian Youth Survey, op. cit.

**(9)** Caterpillar.

Lebanon) is only allowed to wear trousers and a loose article of clothing, not a skirt, even a long one, and must wear the hijab. Teenagers generally, particularly those from poor milieus, are supervised by their mothers and expected to follow their advice. They show their acceptance of this in their socially correct behaviour. When we compare Amira and Tala (17) and Raya (18) from Lebanon, who are from respectively middle-class and affluent milieus, we realize how relative things are. Tala complains about her mother's control (she objects to her wearing a short T-shirt, which reveals her waist when she moves). To avoid problems, Tala complies with her mother's directives.

In general, teenagers put up with the limits imposed, showing discipline and a kind of self-censorship, except in the cases of broken families and where there are serious problems.

Lastly, we should point out that the question of dress and fashion in poor milieus is relative. Buying clothes can be an important, delicate issue, linked to particular occasions, and fashion a subject of frustration: Khedija (18, Morocco) cried when she was younger because of it; some teenagers resent being unable to buy sports clothes of well-known brands. Expressing a preference for this or that type of clothing or food can offer teenage girls an opportunity to assert their personality. Fatma (17, Morocco) says: "I didn't have any taste in the past; I used to eat and dress according to their taste. Now, I try to assert myself."

## Thinness and fitness

Teenagers, especially girls, want to be slim and fit. In the interviews conducted in Lebanon, we often heard "I skip dinner to keep my figure." Eating habits become a kind of fashion, just like other types of behaviour. There is increasing interest in health and health culture, especially with regard to nutritious food and food to be avoided. There is thus a link between choice of food and attention to the body. However, despite certain ideas about health food, youngsters often eat fast food because of the taste and the places where it is served.

This behaviour appears most clearly in Bahrain, where most adolescents tend to eat fast food, showing their inclination for modern food. This accompanies the abandoning of the healthy traditional foods that suit hot climates. Eating habits change to accept world products that have conquered most countries but are generally fatty and harmful to health. This change reflects an idea that links the speed of modern life to the speed of eating. In the countries of the Gulf, health problems, in particular obesity and increasing rates of diabetes, are appearing among teenagers. This can also indicate a change in family behaviour, as a result of the teenagers' having their meals outside. This does not apply to Yemen, where fast food is not widespread and where only the affluent eat out, meals being taken at home.

This taste for fast food is observed in all the countries covered by the study. In Tunisia, teenagers turn away from traditional dishes, in particular stews, preferring pizza, hamburgers and pancakes; they may refer to traditional food as "heavy and likely to cause obesity", mistakenly thinking that modern food and light meals help them keep their figures.

The Egyptian Youth Survey [10] shows that about a fifth of the boys eat some of their meals out, more than double the figure for girls. This is not surprising, for girls are under greater control and have fewer opportunities to go out. More than half the teenagers eat cooked vegetables as they grow older, become better educated and improve their socio-economic level [11].

It seems that most Egyptian teenagers are not very demanding with regard to food. They often say, "We eat everything, we eat what's available." Most prefer to eat at home, thinking home food is healthier than food in restaurants. Sally (16) says, "I eat practically anything, but I don't like oily food, nor the food one finds in fast food outlets like Macdonald's." This attitude seems widespread, and can be explained by the quality of what is served in fast food restaurants in a crowded country, and the uncertainty as to standards of hygiene and safety. But some teenagers, albeit very few, do prefer fast food restaurants.

Though most young people's eating habits do not seem to change with the onset of adolescence, some, like 'Amr (16), say a change can follow a trip: "My taste evolved greatly. In the past I liked things I knew, but after going on a journey, I decided to open up and try things I didn't know." The

**(10)** 'The passage to maturity'. Op. cit.

**(11)** Op. cit.

desire to avoid obesity is shared by all Egyptian as well as other teenagers. Baha (15) eats anything "provided it doesn't make her fat", and Houda (18) says: "I've always loved sweet things, but I try not to overdo it to avoid obesity and acne."

Teenage behaviour as regards food seems to be determined by two things. One is related to health and implies a preference for non-fatty food that does not cause obesity, or can be explained by the wish to be slender, or both reasons at the same time. The other concerns lifestyle and what is seen as modern behaviour, in keeping with stereotypes offered by the media, particularly advertizing and films. Then the health aspect becomes secondary; what is important is to go out, eat a modern meal with friends at a fast food restaurant, or a sandwich at the workplace, at school or on the way there. This emerges particularly from the interviews conducted in Bahrain, Tunisia and Lebanon, where restaurants are in large shopping centers; teenagers go there to eat, enjoy themselves, walk, and shop. This behaviour is particularly common in the cities. When there are no such modern spaces, or when fast food establishments offer nothing but food, they lose their charm and adolescents prefer to eat at home.

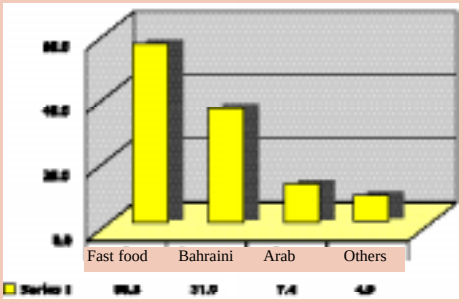
But we should point out that this kind of behaviour is changing to even more modern behaviour, under the influence of environmental and health-related movements, and of advertizing that enhances quantity and quality. Among the well-off, the trend is away from possibly dirty fast food (Macdonald's, Kentucky, etc.) towards healthy, vegetarian, and organic food based on various national cuisines. The trend is also spreading among teenagers who are critical and have a minimum income. Fast food, Macdonald's style, is giving way to bio meals, vegetarian dishes or Chinese and Mexican food. This has caused a geographical expansion of first generation fast food meals (hamburger) outside the cities, and a social widening to include lower- and middle-class groups and poorer teenagers. Fast food outlets (snack, hamburger and pizza places) spread as local economic activities to the towns and large villages, benefiting from the publicity broadcast by the media. But this type of food is not yet general, and is influenced by social and geographical disparities and cultural and political factors[12].

The new teenage eating habits are more related to the social than the biological aspect of food. The significant change here relates to the change of place and fellow eaters. The more a society is influenced by modern behaviour, the greater the tendency to leave the family and home and to eat out with friends.

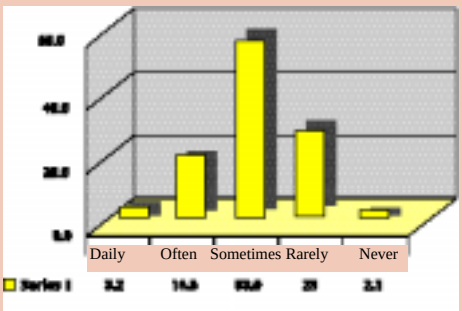
## Graph 10.2: What do teenagers eat in Bahrain?

Within the context of preparing this Report, the national Bahraini team conducted an opinion poll involving 85 teenage girls and 200 teenage boys aged between 13 and 18. Concerning eating habits, it appears that under 19% of young people eat fruits and vegetables on a daily or regular basis, and 25% rarely. 55.8 % prefer fast food to other types of cuisine.

### Adolescents' favorite dishes




### Fruits and vegetales consumption




**(12)** It will be noticed that certain movements of political or cultural protest against globalization and its effects, or against the policies and attitudes of some big powers, in particular the United States, take the form, among teenagers in particular, of a boycott of foodstuffs and restaurants related to multinationals. This intensified during the repression of the Palestinian Intifadha and the pressure on Iraq after September 11, 2001.
* Excerpt from a study made by Ban Majid in Iraq, Culture of the adolescent pupil in Baghdad, her eating habits and her physical leisure activities. It won first prize in the contest for young researchers organized by CAWTAR within the context of preparing this Report. The study was based on a field study with a sample of 303 pupils from the schools of Baghdad, aged between 12 and 18. The study was carried out in 2002.

**Box 15.2**

### Teenagers' eating habits in the schools of Baghdad*

As they get older, teenagers eat less regularly; 51.6% of the sample in the 12-15 age bracket eat 3 meals per day, against 33.1% of the 16-18 age bracket. Half the girl pupils surveyed leave home in the morning without having had breakfast, because the mother works. We notice that some eating habits, like the consumption of hot drinks and sweet things, emerge in puberty. At the same time, teenagers are interested in diets to help them stay slim.

Only 2% of the girls consume their daily meat requirement because of the economic embargo imposed on Iraq, which means that only 2% of the girls obtain their iron requirements. Adolescents aged between 16 and 18 seldom drink milk.

As regards leisure activities, 73.5 % of teenage girls did sports during the latest summer holidays, 69% exercised regularly, and some girls regularly engage in activities like swimming, walking or jogging. 54.5% of teenagers indulge in sport to enjoy themselves, while 25% do it to remain healthy.

It is necessary for teenagers to adopt a healthy lifestyle to avoid disease. It is also necessary to include education for a healthy diet in the school syllabus. The media must play a fundamental part in broadcasting good food culture.

## 2 - Solitude and friendship

The development of individual feeling is specific to modern man. The feeling is related to a sense of particularity and difference in relation to others, solitude, the search for a close friend, etc.[13]. The taste for solitude, isolation in a room and the protection of intimacy are more visible among city-dwellers. Da,d (17, Lebanon) sometimes stays in her room "to practice silence". Here, silence means to withdraw into oneself and free oneself from the tension and pressure of the outside world. Several Algerian teenagers say they use moments of solitude to "switch off".

The feeling of particularity is related to factors of social class, urban life and culture. These variables determine a critical sense and neutral self-examination and imply the idea of being different from others, standing out from the herd. Affluent and educated social milieus help develop this feeling among girls as well as boys, whereas in poor classes there is a fear of difference: conformity and being like others brings a sense of security. Asked if she felt different from the others, one girl exclaims in a frightened, astonished tone: "Different! Why?" In general, the answers of teenagers from poor social backgrounds are more laconic, seeming to reflect either a lack of ideas or the fear of expressing dangerous ones. This is due to the fact that these young people are not used to talking freely about themselves, without control, and discussing things in the family. One should not generalize, however, because there is no absolute rule; there are conditions, or a milieu, that do or do not encourage the development of an individual personality. People and families have their own characteristics.

The need for friendship arises from the change teenagers are going through; they invite boy or girl friends to share their solitude. Usually this friend is a close relative who is important in the teenager's life, an alter ego, as Aries writes [14]. Friendship means delicacy, loyalty or gentleness, and swings between ordinariness and enthusiasm, even obsession and possessiveness.

Adolescence is an age when friendship is vital, involving trust, shared secrets, being able to count on someone, solidarity, complicity and spontaneity, without ulterior motives or "tricks", as Abderrahmen (16, Tunisia) puts it. This implies a great investment; friendship is intimate, ideal. A friend is someone we confide in, sure that s/he will not use our secrets against us[15].

Generally, the friend is of the same sex, due to social acceptability or greater potential for complicity. But that reason is given in support of friendship with the opposite sex: girls say jealousy and rivalry can prevent a real friendship and that this problem does not exist in girl/boy friendships.

**(13)** Duby (F) and Aries (S.D. de). Histoire de la vie privée, Vol. 3 and 5. Paris, Seuil, 1985-1997.

**(14)** Op. cit.

**(15)** Telling secrets to a friend is closely related to the feeling that this friend can then count on us to help and support her/him. 87% feel that their friends need them. 'The passage to maturity', Op. cit.

which is not easy to have in a country such as Yemen for example. Similarly, the interviewees are unanimous in saying that friendship between a girl and a boy is more complicated and less frequent because of the habits, traditions and monitoring that exist in Arab societies, and that teenagers do not have the freedom to choose this. Sarra (16, Bahrain) wonders: "Why wouldn't I have the right to form a friendship with boys, especially when it is just friendship? But I realize that this friendship is not accepted and I wonder why."

As we climb the social ladder, interaction between the female and male worlds becomes more frequent, and the possibility of a friendship between the sexes more probable, especially in urban environments and culturally open families. On the other hand, underprivileged teenage girls, in particular those from rural milieus, are reserved and astonished when the question is put to them. Intimate friendship is either inexistent, or restricted to the same sex. For teenagers belonging to this milieu, going out means being strictly monitored. Religion plays a direct or indirect role in forming attitudes to friendship, but does not constitute the only, or the decisive, factor. Rafiq (18), who belongs to a politico-religious party in Lebanon, says he has many more girl than boy friends, but that the friendship does not go beyond the school premises.

True friends are by definition few. Teenagers distinguish between friends and schoolmates. Jihad (18, Tunisia) has three friends but confides in only one: "If there's more than one friend, friendship recedes and changes." In most cases, intimacy, i.e. confidence and the sharing of secrets, is a constant element in how teenagers define friendship. This places teenagers in front of choices and tests: are they mistaken in their choice of friend, and will s/he reveal their intimate secrets? Fathia (16, Tunisia) stopped telling her secrets to her sister because she told their mother. Friendship involves a modicum of freedom which helps adolescents escape the control of their parents; this is difficult in friendships between brothers and sisters or even between cousins.

On the other hand, a number of teenagers tell their mothers everything. Some tell other family members, like Nada (16, Lebanon) who shares her secrets with her first cousin because "people are pitiless". Caution is increasing; especially in a hostile environment, it is better to keep intimate secrets within the family or not reveal them at all. Some Egyptian teenagers tell their sisters their secrets, so as not to be betrayed. This is especially true of middle-class and poor teenagers; though teenage girls from well-off classes have a wider scope of freedom within the family, they find their female friends are more understanding. For the Egyptian teenagers, friendship is not linked to secrets but more to the sense of being at ease with friends, without this implying total trust. Mohamed (17) says: "I don't trust people easily. I had problems when I told secrets to a friend and realized afterwards that he'd revealed them. A secret should never leave the person it concerns." Abdallah (17) is careful: "One never knows what may happen."

How can caution and the need for a close friend be reconciled? How can the sense of security resulting from the relationship with parents, brothers and sisters be reconciled with the need to have a friendly relationship that escapes their control?

One of the strategies for solving such contradictions is to divide intimate life into different spheres, and change the subject of conversation according to the person. Talah (17, Lebanon) thinks "a friend is a person who gives us the feeling that he understands and assimilates what we say to him." She tells her family problems to her mother, her experiences and love affairs to her best friend, and the "things that upset her" to her first cousin. Teenagers also differentiate between types of secret to be shared. This strategy lasts until the ideal male or female friend is met: Dana (17, Lebanon) describes her as sincere and faithful, bound to her by an indestructible bond: " I never have the feeling she doesn't back me or loses patience with me. She never talks about me to other people and never feels my thinking is wrong. Whatever I do and say, I can always rely on her. Often, she risks being reproached because of me." Jihad (18, Tunisia) shares everything, even pocket money, with his cousin and friend. Sharing relates especially to leisure and pastimes. The family, school, and work environments (for working teenagers) are organized by adults and obey adult rules, so teenagers and their friends create a private, relatively free environment. However, in certain cases, this does not prevent disagreements or some overlapping between the world of friends and the worlds of family and school.

**(13)** Duby (F) and Aries (S.D. de). Histoire de la vie privée, Vol. 3 and 5. Paris, Seuil, 1985-1997.

**(14)** Op. cit.

**(15)** Telling secrets to a friend is closely related to the feeling that this friend can then count on us to help and support her/him. 87% feel that their friends need them. 'The passage to maturity', Op. cit.

## 3 - Centers of interest and leisure activities

Leisure activities play a significant part in teenagers' psychological development, and offer an opportunity for group work, a sense of responsibility and creativity. Spare time means their activities when they finish their school or job, or their household tasks. The essential difference between leisure and other activities is that the teenager usually chooses the first, and parents, teachers or supervisors the second. Parents can sometimes intervene in how their children's spare time is used.

Spare time activities include meetings with friends, sports, TV, music and other diversions. The duration and use of spare time depend on a number of variables (sex, social and economic condition, place of residence). The basic difference between girls and boys is that activities that take place outside the home and family are for boys rather than girls. The findings of the Egyptian Youth Survey show that 67% of boys have social activities and only 43% of girls. But activities related to the home and family are more significant for girls than boys: 79% of girls say they did a household task the day before the interview, but only 29% of boys[16].

Gender discrimination is a general feature of the Arab countries covered by the study, with variations in the percentages and nature of the activities. Two points should be made:

**- The first** is the relative character of what is and what is not allowed, especially for teenage girls. In some cases, they are virtually denied the right to go out: they may only go to certain places, in the company of family members. In more flexible cases, the banned places are listed and the time when the teenager must be back home fixed.

**- The second** is the tendency of parents to want to monitor the friends their children go out with and to tighten or relax this monitoring according to their attitude to the friends. For boys, the parental monitoring concerns more who the friends are, than when the boys come home. This often causes conflict between parents and teenagers. In choosing their friends they are choosing the place and type of the leisure activity and, in a very general way, the ideas, behaviour and values of the group of friends.

Surveys carried out in Morocco[17] revealed radical differences between girls and boys. While sports hold top place for boys, household tasks come first for girls. This is, to a large extent, common to all Arab countries. The places visited by teenage girls and teenage boys are different. Moroccan girls consider it possible to go to cafés, walk on the beach or listen to music. Amel (18): "We often go to the café with friends, walk by the sea or listen to music." She sees no difference between boys and girls, except as regards games rooms where girls do not go. Some respondents from urban milieus say they prefer to make friends with teenagers from a particular social class or the district where they live. For Imene (15) and Ikram (18), frequenting certain places exposes them to sexual harassment. This draws the line between places they can and cannot go.

The world of friends is significant in the lives of teenagers: they enjoy meeting and spending time together, having private conversations, sharing their concerns or smoking qat (unlike cigarettes or the narghileh, parents do not object to this). In Yemen, friends get together to smoke qat, smoke or walk. Girls have fewer chances to go to clubs or walk in the street, because few clubs are reserved for girls, and for fear of being harassed, or because so little time is left after the household tasks are done.

A feature of the Yemeni teenagers' answers is that their spare time is not planned. Choices are limited, and activity is usually spontaneous. Chaddad (16) says: "We do anything during our spare time. For example, my cousins and I smoke qat." Oussama (18) spends his time "in reading, sport or walking". Fares (15) spends time "outside with friends, going for drives in the car or playing billiards". Fella (15) mentions some girls' activities: "I go out with my mother or my friends and we go to the restaurant or the shops." She and her friends are interested in culture, fashion and conversation. Meeting friends and exchanging gossip and news are significant activities among teenagers.

In Algeria, girls organize to go to cafés or the cinema. Most say their parents keep a strict watch over them and must be told where they are going. They do not go out without permission and remain out until about 8 p.m. The same can be noted in other countries, with variations as to when they must be home, which depends on local conditions. Girls sometimes accept parental control without

**(16)** 'The passage to maturity'. Op. cit.

**(17)** Results taken from a field study on the use of time among teenagers in Casablanca carried out by the Population Studies and Research Center, Morocco. CERED. (2000), L'adolescence en question: Analyse des résultats de l'enquÍte sur les adolescents en milieu urbain.

complaint, seeing it as a sign of interest. Others are impatient with excessive monitoring. However, the teenagers' judgment of their own behaviour is relative. An emancipated girl can see herself as conservative because her behaviour is more conservative than that of her friend; another, from a conservative milieu, may see herself as free simply because she is allowed to pay a visit to a female friend, and because she compares herself to a schoolmate who was prevented from continuing her studies.

In Lebanon, Paul Valéry (18) spends his spare time at the snack bar with his friends or stays at home to watch TV. Rami (15) practices sports. Rafiq (18) visits his friends at their homes, meets them at the cafeteria or goes with them to the forest or hunting. Mustapha (17) is interested in cultural and social activities, like festivals; he also visits his friends or meets them at home or in public. This is common in villages and in the popular districts of the cities.

Lebanese girls spend most of their spare time at home. The kind of activity depends on social category. If the girl belongs to a modest family, more time is given to household tasks; if her family is well-to-do, the activities can be different. Nadine (16) paints when she stays at home and intends to specialize in this. Sarra (16) lives in a very small house and her mother does most of the chores. Sarra only has the right to go to the head office of an association concerned with girls in poor environments; this is why she resorts to writing. Talah (17) likes family reunions where members of the family chat and smoke the narghileh. Rafif (17) has no spare time because most of the time she stays at home to help her father with his typing.

All girls do the chores to varying degrees, but poor girls or those in popular rural milieus must do a larger share of such tasks. Their families view them as free labor. Zeïneb (18, Lebanon) talks about what she does at home: "I do what comes to my mind," (i.e. the ironing, which she likes, or the washing and tidying). Nada (16, Lebanon) says "I rest," implying that household tasks are tiring, and, for her, spare time means "real freedom" to rest. Sometimes sleep is an essential activity, as are telephone calls[18].

In Bahrain the dominant activity is shopping. Teenagers spend their spare time in the large shopping centers, where they meet friends and go to the cinema or a restaurant to get better acquainted. The study shows the increased frequentation of such centers, which have become an alternative to sporting clubs and popular cafés and attract young people to a place where they can spend time doing nothing. These centers increase the tendency to consume and overeat. This, plus the lack of exercise, leads to indolence and idleness and encourages teenagers to spend their time watching television or enjoying themselves outside the home.

In Tunisia, the same types of activity are found in urban and relatively affluent social milieus. Shopping centers in the capital and suburbs (stores, games rooms, restaurants and cafés) are favorite meeting places for teenagers. Groups of friends (boys or mixed) go to cafés, cafeterias and the cinema. Abderrahmen (16) belongs to a band of six classmates (4 boys and 2 girls) plus new friends met at a handball match; the group organize collective outings and when they do not have the necessary means meet and spend time together. When they have funds, they go to La Goulette (a Tunis suburb famous for its restaurants) or to the tourist town of Hammamet. Samir (16) and Wou' oud (15) say they go to the sea or the mountains, or spend time in cafeterias or parks. The options depend on the cash available. These outings, which take place according to a plan and a group decision, require that the friends go together or arrange to meet at a particular time. Sometimes the group prefer to remain in the district; Samir's band, made up of seven members, attend a dancing center run by a political party rather than the youth center "where there are only books".

The activities of teenage girls remain rather traditional and differ from those of boys. Public places are not always safe, especially in the suburbs. "It's not a place for a girl," says Najet (18, Tunisia), who is afraid of being bothered by boys there and prefers to go with her friend to the medina (old souk of Tunis) to shop "and not waste time". Shopping is a pleasant activity for girls: it enables them to both walk and buy what they need. Houyem (17, Tunisia) uses the library of a private school to meet her female friend; there teenagers meet and share views.

This type of place is an extension of private space; like home, it is safe. But to get there one must cross the public space, which can pose a problem. The area where one's home is may not be safe:

**(18)** During a debate in a summer camp in Lebanon with about 200 teenage girls and boys of between 15 and 19 two significant activities not previously mentioned emerged: sleep and phone calls. The telephone can keep teenagers busy for hours. Sleep expresses a kind of existential vacuum from which they apparently suffer, or is at least an escape from the real vacuum left by the absence of supervisory institutions.

Najeh (16, Tunisia) crosses it as quickly as possible, with great caution, to avoid being harassed by the boys there. The kind of district where they live sometimes prevents teenagers making friends there; they try to make friends away from where they live. Thus friendship networks within a district are often separate from other, school-based, networks.

Most of the Egyptian teenage girls in the study say they belong to groups of friends of the same age. The group varies according to social category. In the poor classes and certain middle-class categories, particularly those living in popular areas, the groups are related to the school, family or district. Groups of affluent teenagers have a composition that varies according to place. Saloua (16) explains that "each place has its own band of friends; there is initially the band at the school and then the band at the club". Teenage girls see the simple fact of meeting friends as an object in itself, even if they do not do anything special. Friends meet almost every day, to be together. Country girls spend time at friends' or close relatives' or sometimes walk together. On festivals, they take a boat on the Nile. Groups of affluent friends have activities that involve girls and boys, unlike those from the middle class or the poor.

Cafés and the cinema are places where teenagers meet. By and large, boys have no problem going out if it does not stop them doing their homework. They dislike meeting at home because of the presence of women. Imed (17, Egypt) says: "We usually meet in the home of one of us, somebody like me who doesn't have a sister, or at a café or some other place and we decide what we'll do. Sometimes we stay at the café to play dominoes or backgammon."

## A - The cinema

The cinema is expensive, requiring time and available only in capitals and big cities. Before the era of TV, the cinema was a typical feature of urban life and a medium of entertainment and culture. It required a lifestyle and cultural climate that no longer exist. But it still attracts movie buffs. Most urban teenagers in Lebanon, like Tala (17) and Nadine (16), or those who belong to a politicized cultural and social milieu, like Achraf (18) and Paul Valéry (18), go to the cinema. Da,d (17) and Dana (17) have the necessary psychological and intellectual maturity but do not go to the cinema because they live in a village.

In the Egyptian Youth Survey, activities that cost money (going to the cinema or social clubs) are less frequent. Boys of between 16 and 19 mention the cinema and social clubs in 8% of cases (against 1% for girls)[19], leading us to conclude that the drop in cinema attendance is due to its being expensive and available only in cities. According to the female respondents in the Egyptian field study, the cinema ranks second after TV in the boys' recreational activities, and first in those of the girls. This can be explained by the nature of the sample and the existence of a relatively old cinematographic tradition in Egypt, especially in the large cities.

There are two ways of going to the cinema. The first associates culture and artistic pleasure and is the result of a deliberate choice to see a particular film, participating in a collective ritual in which an analogy between the cinema and the theatre appears. One can watch a film alone or with a friend with the same tastes. This was the conception of film enthusiasts before the TV era. The second involves passing the time and amusing oneself with a group of friends, watching a film chosen at random regardless of its artistic value. The film may be chosen under the influence of advertising or out of admiration for some actor or for some special effects. In this case, going to the cinema alone is out of the question; the rule is to go there with a group of friends often before or after some other activity. The cinema is thus closer to TV.

In Lebanon, in the past, movie theaters were independent, bore their own names and were in streets bordered with cafés and terraces. Today the movie theaters of Beirut are in shopping centers and hotels; they stand next to each other, are numbered and are next to cafés and games rooms. Teenagers go here rather than to old-style movie theaters, reserved for an elite with cultural and political concerns. Most people in the capitals and big towns go to the second type of theater and are influenced by a consumer and leisure culture, as in Lebanon and Bahrain, where cinema-going is an integral part of visiting shopping centers. This activity is minimal in Morocco and Algeria. In Yemen, the cinema was not mentioned as a leisure activity.

**(19)** 'The passage to maturity', Op. cit.

## B - Television

Television is one of the most widespread pastimes in the world. According to estimates, an American citizen spends an average six hours and a half a day in front of the screen. An opinion poll covering 10,000 young Tunisians of between 15 and 29 indicates that 75% of them watch TV; 33.3% give it between one and three hours a day[20].

**Encadré 2.17**

### Teenagers and television: Films and serials above all

The relationship between Arab children and TV was examined in a rare study covering 19 Arab countries for the period 1960-2000, based on an analysis of 92 research works and field studies. One of the studies, done in 1994 on a sample of 600 youngsters, was an opinion poll on young viewers of between 12 and 18. It concluded that 98.5 % of those sampled watched TV, and that 72.3% were regular viewers. Children's programms ranked first, followed by recreational, cultural, sports and religious programs. Six other studies dealt with the relationship of teenagers (15-18) and TV, all done in Egypt in the 1990s and based on samples of between 300 and 500 teenage girls and boys. Three of the studies focused on urban teenagers, 2 on teenagers generally, and one on rural teenagers. All showed that the average viewer watches TV for over three hours a day. The average viewer in the sample of teenagers living outside Cairo watches longer than this, since in this milieu TV offers both entertainment and information. Demographic variables such as sex, education and socio-economic level have no effect on the number of hours spent watching TV. Films and serials come first for teenagers. 58% of them watch religious programs, 55% being especially interested in the exegesis of Koranic verses. [21]

Despite the lack of comprehensive Arab data for comparison, the surveys and field studies done in several Arab countries, as well as the intensive use of TV sets and receivers, indicate that television has an important place in the concerns of the Arab citizen. Since the Second World War, it has become the most significant pastime in the world, classed immediately after sleep and work; this also applies to the Arab countries.

In all the Arab countries covered by the field study, it is an essential activity (if it can be seen as an activity, being a passive occupation involving absolutely no action or communication with others). The interviews showed that girls watch TV more than boys, since they spend more time at home. Similarly, it is more common among teenagers who have no other activities or pastimes. Youngsters watch TV more on their days off or when it does not stop them doing their homework. Generally parents do not ban TV if it has no adverse effect on schoolwork.

Yemeni teenagers say they watch TV a lot; it is their favorite pastime. Radio ranks second, followed by newspapers and magazines. Many teenage girls watch Arab films, especially old films, as well as foreign films, serials and cartoons, but not the news or football.

In the Egyptian sample, a few girls watch the news regularly, like Randa (16), who follows "the news and sometimes the debates because they contain daring opinions and give the opportunity to express oneself". The news is followed more regularly when there are important events, like the Palestinian Intifadha: "We watched television on the days of the Intifadha; otherwise, we watch only films and serials," says Ilhem (17). The situation is similar in the other countries; currently the news is seen as tedious. Egyptian teenagers prefer entertaining, attractive and relatively little-controlled programs, which they find in foreign films. Amir (15): "I don't watch Egyptian films, but foreign films. No cuts are made to them and nobody imposes what you see and what you don't." Marwa (18, Algeria) likes to watch TV, especially foreign programs, because she says they make it possible to escape from reality.

**(20)** Extensive Consultation of Young People on 21st Century Tunisia: Tunisia listens to her young people, Ministry for Youth, Childhood and Sports - 2000.

**(21)** The relation between Arab children and television: analytical study of the field research carried out on Arab children from 1960 to 2000, Dr. Leila Abdelmajid, Faculty of Information, University of Cairo- Study presented at the Arab conference on radio, television and the child, Tunis 2002.

Generally, TV offers entertainment and helps pass the time or follow the news at times of crisis. Mention was often made of comic serials, adventures, films, contests, music and TV news. Educational or scientific programs and documentaries are seldom mentioned.

One notices an interest in Arab serials, particularly Egyptian and Syrian, which have wide audiences, plus dubbed serials, especially Mexican. This is common throughout the Arab world for girls as well as boys. Narjes (16, Morocco), illiterate, spends hours watching such serials. They enable her to acquire a great facility of expression and to replace the outside activities she knows are impossible, since she spends most of the day at home. Wasma (17, Yemen) follows the serials regularly despite her criticism of some of them.

In Lebanon, teenagers adopt a defensive stance, saying they do not watch such programs much. Tala (17) says she acquired the habit of watching when she spent a year with her family in a Gulf country; she watched them to be occupied. Serials remind her of books, but she prefers the former "because one feels attached to something and takes part in it". She feels the same when she reads a novel: "I wait all day long to know what happened." It is as if the lives of the heroes in the serials proceed simultaneously with those of the viewers, who wait for the right time to join them. The serials are very like the programs of Real TV broadcast live, which show events as they happen in real time, and which have expanded recently. Tala spends a lot of time watching films. The reason she gives for liking Mexican serials is that given by Line (17) for her lack of interest in them. Line watches TV and reads novels, but dislikes serials that make her wait for the next part; she cannot stand the fact that the producer or director controls the situation. With a book, it is she who sets the pace of her participation in this world and decides when to enter and when to leave it.

Watching serials is seen in Lebanon as typical of dreamy teenage girls who do not go out much. But some teenagers are not much interested in TV, like Achraf (18), who no longer watches programs, including the news. Rafiq (18) watches the news and a few programs. Most teenagers watch TV especially on holiday, generally preferring films, sports, games programs, contests, music and talk shows (very widespread in Lebanon, some of which deal with what the public considers very provocative issues).

**Box 18.2**

## Recreational activities to fight delinquency

There is a great difference between the sexes. Boys have everything they want whereas girls must do the household tasks and not go out. There should not be this kind of discrimination between children. But some believe in male superiority. The girl is conscious of and resents this discrimination. Her brother sits there doing nothing and she is asked to serve him. She brings him what he wants, washes his clothes and prepares his meals. This is why the young Moroccan is dependent; he is encouraged in this by his parents, who give him money to buy cigarettes and alcohol. He studies without feeling he must achieve something quickly; he goes on studying until the age of 30 under the responsibility of his parents. Sometimes he marries after an error of sexual intercourse, and his family must be responsible for him as well as his wife and child. Yet the teenage boy starts to free himself from his family as of the age of 16.

Education starts with the father's behaviour at home, particularly his way of treating his wife. Violence should not occur in the relations between spouses, especially in front of the children. When they disagree, parents must solve their problem between them. When the image of the father is not good, for example when he is an alcoholic, this has a very negative effect on the teenage girls and boys, because in general the father is the person of whom one is most proud.

**Box 18.2**

At the beginning of independence, there were popular education programs aimed at young people. Our association pursues this policy. We started to act within the context of programs to eradicate illiteracy, raise awareness, educate, vaccinate and offer health education. When we talk of popular culture, we do not mean to take the place of the school. Teaching programs in Morocco do not have a strong educational content; the pupils in the schools learn to read, write and count, but nobody inculcates values in them.

Education is not what it used to be. In the past, the father, grandmother, brother and teacher educated the child in different directions. Teenagers were torn between contradictory directives and sometimes confronted with a gap between words and deeds. Fathers who smoke forbade them to smoke; what the pupil heard at school was not done in the street. It is not surprising that this affects their balance.

Teenagers like entertainment because it releases them from the pressures of family and school. They see problems in the family; fathers complain about the high cost of living and the water and electricity bills. In the school, classes are packed and there are teaching problems, while in society there are economic and demographic problems. So teenagers try to escape through entertainment; sport is entertainment, so is music, especially loud music of the raÔ or rock'n'roll type. But it is rare to see young people involved in the theatre. The reason is that when freedom is limited, the arts cannot thrive. Art can develop only in countries that are developed at the economic and civilizational level. Young people cannot find places that enable them to use all their potential. When a new city is built, buildings and roads are built; there are neither parks, nor theatres, nor youth clubs. Even the state and the local authorities do not plan anything for the young people. Their only concern is to build buildings, sell them and make money. This is work that seeks only profitability; why do they build nothing for the young people? We know that youth clubs are very important and very useful institutions for the residents of a district. They represent an effective means of preventing delinquency. Young people find there rooms fitted with technical equipment, a theatre room, a showroom, a music room and a library. There should be a youth club for every 50,000 people, fully equipped with rooms, playgrounds and parks. But this is not the case, so the young revolt and form gangs because they cannot find anything to do with their spare time and cannot use their potential. This is the responsibility of the state and the local authorities. These youth clubs, when they exist, should not be limited to sports and must cover also various artistic fields.

**A youth club director in Morocco**

## C - Computers and internet

Computers play a larger part in the lives of teenagers than the cinema. But there are significant differences between Arab countries here, mainly due to the availability of financial resources. Internet is very common in Bahrain, much less so in Yemen. As for the classification in other countries, it corresponds to their economic resources and degree of openness. There are also internal disparities due to social standing.

**Box 19.2**

### Modern means of communication in the Gulf countries

■ There are 2.5 computer users per computer in the Gulf countries, the highest rate in the Arab region
■ 29.9% of the total population of the United Arab Emirates, followed by Bahrain with 18.7 %, are on the internet
■ A home in the Emirates contains on average 3-4 TV sets and videos. 85% of families have a PC and a dish antenna, and 80% are on the internet.

**Source:** Review of the Union of Arab Radios, n∞ 1. ASBU, 2002.

Most of the teenagers in the Lebanese sample are on the computer or are being trained in how to use it. Only teenagers in the poor suburbs or who have left school, like Hiba (16) and Nada (16), or who live in the poor rural areas and who have left school, like ZeÔneb (18) and Amira (15), are exceptions. They do not use, and perhaps never will, modern technology. Some do not yet know the computer but intend to discover it soon, like Mustapha (17), Rafiq (18), Nesrine (17) and Hana (15). Achraf (18) does not like or use computers, even though he has one, or the internet; he likes e-mail and chats with his friends to enjoy himself and to make new acquaintances and discoveries. Rafif (17) uses the computer for word processing and also uses e-mail, chatting, she says, to enrich her personality. But she does not like using the internet to get information, and thinks "chatting brings us together with other people and at the same time separates us from them". Raya (18) uses computers for e-mail and the internet; she thinks chatting is stupid and meaningless: "It's an ugly way of making an acquaintance."

Internet is fairly widespread in Egypt. A third of the respondents of both sexes have computers they use for e-communication. Many go to cyber cafés. Some have never used it. Internet offers a way of talking to friends, chatting and getting information. Boys use computers more than girls. Knowing how to use it depends on whether there is one at home and the family's wealth.

In Bahrain, few people are unable to use one. Some teenagers avoid sex sites "because it's a sin". Most use internet, visiting sites to satisfy their sexual curiosity and to learn about sex. Jassem (18) says: "I use the computer every day. I use internet in my studies to get a vast amount of knowledge; I find it more important than books. I have friends I chat with and visit several sites. As regards sex sites, everyone who has access to internet is interested in them at first, but now they don't interest me much." Sami (15) says: "The computer is my idol; I chat under a false name." Noura (15) sometimes uses a computer but not to chat; "one finds in it indecent things". She uses it for information.

In Morocco, only certain educated groups use internet and computers. In Yemen, teenagers are interested in computers and internet as an important tool for training and communication that facilitates studies and printing. One notes certain reservations about or even a rejection of certain uses, particularly harassment/immoral sites, though those who express such reservations sometimes say they visit these sites and chat with people of the opposite sex. Though many wish to use it, only to a well-off minority in fact do. Internet enables them to satisfy cognitive and sexual curiosity and contact people of both sexes in a fairly simple way, free from parental or societal control. (This is all the more true as monitoring is particularly severe in Yemen.)

In Tunisia, the use of internet and computers is a relative success, though girls are less interested than boys. Jihad (18) praises, but does not use, "this great technology"; Hanine (17) and Farida (17) think it will help their studies, but otherwise is not useful. Farida tried chatting in public centers but disliked it: "I prefer direct communication to electronic communication." Their responses reveal various uses of this technology: when censorship is strict, it is used as a means of information; when the ban on sex is strong, it can be a source of information on sex via obscene sites, thus raising moral problems in conservative societies; when contact between the sexes is difficult, it becomes possible to make contact; when it is part of the curriculum, its use concerns the acquisition of knowledge and research.

## D - Sports

Sports are related to social class: the higher the class, the more sport is played. We do not mean sport as Hiba (16, Lebanon) practices it - moving her feet while lying down, or Samira (15, Lebanon) who has sport one hour a week at school. Usually, the idea of sport is more common than the practice. This may be due to the lack of sports facilities near home, especially in the countryside: Dina (15, Lebanon) says: "If there was a club, I'd have been a member." It may be due to the high cost of membership of clubs when they exist (in cities, for example). Thus one can explain the disparity between the expressed desire for sport and the actual practice.

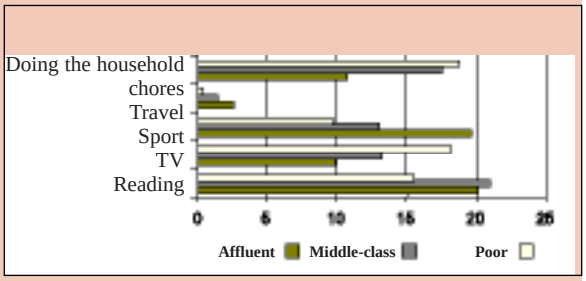
**Encadré 20.2**

## Timetable in Morocco
### Sport is the most male and most class-related pastime

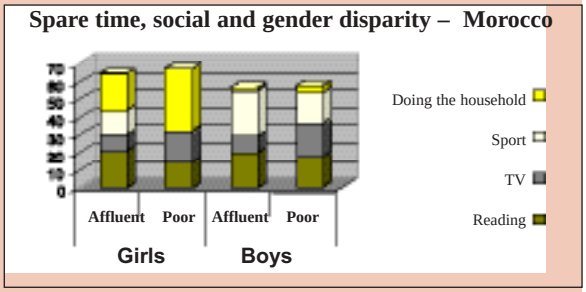
National studies by the Population Studies and Research Center in Morocco (CERED) showed the existence of social gender disparity as regards leisure. Richer children practice sports and travel; poorer children watch TV and do the household chores. Middle-class children seem to be more interested in reading than those from affluent or poorer classes.

When we take into consideration type and social group, we seee that interest in sports is almost non-existent for poor girls, who do many of the household tasks. Boys from well-off families do a lot of sport and few chores. The gender gap is smaller for reading, but while middle-class boys spend more time reading than affluent boys (22.8% against 6.20%), middle-class girls read less than affluent ones (19% against 6.20%). The reason is the heavier household burden for middle-class girls than for middle-class boys.

**Social disparity as regards time use – Morocco**




**Spare time, social and gender disparity – Morocco**




In Yemen, boys indulge more than girls in social and sports activity. In Bahrain, despite the diversity of sports available in all public and private schools and sports clubs, teenagers only do the sports they practice at school, even if they say they want to practice others. One reason for this is the nature of (consumer) society, where people let themselves go, watch TV or have fun outside. Bahraini teenagers mention walking, jogging, football, weightlifting and volleyball. Girls mention jogging, tennis, table tennis (all practiced at school). There are some exceptions, like Yasmine (15) who practices sport regularly in her grandmother's house.

Few Algerian girls do sport. In Morocco, interest in sports is greater, with gender differences, as the priority list of pastimes indicates[22].

| Girls | Boys |
|---|---|
| 1. Household chores | 1. Sport |
| 2. Reading | 2. Reading |
| 3. TV | 3. TV |
| 4. Sport | 4. Paid work |

In Morocco, sport is regularly practiced and has particular importance, especially for boys. Girls express a wish to do sport, but this is not always possible due to lack of means. The growing interest may be explained by the titles won by Moroccan sportswomen at international competitions. In general, the girls say more about what they would like to do than what they actually do. Some regret being unable to practice their favorite sport and express frustration when they compare themselves with girls from higher social classes. Khadija (18) would have liked to swim, and simply expresses her regret that she cannot.

**(22)** Data taken from the tables published by the CERED, Morocco, 2000.

In Egypt, half the girls say they do not play any games because they have "neither the time nor the place for it". Some play basketball or handball, for example, at school. They say they walk, "before nightfall, of course". Yara (15) does karate: "Unlike what is thought, it's a non-violent sport. It does teach self-defense, but it also teaches self-control." What is striking is that richer girls who are all members of private sports clubs do not do sport, except for a few rare cases where they do aerobics or dance in a specialized club (not their own sports club). And girls without the opportunity the clubs offer complain that there is nowhere to do sport.

Sports are more popular among Egyptian boys, the most popular being football. Members of private clubs also fence, play volleyball and do judo. Weightlifting, chosen by Bassam (16), is common in the popular districts. Sport is never presented as an essential activity in life and cannot be compared with meetings where one chats and exchanges news with friends.

## E—Reading

Gutenberg's invention of the printing press helped create the practice of private reading which has been so important in changing the psychological structure of modern man. Everyone can have his/her own idea of the world and gain experimental and personal knowledge, free from the intermediaries of the past or group control.[23] Written culture enables individuals to internalize what they read, form personal opinions and broaden horizons. It moves away from the stereotypes of (oral-based) traditional society, and helps form the individual personality and sharpen the critical sense. It is a source of extraordinary power, as Manguel says:[24] "As soon as I could connect the black signs to each other and transform them into living realities, I became powerful. I could read. It was like suddenly discovering a sixth sense." Reading is an extension of, and an additional tool for, action. Astronomers read the sky; hunters and naturalists read animal tracks; police inspectors read the traces of crime; card players read the faces of partners; spectators read the movements of dancers. All life consists of reading and decoding new or old signs. Reading is a source of freedom (this is why there is a fear of books and reading and why censorship was imposed on books in the Middle Ages). Instead of declining with the development of the media[25], reading is reviving in some societies, including Arab ones.

In the interviews, reading seems to be the least common activity of the present generation. In the answers of Tunisian teenagers, reading is almost absent. Books no longer seem valuable in themselves. Reading is not only rare, but has to serve a purpose. Often, youngsters only read magazines, periodicals and romantic picture stories. In Lebanon, we met only one voracious reader, Line (17), who has a vast culture, self-confidence and sense of maturity. She escapes the tough world where she lives for the vast space of reading, which constitutes her principal activity during the summer holidays. Tala (17) went through a period of intense reading; she read all the collection by Pierre Revel. Now, she does not read at the same rate.

Certain readings form part of the school syllabus, like the writings of Gibran Khalil Gibran and Mikhail Nu'ayma. Some teenagers prefer scientific books, like Rani (16) who has from childhood read scientific encyclopedias but prefers to watch film adaptations of novels on TV. Some read novels, especially detective stories, to escape homework, like Hana (15). Sometimes reading seems to be elitist, and the rate of reading undoubtedly increases with social standing. Books, being expensive, are not available to the poor.

In Morocco, reading comes second, after household tasks for girls and sport for boys. The time spent reading compared to other activities varies between 15% (poor families) and 21% (middle-class and affluent families); the rate is practically the same for girls and boys, whereas the time devoted to household tasks is 20.6% for richer girls and 34.6% for poorer ones.

In Yemen, unlike in other countries covered by the study, one notes among the young an emergence of poetry reading. Respondents talk of a wish to read poetry in their spare time. Rahiq (18) says: "I like to read books in English to improve my level in this language. I also like to read poetry, for example Majnoun LeÔla. As for newspapers and magazines, I read them for a summary of the news." There is also the reading of variety magazines and browsing through the newspapers. Reading of newspapers increases with age and is accompanied by an increased interest in political news.

**(23)** See Aries, introduction to Volume 3 of the History of private life, op. cit.

**(24)** Alberto Manguel, History of reading.

**(25)** Although audio-visual media are the most common and circulate sometimes controversial information, protest generally takes the form of information campaigns and declarations of position, but is not accompanied by concrete steps, because of incapacity or lack of will. On the other hand, books, in particular critical or serious books, are severely censored and treated as a danger threatening the very essence of social relations. Advocates of censorship do not seem to see the mass media as so dangerous, no doubt because these popularize both contestable behaviour and also consumerism and a certain surface culture, both of which seem desirable.

In the Bahraini sample, interest in literary and other books is variable. Girls, and some teenage boys, like romantic novels and poetry. In some cases, the presence of foreign literature can be observed. Jassem (18) likes to read "novels, history books, detective novels and foreign rather than Arabic literature". Hanene (18) reads Russian, French and Arabic literary novels. Fawzi reads literature, novels and poetry by Qassem Haddad, Amine Salah, Fawzia Essendi, Selim Baraket and Ibrahim Al-Kouni, and in foreign literature, Marquez. Samia likes to read "the news in brief, politics, and the horoscope."

The field study showed that Egyptian girls from affluent, cultivated families read widely in imitation of the surrounding models and ideals. Sometimes, family problems can be a factor that encourages reading, making it possible to flee reality. Sally (16) prefers books to newspapers: "books create a different world, but newspapers bring me back to the world we live in." Half the Egyptian respondents read novels and scientific and religious books. Some, like Baha, prefer magazines and newspapers: "books are very long, whereas one can read short stories in magazines." Speed is sought in everything: eating, obtaining data and information, etc. and this undoubtedly explains the success of television and radio compared to books.

## E—Music

Unlike reading, music is a favorite pastime of teenagers in all the countries covered by the study. Listening to music cuts across social class and area and involves both sexes equally. Difference in taste and preference for one type of music rather than another are matters of individual concern. Certain general tendencies can be seen, some corresponding to stereotypes and others opposed to them. The mass media, video clips, radio songs, song festivals, contests and amateur programs help popularize stereotypes via a diversity of audio equipment (radio, television, tape recorders and records).

Mention was often made of rai, techno and rock music, and of certain stars of Arab song like Iheb Tawfiq and Kadhem Al-Saher, particularly in the Tunisian talks. In general, teenagers do not offer clear explanations for their preferences, except for Souheila (16, Egypt), and Farida (17) and Jihad (18) from Tunisia, who say they appreciate fine lyrics, elaborate rhythms and original compositions. Usually it is a question of following the dominant trend, but there is constant interest in classical oriental singers like Oum Kalthoum and Abdelhalim Hafedh.

Music can become an obsession. Rym (15, Lebanon) wants to live alone to be able to listen to music without being disturbed by her family: "I like to listen to music with the volume up, but they ask me to turn it down. I listen to music all the time, even when I sleep. They say: "You were asleep, how could you realize that we stopped the music?" Actually, I'm awake and asleep at the same time. I want to have music around me day and night." She is afraid she will not be able to listen to music once married. In Lebanon, the tastes of teenagers swing between oriental and western music. Sentimental songs are popular, the most often mentioned being those of Hani Chaker, Iheb Tawfiq and Najwa Karam. Classical Arabic songs like those of Oum Kalthoum, Abdelwahab, Abdelhalim Hafedh or FeÔrouz are always in demand and in vogue. Tala (17, Lebanon) likes to listen to Oum Kalthoum, whose voice accompanies all their intimate family gatherings, but also likes the Spanish singer Julio Iglesias, for "to each atmosphere corresponds a music". Da,d (17, Lebanon) plays the flute and listens to "old songs" and classical music, citing Feirouz and Abdelwahab; she knows that her tastes differ from those of her friends. Rani (16, Lebanon) likes all kinds of music and says the computer has given him "an enormous musical collection". He also benefits from his father's collection of music, which includes some rare songs and records.

Most Egyptian teenagers listen to music, especially Abdelhalim Hafedh, Oum Kalthoum, Najet Essaghira, 'Amr Diab, Marcel Khalifa and Sheik Imam, and all kinds of western songs. In Bahrain, one notes an interest in music, with a preference for Arab or foreign songs. Musical preference can implicitly express political or intellectual inclinations or cultural choices. Many like soft classical music. Fawzi (18) listens to western music and jazz.

In Algeria, most teenage girls listen to music alone or in groups. In Morocco some girls like popular music and prefer to listen alone. In Yemen, listening is not an activity in itself, because it is accompanied by dance and songs; music primarily means "listening to songs".

Generally speaking, instrumental music is less popular than songs, revealing the dominant musical culture, or more exactly the musical taste. Music without lyrics is closer to a complex mature culture than song in all its forms (melodic, popular or rhythmic). The predominance of song over instrumental music is like that of newspaper culture over the reading of serious works, that of TV over the theatre and the cinema, and that of the visual over the written.

## F- Associations and clubs

A huge lack was observed of facilities where teenagers could be supervised and offered what is necessary to pass their time in useful activities, as indicated by specialists, teachers and the teenagers themselves. The positive role of such facilities was mentioned in many encounters in Lebanon, Morocco and Egypt. But the teenagers do not go very deep in their criticism of the existing facilities and are not always interested in them. Narjes (16, Morocco) has no interest at all in such (partially existing) facilities because she does not have the education or cultural background to believe she can benefit from them. Family associations were referred to as infrastructure that need developing. Teenagers in Lebanon and Morocco assess the support given to schools by such associations, which help teenagers develop their social, intellectual and professional capacities, as is the case for Sarra (16, Lebanon), or which are active in eradicating illiteracy, as is the case for Hend (17, Morocco), or which help overcome family and psychological difficulties. The existence of a club near home can be a useful, safe solution to the problem of spare time, as Nahla (15, Egypt) says. Narjes and Rani (16, Lebanon) were scouts and went to camps, which play a positive role in forming the teenage personality, according to Paul Valéry (18) and Dina (15) from Lebanon and Fatma (17, Morocco).

These associations provide girls, particularly their members, with a true opening onto the outside world: meetings with boys, excursions, sports and computers. They also have an important role in raising awareness of health and social problems (AIDS, drugs) and preventing delinquency. They offer solutions to people with family problems, like Fattouma (16, Morocco), who likes being called “my daughter” there. All this helps develop the personality, and enhances the ability to communicate with others during this stage of adolescent life.

In Morocco, youth clubs are seen as a suitable response to cultural needs and for the use of spare time. But most teenagers complain that there are too few, and say that even when they do exist, they are unable to fill all the cultural and cognitive gaps. These cultural and sports facilities are needed by teenagers, whose main activity is “wandering round in circles” at home, doing the household tasks, watching TV or passing the time with friends and close relations.

The same problem exists in Egypt. Most teenagers think there are too few recreational facilities and youth clubs, and that these are limited to some districts in the cities, not the countryside (in Egypt and in all Arab countries). Access is not possible for all, because of the cost. All the respondents think such centers could solve many of their problems and break them of bad habits such as idleness or smoking cigarettes or qat (in Yemen). Such centers can offer training in data processing, film clubs or video clubs, opening onto the world and making new friends.

An increase in the number of youth clubs and sports, cultural and artistic facilities, and placing them in sufficient numbers near where teenagers live, is a recommendation, a demand, often made by teenagers and the specialists and experts consulted in the context of this Report.

## General conclusions

Can we conclude that there are consistent behaviour patterns displayed by Arab teenagers that would allow us to say there is/are a/several teenage culture/s in the sense of recurrent models?

It would be perhaps premature to do so. The other chapters in this Report note a lack of uniformity in self-expression and in choices, practices and concepts. This is why the very idea of a model should be treated with caution and relativism. This also applies to behaviour; in this case the possibility of resemblance is greater, since behaviour does not require internal coherence. It is a field that largely relates to external manifestations, since the resemblances at the level of appearance and practice do not preclude differences in opinion and content.

Additionally, the field of behaviour is more influenced by globalized means of information and the patterns they convey, enabling them to be generalized. This trend is reinforced by the appearance/reality duality that exists in Arab societies, and the importance they attach to visible behaviour conforming to dominant practice, whether new or old. This helps create patterns, tastes and behaviour that are often similar, but can be multiple, because of the multiplicity of influences and milieus. But one does not note the forming of cultures that are specific to teenagers (unless at an embryonic stage only).

Samir (16, Tunisia) can be taken as a model of globalized-influenced stereotyped behaviour. He likes music, travel, data processing and modern techniques. He watches a lot of satellite TV and sometimes rents a video for an American adventure film. He does not go to the cinema, preferring to watch TV at home. He dislikes oriental music, or raÔ, seeing it as "popular". He follows the latest fad in western music and listens to techno, house, hard rock and hip-hop. He makes a point of being up-to-date; few people share his musical taste. He loves data processing and computers, using internet and going where he can find it. He blames his parents for not taking out a home subscription to internet. He admires the Japanese as being the most advanced in electronics and information science. He is not at all interested in literature and thinks reading old-fashioned. He does not like traditional cuisine, preferring fast food (pizza, crepes and sandwiches). He likes beautiful branded sportswear and thinks it represents modern elegance.

Zeineb (18, Lebanon) represents the opposite model. She is a poor villager, married by her parents at fourteen. She is still trying to complete her divorce papers after a marriage that lasted two years and ended in failure. She left school early because of her marriage. She wears modest clothes and the hijab and knows practically nothing about fashion. For her the purchase of a new piece of clothing is a significant event generally associated with the Eid (feast). She likes sad Arab songs and Arabic literature, particularly the writings of Gibran Khalil Gibran, but does not have the means to satisfy her desires. ZeÔneb classes housework according to whether she likes the task, like ironing, or not. When she has some spare time, she watches television, especially Arab serials. The dishes that she prefers, if one can speak of preference, are popular dishes, the only ones available in a poor rural milieu.

These two models and the comparison between them raise several complex questions. In studying adolescence in our societies, have we not ourselves fallen into the trap of projections and prejudices, as if searching for a preconceived model? Which of the two above models is most common in Arab societies? Why is research on adolescence a search for a model like that of Samir, whereas ZeÔneb, married, seems to be excluded from the definition of adolescence? Does marriage involve exclusion, which would imply the existence of an exact definition of adolescence which leaves out age, maturity, intellectual and emotional development and true autonomy, factors that do not automatically come with marriage? Do obedience, traditional or conservative behaviour exclude people with these attributes from adolescence, which would be associated with revolt, refusal, and the expression of some kind of particularity, individualism and conflict of generations? Does the relationship between the definition of adolescence and the date of its emergence (i.e. as a historical phenomenon related to modernity) transform research on this subject into research on the manifestations of a certain modernity in a society which, in fact, has not yet embraced it?

Part Two:

# Field study

Chapter Six

# Attitudes and values:

## A yearning for justice... and a confusion about gender equality

# Attitudes and values

## Introduction

This chapter investigates the concepts developed by adolescents as they interact with society and the world, and their attitudes to public affairs and current world developments and values. Like the previous chapters, it uses a complex methodology to present teenagers' attitudes and views as precisely as possible, and make a preliminary analysis. It aims at uncovering contact points and interaction (integration/rejection) with the prevailing values in local and other societies. It also aims to offer a complete picture of adolescents as regards general values. It identifies similarities and differences for the various variables, uncovering the degree of internal consistency between teenagers' behaviour and attitudes and their attitudes towards the private and public spheres.

**The material has been assembled under four basic themes:**

- Theme one deals with attitudes towards women and gender social roles: views about women's current condition, attitudes towards gender discrimination and equality, attitudes towards European-style free relations, and attitudes towards the veil.

- Theme two addresses attitudes to religion and its importance in the life of adolescents and society.

- Theme three concerns attitudes to politics and public affairs. It includes the definition of power by adolescents of both sexes and attitudes to power, political action and participation in social action, plus attitudes to war and 9/11.

- Theme four contains additional issues related to the definition of success and happiness by adolescents, the role of money in life, and attitudes to travel and so on.

### 1. Women's condition and gender social roles

The gender social roles issue appears throughout the present Report, being a main concern of the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research and the series of reports on Arab women's development. Previous chapters monitored discriminatory and egalitarian behaviour within the family, at school and among adolescents. This chapter deals with the issue from a conceptual angle, going beyond the immediate adolescent environment to address their views on society and the world, now and in the future. It addresses values, beliefs and ideas more than behaviour, practices and the specific conditions and restricted environment of teenagers.

### A. Masculinity and femininity

Gender differentiation on the basis of social roles is not obvious. One can be surprised at the meaning of the gender differentiation issue (identifying differences and specificities). Sometimes it refers to biological or external appearance, or prevailing views on behavioural and affective difference. This indicates that the concept of gender as based on social roles (and as a historical socio-cultural product) is of limited value in that biological/behavioural gender differentiation still exists. This should not imply that gender elements are absent, albeit in a preliminary form that has not yet crystallised into a coherent, clearly defined concept.

In the Egyptian interviews, many girls do not understand what is meant by gender difference. For them a woman is a woman and a man a man, with a clear biological distinction that relates to the social role. Fatma (15): "Boys will become men and girls women. Women get pregnant, bear and look after children. Men work and spend money on the family." Nahla (15) differentiates on the basis of external

features that mirror the prevailing social/cultural association of women with beauty and politeness, and men with roughness and manliness (a synonym of power): “A boy’s appearance is not as important as a girl’s. The boy has to protect the girl a bit. He must be brave, courageous and virile. But I know many boys who are not like that at all, but they’re not boys, I mean not men. This is not a problem for girls. Perhaps there shouldn’t be a difference, but there is.” Farouk (18) agrees: “A man is a male who is responsible and cares for those around him and helps his friends. A woman is affectionate and pampers. This shouldn’t mean a girl can’t be virile, but she must be good-tempered and beautiful.” Baher (16) mentions protection: “Men are in theory stronger and more able to withstanding difficulties. Women are supposed to be protected by men, but that’s not always true.”

In the Yemeni interviews, the biological/behavioural classification is predominant; strength is seen as a male, and weakness and affection as female, traits. Adolescents of both sexes share this view. Housem (18) says men are boorish and women sensitive, weak and affectionate. Raouen (15) thinks “women are weaker than men and cannot replace them.” Waad (17) says “women are naturally very affectionate whereas men are not.” Thus, there is agreement that domestic responsibility is for women and work and gain for men. If women must work, they have to reconcile their domestic and professional commitments. Othman (18) turns the matter into a biology lesson: “A man is strong and has a penis, two testicles and a pubic region; a woman has two breasts, long hair, two beautiful eyes and a pubic region. Their features are different. Allah Almighty says that ‘Men are the protectors and mainstay of women’. A man is known for strength and a woman for weakness. That’s why Allah said this verse.’

In this spontaneous reaction, the biological and the social dovetail. But such platitudes can be questioned, leading to skepticism among teenagers of both sexes, particularly when the ideal and reality are compared, as exemplified by Baher (16, Egypt) and other interviewees. Houyem (17, Tunisia) uses physiognomy to differentiate between girls and boys, but goes back on this, finding no specific traits to define maleness. Narjis (16, Morocco) simply says: “I don’t know.” Social dimensions are seen as a function of reality, which adolescents restrictively explain on biological grounds. Mohamed (17, Egypt) thinks manliness does not exist, although he is confused; Baha (15, Egypt) sees the difference as being what society allows men and women to do, with a reference to different historical periods “when it was possible for men to do things that women were not allowed to; this discrimination still holds today”. Abdallah (17, Egypt) thinks the main difference is that a man must work to support his family, whereas a woman cannot be forced to do so. “A man who does not work is not considered a man.” Manliness is associated with work and family support. The most ‘mature’ attitude is voiced by girls. Najla (17, Egypt) sees the enjoyment of freedom as a criterion: “Boys and girls are not different in body and form only. They differ in what they can do. Boys have more freedom; girls are completely deprived of it, particularly in the countryside.” Jouheina (15, Yemen) refers to the concept of rights and says there is no difference between the sexes: “Boys have more rights than us. A girl is dominated from birth on.”

## B. Women’s rights and their role in society

The difficulty adolescents have in expressing a complex understanding of femininity and masculinity stems from the theoretical nature of the two concepts, requiring a level of culture and distance to assimilate and use them. They find it easier to describe women’s condition, rights and social role. There is less misunderstanding; most think women neither cherish their rights nor exercise them satisfactorily, and that their social role is limited. This does not imply an ideational or attitudinal agreement. Attitudes can differ or be almost contradictory. Differences do not arise from lack of knowledge or coherence, but from clear attitudes to accepting or rejecting equality and women’s role in development and public life. A number of variables (even sex itself) affect teenagers’ attitudes and ideas. For almost all girls, the role and condition of women are less than they should be; boys are divided, either accepting or rejecting the idea. The socio-cultural variable plays a crucial role in forming such attitudes.

In the interviews in the seven Arab countries covered by the qualitative study, the teenagers’ attitudes fall into similar main categories with some internal differences:

1. Clear objection to and dissatisfaction with women’s current condition and role, a call for equal rights and a rejection of all forms of discrimination

2. Dissatisfaction with women's current situation; recognition that in society women are discriminated against; not necessarily adopting clear egalitarian concepts
3. Intermediate view, comparing women's past and present situation to conclude that there is some improvement and limits which it is better not to cross
4. Considering women's situation as normal given our customs and tradition, without strong fanatical views against improving women's situation, and associating such improvement with fitting the prevailing social climate
5. Seeing the women's situation in terms of conceptual religious considerations, restricting the women's role to duty to husband and children. Any other view is seen as a deviation from the right path and any attempt to change the situation is rejected
6. No interest in answering the question.

Many variables can affect these attitudes. The history or culture of a country may favour discrimination or equality. Yemen is an example of response focus on the discriminatory pole, whereas it is difficult to indicate an equal level of strong focus on the egalitarian pole. The second variable is sex. Girls express dissatisfaction when calling for equality, or dissatisfaction plus a call for the gradual development of equality in line with custom and tradition. Boys express the strongest anti-change position. The third variable is socio-cultural. It is strong where urban affiliation is associated with membership of the middle class, in addition to cultural and family openness and the family support experience. Attitudes tend towards a consistent call for change and equality, and an awareness that this is necessary. The religious variable is contradictory. First, religious affiliation can facilitate the interaction or not of modern culture and varying interpretations of custom, tradition and heritage, particularly in family relations and attitudes towards women. This can be seen in religiously mixed countries such as Lebanon. Second, teenagers influenced by, or members of, religio/political groups have religious/ideological beliefs about women that go beyond traditional religious beliefs, though they are presented as consistent with local tradition. On the whole, there are no 'typical models' of one or other direction, apart from some very exceptional cases.

In Lebanon, Rafik (18), a member of a politico/religious group, thinks "women's situation is better than in the past and little is needed for them to be equal to men. That's why I find their situation acceptable." He does not think "there is more to be done than that". But Paul Valéry (18), a Catholic in political opposition, compares things to Europe: "Women are a bit oppressed, i.e., they haven't gained many rights compared to foreign countries. They want to do a lot but they can't. In Lebanon, this doesn't seem acceptable, particularly for wives. That's why they are oppressed, but not much since they have gained many things." Despite their implicit reliance on varied authorities and models, both attitudes are similar and moderate, irrespective of partisan commitment and religious affiliation.

Mustafa (17), political and religious, and for whom religion is the basic political and ideological authority, expresses the conservative traditional view on women. He talks as a protector of women, thinking they have not gained their rights, but, "women shouldn't demand too much. It's true they work and help their husbands with the expenses, but they also do 'naughty' things beyond the limit. There are things women shouldn't do." He admits that women do not obtain jobs in line with their expertise, but believes women are not discriminated against. Women go too far when they "work for long hours outside the home and wear indecent clothes". Ashraf (18), a leftist activist, says "women are unduly exploited in many societies. In Lebanon, the situation has improved but a lot needs to be done to catch up with the west in relation to rights in all fields. In my view, women and men are equal. The rights given to men must also be given to women. But our society still acts by customs and traditions of a thousand years ago, thus restricting women even when the law doesn't discriminate against them."

On gender distribution, Lebanese girls think like the boys. Some think the condition of women is improving, but talk of suffering and have a closer appreciation of the issue from their own lives; some have no hope of an imminent change. Others believe that an unsatisfactory situation does not undermine confidence in women and hope for the future. Others are confident that women are able to get what they want once they have decided to. Girls tend to want action and change, not just ideas, and thus focus on what impedes women's progress. They believe that the situation will improve with education and the elimination of poverty and need, women's worst enemies. We also notice the effect girls' personal experience has on evaluating the present situation of women from a personal angle. The religious affiliation variable has less effect than for boys. For male adolescents, the issue is a mental choice imposed on reality, whereas for females the issue is the everyday reality they try to reconcile with mental and religious convictions. Common suffering slightly lessens the differences arising from mental and cultural options.

Nesrine (17), a Catholic from southern Lebanon, loves someone she may get engaged to. She leads an apparently modern life but has traditional views, seeing housework as a woman's natural duty, while keen on a vocational training for herself. She is sure women have got their rights. Dana (17), from the Bekaa, thinks things have improved but more is needed. Amira is under 15 and engaged. From a poor milieu with no financial or cultural capital, she says she has not succeeded in life but thinks women's situation is "normal" and "good" and has no specific demands. Raya (18), the most liberal case, who studies theatre, believes women were worse off in the past but one cannot say they "have become free" now. She ridicules the idea of having to "stay at home, wear the veil and wait for her husband to come home to take off his shoes and wash his feet." Her caricature seems personal. Nadine (16) combines realism and hope and integrates the wider community in her evaluation, referring to the specific situation of rural women and crimes of honour but recognising that women's conditions have improved.

A girl's social, economic and cultural situation and her mother's experience influence attitude formation for adolescent girls who, despite being dissatisfied with the situation, are unanimous that they are better off in Lebanon than elsewhere in the Arab world.

Attitudes expressed in the Egyptian interviews are similar to those in the Lebanese. There is a closer link to the pressing social reality, perhaps explained by population size, kind of problem and other differences. There is less distance between an adolescent girl and a woman, and an adolescent boy and a man, than in Lebanon; major problems are present in Egypt.

Egyptian girls, except Fatma (15), see women as "clearly" oppressed. Even Nermin (18), who defends gender role distribution, thinks: "The situation is bad now and will be so in the future. All people in our country are oppressed, but women more than men. The man undergoing pressure outside the home exercises his power on his wife because he is the man. Even inside the same home girls face more restrictions than boys". Nehla (15) dislikes how women are presented in the media, especially TV: 'Sometimes they say things which make us feel like animals and helpless, as if any man in the world was better than any woman. I don't know where they got this from, surely not from religion, just out of their minds." Souheir (16) criticises the high illiteracy rate among women and "the customs and traditions that control people and make them act badly towards women, such as female excision, crimes of honour and preventing women from going out". Hikmat (15) links the situation to socio-economic conditions, particularly in rural areas. "Of course women are oppressed, particularly poor and rural women. Many don't know how to read or write. Many are poor or single parents. Life is more difficult for women than for men."

Egyptian boys' attitudes are stricter. Bassam (17): "Women's situation is good, normal, as in any other Muslim country. Illiteracy is rather high, but there are classes to wipe it out. Recently the khula law was passed [allowing women to seek divorce themselves pending payment of compensation]. This is good for women seeking divorce." Baha (15) shares his opinion. Others see the situation of women as bad or very bad: Amir (15) says they are not treated like "human beings". Adolescent girls and boys say both men and women are responsible for changing this; calling all men "bad" and all women "oppressed" is unacceptable.

Egypt is like Morocco in having acute socio-economic problems such as (especially rural) poverty and illiteracy, and heavy socio-cultural interaction with Europe. Adolescents of both sexes have drawn attention to the need to avoid simplification and generalisation, and stress that, despite some development of socio-political participation, women's situation is generally inferior since they lag behind men in education. They also see women's rights, particularly the right to divorce, as insufficient. Here we note the importance of the socio-economic, and the women's environment, variables. Urban women have more advantages than rural ones. Ikram (18, Morocco) says: "Women who look prosperous, wearing make-up and elegant clothes, are lucky and decently treated by the public services (official administration) whereas other women are treated more aggressively." In the countryside, there are those "who stay marginalized at home and those who open up a little".

On the whole, Moroccan adolescents think gender discrimination has no religious basis, except for inheritance. Imen (15) disagrees, thinking religion can restrict women's freedom. Radhouan (15) says "some men prevent women even from going out of the house." Majda (17) holds society as a whole responsible for the situation of women, and suggests that one of the factors that help reduce gender discrimination is law enforcement. But Imen thinks that "the situation of women will only be improved by improving other general conditions in society as a whole."

In the Tunisian interviews, there is near consensus on the generally positive nature of women's rights in Tunisia. Hana (18) thinks Tunisian women are equal to men and have an effective role in society. Neila (18) agrees that "Tunisian women have a good situation." Jihad (18) agrees that "women's rights are important gains. Formerly, husbands could beat their wives, evict them and throw them onto the streets with their children." Hanine (17) thinks women also deserve merit: "Tunisian women are no longer illiterate, are educated and can be relied on. To succeed, men can't do without them." But she thinks they do not have enough freedom of expression, for "important crucial affairs are still in men's hands. There are many male and few women ministers, but things are gradually improving. Last year, there were only eight girls in the maths class and there are twenty boys and twenty girls this year. This is how things are moving forward." Adolescents compare women's good situation in Tunisia with other countries, particularly Arab ones, and so are aware of the relative nature of these gains. Ferida (17) says she is happy to live in a country she considers modern and developed. But she also wonders: "In spite of the father's extremism and domination in the traditional family, wasn't the family in a better situation? Wasn't it closer? Weren't relations between brothers and sisters stronger?"

Unlike most interviewees, a minority see the situation of women negatively and reject the European influence. Ahmed (17) sees the Tunisian women's situation as "decadence, nakedness and lack of respect", thus shifting from rights and social roles to behaviour and morality in the context of an opposition between western and eastern values.

In the Algerian interviews, attitudes appear more differentiated and girls' complaints about the male attitude of society and relatives, even brothers, are substantial. This may be due to the special conditions in Algeria today and the cultural and political polarization of a society experiencing internal violence and the presence of extremist movements in some regions. Maroua (18) thinks Algerian girls live in a "hostile" environment; fathers consider girls who go out 'shameless'; boys have more rights than girls at all levels. Nadia (18) also believes that "women have no rights at home or at school, the cause being family law which gives no rights to women, particularly no right of divorce for them."

The Bahraini interviews reflect the country's duality and specificity. Bahrain has relative internal cultural/social development, generating a development in women's situation and social role; women's movements have helped; it is open to the influence of other Gulf countries with traditional and conservative social views that stress the behavioural aspect of religion, particularly as regards family structure and its social role. Hanan and Faouzi (18) think the women's situation is bad in Bahrain. Hanan, divorced after a short marriage, thinks "women's situation is very bad, particularly from the angle of marriage and divorce law. Although women study and reach high positions, they are oppressed in the end." Faouzi sees the situation as dramatic: "Women are very unlucky politically and socially for the laws are unjust and biased in favour of men who belittle women." The sense of oppression is heightened when women's success in various fields is noted. Leila (17): "We women are better than men at everything. We're more successful in study, understanding and revision." Others are more moderate. Jasim (18) says "women have some freedom, but there is an injustice due to the laws of society and religious tradition. As long as such injustice doesn't affect them, and as long as all live with it and accept it, I personally don't see any problem." This reveals two important points. The first is that he sees the "problem" as starting when women become aware of their rights and start pressing for them. Without awareness of rights, there would be no problem. The second is behavioural: some people are not opposed to gender injustice, and it is possible to live with it as long as nothing forces the opposite.

In Yemen, the most traditional society in the study, the attitudes of adolescents are as numerous as the views expressed by adolescents in the other countries. Interviewees agree that the situation of women is unsatisfactory and that strong restrictions are imposed on them. Specific problems are early marriage, the widespread absence of the right to education, and restrictions on movement and going out. The relative nature of the attitudes should not be forgotten. Objection or agreement on gender issues by adolescent boys and girls sometimes deals with basic rights widely recognized in other Arab countries. One feature of the answers of Yemeni adolescents is the importance of religion in explaining women's situation and rights, and attitudes to action for changing the situation.

Shadha (18): “What do they mean when they keep their daughters from knowledge? I consider knowledge the most important thing in life. Some fathers marry their daughters young, especially to rich men. This means they sell their daughters. In some families, women are like men. But I believe there are areas which are suitable for women. A woman is no good as a President of the Republic and, generally speaking, politics is not suitable for women. I believe that as an Islamic entity, according to our religion, only light-weight areas are suitable for women. A woman can’t be a Member of Parliament. This isn’t appropriate, for women are refined and sensitive. The work is tiring; men are born to this type of work.” Wahid (15): “Women suffer from some injustice and don’t play a role in society. They are despised and considered worthless in Yemen.” Daad (15) thinks there is an urban/rural difference: “In the countryside, girls stay at home, don’t go to school, marry early, sometimes at eleven when they don’t know anything. They tell women not to go out, not to work...but in the city awareness is growing.” Houssem (18) agrees: “In some rural areas, some people understand, but most live in the Stone Age.” Fakhri (18) thinks “Yemeni women don’t have an impact on their society. They have few rights and have duties to do. They can’t work like men.” Taha (17) adds “In my country, women have no rights because they’re all housewives. Some of them work in government offices and have no role.” But some girls from Aden compare today’s bad situation with the past, when women held positions in the judiciary and police. Jouheina (15): “In the past, women enjoyed their rights, but now the situation is different. We used to have many female lawyers and judges. Now numbers are much lower.” Salima (18) shows how attitudes have changed: “In the past, women could work. Now they still work, but they used to work more freely and weren’t harassed. They were trusted by their relatives, husbands and people.” Hani (17) attributes this to custom and tradition: “Women’s role is very weak. Before Islam they had no voice. Islam gave them rights but not as many rights as men. The customs and traditions of Yemeni society don’t let women go out because they have no role to play.” Farouk (16) attributes it to religious rules and sees it as normal, confidently rejecting the idea it is unsatisfactory: “It’s better for women to work at home; Allah Almighty says: ‘And stay quietly in your houses and make not a dazzling display, like that of the former Times of Ignorance.’[1]

## C. Equality

The interviews deal with attitudes to gender equality and discrimination. We try to investigate beliefs, beyond mere dissatisfaction with the current situation, and identify attitudes to desirable models and behaviour. Interviewees are asked about western values, i.e. European behavioural models of gender relations as regards dating, sexual freedom and extra-marital sex. The question produces various responses (it is intended to encourage adolescents to voice real attitudes about such sensitive issues).

The radical views are mostly liberal or extremist. Intermediate attitudes dominate, combining realism and idealism, and do not seem to result from a forced acceptance of custom and tradition. They express a rational belief that social development is a historical process, which cannot be reduced to immediate desires. The answers express pragmatic attitudes and take into account the problems and difficulties that adolescents may face as a result of adopting behaviour that is contrary to, or ahead of, the prevailing situation.

Although the responses of most adolescents describe the situation of women in Arab countries as unsatisfactory, this does not mean that there is a general belief in gender equality. There is a feeling that equality has limits, is relative and does not cover what female and male adolescents alike consider specialization or obvious role distribution. As long as the demand for equality deals with basic rights (education, health care, life) it is widely accepted; the second category (right to work, political participation) or the third category (the family, personal status, sexual relationships) are not. The final category is controversial; gender equality is rejected, or has little likelihood of being accepted. Gender rights may fall into different categories:

- The first category concerns what may be considered basic women’s rights, i.e. the right to education (basic, at least), health care, protection from poverty and want, personal safety (no violence). Boys and girls, urban and rural, modernizers and traditionalists approve of such rights. Differences relate to levels (e.g. acceptance of basic education but not university education)
- The second category goes further, concerning work and participation in politics and public life. Here differences start, according to the above variables, and attitudes and views can overlap. However, the gap between attitudes is still small

**(1)** Surat Al-Ahzab, Verse 33. The wives of the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him salvation) are addressed in this verse.

• The third category concerns the private sphere (family, gender relations in family duties, sex, and personal status). Here attitudes are more conservative. Radical attitudes are more acute, whether for or against prevailing attitudes. The egalitarian radical attitude expresses limited personal choices and results from a socio-cultural construct based on specific features of individual and family experience. But prevailing attitudes show the real difference between Arab and western societies, particularly as regards the free exercise of personal beliefs.

The Lebanese interviews do not show that the religious variable markedly affects attitudes to gender equality (Lebanon is a good example for testing this variable, since it has the most diverse religious and sectarian fabric). This conclusion is backed by the attitudes emerging from the other countries, where many widely-diverging attitudes exist, despite unity of religious affiliation. No systematic or consistent distribution of attitudes for the variable of sex is identified, either. Like boys, girls tend to express reservations about absolute equality and 'western values', particularly in relation to non-conventional issues and rights relating to the family and sex.

Ashraf (18), a leftist, and Rani (16), an urbanite, defend gender equality despite having a traditional education open onto the west. Both belong to a cultured modern group. Paul Valéry (18) favors equality, but moderately. This may be because he comes from a poor liberal Catholic family with affective relations with the west. He differs from Rami (15), a Muslim whose low social class has wiped out any sensitivity on the matter. Rafik (18), a member of an Islamic party, is conservative/liberal: he is against gender discrimination in education and general treatment but thinks women should do "perceived female activities" (i.e. housework, and not work outside the home - a man's job) and observe specific rules like "not raising the voice, going out and decent clothes".

Girls' attitudes fall between a conservative attitude, internalizing discrimination in general, and an attitude that supports gender equality. The first attitude is found among girls from poor rural groups, like Tala (17), a conservative Shiite, who sees censorship as expressing protection and care. Her attitude resembles that of Nesrine (17), a rural Catholic, who has internalized the idea of gender discrimination. We conclude that the religious factor does not appear to determine attitude differentiation on this issue.

Some girls, like Sarah (16) and Raya (18), support gender equality; we can conclude that the urban affiliation, more than the rural affiliation, factor enables them to compare men's and women's situations and oppose discrimination.

Adolescents generally understand their societies, especially when beliefs are translated into practices and behaviour. This does not imply hypocrisy but a certain awareness that ideas can precede reality and that the time factor is important. Social transformation and awareness are a gradual process; behaviour can be harmful if it precedes society's or the milieu's ability to accept it. Ashraf (18, Lebanon), a leftist, believes in absolute gender equality but does not agree with cohabitation, seeing it as men's exploitation of women, given its impact on society. He believes that with social change and enhanced awareness, and when women get all their rights, behaviour will be freer. Rafif (17, Lebanon) opposes marriage but says she will inevitably marry: "In Lebanon, we do it to have children. Extra-marital sex disturbs people." Raya (18, Lebanon) is the most liberal as regards sexual relations but believes that girls can practice this right or freedom "within limits".

Limits are relative. What is acceptable or desirable for some is impossible for others. Those with the most favourable views on sexual freedom are generally from the urban middle classes and they or their families have some cultural openness; other interviewees have never heard about gender equality and know nothing about it.

When the demand for equality takes the form of a set of concepts and behaviour related to the prevailing understanding of western societies, or western culture generally, attitudes become more precise. The question, 'What do you think of western concepts?' helps the speaker position him/herself at a sufficient distance to explain his/her attitude. It also compels the informant (unwillingly?) to compare 'western' and 'eastern' concepts. Daad (17, Lebanon) supports gender equality and refuses to see it as an imported idea: "Who said these are western ideas? Why do we take them from the west? We know for ourselves the need for gender equality and the matter is natural. This isn't something we learn from the west." Rani (16, Lebanon) is against importing everything uncritically: "Such behaviour

happens there because their society is fairly open, but we in the east copy them wrongly. We take the worst, not what's good." Rafif (17, Lebanon) does not believe east and west exist. For her, there are individuals, each with his/her own views.

Some Egyptian adolescents object to the west/east polarity. Sally (16) says: "The question of needs isn't western or anything like that. Even in Egypt there are people who live like that, although they are fully Egyptian, i.e. with no foreign mother or father...Look at the difference between Cairo and the countryside...a big difference...probably bigger than that between Cairo and Europe. The difference is that these things are freely done there but not here. That's why people say they're bad. If they stop saying they're bad, people will do them openly." Yara (15) agrees: "Sometimes I see they're good, such as friendship between boys and girls, but people say they're western things. I don't see why they should be western only if they're good things. Divorce isn't western or anything like that. Many friends of mine have divorced parents and they aren't western at all." Mohamed (17) sees such concepts not as western but as "human concepts and we must deal with them freely. They aren't related to west or east".

Souhir (16) accepts the east/west polarity and is defensive about what she sees as alien to our societies: "We don't need foreign ideas to know how to live. We have our customs and traditions. Some are good and we must maintain them. Some may have to change slightly. It's no good copying foreign countries. Each country has its specific conditions." Houda (18) sees the other world as "a second world different from ours. We're Muslims and this language isn't good for us". Abdallah (17) and Farouk (18) think it is "possible to choose what suits us from these values and behaviour and reject what isn't suitable, irrespective of its origin. All we have to do is use our brains."

### Nahla: Were Kais and Leila European?

"Love and equality are good and I don't know why they say they're western. We have Kais and Leila, Hasan and Naima, and these love stories are not from abroad. A free relation is the problem and I don't think that it's right. If the boy has good intentions, he asks the girl for marriage. They can get married and that's it... But sometimes boys say nice things just to fool girls. Divorce is frightening but sometimes necessary. I don't know whether it's better for my father and mother to divorce or live together without talking to each other. Isn't this the most hateful thing allowed by Allah? Isn't it?"

Most Yemeni interviewees reject gender equality and what they see as western customs and behaviour that "don't suit our religion and traditions". Specific social factors combine with an environment where tribal affiliation is vital in people's lives, and a traditional understanding of Islam, to determine teenagers' attitudes on the issue. Emotions and personal relationships between men and women must only happen within marriage. No other type of relationship is possible. Shadha (18): "Free relationships...shouldn't enter one's mind. They're wrong. It's impossible for a woman to live with a man, even a cousin, outside marriage." Wahid (15) thinks that "when a boy and girl go out without marriage, this gives rise to a bad reputation and shame. I don't like this." Housem (18): "Yemeni society is backward. If a girl, even a respected one, goes and talks to someone and only says hello, they say she's impolite. So it's better for girls to stay conservative."

This does not hold good for all Yemeni girls. Waad (17): "Officials' daughters are outrageously liberal. They go to clubs and come home late and nobody brings them to account. Perhaps their parents' absence encourages this." Wahii (15): "Some families are cultured and just towards boys and girls. Of course I'm for equality, but I'm against the idea of a girl leaving home after the age of 18. I'm for gender equality. Women should work with men and make themselves heard, but within limits."

As regards independence from the family on majority, this is not seen as a real option by adolescents from all countries and all social groups, unlike formerly, when independence from the family was central in the mentality of youthful rebellion and revolt. Othman (18, Yemen) links gender attitudes and Islam: "As Allah Almighty says, 'Men are responsible for women'. Men are strong and women weak. That's why Allah Almighty said this verse...It's better for women to work at home...They have no role in society, only in marriage." This understanding of religion is expressed in a number of attitudes. Religion is explicitly or implicitly the basis for attitudes to gender equality, even when there are differences between countries and differences in the questions raised by adolescents, who try to grasp how they must behave to deal with real situations.

The Moroccan situation shows that the (even implicit) religious factor in concepts and views, as the strongest illustration of the prevailing culture, exists alongside pragmatic behaviour, that tries to reconcile belief and actual behaviour. Khadija (18) thinks pre-marital sex between her and her fiancé is a necessary 'bait' to keep him (he might go off if she refuses). But he can't have everything before marriage: "Now he owns a quarter of me, a half of me after engagement, and all of me after marriage." Khadija shows great honesty and courage in admitting this, and all girls in all the countries face this issue, even if they do not admit so openly. This appears in the various responses that distinguish between friendship and a love relationship, and express concern about the shift from the first to the second (involving the loss of a friend), or the responses that stress safeguards and limits between what is and what is not allowed in relationships between girls and boys.

The Moroccan interviews recognize extra-marital sexual relationships. Some interviewees say this is normal practice among adolescents. Although most think sex should only take place within marriage, the reality is different. Where the attitude to the western lifestyle is concerned, the adolescents' admissions go against Islamic principle. There is more concentration around this attitude when there is a wider margin of individual practice, without raising this to the level of behaviour or recognised public attitudes. Ikram (18) has a radical attitude contrary to the above-mentioned ambivalence, hoping Morocco will follow the lifestyle and social practices of "the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia because moral depravation is common in Morocco". Though she speaks against such behaviour in her discourse, she sits in cafes, which does not seem consistent. We notice again the difficulty of finding complete, consistent views and practices among adolescents.

Ghalia (17, Algeria) reveals the difference between Algeria and Europe, and how religion is omnipresent: "I find relationships between boys and girls natural, but there must be limits. There should be no sex because religion forbids it and we can't do it at this age. OK...In France the age of fifteen may be enough to start sex, but for us we have sex within marriage, and we are clear and precise here." We note a combination of conviction and caution. Nadia (18) was told by her mother: "Friendship between a girl and boy is impossible; even if the matter starts with friendship, it will quickly change. A boy always likes something in a girl, and after two or three years things change." This change cannot happen because, according to Ines (17, Algeria), it may become "sin", especially for the girl. This is different from Europe where a relationship can develop in different directions.

The Tunisian interviews show that gender attitudes go beyond the law to the value system itself. Most Tunisian interviewees assess women's legal and real situation positively, but this varies when ideas of full equality or the vision of future social organisation and the resulting position of women are concerned. Ahmed (17) says: "We can't extend gender equality to everything. If equal opportunity in education and employment is provided to both girls and boys, women shouldn't be equal to men in going out at night and fooling around." Woud (15) questions the need for equality itself: "Gender equality can't last because a man and a woman must give in power to each other. It's a type of instinct. I don't agree with some countries when they allow a mother to give her family name to her baby. Equality isn't a question of words only. In Arab countries, men respect their wives more than in western countries. In the United States half the men beat their wives. It's true that many things happen in Arab countries, but husbands generally respect their wives and provide for their needs." She explains this by Arab specificity and Islamic principle.

Neila (18) welcomes the improvement in the condition of women in Tunisia but believes that as regards gender equality "we have different customs and traditions from western societies. Our customs are better than theirs, but for sex and love, their situation is better". This reveals a contradictory, confused attitude which recurs in all the interviews. But a minority does not take the ambiguous option. Fathia (16, Tunisia) is for unconditional gender equality in all fields. Others are sure of a specificity that is not negotiable, and are concerned about sin on the basis of a given understanding of freedom. To compare Tunisia and Lebanon, in Tunisia the law is far ahead of the prevailing understanding of gender equality, especially in areas that fall into the third category of rights (family, gender relationships, personal behaviour), whereas in Lebanon the situation is inversed, in that the law lags behind social liberalisation.

## D. The veil

This issue is the bridge linking tradition and social behaviour to religion, which offers almost the only basis for accepting or rejecting the veil. Personal choice, resulting from human respect, is not present here. The flexible, tolerant attitude towards the veil comes from the traditional angle, not necessarily including recognition of free personal choice.

Teenagers of both sexes tend to dress decently and respect general traditions, dishonestly suiting the type of clothes and degree of decency to how near the family they are. This is easier for adolescents who leave the countryside for the city to study or work, or commute between the home and the workplace, or between places with, and places without, relatives, neighbours and acquaintances. But adolescents always set limits to clothes, to variable degrees in different situations. Although girls want to look decent, respectable and serious, wearing the veil goes beyond normal decency to be a demonstration of identity, where the national is mixed with the religious and political, and deep personal belief is mixed with following the trend and affirming identity in the face of an internal or external threat. The veil becomes a means of self-affirmation, and the individual merges in the collective, thus producing a feeling of belonging and strength.

Most of the attitudes from the interviews held in Morocco, Tunisia and Lebanon cluster around one of the following two poles: seeing the veil as a personal matter, or the tendency not to agree combined with freedom of choice. But in Algeria, Bahrain and Egypt, the balance between support and reservations is closer to the intervention of personal choice. In Yemen, veil-wearing is favored, based on a set of considerations: decency, respect and "voluntary" observance of Islamic teaching (among girls), commitment to religious bans and the prohibition of unveiling (among boys). Unveiling is categorically rejected. Here the urban/rural and social/cultural variables help explain the supportive or hostile attitudes, but the religious factor is the most important.

Compared to the other countries, the Egyptian and Yemeni interviews offer the richest examples of the issue of the veil, given the mixing of the social and religious with the inherited traditions that lie outside religion per se. There are varieties of veil, with the traditional Egyptian tarha (headcloth) and Yemeni lathma (veil) and what is referred to as "the religious veil". A study of the Egyptian and Yemeni cases enables us to identify possible attitudes to veil-wearing, as well as the difference in meaning of "the religious veil" and the traditional veil, and the significance of the two practices.

### Egypt: The veil past and present

In the Egyptian sample, most interviewees, including those who wear it, see the veil as a matter of personal choice. A minority see it as a duty that must be done. It would appear that, contrary to expectation, veil-wearing has changed. In recent decades, veil-wearing sprang from social tradition and did not have the religious-political and cultural-ideological significance it now has for the young. It also appears that unveiled female adolescents face pressure from schoolmates and neighbors to wear the veil. Peer and fiancé pressure is stronger than family pressure. This marks a transformation in the behaviour of the parents' and the children's generations, indicating a shift of influence from the family to the outside world, more specifically the religious organisations and religious political movements. This transformation also reveals the role of the media, via religious programmes and Islamic preachers who use local and satellite TV as a means of direct contact and influence, transcending the family sphere and ignoring relatives' influence. Nahla (15): "My mother says that when she was a child things were different from now because of the veil. Small girls didn't wear it. Old female farmers used to wear the tarha. My grandfather didn't ask my mother to wear it. The Muslim Brothers want girls to wear the veil. Girls are scared. Relatives, fiancés and schoolmates can put pressure on them, so they wear it to avoid insistent requests. For example, many girls tell me I have to wear the veil and give me books. But I won't. They're free and I'm free too." For Aziza (17) "it's a matter of personal choice. I don't like to wear the veil, but my sister does. She's free and we're good friends, even after she started wearing the veil. Although we don't agree on everything, we talk about everything. I hear from my relatives that today's veil was not worn in the past. But it's a question of personal freedom and it mustn't be imposed."

Egyptian girls refer to the social and religious nature of the veil issue, showing that it is not restricted to Muslims but also concerns Coptic women from agricultural and poor backgrounds. Abdallah (17): "My four sisters wear the veil. Even Coptic girls wear a headcloth when they go out in the neighbourhood to avoid gossip, harassment and the like." Souhir (16, Catholic) says: "It's a personal matter. Many Christian girls wouldn't go out without covering their heads. It's a question of tradition. Everyone must behave as she likes." The increased importance of the religious/political and cultural aspect of the veil in the last decades has been at the expense of the social aspect, indicating demarcation lines between people on the basis of religious, not social, affiliation.

The ever-growing importance of the religious aspect emerges in answers that see the veil-wearing/Islam link as obvious. Fatima (17, Morocco) sees veil-wearing as "normal since we are Muslims". Even when girls are unwilling to wear the veil, the religious argument appears, as for Yara (15 years, Egypt): 'I wore the veil for a year. Some girls at school gave me books and I was convinced. After a while I felt like a stranger among them and I thought that I had to wear that sort of clothes because Allah said so. But when I wore the veil, I felt I was no longer myself and my behaviour didn't change at all. Then, a friend of my father's gave me a book that said wearing the veil wasn't stipulated in the Koran, I liked the idea and took the veil off. One should be patient. Taking it off wasn't easy."

The attitudes of Egyptian boys vary. Some see it as a personal matter, like Amrou (16): "Each religion has its system. The veil is a Sunna of the Prophet and his wives. He recommended it to Muslim women. Women don't have to wear it, but it's preferable to do so, particularly if the woman is beautiful, to avoid enticing men." Mohamed (17) is "in favour of the veil, but not as it's worn here in Egypt, where girls wear the veil to avoid greeting boys and stop leading a normal life." Bassam (17) and Abdallah (17) mention religious considerations. "It's a duty for Muslims and a Sunna of the Prophet's wives," says Bassam. This is typical of the modern attitude of the religious-political movements, one of decisiveness and distinction between what is lawful (halal) and unlawful (haram), useful/useless, permitted/forbidden and other dualities that cut a clear line between two poles with intermediate areas. Adolescents look to such intermediate areas to reconcile opposites, adopting a critical attitude to interpret or explain good and bad or use religion in support of man-made views. Soumaya (18) says: "The problem is that unveiled girls are considered inferior to veiled ones, causing a violent reaction against veiled girls. They assume that unveiled girls aren't religious. I reject equating the veil with being religious. I utterly reject the idea that people decide who's good or not good on grounds of his/her religiosity."

Now we can detect a process. For decades, veil-wearing was social behaviour (embodying traditional values). This is why Muslim and Catholic women from rural or working-class backgrounds wore it. The religious, political and cultural aspects have changed under the effect of internal influences and globalization. The veil is now a sign advertizing political Islam, with an internal political side and a cultural side to express identity in the face of the outside world. This explains the link between the recent expansion of veil-wearing and globalization, socio-economic change in Arab societies, consumer trends, and the mushrooming of national media and satellite broadcasting.

## Yemen: From the veil to the religious veil

In Egypt, the veil - the tarha, usual in the Egyptian countryside - covers the entire body, apart from hands and face. But in Yemeni, the shift from the social to the religious-political dimension is reflected in the shift in the form of the veil, from the traditional sharshaf to the lathma or nikab and the "religious" veil. The religious basis for veil-wearing appears stronger here than in the remaining countries, given that the religious-political attitude is the same; in the Yemeni interviews the references are clearer, more decisive and recurrent.

Previously, Yemeni females wore the sharshaf, a two-piece black dress that covered from head to toe. Old women and young women from traditional families still do. By the late '70s and the early '80s, it gave way to the balto or abaya (a cloak-like dress) or black or coloured jilbab (gown). Schoolgirls, female students and middle-aged women started to wear this type of veil, which became very popular, in addition to the nikab (lathma in the local dialect). But there was a shift among schoolgirls and students to the 'Islamic' veil, i.e. the total covering of the body with the balto or jilbab and a headcloth, leaving the face and hands uncovered. (Underneath it, women wear modern, fashionable clothes, especially when they go to women's parties, in accordance with customs and traditions.)

The teenagers' responses show wide acceptance of, almost consensus on, the need to wear decent clothes and observe "religious law, customs and tradition". A near consensus has emerged that showy make-up goes against custom. But the consensus on what accords with culture, society and religion does not extend to the veil or traditional clothes. The attitudinal difference lies in the shift from whether to wear the veil to the kind of veil, given each type's significance, moving between the cultural-social-religious (reflecting local tradition) and the cultural-religious-political (ostentatious expression of Islamic identity against other civilisations). Another facet has appeared - type of clothing - as regards what is most developed, least restrictive and most flexible as regards modern life, while underscoring the relative nature of these terms, particularly in Yemeni society.

Attitudes can vary and be critical, particularly girls'. Thara (16) says "most women wear the veil without conviction. It's simply out of respect for tradition, or in response to a father's request. Few women do it from conviction." But Raouan (15) supports the Islamic veil without wearing the nikab, the traditional veil: "I don't like the lathma. But in Yemen it's better for girls to wear it because people prefer it; but I don't put it on." Wahi (15) says: "I like the lathma; I got used to it at an early age." Zahra (15) thinks the veil is "necessary and an Islamic duty because Allah orders us to do so, and it's part of our customs and traditions." Naoual (18) sees the veil as an expression of a "strong faith in women's hearts, a compliance with Allah's orders and an obedience to the Prophet". But Ikbal (17) has views that do not bear out her behaviour: "Veil-wearing is very beautiful. I wish all women could wear it. I want to but I can't." When asked to explain, since she wears the veil: "I mean a complete veil...if we mean to follow religious teachings, we must wear the nikab, and I don't. When a nikab-wearing woman walks past me, I feel naked. I want to be like her, but I can't...perhaps because I'm not yet sure."

Boys express similar attitudes to girls, and the attitude gap seems smaller than in other countries covered by the study. Ousama (18) supports the nikab: "When I see a woman wearing a dress that covers all her body, I feel proud to be Muslim." Though he prefers the lathma, he says: "We live in a changing world and there's no objection to change if one wears decent clothes." Mondher (17) objects to an uncovered face. None of them think the lathma shows a girl's reputation or virtue, but she must look decent and follow custom, tradition and Islamic duty. Although views differ on face covering, there is a near consensus on the idea that a woman should not uncover her face when wearing make-up.

The attitude is less tolerant, more determined, coherent, and based on a complete understanding among males impregnated with formal religious culture. This is the attitude of Othman (18), Taha (17) and Hani (17). Othman says: "The veil is very controversial and neglected these days. Some Egyptian girls and women wear the veil from head to foot with unveiled hands and faces and claim to be veiled. This is not the religious veil. It's a veil of their own making. The same applies to Turkey: why should women cover their bodies and heads and leave their hands and faces uncovered? The religious veil covers a woman from top to bottom, as Aisha said: 'Allah bless the women of al-Ansars [the Medina followers of Mohamed]. When they heard about the verse on the veil, they tore their clothes and wore the veil.' Therefore, the religious veil is that black dress which a woman wears to cover her face, feet and entire body." Othman speaks authoritatively and is certain about his statement as a general judgement; Taha refers to practical and behavioural aspects that are grounded in religion: "As regards the veil, My Allah! It's excellent if your sister, mother or neighbor covers her face. You try to advise her. Tell her to wear the veil. It's necessary for sisters or mothers to wear the veil. We try, Allah willing, to advise others because we like the veil...Because when you go out with your aarik ('shame' in reference to 'family members') or harem (wife), and she is wearing lipstick or blusher, you feel ashamed and hear others say: 'Look she's wearing lipstick and blusher. She goes out without a veil or a cover'. To advise you, people may say: 'Please try to tell your sister or mother to wear the veil because it's a good thing, Allah willing'." Hani confidently ends with the language of a preacher: "Honestly, the veil is very good and it must be imposed on all women because of widespread immorality among young boys and girls. It's very important in this life for a woman to wear the veil because of immorality. This is stipulated by religion as indicated by the Prophet Mohamed, Allah bless him and grant him salvation! Allah, Allah be praised, says in the Koran verses that the veil is a duty for every Muslim woman."

Hani's discourse is a direct statement of the need to impose the veil in accordance with religion. But his language reveals behaviour and values that are related to religion but not necessarily religious. Family (mother, sister, daughter) are 'shame', 'honour' and 'harem'; the veil affords protection against gossip; unveiling and make-up encourage immorality; immorality is primarily man/woman contact outside what is allowed by religious law.

## 2. Attitudes towards religion

In all the countries, religion is central to teenagers' lives. But its role, position and context in which it evolves vary within the same country. Religion is attracted by two poles. One pulls religion into the realm of the personal relationship between the individual and Allah within an affectionate relationship that is largely personal; the other draws it into the sphere of external behaviour, as a general regulator of public and private lives in individuals and groups within society and the world as well. It is also religious law defining what is halal (lawful) or haram (unlawful), right or wrong, religious or irreligious, for every field of individual and group behaviour.

Hana (18, Tunisia) finds difficulty with the question on how important religion is to her. Pressed, she hesitantly answers: "Religion is Islam." The simplicity of the answer shows that she is unable to distance herself from the question, as if she had not been asked this before. Ahmad (17) and Jihad (18) from Tunisia see religion as important "because it sets limits we should not overstep", to use Ahmad's words; "if every human being followed religious teaching, we would live in a better world now. So we must do what the Koran says." Woud (15, Tunisia) thinks "human beings can't basically live without religion. When we have to a make a decision about what we should or shouldn't do, we must go back to Allah and Islam." Religious prohibitions, and 'order', should be respected. But Woud does not pray and only gives charity; for her, religion is an internal moral standard to regulate her behaviour and life rather than a full system of behaviour based on ritual and visible group practice. Such emphasis on the inner intimate side is found in Houyam (17, Tunisia): "Religion is very important to me because it gives me inner serenity and a feeling of security." Yomna (17, Tunisia) is "a strong believer", experiencing prayer as healing, where she "tells her pains to Allah" and gets rid of her worries.

Another type focuses on externals, rituals and religion as mandatory universal rules. Najeh (16, Tunisia) thinks she "will wear the veil when she grows up" since it shows religiosity. She says "veiled girls have something more, something like a special aura because Allah gives them a special mystery that we don't find in other girls." She prays and fasts in Ramadan, but believes that "religiosity and faith are private matters, and only Allah can judge His creatures. Human beings cannot intervene in this."

Other elements emerged in the Tunisian interviews. Being religious is not limited to Judgement Day but is important in our lives. Fathi (16): "If I had money, I'd give some to the poor as charity. It would be a kind of blessing to help me achieve my projects in life." As regards behavioural aspects relating to religion (the veil), the religious aspect is mixed with custom and the wish to conform. Hana (18) thinks veil-wearing is a good thing in countries where all women do it and does not object to it "as long as others do it". Hanin (17) and Fathia (16) raise the issue of contradictions; some teachings they think are not in harmony with their beliefs and hopes for a better life. Hanin thinks "Islam is harder on women than men, who can practice their beliefs without being deprived of many things, but it's different for women. To be good Muslims, women shouldn't go out, should wear the veil, shouldn't go to school and shouldn't work." Fathia refers to custom and tradition: restraints on women are to eliminate the "female appeal" that can cause social chaos. She has decided not to follow her mother's advice on praying and fasting, believing that she cannot pick and choose which religious teachings (clothes, other duties) she will observe.

At a more complex level, Samir (16) defends a secular view of religion and its role in society. He thinks religion must be neutral and keep out of public life, customs, law and politics. His attitude is complex. He does not think religion should intervene in individual behaviour and appearance (veil-wearing, beard-growing) and cannot see how some countries punish a driving error with flagellation, when the driving licence can be withdrawn. He does not understand how one man can kill another or blow up a plane in the name of religion. He believes "religion cannot be imposed" and criticises the "Americans and Jews who want to maintain their religions by destroying Islam...if Allah has allowed the existence of three religions, this is because He wants them to live together and not to fight each other in the name of religion."

### A. Behaviour...morality...custom

The overall environment in Tunisia, as in other countries, allows for a certain diversity of attitude to religion, particularly as regards those with intermediate attitudes or capable of an analytical distance to think about religion itself and how it relates to the social and political. In the Moroccan interviews, we find clearer signals of the impact of the family, or of political movements, on adolescents' religious interest.

Fatima (17) compares religious movements to totalitarian political parties. From a political angle, she criticises the tendency to domineer. She thinks that family and parental imitation have an essential role in the adolescent's religious interest: "A young person always follows his parents. If the family is religious and conservative, the person gets used to such commitment and may go further, joining Islamic organisations, associations or parties. This is difficult if he hasn't yet developed his beliefs and chosen his path. That's why he quickly withdraws to deeply understand Islam. Scared by some religious movements, he draws back and hesitates to join them." She distinguishes between joining a group, and religion itself, in the lives of Moroccan adolescents. Religion is "greatly respected by adolescents, no matter how irresponsible and frivolous their lives are. Why? Because since early childhood they have witnessed people's respect for Islam through praying, fasting, Koran reading and charity. These are means to get closer to Allah. In addition, the muezzin's voice attracts the attention of the child, who learns to respect Islam. But youngsters may or may not do their duty. I notice that Moroccan youngsters lack Islamic education and training. Even Islamic education curricula in educational institutions merely force children and youngsters to learn by rote some Koran verses without explanation or analysis. That's why youngsters know about religion from parents and people or from some very rare half-hour weekly programmes in some audio-visual media."

Ibtisam (18) blames her parents for not giving her a good religious education and not advising her to wear the veil. Unlike her father, her regularly-praying mother advises her to follow her. Ibtisam "prays irregularly" and considers her mother "responsible for it. Had she taught me how to pray as a kid, I wouldn't have to face this problem now." She wants to join a radical religious-political movement, whereas Hasan (18) sums up a sensitive issue light-heartedly: "Religion is optional in Morocco. There's the mosque and there's the bar. If you want to go to the mosque, you can. Religion is a duty because we are Muslims and we must pray and do everything...but no bigotry in religion. Islamic movements will take us back to the Middle Ages."

In Algeria, the difference is not due to theoretical differences but to the acute split and open conflict Algeria has been experiencing, of which the Islamic political movements are a basic element. Although the interviews could not cover all the views in today's Algeria, particularly the most extremist, urban reactions are marked by a tendency to sharper, more radical attitudes than in the past, though these are perhaps not the most common. Marwa (18): "We live by Islamic teachings. I'm Muslim but I don't practice and don't pray. But there are things I must respect. Islam is a principle in some sense. We believe in Allah and we must believe in Him. Therefore we must do what He asks us to, but there are many things we can't do." Ghalia (17) thinks some Islamic obligations "restrain a girl's freedom, particularly veil-wearing in summertime". But Samir (16) is outspoken, believing that his conflict with Islam in its extreme, harsh form is his basic problem with religion.

There is vacillation between religion, morality, behaviour, custom and politics. These are mixed concepts in the minds of adolescents generally, and entail a risk of holistic attitudes of two kinds: the first, a tendency to submit every part of life to a religious interpretation under the guise of observing religious instructions, the second, a tendency to reject certain religious provisions and behaviour related to beliefs and rituals that go against some practices. Many adolescents cannot differentiate between the various levels, for these are complex, intertwined and mixed, particularly in religious-political practices. In addition, adolescents lack the cultural maturity and knowledge for such a sophisticated operation. But we do find some elements of this differentiation in some of the interviews.

Religion is basic in Egyptians' lives, but they have varying interpretations and degrees of commitment. Most girls see religion as important in their lives because it is "sent down by Allah" (Sana, 15), because it organises life by "restraining people, distancing them from sin and pushing them to be good" (Fatima, 15), or because "it defines what is lawful and what is unlawful" (Sana). Souhair (16) sees religion as curing wrongdoing: "Many people can be persuaded to stop doing wrong by going back to religion." Sally (16) sees it as the "general framework that determines human life". At personal level, religion protects Soumaya (18) from the fear of death, and "facilitates life" for Warda (16). Though the overwhelming majority of Egyptian girls say religion is important in their lives, a few (Sana, 15, Houda, 18, Narmin, 18) say they are "Muslims" and that religion is important to them. Individual examples (Souhayla, 16 and Aziza, 17) show religion as not very important. What is striking is that girls, even those who wear the veil, draw a distinction between religious feeling and observance. Although they see the absence of such observance as a failing, they do not see this as voiding their religious nature.

Attitudes and degrees of religiosity differ among the Egyptian adolescents. Baha (15), the youngest, does not pray but sometimes fasts; religion is not a problem to him. Half the teenagers say religion is important in their lives; the other half say it is merely "exchanges between people" and a personal issue between them and Allah. Most inherit their family's attitude, having been taught that it is important and thus considering it so, irrespective of whether they are practicing or not. Abdallah (17) prays and fasts: "I don't know why, but we've been taught that we are Muslims and that religion is a man's conscience. I never thought about it before." Amrou (16) does not follow Islam because "it's supposed to develop with time. I practice my beliefs. If I feel there's something wrong in religion, I don't do it." Baha says people "need to resort to religion when the doors of life are shut in their face. When people rely on Allah, they feel they're not lonely". The sample overwhelmingly rejects extremism, constraint and force in religious matters. It also rejects religion as imposed behaviour (each person can communicate with Allah in his own way), while emphasising the principle of doing good and good treatment as a basis for religion.

The Lebanese interviews are somewhat different. The first reason is that Lebanese society is mixed, equally divided between Muslims and Christians. The second reason is that the political system and an essential part of the institutional structures are based on confessionalism. This is related to politics and war in terms of condemned practices or as a source of pride, such as the struggle against occupation and the defeat and eviction of the occupiers. Some views and attitudes are the same as those identified in other countries. Some believe that religion has no role; others wish to practice religion and see religion as the source of life, very important in human life: "Religion is everything."

Ashraf (18, Lebanon) thinks religion was formerly very important and does not see why its role continues now, particularly as regards customs and rituals that are no longer justified. He cannot understand why ablutions cannot be replaced by a shower before prayer, admitting he "doesn't know much about the religious creed he belongs to" (Druse Muslim). "I know it's not allowed to eat Jew's mallow (it contains an aphrodisiac). I once discussed the matter with a sheik to understand better and he nearly hit me." Rafif (17) does not think religion is important but goes to the church on certain occasions. Three years ago, she used to go more frequently, finding it emotionally involving and comforting. Now she feels she should go. She has never confessed in church: "Religion is not important. I have to go to church. I prefer to contemplate on the roof."

Raya (18), a Sunni Muslim from an urban background, went to a Catholic school (common practice in Lebanon) and does not practice: "Religion is not important to me. I think it divides people instead of uniting them...I'm a believer in my own way and I don't believe in what they believe in without understanding. If they're real believers as they all claim, and they all say that Allah is one, why are Muslims, Christians or Druses fanatic? Each one keeps telling the other that he has no sacred book and is not a believer. All this talk confuses me and I don't understand well any longer." As regards the idea of Allah, she says: "It's not necessary to fear Allah or present a frightening picture of Him. Allah is just; I see many things different from what religion shows. I know the reason. Probably because I'm Muslim and went to a Catholic school and studied the Bible. But I believe that there's a secret to this life, and this is the meaning of Allah. There are people who want to use 'the idea of Allah' to scare people so that they don't do certain things and be rewarded by Allah, as if Man always needed fear to avoid error. I think that they use the idea of Allah wrongly, not to solve a problem but just to scare."

Rym (15, Lebanon) looks at practical considerations: "Polygamy is wrong. What does it mean when a man marries three women? Does it mean that when he likes a woman, he marries her? My Allah, what's this behaviour?" Daad (17), a Christian, sees religion as important. She used to go to church every day when she belonged to a religious group but now only goes at feasts. She used to do all the rites, including fasting, but now fasts sometimes: "When I find I'm eating a lot, not as a diet, but because I feel I sinned or committed an error." Nesrine (17) dislikes politicised religion and religious separation in Lebanon: "This is a Muslim and this is a Christian"; she is interested in personal worship. She goes to church every Sunday, but does not give a specific reason for her interest in religion: "It calms me. I sometimes stay on my own to pray and I feel calm. When I'm annoyed, I pray to rest. I always pray." Nadine (16), though not a practicing Christian, considers herself a believer. She sees faith as a relationship between Allah and man; there is no need to wear religious symbols or show affiliation or faith. Sara (15) cannot imagine life without faith: "We resort to Allah." Hana (15) says: 'Religion is necessary to man. It emanates from man and is imposed on him at the same time because it teaches him to walk in the right path."

Rafik (18), a member of an Islamic religious party, says religion is "the source of life". He is committed to religious values and principles and finds that religion makes his relation with his environment excellent and pushes him to maintain the "relationship of kinship" with parents and relatives. He sees religion as protective: he "discards what religion forbids, even if collectively practiced around him". Religion gives him spiritual strength and moral support. Mustafa (17) thinks he is religiously committed but not "complicated...Religion offers the right path, the path to success, and teaches us love, faithfulness and mutual understanding."

## B. Values...faith...globalization

The qualitative study covered Bahrain and Yemen. Teenagers' responses in both countries share common features plus specific features of a sub-region with a strong religious impact, caught between traditions and the consumer globalization of the oil-producing societies.

In Bahrain, the duality is perceptible. Islam, with its concepts, values and education, hands down knowledge, values and behaviour about right and wrong to adolescents. The treatment of religion in most responses in the Bahraini sample is characterised by its sacred character, with a call for a full compliance with Islamic duties and spirituality. Some behaviour and concepts (love, sex, the veil, masturbation) are seen from the angle of religious bans and duties. But some responses do not conform to this consistent vision and contain contradictions. Thus, the teenager says religion is important and agrees with its prohibitions, position on the veil and other religious requirements; when asked how religious he is, he says he is not religious, does not want to marry a veil-wearing girl, and does not believe that the veil is a virtue!

This is the case for one girl who talks in the interview about religion in strict terms but also about emotion and sex. This seems to come from the formal inculcation of religion as a faith and the association between faith and terror, punishment and suffering in the tomb. These are widespread views at school, since children in the first years of education are taught by a new generation of teachers of both sexes who are more influenced by political religious teaching than by the old, more flexible, moderate understanding of religion. In the Bahraini sample, only Jasim and Faouzi (18) are exceptions to a widespread pattern. Jasim sees "religion is of low importance to me because I'm not largely influenced by it, but I admire people whose faith gives them an internal strength to overcome difficulties. I'm not religious." Faouzi thinks "religion is part of our underdevelopment". The other adolescents have different views. Hanan (18) feels that "as human beings we can use religion to organise our mutual relations". Noura (15) says religion makes her "feel safe". Mohamed (16) thinks "religion has a great importance because it's the basis of my thinking and accounts for the major choices I make in my life." Yasmine (15) sees Islam as "a religion that guides us to worship Allah. We're following the right path and we're righteous. Allah willing, we will all go to Paradise."

In Yemen, most interviewees see religion as important and necessary to human life and feel someone without religion has no value. The responses do not show hesitation or religious doubt; there is some self-blame and reproach because of not praying or not praying regularly. The adolescents inherit this understanding from their families; the family is important for teaching children religious concepts and familiarizing them with prayer. Their attitude towards religion seems fairly similar to their parents'. Religion means prayer, morality, following the right path, uprightness, good treatment, faith, trustworthiness, and sincerity.

For Mondher (17), religion means "praying at prescribed times and being faithful". Thara (16) says: "I believe in Allah, Allah be praised! I feel that when I face a problem, I pray to Allah. I ask Allah's forgiveness because I don't pray regularly, only when I want something. My friend calls me and asks me to pray before revising my lessons." She sees a direct causal link between prayer and success/problem-solving: prayer is asking Allah to intervene and support her in daily life. Wahid (15) thinks religion "organises our affairs. For example, it prevents us going out with girls. That's why the Arabs have different traditions from America. The Arab people are expected to stick to religion, but what happens in reality is different". Oussama (18) uses Oussama Bin Ladin to stress the importance of religion: "If man wants to follow the path of salvation, he must behave like the Commander of the Faithful as to trustworthiness and sincerity, on the one hand, and punishing theft, adultery and other sins on the other."

The issue raises some questions. Thara (16) addresses religious teaching methods at school: "I'm sometimes scared by some of the teachers who teach us religion and frighten us with Hell. Some others make us love religion." Hanin (15) thinks religion "organises life because when we follow its teachings, there is order. But there is no order among the Yemeni people because they are far from religion." Here lies the paradox. Whereas we believe that religion is strongly present in Yemen, Hanin thinks that not being religious is the cause of disorder. This is contradictory: she starts from dissatisfaction with society, her experience and chaos to say that religion is Allah's organiser and to conclude that chaos is the result of irreligion. Religious belief becomes an overall, coherent ideology (as indicated by some responses). Othman (18) has a grasp of religion and its role in society: "Religion is of paramount importance because it's Islam. Allah Almighty says: 'If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost.' (S˚rat Al-i-Imran, Verse 85). This is religion. There is a big difference between us, the Prophet, upon him be peace, and His Followers. They battled and fought against the infidels so that religion reaches us pure and clear. We neither got tired nor fought. We come here only to study and learn." He trusts families to ensure a future for their children based on "religion, values, morality and custom".

## 3. Attitudes towards politics, war and public affairs

The responses of respondents in the countries of the study generally show a negative attitude to organised political action, even to politics in its traditional sense. But it is accompanied by two elements that reduce its negative aspect and indirectly point to the cause of reticence and aversion to direct political action. In a fair number of interviews, teenagers show interest in associative and social action. Most are also interested in basic political issues in the region and the world such as the Palestinian Intifada, Afghanistan and Iraq, and the repercussions of 9/11. They express views on American policy and other issues in an unambiguously political manner, making the picture more complex than it at first appears.

As regards direct political action, the same attitude recurs, with the same terms used, among female and male adolescents alike, though interest in party politics is slightly greater for boys. The attitude may be summed up as: "I don't like politics", "I'm not interested in politics", "I have nothing to do with these things". Some implicitly explain this when they say they prefer to work in "areas that can be truly useful to people" - politics and parties are obviously not. A common preference is to belong to the Red Cross or Red Crescent or work for women's and children's associations and development associations, i.e. areas where teenagers can make a tangible contribution to helping people they know, and where they are qualified to work.

This is the overall impression, in varying degrees, in all the countries. There is a negative feeling about organised political action. This does not mean adolescents are unaware of the importance of politics in society. But they feel that their impact capacity is weak, and they object to the content and style of political action, which has probably lost its appeal, apart from specific cases requiring specialized study. Some informants are party activists, as shown by their responses. Ashraf (18, Lebanon) is active in a leftist party and thinks "politics is the basis of everything in life; people can't live in this world without being political. Politics organises their lives". Hesitant to take up politics in the capital, Rafik (18, Lebanon), from the countryside, thinks his religious/political activity gives him the moral and methodological support to live according to his religious faith. One of the negative aspects of political action in Lebanon and for many teenagers a cause of aversion is confessionalism. Nadine (16): "I don't belong to any party, but I like political parties with written, well-formulated principles. I don't like confessional parties. Confessionalism is one thing, politics another."

The impact of the family on the attitude to politics is clear. In interviews in more than one country, adolescents from families which are involved in politics or public activism are readier to become politically or publicly active. This appears in the responses from Lebanon, Egypt, Algeria and Yemen. Some of them became active under family influence, either in political or associative action. The general (national, local or international) environment incites to political action in the present or in the near future, and is not free from romanticism: Aziza (17, Egypt): "It seems to me that I'll get involved in politics with university students. Demonstrations, wall posters, conferences and similar activities. Beyond that, I don't know. But it seems to me that I'll do something. I'll set up an association or join a political party."

Teenagers look for what attracts or surprises them and adds to their lives via entertaining and beneficial activities. They aim for the lifestyle they fantasize about at university and in the student movement, probably imagined rather than real. But reality is mostly unattractive. Thus their real, practical interest in politics is almost a function of their suffering, and the conflicts and wars that affect their lives, societies and nations. This is unavoidable.

## A. Attitudes towards wars

Attitudes towards war are similar in the countries of the study. Differences within the same country sometimes seem greater, and attitudes more complex, when an outside conflict is related to an internal one, or in the case of a civil war. Overall, a clear consensus has emerged on some issues, particularly universal issues. Attitudinal diversity becomes greater when the conflict is close to the adolescent's country and when the issue is more about reacting and confronting war than determining a moral attitude to it or identifying its causes.

The interviews were conducted in a period which saw the attacks on the WTC Twin Towers in New York, war in Afghanistan and threats to Iraq, when the Palestinian Intifada was stepped up and Israel was repressing it. It is natural that such events recur in the adolescents' rather angry responses. These also included attitudes towards the United States and its foreign policy, with fewer references to ex-Yugoslavia and other local military and political conflicts.

Teenagers unanimously condemn and reject war for moral, human and logical reasons. Ashraf (18, Lebanon) thinks war is "destructive and cannot be a manner for humans to pursue their goals. No-one wins in a war. Everyone loses". Dana (17, Lebanon): war is an "expression of light-headedness and must not occur at all". Shadha (18, Yemen) says "war is horrible. I want the world to be a peaceful place. If there's a role for me to play, I will call for peace. I don't want people to go to war, Muslims or non Muslims." Noura (15, Bahrain) thinks "wars are bad and destroy societies and generations and influence future generations." Yasmine (15, Bahrain) hopes "to have extraordinary power to stop wars. Cause of war is unimportant. Wars destroy, kill and spoil." Jihad (18, Tunisia) thinks war is the ugliest human action because it leaves behind poverty and destruction. Ibtisam (18, Morocco) dreams of "peace and Adam's sons living without lies and hypocrisy, wanting for their brethren what they want for themselves, be they Muslim, Jew or Christian, all equal." Adolescents unanimously hate war, seeing it as violence, destruction, death and horror. Warda (16, Egypt) warns of the risk of getting used to the images of killing that appear daily in the media: "We'll soon feel what's happening is natural and that it's normal to hear that a number of people have been killed in a given place. I think the most horrible thing is when killing people becomes normal."

These attitudes reflect moral grounds for, and general attitudes to, war. But the attitudes fall between these two points differently for each issue. For attitudes to the United States, there is a near consensus that American policy is domineering and high-handed and seeks to dominate the world. It is seen as the first cause of artificial wars everywhere. Variation by country, gender, age, social group, religious affiliation, political and ideological background does not intervene in the very wide consensus on this point. Shaddad (16, Yemen) feels that "America didn't wage war on Afghanistan because it attacked the Twin Towers, but because it wants to impose its colonial domination over the world." Ashraf (18, Lebanon) believes that "it caused the war in Bosnia". Ward (17, Yemen) thinks "the cause of war is the attempt by the strong countries to dominate the weak ones". Jasim (17, Yemen) clarifies his attitude to the United States and war: "I hate wars because they are human tragedies, but I'm aware that they are unavoidable and I don't know whether they will end in the near future...America is a free marvellous country where people are naÔve and obscure. I don't like its foreign policy because I'm Arab and it cares about its interests. If Arab countries were in the American position, they would behave in the same way." Hanan (18, Bahrain) sets criticism of America in the context of its conflict with the Arabs: "The war is sometimes against us, as in Palestine. America is the enemy of Arabs and Muslims and supports Israel."

Frame 2.22

## Female and male adolescents in Palestine

The contemporary history of Palestine has witnessed two essential events. The first occurred in 1948, when the State of Israel was created on part of Palestinian territory. The second was in 1967, when Israel occupied all Palestine (and some other Arab land). From that date on, Palestinians have been living under occupation or in refugee camps in Arab countries or as migrants scattered around the world. Successive generations of Palestinian children and adolescents have not had a single day of freedom from occupation and displacement or a single day of peace and security. If Palestine has been since the mid-eighties in a continuous state of uprising and open conflict with the occupation, this means that the current generation of children and adolescents under the age of 18 have not known a single day without confronting the occupation. This situation represents and will represent the most important issue in their daily life.

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, female and male adolescents (15-19 years) represented 10.4% of the total population at the end of 2000 (10.6% of total male and 10.2% of total female population). What are the main characteristics of this group?

As regards social status, statistics show that in this group average female marriage was high, at 18.4% as against 0.7% for boys. Cases of female marriage before this age were few and not above 0.2%, whereas in the 20-24 age group the rates were 58.6% for girls and 21.1% for boys. These age groups had the highest divorce rate in 2000: 14% of girls in the 14-17 age group and 44% in the 18-24 age group, whereas the rates for boys were 0.8% and 26.8%.

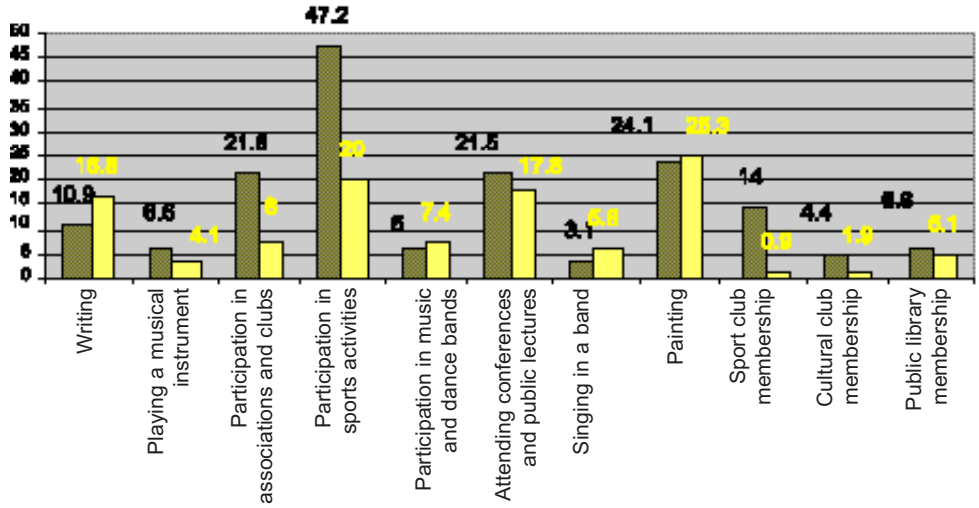
As for jobs, the rate of participation of the 15-19 age group in the workforce was 34.8% for boys and 2.2% for girls. The unemployment rate was 21.2% for the 15-19 age group and 19.3% for the 20-24 age group. As to sector, most of the 15-19 age group worked in building and construction (24.5%), followed by mining, quarries and manufacturing (22.6%), trade, restaurants and hotels (21.9%), and agriculture and fisheries (47.6%). Child (under 15) labour was mainly found in agriculture and fisheries (47.6%) and trade, restaurants and hotels (23.5%). 21.6% of all working teenagers worked in Israel and the settlements; the rest worked in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The economic embargo imposed by Israel quickly and sharply increased unemployment in the Palestinian territories. In 2000, the unemployment rate (according to the ILO definition) for the 10-24 age group was 13.4% in the third quarter, and 28.4% in the fourth quarter. If the extended definition of unemployment is adopted (counting hopeless job-seekers), as is more appropriate to Palestinian reality, these rates could become 38.8% and 53.2%, respectively.

With regard to educational indicators, 71.2% of boys and 76.2% of girls in the 15-17 age group are registered. Palestine is like many Arab countries in that the rate of girls' schooling is higher than boys'. Boys join the job market in greater numbers at this age. The rate of school dropout for the 15-19 age group is 25.9% (27.2% for boys and 24.4% for girls). The illiteracy rate for the same age group is 1.6% despite the occupation and the open clash.

The extremely harsh conditions have not prevented Palestinians, teenagers included, having hobbies and joining clubs and associations. Girls are more interested in writing, dancing and singing bands; boys prefer sports and activities in clubs and associations.

As for health indicators, 41.2% of girls (15-19 years) are not covered by any health security scheme. 9.8% of them are smokers, with a significant difference between the West Bank (12.3%) and the Gaza Strip (5.4%).

With regard to casualties during the Al-Aqsa Intifada, there were 710 martyrs in one year (29 September 2000-28 September 2001), 382 of them between the ages of 10 and 24. There were 14,532 injured, 4,552 of them between the ages of 10 and 18. This is unprecedented in the world; its cause is not transient events or conflict but uninterrupted, decade-long acts, daily.




## Palestine

For many adolescents, the war has not been academic but an ongoing war in the land of Palestine.(2) The Palestine issue tests their beliefs and moral-philosophical attitudes to the war as well as their political and actual attitudes. Attitudes do not differ as to oppressor and oppressed, who's right and who's wrong in the conflict. But teenagers claim in their responses that they are neutral, rational and objective when dealing with the Intifada and the violent repression of it. Sympathy and a sense of identification with a single cause are visible from Morocco to the Gulf, including Palestine's neighbouring countries in the Middle East.

In view of this, the moral attitude of adolescents is generally against the war and its tragedies. The oppressor/oppressed duality (aggressor versus those defending their rights) leads to moral and political justification of a 'just war' - the Palestinian war to liberate the occupied land. In fact, some do not see liberation resistance as war. Nadia (16, Egypt) explains: "No war is good. People die; children die; women die. They are displaced. Homes are destroyed. But war is sometimes necessary. For instance, can the Palestinians regain their land without war?" Soumaya (18, Egypt) has difficulty describing events in Palestine as war: "This is a one-sided war by Israel. I'm with the resistance and the return of all lands." Mustafa (17, Lebanon), who experienced Israeli occupation and witnessed the Qana Massacre in 1996, associates war with Israel: "War takes place as a result of one state dominating another, as in the case of Israel's domineering will and the resulting occupation of Palestine. Every people under occupation must rebel. The way America is dominating the world will cause a revolution against its policy. All this because of the greed of big powers. There's no other solution than war."

Adolescents in Morocco, Bahrain, Yemen, Tunisia, Algeria share the same attitude to the Palestinian cause; we cannot sense a clear position on what can be done. The interviews highlighted the role of satellite TV reporting on Palestine, which the overwhelming majority watch (they say). This increases concern and awareness of how dangerous the situation is and how greatly the Palestinians are oppressed. The role of the media seems greater than that of governments, parties and political movements, but goes no further than reporting and creating anger and a unspecific desire to act. It does not methodologically and coherently offer some contribution that adolescents, or Arabs in general, can make to support the Palestinian people. Teenagers oscillate between despair and helplessness, and the wish to carry out a martyr's attack in Palestine.

Narmin (18, Egypt) says: "What's happening in Palestine drives you mad. When we watch TV, we want to smash it because we can't do anything. We only donated food and clothes. They gave us posters that we posted up at school. What can we do? I don't know. It seems to me that people should volunteer and help them. But this isn't possible either." Dana (17, Lebanon) says: "I'm very much moved by the situation in Palestine. I cry a lot when I see the pictures of the massacres and I can't watch TV. If I can do a martyr's attack, I won't hesitate. But I feel I'm so far away from Palestine." Fadwa (16, Tunisia) wishes she could give an army to the Palestinian people so they can defend themselves. The same wish is expressed by more than one Yemeni, yearning for martyrdom fighting and dying in Palestine. Shaddad (16, Yemen): "I'd like to join Hamas and fight in Palestine.

**(2)** This report was prepared before the war on Iraq.

He who dies there is a martyr because he's fighting the infidel." Hanin (17, Tunisia) accuses Arabs of indifference: "If they don't give oil to America, its economy will stop." Jihad (18, Tunisia) also blames the Arabs: "The first culprit in the Palestinian war is the Arabs because they aren't up to what they must do... they don't know how to work and don't make an effort to be strong."

## America and Oussama Bin Ladin

The views on war and resistance lead to more complex issues, linking resistance in Palestine to the 9/11 events, war in Afghanistan, threats to Iraq, and Oussama Bin Ladin. Religion and religious militancy are a common denominator. The war between Arabs and Israelis, and between Palestinians and Israelis, is seen as one of Muslims against Jews. The clash with the US is described as war against Crusaders and infidels. Thara (16, Yemen): "When I say the war between the Jews and Palestine, of course I can take part in it. If the war is between Iraq and Kuwait, it's a war between Muslim states, therefore I can't take part in it. The same applies to Afghanistan and Pakistan. I could participate if they were infidels. America deserves what happened to it because it's guilty. It's true, innocent people were killed and I feel they were oppressed. Allah is merciful. It's true they were Christians who believed in Allah. Anyway, if they died it was their destiny." Use of the term 'Jews' with reference to the conflict with Israel is widespread, even among non-religious adolescents, like Ashraf, a secular leftist from Lebanon, who uses the same term in the same context.

The use of religious terminology about the conflict with the United States after 9/11 (the war as a crusade, the clash as one with infidels) seems less frequent. It occurs in two cases. First, among adolescents with religious-political thinking; second, parroting what the media says. Oussama (18, Yemen) says: "Since America declared a war on Afghanistan, we must wage an Islamic war on the Crusaders." In a mixture of religious awe and heroics (the influence of the media is clear), Faris (15, Yemen) says of Bin Ladin: "How powerful his Islam is! If somebody else was chased and followed from one mountain to another, he would have surrendered. But he's not scared and death for him is better than surrender." Once again, satellite TV is responsible for awareness formation and, probably, the imagination/reality mix. Faris (15) says: "I followed the news as long as it covered Oussama Bin Ladin. When it stopped, I gave up following it." Amrou (16, Egypt) reports his father saying: "What Bin Ladin did is like what Nasser did when he nationalised the Suez Canal." Samia (15, Bahrain) sees in him "a strong, stubborn personality and I like it because he defied the strongest power in the world, that is America, which is supporting Israel." Another common viewpoint questions the effectiveness of what Bin Ladin did, and some object to linking him to Islam. Farouk (18, Egypt) says: "Bin Ladin has nothing to do with Islam. It's true he's broken American arrogance, but not this way. This is illegal in Islam and religion." Imad (17, Egypt) criticises Bin Ladin for what his action led to: "He may have his reasons for what he did, but that was not the ideal way to go about it. Wars have broken out in the world and Muslims are badly treated everywhere as a result of what happened."

The Lebanese interviews show a strong belief that "the Jews were behind it". The media, and information that Jewish employees had not turned up at the World Trade Center on the morning of the attacks, may be responsible. Here is conspiracy theory, whether or not the information is correct. One attitude denies responsibility; another claims and boasts of responsibility. The first reaction is usually emotional: "They deserve it"; "They have a taste of what we've long been tasting", followed by concern for the innocents and for consequences, and fear of what may follow.

Shadha (18, Yeman) wants world peace. Because she is so moved by events in Palestine, she hates war: "To the point that when I saw what happened in America, I was very much moved, although I don't like America." The search for solutions can lead to original proposals, such as Farouk's (16, Yemen) hope for "peace in the entire world so that everyone is comfortable and adversaries are apart, like the Israelis pushing back from the Palestinians and vice versa - all living in peace." Adolescents swing between dream and reality, naivety and evidence, emotion and reason, principled firmness (frozen in past slogans) and total flexibility, questioning the inability to achieve justice, sincerity and faithfulness.

## B. Defining power

To adolescents, power appears as spread and scattered around them. But one can identify three basic circles of power exerted over them. The first is the family, where father and mother represent power. In some cases, the elder brother comes before the mother, as shown in some of the interviews conducted

in Algeria and Yemen. The uncle on the father's or mother's side can, rarely, hold that power, particularly in places where the extended family still exists (Yemen). The second circle is the school or workplace. Here power is represented by the schoolmaster, deputy head, teachers, employer or his deputy. Power at school appears as order and discipline, disobedience to which is punished. At work, power involves enforcing orders and instructions, particularly for trainees. Punishment may be verbal or physical violence (as in the case of Jihad from Tunisia). The third circle is politics and public affairs. Here power is represented by the President, Government, police, army, judge, village chief (in the Egyptian countryside), and the state institutions. Sometimes power is represented by religious institutions and representatives, custom and tradition, and the elderly. In some cases, the responses refer to a power dimension in relations between friends.

Power penetrates all sectors and spreads 'everywhere', but the focus on exercise of power varies from one adolescent to another. Teenagers' responses may fall within cross-country groups, with specific features, but attitudes to power and the way it is handled are similar. In the Tunisian interviews, power spreads across the three above-mentioned circles, with greater focus on the family and general politics. Whereas girls' responses focus more on family power (the father, then the mother), boys' focus more on power as represented in the public administration, and the political/state institutions. Jihad (18) thinks "power is to Allah first, then to those who govern on earth. Power is represented by the state, magistrates, police, national guard, all those who are sworn in, and anybody wearing an official uniform. All these are appointed by the President of the Republic to protect us and others." For Hana (18), the father is power: "When he gives an order, he must be obeyed."

The difference has emerged in other countries, such as Egypt. Nadia (16) says: "For me, the highest power in my life is my father's. I love him very much but fear him as much. Of course, outside the home, there's the power of the teacher, government, and so on. The father and mother are powers, and so are the husband and mother-in-law." Souhir (16) sums up: "Power has many forms. The clearest one is the government, but each place has its different power. At school, schoolchildren mostly fear the schoolmaster, followed by the teachers, who all represent power. At home, power is the family." For Hanin (15) and Shadha (18) from Yemen, power is the family, the father in particular. Hanin: "My father gives orders and controls things. When he's not around, my mother controls us." Shadha links the father's power and the justness she regards as pertinent and necessary.

Comparing the Algerian and Egyptian interviews, we note a difference, focusing on the private circle (Algeria) and the public circle (Egypt). Algerian adolescents refer more often to the family's power than the government's; the opposite is true for Egypt. This is an implicit reference to the unstable situation in Algeria, leading to a focus on the family as offering protection as the state's role declines. The opposite holds for Egypt, where the state is strong. Some girls, like Hala (17, Algeria), see brothers as part of family power, an extension or representative of the father. Brothers may be asked to accompany or control their sisters outside the home, and can even give orders, allowing or prohibiting.

"He who is strong has power," says Bassam (17, Egypt). For Ilham (17), an Egyptian rural girl, the powerful are not only the pillars of the central power: "Power is the dignitaries, the government, the village chief, the civil officer." Sally (16, Egypt) agrees: "I believe that power here (in Cairo) is the government, but in the village, the village chief has the final word in important matters. That is, he is power." The power of the village chief is a mixture of institutional power (an extension of central power and state institutions) and social power (from complex factors in the local community and its relationship with the central power). Part of his power comes from society, customs and traditions, which may also be partly inherited. Amir (15) means this when he says: "In Egypt, society is power." Amrou (16, Egypt) attributes, with some exaggeration, all power to one single source, i.e. society. He points to the fact that the grounds on which power rests should not be missed or forgotten.

In describing power, teenagers link power and domination, imposing views, hardness, advice, obedience, power, justice, oppression, order, discipline, and protection. They agree that power is necessary and has existed throughout human history. They say they cannot envisage an anarchic society without power to regulate its affairs. But this never means unconditional, blind obedience. They tend to accept parental power more than other power. Although not always free from hardness and confrontation, parental power is safe for children, since they cannot imagine their parents will act against their interests (this appears clearly in the Algerian interviews). Even where there are different or conflicting views, the most obedient adolescents justify this by the fact that parents are more experienced and know the interests of

their children better than the children do. The attitude of obedience, understanding, or general acceptance thus prevails. Hayat (18, Tunisia) says: “Not everything we do is good and necessarily justifiable. We need older people to advise us and tell us what we should do.” Hanin (15, Yemen) does not object to “abiding by parental power without discussion, even when we’re not happy about the decision and are shouted at. We may get angry, but what matters is our interests. When we grow up, we realise they’re right.” But Walid (18, Bahrain) seems to swing between spontaneous and critical obedience to those older than him. He has started asking himself questions: “I respect higher power, the one that can impose its view on me and I can respect it and discuss it. Wrong things come from them, but I used to obey them because they were older than me.” Some go further, like Shadha (18, Yemen) who thinks the person who wields power must be just: “Some things we’re forced to do without conviction. For me, this is control, when someone wants to control everything, even what’s not his. I’m not in favour of absolute power.”

The situation is more complex outside the circle of home and family. Obedience is harder since the affective family link disappears and the call for justice and sound decisions appears. This is expressed by Ilham (17, Egypt): “Order is necessary, but the ruler must rule justly.” Nadia (16, Egypt) thinks obedience is necessary “when power is right, but when it ‘lies’ it must be resisted”. Dhikra (18, Tunisia) agrees: “There’s no harm in obeying those who have power if their orders are in our interests. But if it’s a dictatorship, I reject it; and in this case, I prefer to look after my own interests.” Hikmat (15, Egypt) criticises rejecting power for stubbornness’ sake, for power must exist “to organise people, bring them to account, and protect them”. But people must be able to choose their power and bring it to account, or how can it be obeyed? Imad (17, Egypt) gets close to linking obedience to ‘democracy’. He draws a distinction: “Power differs from one place to another. In some countries people choose their power and it’s understood why they support it. If power doesn’t emanate from the people and is imposed on them, this means they won’t obey it unless they have to and are scared.”

As well as the moderate attitudes, there are ‘extremist’ examples of power rejection or acceptance. The rejectionists believe “it’s difficult to find a just power in the world. Power always tends to dominate. You may think things are done in your interests, but it’s just the opposite,” says Ahmad (17, Bahrain). Ahmad (17) and Samir (16), from Tunisia, think power necessarily entails abuse, exploitation and excess. Samir says power is always arbitrary and repressive. “Dialogue is lacking. There is no dialogue between us. Nobody listens. For example, the policeman never listens to you. He starts beating you first.” The accepters praise power, even public, not parental. Jihad (18, Tunisia) internalizes the ideology of absolute obedience to power by sanctifying it. He uses power to describe any form of statehood (magistrates, police officers, national guard, civil servant on the Koran oath, and all who wear official uniforms). All are appointed by “the President of the Republic to protect us and others”. Power, he thinks, is Allah’s, followed by those who govern the country; when a motorbike rider is fined for not wearing his helmet, he thinks “the policeman acts like this, not to protect the life of the young man, but because the country needs him to build the future”. Thus Jihad, a poor young trainee mechanic, internalizes the values of obedience and declares them to an unknown researcher, asking him a question on his view of power.

## 4. Happiness, success, money and immigration

Adolescents see happiness as generally related to success. The two concepts are intertwined, if not the same. Happiness is defined as the highest achievement of desires, ambitions or projects. It is contentment and satisfaction with what one does. This underscores the idea of satisfaction as a mixture of self-fulfilment and ambition realized, and reduces happiness to the level of satisfaction with actual and potential achievement. The difference in attitudes between these two ends reflects differences in social affiliation (poor classes of limited capacities, rich middle classes). A difference has also emerged between pupils ambitious for educational success, paving the way to professional success, and school-leavers who have entered the job market against their wish and personal choice, and for whom happiness is the forced acceptance of existing reality - “alleviating pain by reducing expectations”.

In the Moroccan interviews, there is some indication that happiness “does not exist at all”. Fatima (17) and Radhouan (15) equate it with “contentment” and “helping people”, respectively. These brief responses are eloquent expressions of the distance between hope and reality. Even when Hasan (18, Morocco) defines happiness in more detail, he sticks to simple platitudes (difficult to accomplish): “Happiness is living without problems, having a steady job, eating well, and not having a headache.”

When clear projects exist for adolescents, happiness and success usually relate to the accomplishing of such projects and objectives. Happiness appears as a future, not a present, issue: “Happiness is attaining aims. When we achieve our objectives, we are happy at the affective and professional level, and all levels,” as Maisa (18, Algeria) says. Faouzi (18, Bahrain) agrees that “success is part of attaining aims and a better future.” Samia (15, Bahrain): “Success is important for my job and my future.”

## A. Money has no moral value...

According to adolescents, money has limited importance. Although most belong to low- and middle-income social groups, money has no moral value for them and they do not link it to happiness and success; it is usually associated with meeting needs, solving material problems, and helping the family out. It is sometimes related to important moral wishes, such as saving money to pay for the Hajj (pilgrimage) for a parent, or developing a modest project, or paying a family debt. When asked how to spend a large amount of money, the responses of many adolescents converged on helping the poor and handicapped, supporting associations, building a mosque, or creating a social welfare centre. While they express a sense of social solidarity, these views tend to separate the concept of ‘money’, as a specific cash amount to fulfil social and consumer needs, and the concept of ‘capital’, as used in a project to make a profit regardless of work type and social benefit. Thus the concept of success is still far from the concept of professional success, in the financial, economic or industrial sense, as known in industrial societies, where a person’s success is equated with a successful economic project.

Success, for the Algerian girls, can take the form of “educational or professional success” in the case of Marwa (18), or “a stable job and a good salary” in the case of Ghalia (17), or “marriage and starting a family”. Success is also associated with happiness: “Success is when all our dreams come true,” say Fariha (16) and Alyssa (16): “My happiness is when I realize my dreams.” But the question is how to make these dreams come true, and where.

Only a few teenagers do not express the wish to travel for study, migration, tourism or Hajj. Sometimes, the absence of the desire to travel is realistic, given the limited financial resources and youth. In Lebanon, the poorest interviewees do not express the desire to travel.

The destinations chosen vary as much as the causes and reasons. European countries (France, Italy, Spain) are preferred, particularly in the Maghreb and Machrek. This is due to geographical proximity, human and cultural contact, admiration of the cultural heritage, and the desire to know their way of life, plus the idea that they are advanced societies that respect human rights, with some democracy and a social sense. Teenagers cannot find these advantages in a country like the United States, infrequently chosen as a destination. The Euro-Mediterranean states are preferred, compared to Britain, Germany and north European states. Travelling to these countries is for the purposes of study, work, tourism, and immigration.

The second group have non-Mediterranean cultures and civilisations, and include Asian countries (Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, India), Argentina and African countries (South Africa). The purpose of travel is to know about their civilisations and, most probably, out of curiosity and for pleasure.

The third group includes Arab countries. Saudi Arabia is referred to fairly often in more than one Maghreb or Machrek country or Yemen, to go for Hajj or to visit the holy sites. A Bahraini boy mentions Iran, showing the religious dimension. Lebanon is also mentioned in Yemen, Egypt, and Morocco; its image is an open, democratic country with “beautiful girls” (influence of Lebanese satellite TV?). Palestine is also mentioned for the sacredness of the land and the admired Palestinian struggle against Israel. Egypt is repeatedly mentioned, to get to know Pharaonic civilisation, as well as the Egyptians’ ‘humorous’ reputation. (The impact of Egyptian films, soap operas and songs is clear.)

Adolescents travel with their hearts, minds and dreams. Sometimes they travel within their own borders. Ilham (17), from the Egyptian countryside, says: “I want to see Cairo first.” They may also travel abroad to enjoy themselves, and then decide to stay or go back.

Amrou (16, Egypt) sums it up: “I want to travel round the world then settle down in Egypt. I get a new job, fulfil my religious duty by marrying a beautiful, humorous, affectionate girl who cares for me and our children and helps us. A loving wife who knows how to live.”

## B. Migration and travel: Social promotion

For many adolescents, migration is about getting a better future via study or a well-paid job. It can be an end in itself, to escape from the country's economic and political situation. It is seen as almost the only way out of despair, loss and the absence of horizons.

Travelling to study a specialty is a basic option for pupils, especially those who link social success to a good scientific training and a specialization that provides better job opportunities, not always available inside the country. High unemployment rates and the difficulty in finding the sort of job they want are an important reason for migration. Finally, unstable political and security situations also encourage migration.

Such factors are in the minds of adolescents when they think of migration. They determine whether it will be permanent or temporary, for study or employment. Teenagers may travel just to study and return home. Nawf (16, Yemen) hopes to travel to a European country like England to study. Souheila (16, Egypt) wants to study abroad and then return to Egypt. They may decide to get a temporary job to achieve an objective and return: Bassam (17, Egypt) wants to go to Saudi Arabia, save some money, open a shop and "make his life". Walid (18, Algeria) wants to go to England and make money and buy a flat, but then to return home, "which can give him a psychological rest". This option may lead to making a life abroad. Temporary study may end in settling abroad for a long period if there is a chance of a good job. Dual objectives appear in Abdallah's testimony (17, Egypt); he sometimes thinks about emigrating but is afraid of destroying his parents' dream about him graduating, and has therefore decided to join the Faculty of Commerce because it prepares him (in his view) for work in the Gulf. However, Thara (16 years, Yemen) wants to migrate and settle abroad.

A dual attitude towards one's country is clear. The country is what the adolescent wants to escape from to lead (s/he thinks) a more liberal, comfortable life. But it is the shelter to which s/he will return to cherish and share the savings made in exile. Some contradiction appears in the adolescents' attitudes; Mohamed (17, Egypt), for example, is torn between his dream to change his country's situation and his wish to go abroad.

Sometimes travelling for work is linked to a specific goal, usually saving money and returning to live in the country of origin, but the option is open to other possibilities. The most decisive option is when many factors mingle to encourage migration, particularly when the economic factor combines with that of lack of safety and political stability, or a long period of internal strife and war. Then the option is accompanied by psychological factors that offer migration as a solution, irrespective of what the migrant will face in the host country. This is so in countries with high unemployment rates, where adolescents do not see any end to the tunnel. Alyssa (16, Algeria) dreams of being a journalist and wants to go to Belgium: "Young people have no future in Algeria, for unemployment is destroying their ambitions." Thinking of migration is linked to unemployment in all the countries in the study (particularly Morocco, Lebanon, Egypt and Tunisia). Aicha (17, Morocco) says her one wish is to one day go to France. Sihem (16, Morocco) openly wishes to live abroad.

We see other cases where the combination of economic and political problems (as in Algeria) explains the strong migratory tendency. In the Algerian interviews, migration is an obsession, a dream. Hala (17, Algeria) says: "My greatest dream is to leave Algeria. Staying here doesn't guarantee an excellent future for me, whereas the other world may have more opportunities for success." Maysa (18, Algeria) agrees. She wants to go to France and have a successful job and life: "There's no future in Algeria." Marwa (18) intends to become a professional translator to be able to travel; she feels very happy when she travels and "goes out of Algerian society", seeing life in her country as unbearable and people struggling to survive.

Sometimes the existence of a migratory tradition in a country, easy migration, or geographical proximity to the destination (Lebanon and Tunisia) encourage migration in imitation of relatives and acquaintances who have done so. Those Lebanese adolescents who do not express a desire to travel or migrate come from the poorest groups. For them, the option is not realistic, given the lack of money and successful experiences in their environment. Teenagers usually build their future projects on the basis of the 'successful' experience of some acquaintance they want to emulate. The dream is more legitimate if others have achieved it. Jihad (18, Tunisia) is considering migrating illegally to Italy; he knows people who have done so. His choice is motivated by the fact that "he loves taking risks and doesn't lack ambition".

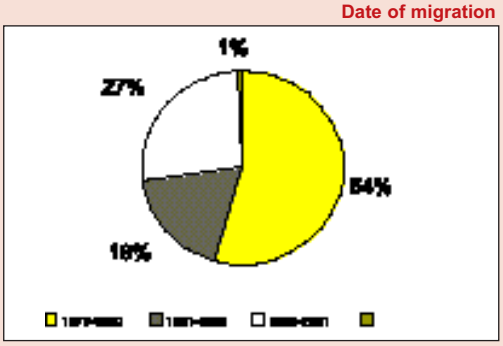
## Chart 2.10: Immigration characteristics in Lebanon 1975-2001

Lebanon is one of the few Arab countries with an old tradition of migration to different parts of the world. In a study of youth economic integration and migration conducted by the Jesuit University in Lebanon in 2003, it appears that slightly under half of Lebanese families (46.2% of families) have seen one of their members migrate between 1975 and 2001. The main features of the migration in terms of migration year, country of destination, and cause, are:

### Date of migration

About 54% of migrants in the study period migrated during the war from 1975 to 1990 (an average of 3.6% p.a.), and 18.4% migrated during the first half of the 1990s when the economic and political expectations were relatively optimistic (an average rate of 3.7% p.a.), whereas the rate of the second half of the 1990s (1996-2001) was 26.6% (an average rate of 4.4% p.a.) when there was an economic recession.

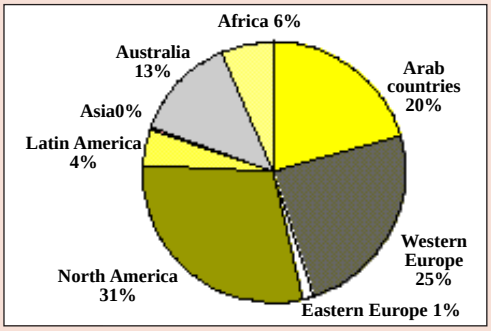
Date of migration




### Country of destination

Most Lebanese immigrants migrated to North American countries (29.5%). The prevailing pattern is permanent residence for work, involving the whole family (particularly migration to Canada). European countries (24.4%) and Arab countries (20.4%) come next. Migration to Australia (13.1%) is for permanent settlement and work, involving the whole family. As for Western Europe and North America (the USA in particular), migration has mixed motivations: study, employment, permanent residence.

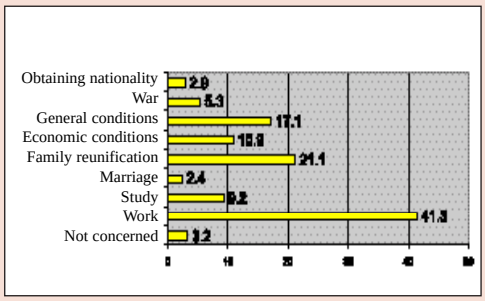
Country of destination




### Cause of migration

Most Lebanese immigrants migrated in search for employment (41.3%), plus 10.9% who migrated again for economic reasons. 21.1% migrated to reunite with their families. 17.1% and 5.3% attributed the cause of migration to general conditions and the war, respectively. 9.2% of all migrants migrated to pursue their studies.

Cause of immigration




**Source:** L'entrée des jeunes dans la vie active et l'émigration [Youth Employment Integration and Immigration]. Presse de l'Université Saint Joseph: Beirut, 2003.

## General conclusions

The four themes of the chapter have shown differences in teenagers' attitudes, behaviour and ideas. The first general difference between articulated attitudes and actual behaviour relates to the duality between words and deeds in society. The specific dimension of the first difference expresses the features of attitude formation and personality building and the oscillation between internalizing prevailing values and repeating accepted attitudes under the impact of family and school education, and confronting the mismatch of such values with their needs and beliefs by questioning them and using their right of choice.

The gap between attitudes and actual behaviour is a result of the lack of internal consistency in the formative period, with its confusion, lack of courage or inability to identify a general justification for actual behaviour. The latter remains socially 'illegitimate' and is part of the general social duality between statements that are in line with prevailing values and practices that are tolerated, even if they contradict those values, as long as they are not openly stated.

The second difference between attitudes and/or behaviour and concepts is due to the fact that the transition from the first to the second level of attitude and behaviour is a complex operation, requiring a high degree of abstraction and consistency between aspects of the teenage personality in different fields. This is a difficult operation that becomes easier as adolescents grow older and their experience and activities more diversified. Such an operation requires a supportive milieu, which is not generally the case in Arab societies, either at school or in the family or society, where the most common values are obedience, profit, and traditional thinking.

The interviews show the embryonic beginnings of consistency between the three dimensions: attitudes, behaviour and general concepts. There are individual cases where specific factors have played an essential part: the adolescent who lives in an open, cultured and socially active family that has enabled him/her to think coherently on behaviour and attitudes, or the teenager who has a political, social or cultural activity that has enabled him/her to build a coherent personality, or the adolescent who has a comprehensive understanding that organises his/her attitudes to most issues. Such coherence does not always result from critical, selective thought but from a hasty one-off choice, followed by obedient acceptance of what results therefrom.

It is difficult to say adolescents in the different countries have adopted very complementary value systems. We mean by this the set of dialectically interdependent values that are brought under a common logic and goals covering more than one part of the lives of female and male adolescents. We exclude from the system existing religious ideas that cut across national boundaries at two levels. The first concerns popular religious belief, dominated by ritual and behaviour; although tied to a number of basic moral points that are constantly present in the teenagers' mental and behavioural backgrounds, it is varied, flexible and linked to the national and local characteristics of every society, in terms of attitudes and behaviour.

The second level concerns the political or political-cultural religious movements that transcend national frontiers. It is closer to the value system of the above-mentioned sense. Though the believers' attitudes and behaviour differ, influenced by local milieus, families and individuals, the attitudes of people who belong to political religious groups are similar (and where they differ, they do so in relation to sub-divisions inside that group) and deal with political, moral and behavioural attitudes and views on women. Here, the highest degree of similarity in typical attitudes is found within this group of different countries. We also find the highest degree of attitudinal interdependence between different areas for the same individual, although the cause of this similarity is the observance/textual commitment to what is legitimate and what is forbidden, or the reiteration of unified attitudes towards total issues. Satellite TV plays a special part in unifying and modelling behaviour and ideas among members of political religious movements, and gives them a common identity.

At the opposite pole, what may be considered modern ideas (such values being different from globalization values, as shown in the introduction) are gradually emerging, supported by national and family milieus. This is distinct from the pattern of how religious and political movements and consumerist globalization [3] form; it is a difficult process, since it struggles against the prevailing situation with its poles of traditionalism and globalization, and offers a critical appraisal of such a situation.

**(3)** The values of modern globalization are addressed in the chapter on the culture of adolescence and behaviour. Second Report on Arab Women's Development

Deuxième partie :

# Quantitative indicators for Arab girls

# Quantitative indicators for Arab girls

## INTRODUCTION

Statistical data on adolescents in Arab countries is scarce, inconsistent and inaccurate. There is little interest in the subject in Arab countries generally, and thus few serious attempts to provide indicators about it. Available data on Arab girls has been collected on the basis of interest in adolescents as a specific age group, using population distribution by five-year group or educational stage. We shall use the data available on the 15-19 group and the secondary education stage for the adolescents targeted in the Report (15-18). [1]

For the purposes of analysis, the Arab countries have been put into four groups, each made up of four to six countries with common demographic, geographical, economic and social features that set them apart from the countries in the other three groups.[2]

- The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates. These countries share certain features, e.g. being situated in the Arab Gulf, having a desert or quasi-desert climate, low population density, a high rate of non-nationals, an economy that depends on the export of crude oil, and similar political systems.

- The more diversified economies, the Mashreq: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, the Arab Syrian Republic. These countries have more diverse geographic, demographic, economic, social and political features. Egypt has a high population density, and is the biggest exporter of labor to other Arab countries. Although Iraq is the only oil country, it is peculiar in that it has experienced war and a severe embargo for over two decades and then come under American occupation after a third Gulf War (2003). Lebanon is open and in many ways a leader of the Arab world, but endured a civil war for nearly 15 years and an Israeli occupation of part of its territory for 22 years. Palestine is unusual, having experienced war, exile and refugee camps, occupation, settlement, deportation, embargo and a resistance. Jordan and the Arab Syrian Republic are the Arab countries most affected by the Palestine issue (and the situation in Iraq, for Jordan), and suffer from the effects of war, refugees, and resistance that have accompanied this issue.

- The most diversified economies, the Maghreb: Algeria, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco and Tunisia. Algeria is an oil country which resisted French occupation and was one of the last to become independent; for many years it has undergone an internal conflict. Libya is an oil country and has been less open than some Arab countries; it endured an economic embargo for over ten years. Morocco has high employment and poverty, and has been affected by the Western Sahara issue, a huge economic burden. Tunisia has had a more consistent social policy than any other Arab country in fields such as education, employment and women's rights. The countries in this group all lie around the Mediterranean and communicate and interact with Europe. In some ways (culture, economy, labor mobility) they are more affected by Europe than by other Arab countries.

- The less developed countries: the Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. Although, unlike the countries of the other three groups, they are not geographically connected, they share some basic features: extremely low per capita income, poor education, health and government services, and high fertility. Most have varying degrees of political instability, and some have internal wars.

Undoubtedly, the similarities and difference between and within the groups of Arab countries suggests sources of strength when looking for solutions to adolescent problems.

**(1)** Papfam, the Arab survey on family health is a positive exception. This survey was done in Arab countries and others involved in this project - the League of Arab States, the Gulf Fund for the support of the UN agencies, the AGFUND, the United Nations population fund, plus national partners, and specialized ministries. The survey is important in that it provides a common data base for the applied methodology and indicators; it uses a special questionnaire for studying adolescent conditions, particularly aspects related to reproductive health. However, the project has not yet been implemented. Most of the data covers all the Arab countries. This chapter required the use of other sources providing data for all or most of these countries for successive periods of time; the results of the survey on family health have been used in several ways in the body of this Report.

**(2)** This is the same classification used in the First Arab Women Development Report, issued by CAWTAR in 2001, under the title Globalization and Gender: The Economic Participation of the Arab Woman.

The statistical tables (see statistical appendix) present indicators on the conditions of Arab adolescent girls. These indicators are presented for each group of Arab countries and give the average for each group, to draw comparisons between them[3].

## 2. Human Development

The human development guides published annually in the UNDP Human Development Reports provide quantitative criteria for international comparison. They cover various fields of human development; publishing them annually makes it possible to see how they develop.[4] Table 1 shows the values and order of the Arab countries based on the three most important of these indexes.

### Table 3.1: Human development indexes for the Arab countries

| Country | Index value | | | Ranking of countries | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Human Development Index 2000 | Gender-related Development Index, 2000 | Human Poverty Index 2000 | Human Development Index (in 20 countries | Gender-related Development Index (in 19 countries | Human Poverty Index (in 1* country |
| **GCC countries** | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 0.831 | 0.822 | .. | 1 | 1 | .. |
| Kuwait | 0.813 | 0.804 | .. | 2 | 2 | .. |
| Oman | 0.751 | 0.722 | 32.1 | 8 | 8 | 9 |
| Qatar | 0.803 | 0.794 | .. | 4 | 4 | .. |
| Saudi Arabia | 0.759 | 0.731 | 16.9 | 6 | 7 | 4 |
| United Arab Emirates | 0.812 | 0.798 | .. | 3 | 3 | .. |
| **GCC average** | **0.790** | **0.779** | **24.5** | **4.0** | **4.2** | **6.5** |
| **Most diversified economies-Mashreq** | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 0.642 | 0.628 | 31.2 | 13 | 13 | 7 |
| Iraq | *0.567 | *0.548 | *32.9 | 15 | 15 | 11 |
| Jordan | 0.742 | 0.701 | 8.2 | 9 | 10 | 1 |
| Lebanon | 0.755 | 0.739 | 9.9 | 7 | 6 | 2 |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Syrian Arab Republic | 0.691 | 0.669 | 19.3 | 12 | 12 | 5 |
| **Mashreq countries average** | **0.679** | **0.657** | **20.3** | **11.2** | **11.2** | **5.2** |
| **Most diversified economies-Maghreb** | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 0.697 | 0.679 | 23.4 | 11 | 11 | 6 |
| Libya | 0.773 | 0.753 | 16.2 | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| Morocco | 0.602 | 0.585 | 35.8 | 14 | 14 | 13 |
| Tunis | 0.722 | 0.709 | .. | 10 | 9 | .. |
| **Maghreb countries average** | **0.700** | **0.682** | **25.1** | **10.0** | **9.8** | **7.3** |
| **Less developed countries** | | | | | | |
| Comoros | 0.511 | 0.505 | 31.9 | 16 | 16 | 8 |
| Djibouti | 0.445 | .. | 34.3 | 19 | .. | 12 |
| Mauritania | 0.438 | 0.429 | 47.9 | 20 | 18 | 15 |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sudan | 0.499 | 0.478 | 32.7 | 17 | 17 | 10 |
| Yemen | 0.479 | 0.426 | 41.8 | 18 | 19 | 14 |
| **Less developed countries average** | **0.500** | **0.460** | **37.7** | **18.0** | **17.5** | **11.8** |

**Source:** Table 1-1, 1-3, and 1-4 in the Statistical Appendix

**(3)** The rates are simple arithmetic means given the practical difficulty of calculating weighted arithmetic means.

**(4)** Human development is defined as the process of expanding people's options. Basic options consist in people living an interesting and healthy life, acquiring knowledge, and obtaining the resources necessary for an acceptably adequate living standard. Based on this definition, the human development index measured by using three main dimensions of human development, namely: a long and healthy life measured by the indicator of life expectancy at birth; knowledge, measured by two indicators, the adult literacy rate, and the rate of enrolment in elementary, secondary and higher education combined; and the living standard, measured by the real individual share in the Gross Domestic Product.
The Human Development Index reflects the average achievement in the HD dimensions for the overall population, not taking into consideration gender inequality. To obtain a gender sensitive index, a second HDI, called gender-related development index, is calculated through adjustment of each indicator in the HDI according to the degree of discrepancy between males and females in the indicator.
The third Human Development Index, specific to the developing countries, is the Human Poverty Index (HPI). This index measures deprivations in the three principal dimensions of human development. Deprivation of long and healthy life in this index is measured by the indicator of the percentage of population who are not expected to live up to age 40. Deprivation of knowledge is measured by the percentage of adults who are illiterate. As to deprivation of a decent living standard, it is measured in this index by two indicators, namely the percentage of the population who do not use improved water resources, and the percentage of children under age five who are under-weight.
There are other indices and criteria related to HD which are published in HD reports. The most important of these reports, as far as the present Report is concerned, is the gender empowerment index. However, the values of these indices and criteria are available only for a limited number of Arab countries (see the HD reports).

## A. Reality and orientations of the Human Development Index

Table 1-1 in the Statistical Appendix shows that the values of the human development index for the four groups of Arab countries are of three different levels: a relatively high level in the limits of 0.8 which is enjoyed by the GCC countries; an average level in the limits of 0.7 which represents the level of the countries with the more diversified economics in the Mashreq and Maghreb, excepting Iraq; and a low level in the limits of 0.5 which represents the level of the countries in the least developed group.

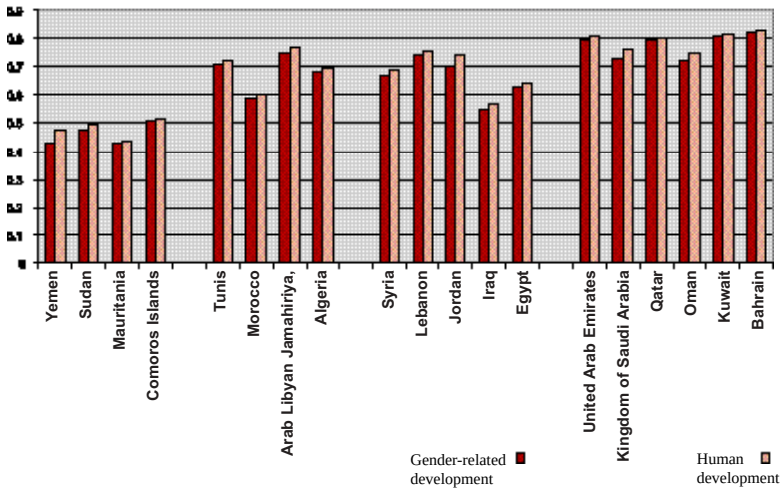
The economic dimension is the weightiest factor in determining this order. Whereas the HD rate for the GCC countries (which have the highest HD level) exceeds the corresponding rate for the group of least developed countries (which have the lowest HD level) by one third in the life expectancy indicator, and by one half in the literacy indicator, and resembles the group of less developed countries in the indicator for the general rate of educational enrolment, this rate is nine times higher than the indicator of the rate of the individual's share of GDP. The discrepancy in the individual's share of GDP has also contributed to the growth in the discrepancy in the first three indicators, particularly the indicator of the overall rate of enrolment in education, due to the high cost of raising this rate. The oil resources of the GCC countries directly increase the individual's share of GDP. Oil provides better opportunities to enjoy a long and healthy life, literacy and a decent standard of living.

A general feature of Arab countries is the advance of individual income compared to the other two HD dimensions, indicating that their economic resources enable them to achieve better social, health and educational results. The HDI average for Arab countries is approximately equal to that of all developing countries, despite the fact that average per capita share of GDP in Arab countries is 27% bigger than the corresponding average for developing countries. Also, the world ranking of most Arab countries, based on per capita share of GDP, is better than their ranking based on the HDI. This is particularly so for the GCC countries; the average ranking of these countries based on the HDI average is 55, while these countries have a GDP that enables them to rank 35, on average, based on the per capita share of GDP. The group of countries with the most diversified economies (Mashreq) is the only Arab group whose average HDI ranking was better than their average GDP indicator ranking, thanks to Lebanon (which ranks 75 according to the HDI, and 95 according to the GDP indicator).

The lagging of the social aspect (health and education) compared to the economic aspect in most of the Arab countries indicates that their development of social services has not kept pace with their high demographic growth, a growth that is thus disproportionate to the rapid growth of demand for health and education. Undoubtedly, adolescents are generally the social categories most affected by the health and education reality, not only in their present but, which is the most important, in their future also.

On the HDI for each country within each group, Table 1-1 and Figure 3.1 indicate that the greatest discrepancy occurs in the countries in the two most diversified economies groups, followed by the GCC countries, and finally in the LDC countries. The countries with the highest HDI compared to the other countries in their group are Lebanon, the Arab Libyan Jamahiriya and Tunisia. It seems that per capita share of GDP best explains the discrepancy between these countries and the others in their group.

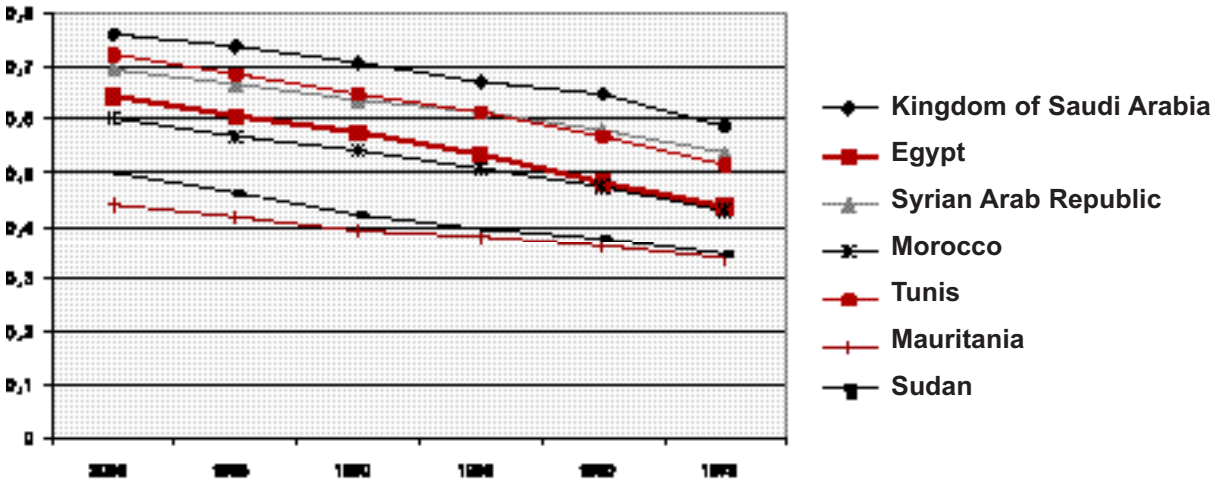
**Figure 3.1: The Human Development Index and the Gender-related Development Index**




**Source :** Human Development Report 2002

For HDI trends over the period 1975-2000, Table 1.2 shows that HDI values for the four groups have hardly changed over the past 25 years, the sole difference being that the groups of Mashreq and Maghreb countries swapped second and third place. The 4 groups showed different levels of improvement in the HDI averages: these averages rose by 0.218 for the Arab Maghreb countries, and 0.214 for the Arab Mashreq countries, while the average rose by 0.132 for the LDC countries, and 0.125 for the GCC countries. In the countries for which HDI values are available (at least for 1980-2000), Tunisia and Egypt achieved the greatest HDI rise, while Kuwait, Jordan and the Comoros Islands showed the lowest.

## Figure 3.2: Human Development Index Trends (1975-2000)




**Source :** Human Development Report 2002

## B. Human development and gender equality

The Gender-related Development Index (GDI) shows the extent of improvement achieved in HD aspects, taking into consideration the issue of gender equality. Table 1-3 shows that gender inequality in Arab countries is greater than in the world generally. From the values of the Arab countries' averages it seems that the GCC countries group has the greatest gender inequality, followed by the Arab Mashreq group, then the Arab Maghreb group, and finally the LDC group. Morocco and Tunisia hold the same place in both indexes; the positions of the Comoros Islands, Mauritania and Sudan are relatively positive in the world generally. This is a result of the policies adopted and progress achieved in the field of women's rights (in Tunisia and Morocco); for the LDC, the improvement is due to, first, a general drop in development indicators that reduces the gender gap, and second, the fact that more women are participating in economic activity (particularly agriculture) compared to other countries. This has been shown in CAWTAR's first Report on the Development of the Arab Women, Globalization and gender: The economic participation of the Arab woman.

Life expectancy at birth for females is less than four years higher than for males for most countries (the normal difference being 5 years). The literacy indicator for adults shows a disparity in favor of males in almost all Arab countries. The same is so for the indicator of overall rate of school attendance. But the disparity in this indicator is less sharp than in the literacy rate indicator. Also, the existence of Arab countries in which girls enjoy a higher rate of overall enrolment in education than boys implies a reduction in this disparity in education in the future. This disparity in the level of education for adolescents is lower than for older adults, because illiteracy is concentrated among the higher age categories.

The indicator of approximate net income shows a greater disparity than other GDI indicators. The rate of net income for females is approximately a quarter that of males in the GCC group, a third in the Arab Mashreq and Arab Maghreb groups, and half in the LDC group. The drop in net female income is due to the decrease in the rate of economically active females and to the decrease in their wages compared to those of males.[5]

## C. Human poverty and income poverty

Poverty data for Arab countries is scarce and not very accurate, with no common definition, measurement instruments or methodology. It is thus difficult to make comparisons. There is no international agreement on how to define and measure poverty. A narrow definition restricts it to lack of income (or expenditure) and measures it quantitatively via a poverty line reflecting a monetary counterpart of basic needs; a wider definition sees poverty not as material alone but including participation, or even personal dimensions such as the sense of deprivation. There are absolute, or relative, measures of poverty, and a host of methodologies and measurement methods that reflect both research trends and the complex nature of poverty.

Further difficulties emerge in relation to this Report. Detailed data on poverty by age category is almost inexistent, making it impossible to compare the poverty experienced by adolescents with that experienced by other age groups. For measuring poverty, the family, not the individual, is usually taken as a basis: all family members are ranked poor or non-poor according to whether the family is situated below or above the poverty line; adolescents' needs are seen as equal to those of other family members, despite their greater bodily activity and rapid physical growth, and greater need of calories and nutrition, clothes, educational and leisure materials.

Thus, compared to other family members, adolescents are poor. Some may be poor though their families are above the poverty line. Traditional means of measuring poverty fail to take this into account. Adolescents can be publicly embarrassed when they cannot have the goods and services their peers have. It is more necessary to include a behavioral dimension, the personal dimension, when describing poverty for adolescents than for adults.

In general, poverty in Arab countries can be seen from the income poverty angle and the human poverty angle (two perspectives in use world-wide). We can also separate utter poverty (very low income, malnutrition, hunger and lack of material needs for survival) from relative poverty (a set of basic needs including not only food but shelter, basic education, primary health care and clothing).

**(5)** The criterion of gender empowerment was calculated in the World Report on Human Development for the year 2002 for only one Arab country (Egypt), which ranked last but one. Only Bangladesh ranked lower. The HDI in the first Arab Human Development Report was based on the gender empowerment index for the year 1995.

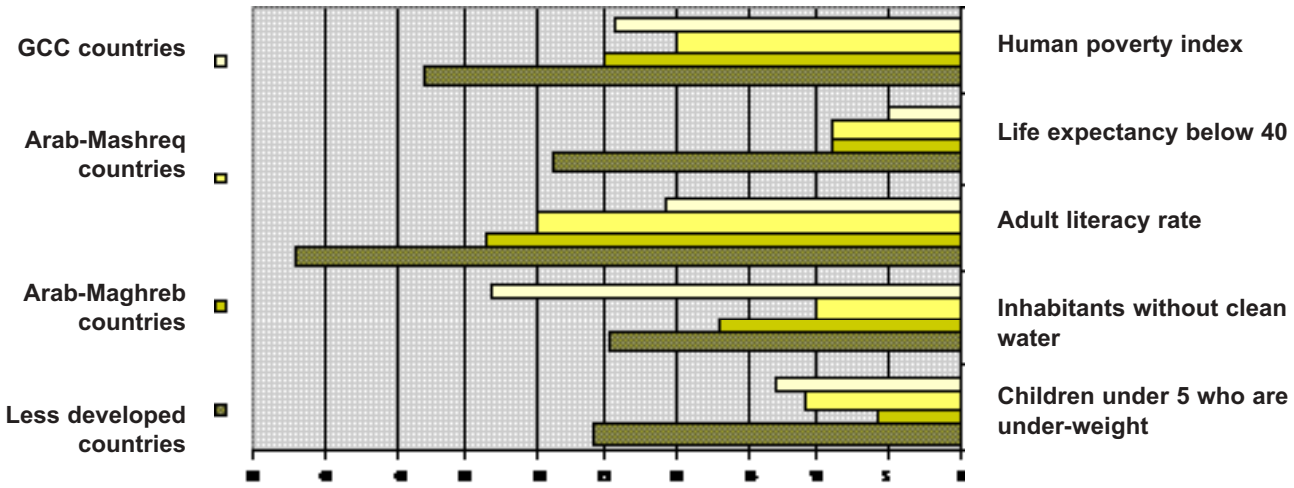
Fighting utter poverty and hunger is the first of eight goals defined in the U.N. Millennium Declaration (September 2000). The goal is to halve the number of people with a daily income of less than one dollar, and halve the number of people suffering from hunger, in 1990-2015. The two sub-goals are more suited to the less developed countries than to most of Arab countries, with their medium or high level of development.

Table 1-4 shows that the LDC group suffers most from income poverty (about half the people are poor), followed by the Arab Mashreq group (about a quarter are poor). Though the GCC group suffers least from income poverty, some (headed by Saudi Arabia and Oman) suffer from rates of poverty that are higher than expected (for rich oil countries).

The concept of human poverty used in human development reports is wider than that of income poverty because, in addition to what is needed for a decent standard of living, it includes two other human development dimensions - a long and healthy life, and knowledge acquisition. The human poverty index for developing countries measures deprivation of the three main human development aspects.[6] The difference between these two concepts led to different views on, and readings of, poverty: Jordan is first among Arab countries in terms of the human poverty index (which is low), though it ranks 13 in terms of income poverty.

The human poverty index indicators show that 5% of people in the GCC group do not expect to live to 40, 9% in the Mashreq and Maghreb groups, and 29% in the LDC group, as shown in Figure 3.3. This reflects the effect of different factors, the most important being income poverty, absence of health services and drinking water, and environmental pollution.

**Figure 3.3: The human poverty index**




**Source :** Human Development Report, 2002, and Baqir, Mohamed Hussein, Measuring poverty in the ESCWA countries, ESCWA, 1996.

Another indicator in the human poverty index is that showing the percentage of children under 5 who are under-weight. The rate registered by the GCC group is higher than the rate in the Mashreq and Maghreb groups, though the per capita share of GDP in the GCC group is three times higher than in other two groups. This is the result of unhealthy eating habits, more widespread among children in the GCC countries than among those in the other countries, and of the high percentage of children raised by foreign servants. The children's unhealthy eating habits or being under-weight is harmful when they reach adolescence.

## D. Other Human Development Indices

In addition to the indices used in the World Human Development Report, there are other criteria for human development. The 2002 Human Development Report contained a proposal to use a new criterion (the personal development indicator) for human development. This is a complex indicator

**(6)** In this Report, deprivation of a long and healthy life is measured by the indicator of the percentage of people who are not expected to live to 40; deprivation of knowledge acquisition is measured by the indicator of the percentage of illiterate adults. Deprivation of a decent living standard is measured by two indicators: the percentage of people who do not have access to clean water, and of children under five who are under-weight.

### Economic indicators: (7)

- The per capita share of GDP based on purchasing power parity (in dollars)
- The individual's share of calories (calories/day)
- The consumption of commercial power (kg oil/day)
- Non-food consumption as a percentage of total family consumption for living (%)
- Gross domestic investment as a percentage of GDP (%)
- Manpower as a percentage of the total population (%)

### Social indicators

- Life expectancy at birth
- Adult literacy rate (%)
- Overall attendance in primary, secondary and higher education (%)
- Student-teacher ratio in primary education (one teacher per 1,000 pupils)
- Telephone lines (per 1,000 inhabitants)
- TV sets (per 1,000 inhabitants)
- Percentage of population with access to electricity (%)
- Percentage of population with access to drinking water (%)
- Percentage of population with access to sewage disposal (%)
- Urban population as a percentage of total population (%)

### Human indicators

- Percentage of women working in administrative and organizational business
- Women's share of net income (%)
- Percentage of non-poor population
- Stability and peace indicator (3 points)
- Transparency indicator (percentage of indicators and indices of human development published in the Human Development Report (%).

Using this methodology, the GCC group is top for social and economic aspects but behind the Mashreq and Maghreb groups for the human aspect (women, poverty, stability, peace and transparency). Table 2.3 shows that the Maghreb group ranks first for the human aspect.

The study shows that Arab countries fall into three groups as regards the pattern of human development. For economic and social aspects, the same pattern exists in the GCC group, and a different pattern in the Mashreq and Maghreb groups. The LDC, with Morocco, follow a third pattern, as far as the social aspect is concerned. As regards the human aspect, the same pattern exists in Bahrain, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. A fourth pattern of development exists in the remaining Arab countries, except Sudan. Thus, Arab adolescent girls have similar economic and social conditions in each of the four groups of Arab countries, but different conditions within the same group, where the human aspect is concerned.

## Table 2.3: Record figures for human development aspects (Arab countries = 100)

| Group | Economic aspect | social aspect | Human aspect | overall index |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Economic aspect | 231 | 39 | 331 | 751 |
| social aspect | 901 | 79 | 411 | 201 |
| Human aspect | 901 | 501 | 801 | 011 |
| overall index | 77 | 48 | 47 | 08 |
| GCC countries | 001 | 001 | 001 | 001 |

* Sudan and Yemen only

**Source:** Mohamed Hussein Baqir, Measuring human development with special reference to the Arab countries, The Economic and Social Commission for West Asia and the United Nations Development Program, 1997.

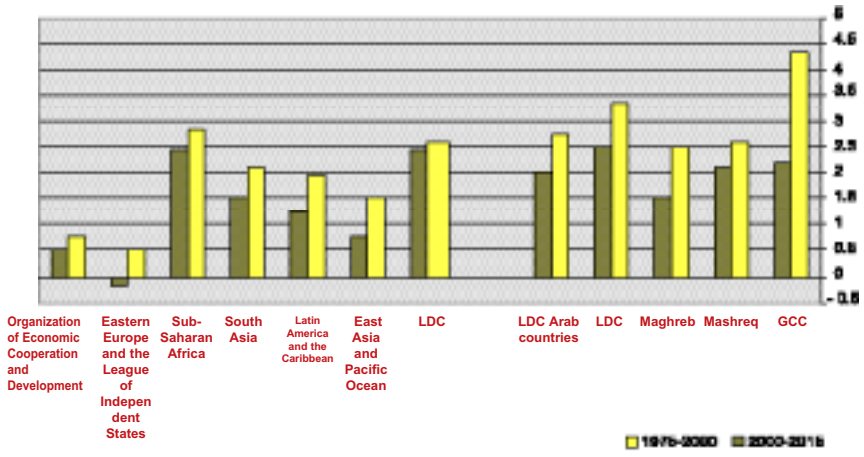
(7) Mohamed Hussein Baqir, Measuring human development with special reference to the Arab countries, The Economic and Social Commission for West Asia and the United Nations Development Program, 1997.

## 2- Population
### Demographic trends

The Arab countries' population doubled over 25 years from 126 million in 1975 to 249 million in 2000 (Table 2-1). Except for sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab region had the highest rate of demographic growth, with an annual growth rate of 2.7%. Though this is expected to drop to 2% in 2000-2015, it remains the highest in the world, apart from sub-Saharan Africa.

The Arab countries as a whole are experiencing steady demographic growth, especially the GCC and LDC groups, which are expected to register an annual demographic growth of 4.3% and 3.3% respectively in 2000-2015, compared to about 2.5% for the countries of the most-diversified economies (Figure 3.4). This demographic growth calls for high economic growth rates to absorb and transform demographic growth into productive energy, and not the reverse. Demographic growth should be accompanied by equal growth in the provision of health and education services and other human development requirements; their quantitative expansion should not be at the expense of quality or fairness. With low economic growth expected in the GCC and LDC, and negative effects of high demographic growth (e.g. unemployment), these countries increasingly need to commit themselves to a demographic policy that balances demographic and economic growth. This is particularly important for adolescents because they are most affected by a quantitative and qualitative decrease in the level of per capita share in education services, and suffer most from unemployment.

**Figure 3.4: Rate of annual demographic growth, 1975-2015**




**Source :** UNICEF: Official summary: The state of the world's children, 2002

Table 2-1 shows the persistence of demographic growth rates in cities and urban zones. It is expected that by 2015, 59% of people in the Arab region will live in urban zones, compared with 49% of people in the LDC. It is also expected that by 2015, 92% of people in the GCC group, 72% in the Mashreq group, 73% in the Maghreb group and 57% in the LDC group will be urban. The rapid rise in urban population springs from factors including the rural exodus and the urbanizing of rural zones and has major economic, social and environmental results. Growing numbers of adolescents will face city life, with its advantages (services, training and job opportunities, easy communication) and disadvantages (overcrowing, unemployment, harmful practices, and fierce, unequal competition for a stable future).

Other important demographic trends shown in the Table are the low percentage of children in the overall population and low overall fertility rates. But the Arab countries' rates in these indicators are expected to remain higher than they are in the LDCs generally.

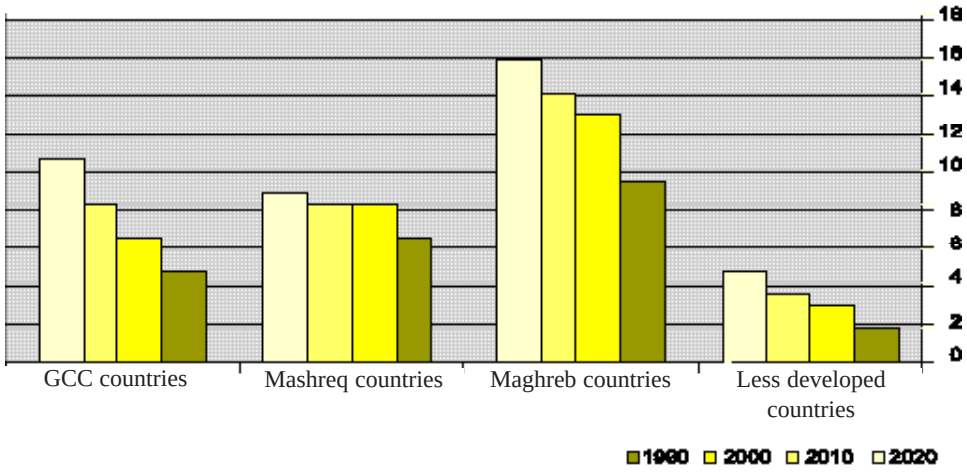
The problems faced by the four groups of Arab countries will vary as their resources fit or do not fit their populations. High rates of development in the GCC group may see foreign labor replaced by local workers. The LDC group is expected to face greater problems because of their persistently high rate of demographic growth. In these countries, by 2015 42% of the total population is expected to be under 15, and the rate of live births per woman 6.2. This is particularly so for Yemen; half its

people are expected to be under 15 in 2015, and the rate of live births per woman to be 7.2. This will be a heavy burden for the education and health services, and handicap Yemen's efforts to reduce its poverty and unemployment rates. Adolescents are expected to suffer most from these negative indicators.

### a. Evolution of figures and percentages for female and male adolescents

Data for the 10-19 age group shows that the number of adolescents rose from 23 million (1990) to 31 million (2000) and is expected to be 35 million in 2010 and 41 million in 2020 (Table 2-3 and Figure 5). Adolescents were 10.3% of the total population in the Arab world in 1990, and 11% in 2000. This is expected to fall to 9.9% in 2010 and 9.7% in 2020. The rise in the percentage of adolescents during the period 1990-2000, and its tendency to decrease later, are due to the fact that the high demographic growth rates of 1970-1990 substantially decreased in 1990-2000 and are expected to continue to decline in the future (see Table 2-2).

### Fig. 5.3: Evolution of the figures of female and male adolescents (15-19) in millions

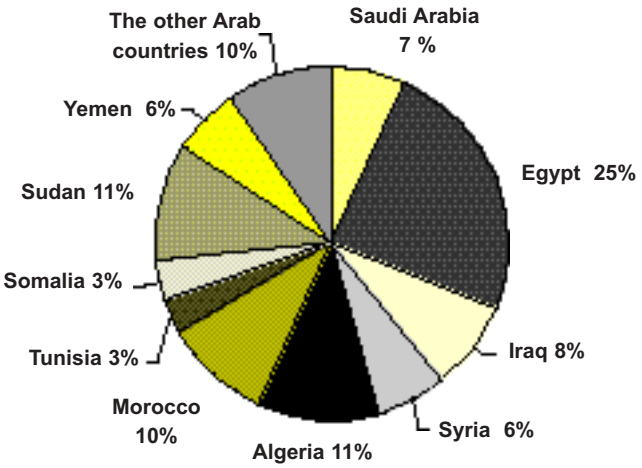



**Source :** United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Population Prospects (1998 revision), Volume I, Comprehensive tables, 1999.

The GCC countries do not follow this trend because of changes in the age composition and percentages of foreign labor in these countries. They are expected to face greater challenges than the other Arab countries as regards adolescents, for three major reasons: first, the quick growth in the number of adolescents. Second, the fact that adolescents are influenced by the values and behavior of a labor force made up of people with low educational levels, from different cultures, and are influenced by globalized consumer trends via direct contact (travel in both directions), open markets, and money for consumption. Third, the fact that they do not now and will not in the near future enjoy the advantages their fathers enjoyed, i.e. availability of resources, family cohesion and family care. Many will face serious economic, social and environmental problems. Nor should we forget that the Gulf has been convulsed by political and military events (the 1980-88 Iraq-Iran war, the 1990 invasion of Kuwait and the war that followed it, and the Gulf War of 2003) which have profoundly affected adolescents in those countries, and whose consequences may be lasting.

If we take individual Arab countries, Egyptian adolescents are 25% of all adolescents in Arab countries, Algerians and Sudanese 11%, Moroccans 10%, and Iraqis 8% (Fig. 3.6). In other words, approximately 2/3 of all adolescents live in five Arab countries, all of which have economic problems, and three of which are suffering from war or internal conflict.

### Fig. 3.6: Distribution of adolescents (15-19) in 2000



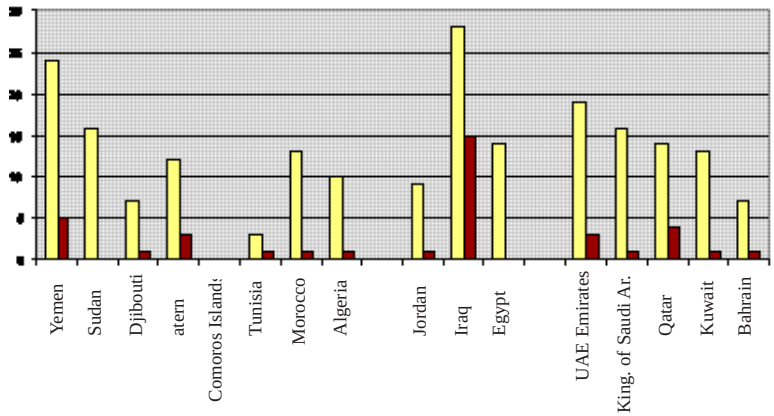

**Source:** United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Population Prospects (1998 revision), Volume I, Comprehensive tables, 1999.

## b. The family, marriage and births

Family size and composition affect adolescence. In Table 2-5, the the average family size indicator shows a greater disparity within the same group than between the groups. In the GCC group it ranges from 5.6 for both Bahrain and Qatar to 7.4 for Saudi Arabia. In the Mashreq group it varies between 4.7 (Lebanon), 4.9 (Egypt) and 7.3 (Iraq). In the Maghreb group it varies between 5.4 (Tunisia) and 7.0 (Algeria).

Table 2-5 and Fig. 3.7 show that the percentage of married female adolescents (15-19 age group) is between four and ten times that of boys in all the Arab countries for which data is available. In the entire Arab world, the average age of girls on first marriage is at least two years less than for boys; the difference is 7 years or more in Oman, the Comoros Islands, Djibouti and Mauritania. Average age on first marriage is lower in rural areas than urban ones (Table 2-6) and rises with level of education (Table 2-7). Education is thus vital for fertility rates and all family behavior, and indicates population policy options, if the society or the authorities see reducing fertility rates as desirable.

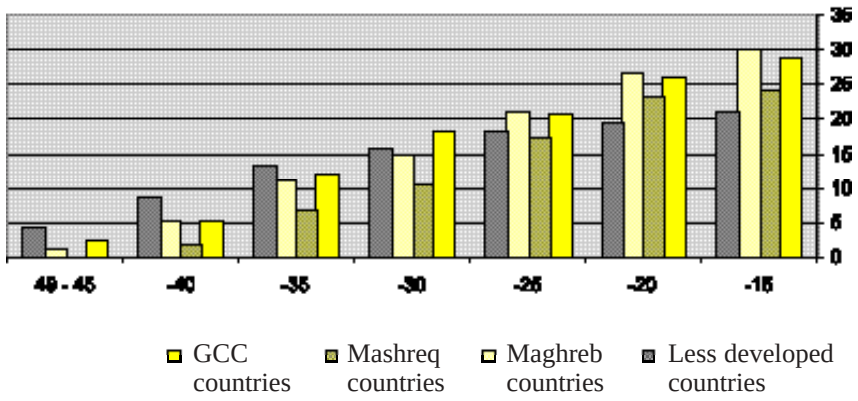
### Fig. 3.7: Percentage of those married or previously married in the 15-19 age group, for the period 1991-1998




**Source :** League of Arab Nations, Department of Demographic Studies, Mother and Child database.

Early marriage can have negative (health, psychology, social, educational) effects on girls and the law has set lower limits to the age of marriage. The younger a girl is on first marriage, the higher the number of expected births (Table 2-8); she is more likely to experience childbirth complications if under 20 than if she is older (Table 4-6). Most pregnant married women (between 21% and 30%) in the four Arab groups are under 20 and are most likely to face complications during childbirth (Table 2-9). But these negative indicators are balanced by positive ones, e.g. the younger the previously married woman, the fewer the desired children (Table 2-11), which indicates that young people generally, and Arab adolescent girls in particular, are becoming more aware of the importance of family planning.

**Fig. 3.8: Percentage of pregnant women among married ones according to current age**




**Source:** League of Arab Nations, Department of Demographic Studies, Mother and Child database.

## 3- Education

Education holds a central position in the lives of adolescents. It helps them to build up a personality and develop their own opinions and behavior, and gives them the qualifications and skills that often determine their work, their professional future and their social position.

Direct effects of the educational process on adolescents vary according to the type of society. Where there is a traditional conservative attitude to woman's work, the value of education in providing future job opportunities for girls is less than for to male adolescents.

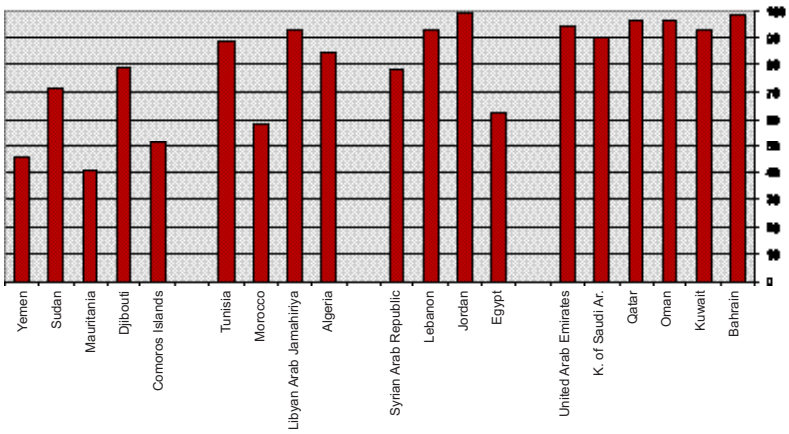
Schools give girls a chance to join a circle larger than that of home and family. Staying at school helps delay marriage, and improves girls' health and social culture, thus positively affecting their future as wives and mothers. The data available shows that fertility and child mortality decrease as the woman's educational level rises. Education makes women more aware and gives them more respect from society, thus reinforcing their ability to obtain their rights. It affects their health, social and economic futures.

### a. Literacy

Arab countries have made great progress in adult literacy. Table 3-1 shows that, in 1985-2000, the value of this indicator rose by 13% in the GCC group, 11% in the Mashreq group, 18% in the Maghreb group and 14% in the LDC group. In 2000, literacy rates in these four groups were 79%, 74%, 67% and 53% respectively. They were lowest in Mauritania (40%) and highest in Jordan (90%).

In most of Arab countries the literacy rate for the young (therefore adolescents) is higher than for older adult groups. In 2000, literacy rates among the 15-24 category in the Arab groups mentioned above were 95%, 88%, 87% and 67% respectively. In that year, the literacy rate in approximately half the Arab countries for which data are available was over 90%.

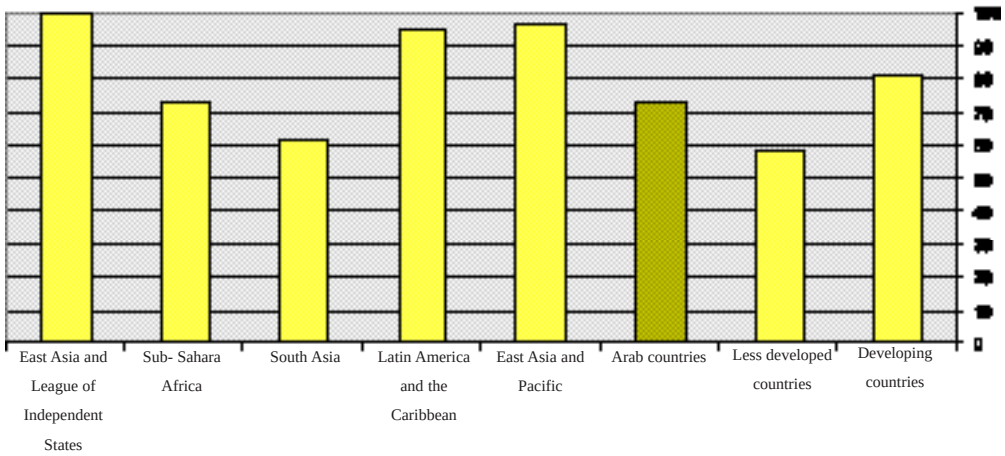
**Fig. 3.9: Literacy rate among young females (15-24) in Arab countries, in 2000**




**Source:** Human Development Report, 2002
UNICEF: The State of Children and Women in the Middle East and North Africa, 2001.

Comparison with other developing countries shows that the average literacy rate for adults is higher in the Arab world than in south Asia or sub-Saharan Africa but lower than in East Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean. This holds true for the literacy rate among young females in the 15-24 age category (Fig 3.10).

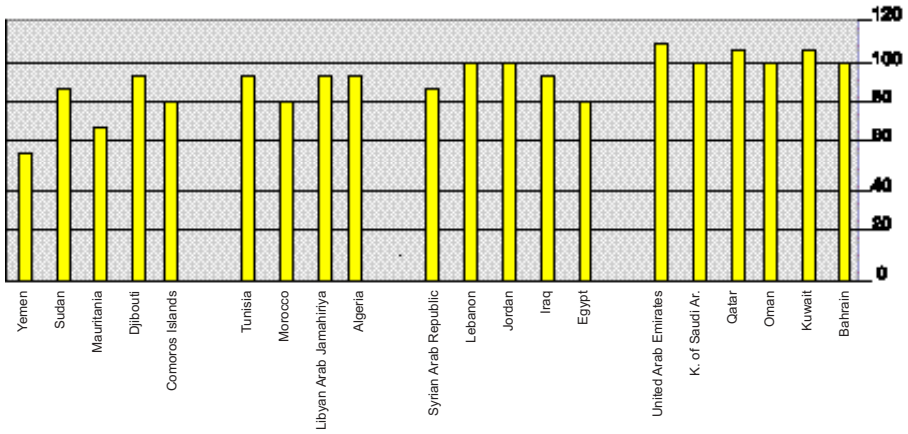
**Fig. 3.10: Literacy rates among young females (% of those aged 15 to 24) in the Arab world, compared to other parts of the world, in 2000**




**Source:** UNICEF: The State of Children and Women in the Middle East and North Africa, 2001.

Reduction of gender disparity in adolescent literacy is a major positive indicator. In 2000, the literacy rate for adolescent girls was equal to, or higher than, that for adolescent boys in 5 Arab countries, and about 10% lower in 7 (Figure 3.11). Reducing the boy/girl education gap now will help reduce gender disparity in the future in job opportunities, participation in decision-making and other areas where education can empower women, if the political will and the right social and cultural conditions are present.

**Figure 3.11: Literacy among the young (female rates as a percentage of the male rates)**




**Source:** Human Development Report, 2002

## b. Education enrolment

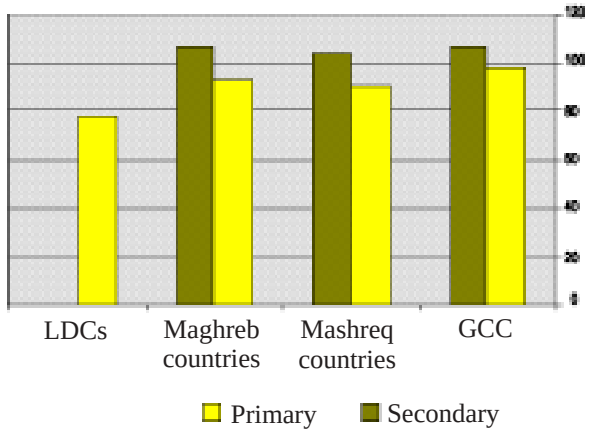
The second of the Millennium Development Goals is that all boys and girls should enjoy full primary education by 2015. The goal is that gender disparity in elementary and secondary education should be ended by a fixed date, preferably 2005, 2015 being set as a deadline for eliminating these disparities at all education levels.

Increasing school attendance faces several challenges in the Arab countries. The first is the rapid population growth; even keeping up enrolment rates requires increased financial and human resources. The second is the dwindling financial resources of the state, which in most Arab countries bears most of the cost of education. To face these challenges, and in accordance with world trends, Arab countries have tended to encourage the private sector, and to create new fee-paying higher educational courses.

Table 3-1 shows that in 1998 net enrolment in primary education in Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Syria and the Comoros Islands decreased compared to 1985-1987. It also shows that in 1988 net enrolment in secondary education decreased compared to 1985-1987 in two (Bahrain and Syria) of the five countries for which data on the two periods is available. Despite the shortage of data in Table 3-1, it can be said that in the GCC group school attendance declined, placing them behind the Mashreq and Maghreb groups as regards this indicator.

Enrolment indicators are better for girls in secondary than in primary education. In 1988, as shown in Table 3-2, in primary education on average there were 98 girls enrolled for every 100 boys in the GCC group, 90 in the Mashreq group, 93 in the Maghreb group and 78 in the LDC group. In secondary education for every 100 boys, 106 girls were enrolled in the GCC and Maghreb groups and 103 in the Maghreb group. Female enrolment in higher education was about twice as high as male enrolment in the GCC countries, and higher in half the Arab countries for which data is available. But the overall situation (primary, secondary and higher) is to the males' benefit, because of the relatively high numbers in primary education (Table 3-1). At secondary and higher level, fewer boys proportionally attend school, due to the greater dropout rate (they work, travel to finish their studies, or join non-civil educational institutions such as military colleges). And while boys are more likely to leave secondary and higher education, girls may cling to education as an alternative to staying at home. In some situations the boys' suffering is greater: when a family has to make one of its members work, and thus abandon studies, in most Arab countries that member is the son.

**Figure 3.12: Net enrolment in primary and secondary education (girls as a % of boys)**

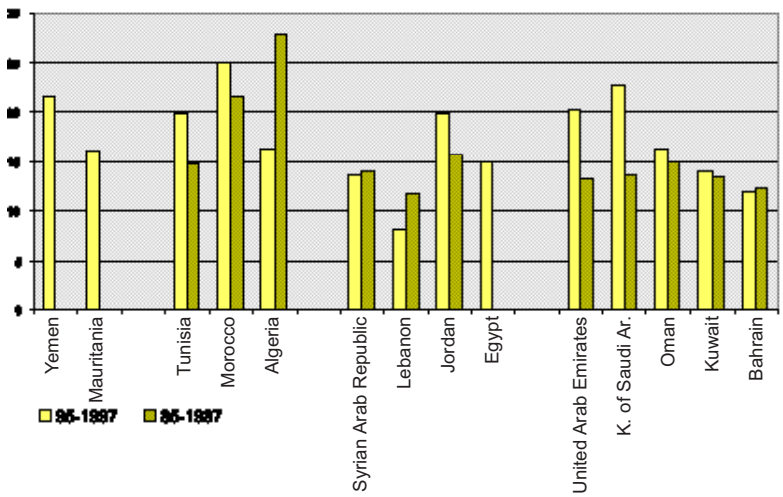



**Source:** The Human Development Report, 2002

### c. Spending on education

Table 3-3 shows that spending on education as a percentage of the national product declined in most Arab countries in 1995-1997, compared to ten years earlier. The opposite can be said as regards spending on education as a percentage of total government spending, as a result of the decline in the proportion of state spending in the national product. Spending on education as a percentage of government expenditure for 1955-1997 varies between 8% in Lebanon and 25% in Morocco (Figure 3.13). This disparity is largely due to the size of the non-governmental sectors' contribution to education. In some Arab countries, the private sector, NGOs and foreign institutions play a much greater role in education than does the public sector, as is the case in Lebanon. This affects the opportunities open to girls to finish their education, and the quality of the education; opportunities for girls improve in proportion as the cost of education decreases and the role of the public sector increases.

**Figure 3.13: Spending on education as a percentage of total government expenditure**




Source: The Human Development Report, 2002

Other indicators should be considered. School curricula and teaching methods are in many Arab countries substandard and neglect the advanced knowledge and applied skills needed in practical life. In Arab countries generally, educational output does not satisfy market requirements. Arts and human specialties may be expanded at the expense of scientific and engineering specialties; insufficient interest is shown in training middle-level pre-university cadres and insufficient emphasis placed on complementary on-the-job skills. Job market capacity is lower than the demand from girls studying arts and human sciences; they are unemployed, with a weak bargaining position in the job market; they are unwilling to enter pre-university community colleges or cannot find places at these colleges, thus remaining untrained for medical professions and sectors such as nursing and middle-level technical professions. Both male and female graduates lack practical experience in their fields of specialization, or skills in communication, production management, marketing, financing etc., whether working for wages or self-employed.

The scarcity of data for preparing indicators that reflect these qualitative issues should not prevent us from mentioning them. That such issues were important to adolescents was clear in the interviews; an analysis of this appears elsewhere in this Report.

## 4. Health

Health indicators fall into two main groups: health input indicators, and health reality indicators. Table 4-1 shows some important health input indicators, including health services and resources. Except for the LDCs, indicators concerning the availability of time off for health problems, safe water, births with medical teams present, and number of doctors indicate that such services and resources are fairly much available in Arab countries. But greater availability of health services and resources does not necessarily mean better health. The concept of the health situation includes indicators as to the quality of services and the citizen's general health (not just sickness, disease) and indicators of coverage rates.

### a. Progress made

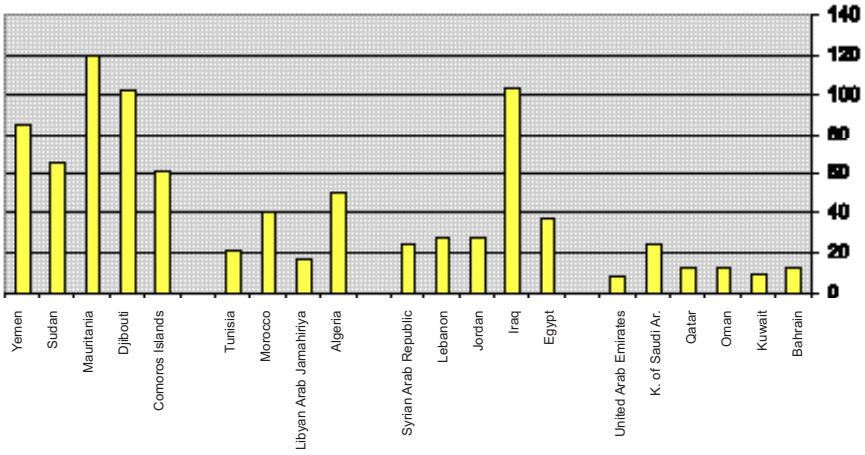
Where detailed indicators concerning the health situation are lacking, the life expectancy at birth indicator can be used as a general indicator of the health situation and how it is developing. Table 4-3 shows that average life expectancy at birth rose in 1970-2000 at rates of between 10% and 41%, except in Iraq (3%). The Maghreb group showed the highest rates (between 25% and 32%). The Arab world as a whole in this period achieved a 27% rise in the life expectancy indicator, the highest increase in the world. On average, adolescents now expect to live fourteen years longer than their parents. For the period 1995-2000, average life expectancy at birth was 72.3 in the GCC group, 76.6 in the Mashreq group, 68.8 in the Maghreb group and 53.8 in the LDC group.

The life expectancy at birth indicator reflects long-term changes in the health situation and is not much affected by short-term changes. Where health conditions decline as a result of war, embargo or economic depression, the indicator shows this much later. Mortality rates for babies and children under five are short-term indicators. One of the eight goals of the July 2000 U.N. Millennium Declaration is to reduce child mortality rates, while the third of the Millennium Development goals is to reduce mortality rates for infants and children under five by two thirds between 1990-2015.

Out of the 20 Arab countries for which data was available, 15 were able in 2000 to reduce infant mortality rates to half, or less, of what they were in 1970. In all Arab countries except Iraq and the LDCs, the infant mortality rate is under 50 per 1000 children born alive.

The indicator for the rate of mortality for children under five showed even more progress: out of the 20 Arab countries for which data was available in 2000, 11 had cut their rate of mortality among children under five to 1/4, or less, of what it was in 1970.1 The rate fell by at least 25% in the other Arab countries, except Iraq, where it rose from 1970 to 2000.

## Figure 3.14: Infant mortality rates (per 1000 children born alive)




Source: Human Development Report, 2002; and UNICEF, The State of Children and Women in the Middle East and North Africa, 2001

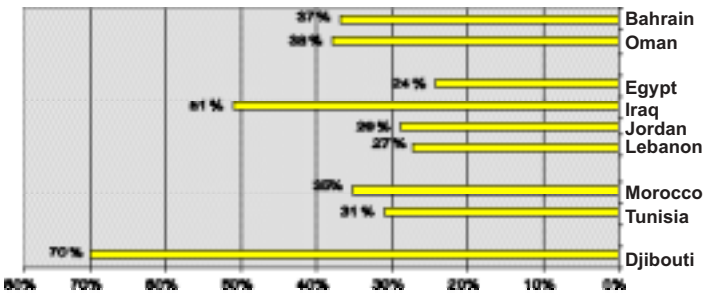
### b. Reproductive health

The qualitative and behavioral aspects of reproductive health in the lives of adolescent boys and girls are examined elsewhere in the Report. The indicators discussed here include care of pregnant mother and fetus, contraception and data on the spread of AIDS.

Table 4-4 shows the rise in the values of the indicator for pre-natal embryo care, and the indicator for births with qualified persons present. The two indicators show 95% in the GCC group, 80% in the Mashreq and Maghreb groups, and 45% in the LDC group. The rate of deaths in childbirth shows big disparities within the Arab world. The figure for pregnancy-related mortality per 100,000 live births ranges from 3 (United Arab Emirates) to 763 (Sudan). The value of this indicator is linked to that of the previous indicator. As pre-natal embryo care and the rate of births with qualified persons present rise, deaths in childbed fall.

We note an increase in the percentage of iron deficiency cases for women in the Arab world generally. It is 24% in the 9 countries for which data is available; it is over 50% in Iraq and Djibouti. This rise reflects poverty in all the countries, particularly the poorer ones such as Iraq and Djibouti, and perhaps results from unsound eating habits for the other countries.

## Figure 3.15: Percentage of cases of iron deficiency among women

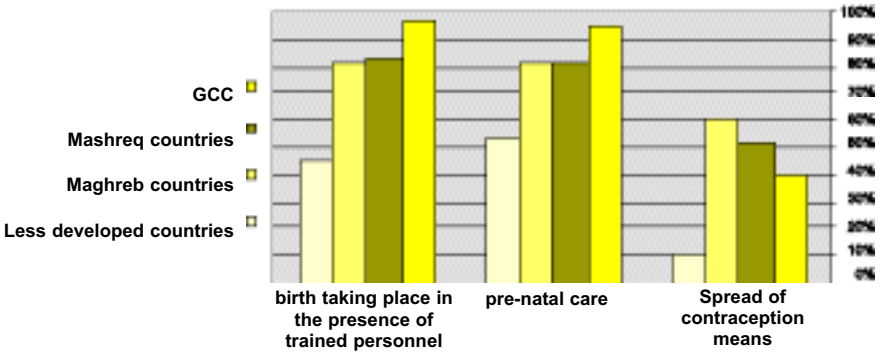



Source: UNICEF, The State of Children and Women in the Middle East and North Africa, 2001.

Family planning is very important, defining a family's size and welfare, and is central to how adolescents of both sexes view their future families. Table 4-4 shows that there is an enormous difference in the rate of use of contraception (a practical step used for family planning) in the Arab world, from 2% (Djibouti) to 71% (Tunisia). The rates are very low in the LDCs and fairly low in the GCC group, though these two groups have the highest rates of demographic growth and fertility. Rates for the spreading of means of contraception also differ wildly within the two groups from 2% (Djibouti) to 21% (Yemen), 28% (United Arab Emirates), 54% (Bahrain) and 60% (Maghreb countries, with the highest rate).

At sub-group level, the percentage of women using contraception is 4%, 52%, 60% and 10% in the GCC, Mashreq, Maghreb and LDC groups respectively. This is much lower than the indicators for pre-natal care, or births with health control, and confirms the view that use of contraception does not reflect availability of material and human resources (as is the case for the other two indicators) but social, cultural, political or other factors. Thus, use of socially acceptable consciousness-raising policies will help the countries concerned achieve their family planning goals, and link their demographic growth rates, development programs and resources, without additional resources being required. The problem is the absence of political decision, and of effective strategies over periods long enough to achieve the goals.

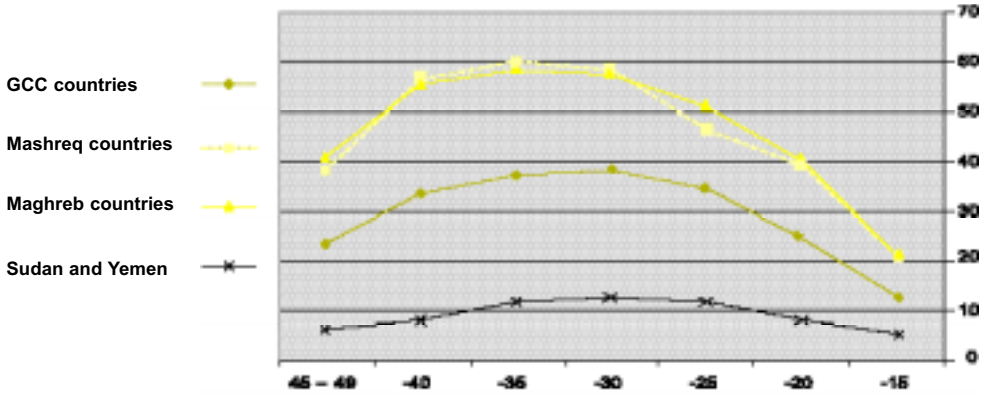
## Figure 3.16: Reproductive health




**Source:** UNICEF, The State of Children and Women in the Middle East and North Africa, 2001

The Arab countries have a similar profile as regards use of means of contraception/woman's age. Table 4-5 shows that the 15-19 age group has the lowest rates - newly-married women want to have children. The rates rise for successive age groups and peak for the 35-39 age group, falling for the next two age groups - child-bearing is nearly over. For the 15-19 age group, the proportion of women using contraception is about half the overall average, i.e. the 15-19 age group uses contraception least, is most likely to experience complications in childbirth, and has the highest proportion of pregnant married women (Table 2-9).

## Figure 3.17: Percentage of women currently using a means of family planning by age




**Source:** League of Arab Nations, Department of Demographic Studies, Mother and Child Health Database

## c. HIV/AIDS

AIDS is not a big issue in Arab countries, partly because published statistics indicate that the Arab world ranks lowest in terms of the number of women in the 15-45 age group carrying the AIDS virus (about a quarter of a million, with 90% of them living in Sudan). But there is no reason for overconfidence. The scarcity of data on how many people have AIDS and on trends (numbers, age composition, etc.) leaves us ignorant of the real size of this problem and unable to define its future development. And increasing contact with the outside world, and the likelihood of it spreading from present victims in the Arab world, may make it spread more quickly in these countries. We should pay immediate attention to its spreading among the young, to avoid the possibility of an explosion which would be hard to overcome. In North Africa and the Middle East, about three times more girls have the virus than boys.

### Table 3.3: Number of females and males (15-24) affected by AIDS (December 2001)

| Region | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 2,800,000 | 5,700,000 |
| East Asia and Pacific | 200,000 | 87,000 |
| South and South East Asia | 590,000 | 930,000 |
| Latin America | 260,000 | 170,000 |
| Caribbean islands | 59,000 | 72,000 |
| North Africa and the Near East | 41,000 | 110,000 |
| Eastern Europe and Central Asia | 340,000 | 85,000 |
| North America | 100,000 | 47,000 |
| Western Europe | 55,000 | 33,000 |
| Total | 4,445,000 | 7,234,000 |

**Source:** United Nations, AIDS program [2]

## d. Health challenges

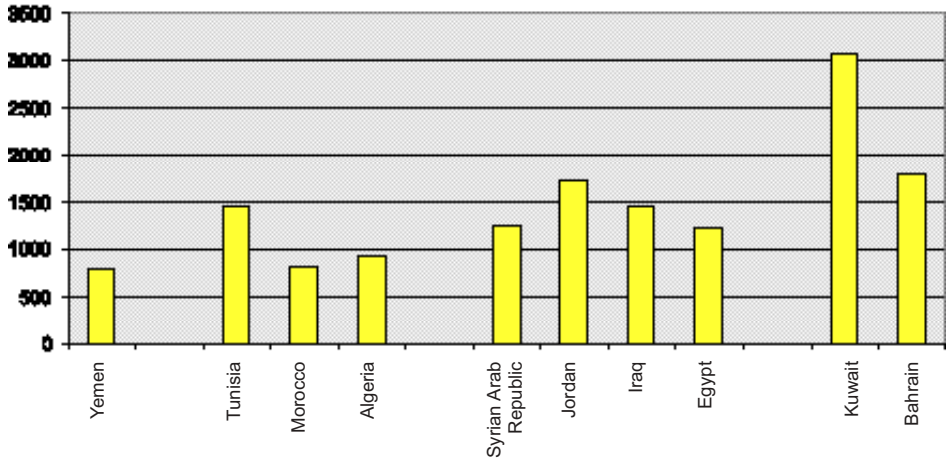
Progress achieved in health service coverage, or in some of the health indicators mentioned above, must be supported by additional data on the quality of the services and the means that exist to develop them for all, to the highest possible level. It is necessary to assess level and return of health expenditure. In the light of this, a comprehensive, objective evaluation of the health situation in the Arab countries is possible.

Data on disease in the Arab countries is scarce and does not permit comparison. Data on tuberculosis in the Arab countries shows a tuberculosis rate that is lower than in the developing countries generally. But the percentage of these cases is very high in the Arab LDCs, and is double that in the less developed countries worldwide.

The most important health challenge for adolescents may be consumption of tobacco and similar products. Figure 18 shows a great disparity in cigarette consumption between Arab countries. Annual per capita consumption varies from 797 (Yemen) to 3,080 (Kuwait). Other habits affect health and cost money: the narghile, qat, alcohol and drugs. These have recently become more dangerous due to their rapid spread among young people of both sexes, including pupils, in many Arab countries. This was clear in the interviews with adolescents; results appear elsewhere in the Report.

9. UNUSIDA, Youth and HIV/AIDS: Can we avoid catastrophe? 2001

**Figure 3.18: Cigarette consumption per adult person (annual average)**




Sources: The Human Development Report, 2002, and The Arab Human Development Report, 2002

### e. Spending on health

Health expenditure and its effectiveness is another challenge. In countries with high human development, 5% of GDP is spent on health. It is under 3% in nine of the 11 Arab countries for which data is available. The average percentage of gross public and private spending on health in the high human development countries is 7.5% of GDP. Except for the United Arab Emirates and Lebanon, no Arab country has that percentage. While average per capita share of health spending in the high human development countries is about $2,350, based on parity of purchasing power, it is under $20 in Mauritania and under $500 in six of the seven Arab countries for which data is available. Effectiveness of spending is important: health spending may be high, but health returns lower than expected; the expenditure should be linked to health policies that pay attention to prevention and basic health care (less costly and more effective for improving people's health) rather than cure (policies prioritizing medical treatment). In Lebanon, spending on health is high and mostly devoted to medical treatment.

## 5. The economic situation

The economy was important for shaping the Arab world, with the oil boom a major factor for change over the past decades. Many of the disparities between Arab countries spring, directly or indirectly, from economic factors. Oil enabled the GCC to make progress in many indicators, compared to countries (Egypt, Lebanon, the Maghreb) which fifty years ago were ahead of them. The economic and social situation in countries exporting labor to the Gulf oil countries was affected: positively (money repatriated by these workers during the oil boom) and negatively (later downturn resulting from economic or politico-military considerations).

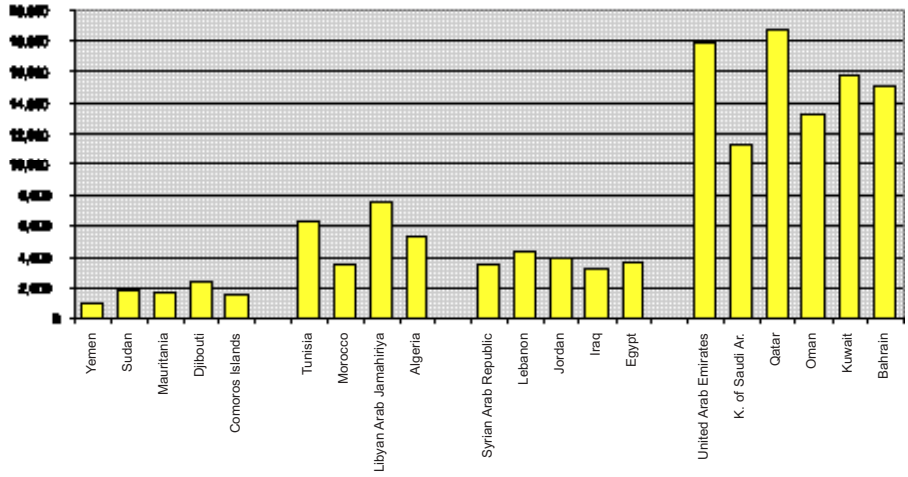
But non-economic factors are also important. Some countries have large oil resources (Iraq and Algeria) but made less progress than countries such as Lebanon, Jordan and Tunisia, which do not. Thus, a second factor (next to available resources, which had the major role in developing the Arab countries) is management of such resources. This management varied from one Arab country to another, depending on social situation, political system, outside influences, etc. They have been differently influenced in this management, either by international (e.g., globalization, the collapse of the USSR) or by regional influences (the Arab-Israeli conflict). Particular factors also affected certain countries, some internal (armed conflict in Sudan, Somalia, Algeria and Lebanon), and some external (the war and embargo on Iraq and Palestine). On the whole, the results of these factors on management of economic resources were negative: wastage of resources and constraints on development.

What are the economic resources available to Arab countries, and how do they manage them? What impact does this have on society in general and adolescents in particular?

### a. Standards of living

Per capita share of GDP in a given country is a general indicator of the economic situation in that country. Figure 3.19 shows a great disparity between Arab countries as regards per capita share of GDP (in dollars) based on parity of purchasing power. In Qatar, this share was in 2000 twenty times higher than in Yemen ($18,789 and barely $893 respectively) (Table 1-1). For groups of Arab countries, per capita share of GDP in the GCC group is over 31/2 times higher than the average for the Mashreq group, twice the average for the Maghreb group, and nine times higher than the average for the LDC group, as shown in Figure 3.20.

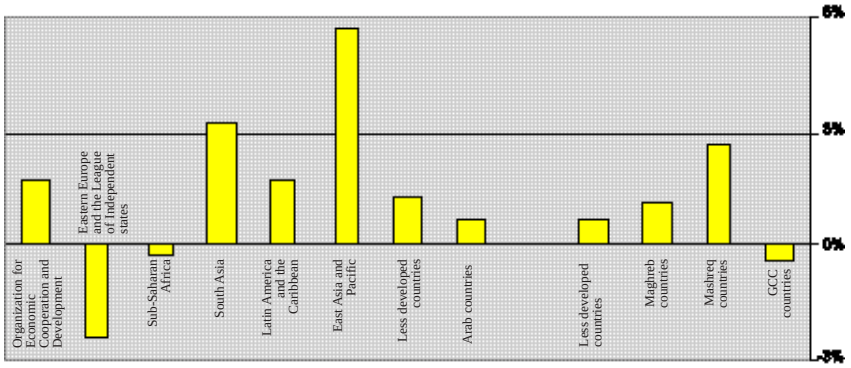
**Figure 3.19: Per capita share of GDP in the Arab countries (in dollars and based on the parity of purchasing power) in 2000**




Source: Human Development Report, 2002

There was a moderate rise in average per capita share of GDP in 1975-2000. Table 5-1 shows that, except for sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab world had the lowest development rate p.a. in terms of per capita share of GDP of six groups of developing countries, whether for 1975-2002 or 1999-2000. During the later period, that development rate was 0.7% for the Arab world, 1.3% for less developed countries worldwide, 5.7% for East Asia and the Pacific, 1.7% for Latin America and the Caribbean, and 3.3% for South Asia.

**Figure 3.20: Rate of annual development of the per capita share of GDP, 1990-2000**




Source: The Human Development Report, 2002

Per capita share of GDP for most Arab countries fell in the 1975-2000 period as a result of demographic growth and falling oil prices. But some Arab countries achieved concrete growth in their per capita share as a result of oil being discovered there (Sudan, Yemen) or for other reasons (Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Tunisia). Those five countries had the highest increase in per capita share of GDP in the 1998-2000 period. But a large disparity in per capita share between the GCC countries and the other Arab countries remained.

If economic growth continues in the countries with a higher per capita share, and if there is an improvement in the conditions of countries like Iraq, Algeria, Somalia and Sudan, whose present internal conditions are exceptional, and if the rate of demographic growth in the GCC group continues to be higher than that of economic growth, the income gap between the GCC group and the other three groups should narrow. The rise in the per capita share of GDP in Sudan and Yemen (with 3/4 of the total population of the lower-income Arab countries) will also help reduce the gap between the LDC group and the other three groups.

How will this reduction in disparity of income, if it occurs, affect the countries' adolescents? Firstly, there will be less disparity between other income-dependent indicators (particularly education and health). Secondly, the effects of the economic and social changes that accompanied the great, surprising increase in income during the 1970s, on adolescents in the GCC group will probably decrease. These changes included a big rise in the incoming labor force, a big expansion of consumer trends, and a drop in incentives for serious, productive work. Thirdly, educational development and mixing with other cultures will have effects that will mitigate the constraints imposed by local custom and tradition. It is expected that there will be fewer differences of conviction, practice and behaviour between adolescents in Arab countries. But expectations based on "normal" economic and social developments may be confounded because of political, military and ideological factors, which cannot be predicted.

From the 1970s most Arab countries experienced inflation. It is known that the social classes most affected by inflation are those with a fixed income (civil servants, retired persons and their families). Adolescents in these families are hit by this inflation. Though its impact varies from country to country, adolescents in families that depend on government salaries as the main source of income do not enjoy the relatively high standard of living and status their counterparts had in the past. The trend of falling inflation rates in most Arab countries (becoming negative in some in 1999-2000), plus rising poverty and unemployment, may recently have curbed the deterioration in these adolescents' conditions. And other factors have harmed the social and economic condition of these previously vital categories.

In addition to average per capita share of GDP, people's standard of living depends on how equally income is distributed. The greater the disparity in income distribution, the more the people feeling deprived and unjustly treated. Adolescents may suffer particularly, for an inability to get the goods and services their friends have may harm the development of their personality and their relations with other adolescents and society as a whole.

There is little data on income distribution for most Arab countries. Table 5-2 shows that the gross consumption share of the poorest 10% of the population is below 4.5%, compared with 25% or more for the wealthiest 10%. The latter's share is over 11 times that of the former in Morocco and Mauritania, 9 times higher in Jordan, Algeria and Yemen, and about 6 times in Egypt. Nevertheless, in most Arab countries this disparity in consumption is less acute than in developing countries generally.3

## b. Housing

Housing is important for people, particularly adolescent girls, who often spend a major part of their time at home. The house's components, equipment, location etc. directly and deeply affect such girls, their relations with others in and outside the family, and their activities.

Table 6-8 presents data on some housing characteristics. The data shows that homes in the GCC group have most rooms, followed by homes in the Mashreq group, then those in the Maghreb group and finally those in the LDC group. The average number of rooms in the GCC group is 5.9, compared with 2.3 in the LDC group. But the disparity is less when it comes to the average number of people per room, for the average family is big in the GCC countries. This holds good for bedrooms; they represent

66% of all rooms in the GCC group, compared to 78% in the LDC group. Thus, in accordance with the indicator for the total number of rooms (bedrooms included) and with the overcrowding indicator, adolescents enjoy better housing in the GCC group than in the Mashreq, Maghreb and LDC groups.

The adolescents with the worst housing environment are perhaps those living in one-room units like huts, tents and very small apartments or homes. They suffer from lack of privacy, unhealthy conditions, and other problems of over-crowdedness and low quality housing. Such homes are particularly found in the the LDC group, where the indicator for the average number of rooms (2.3) shows that many of the homes are one-room units.

As for provision of home services, 98% of homes in the GCC and Mashreq groups use electricity for lighting, compared with 27% in the LDC group. Tables 6-5 and 6-6 show that homes in the GCC group have more means of communication and leisure, followed by homes in the Mashreq and Maghreb groups, and finally by homes in the LDC group.

## c. Public spending priorities

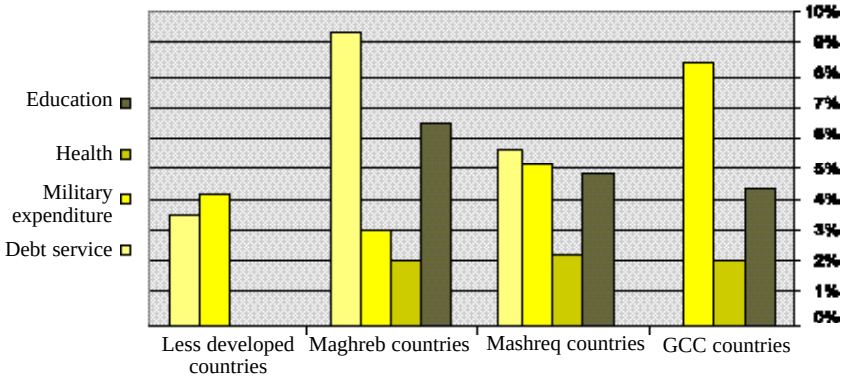
Public spending on education and health as a percentage of GDP fell in the 1990s in most Arab countries, as shown in Table 5.3. Based on simple arithmetics, public expenditure as a percentage of GDP in Arab countries is almost as high for education as in countries which have an average human development growth in education, but is lower as regards health.

Military spending also fell as a percentage of GDP in the 1990s in most Arab countries. In 2000, compared with 1991, imports of traditional arms fell to about 1/5 in the GCC group, and to approximately half in the other three groups (Table 5-4). However, this was less due to a decline in military expenditure during the 1990s than to the unusual rise in military expenditure in 1990 and 1991, particularly in the GCC group, as a result of the first Gulf War. This is confirmed by the rise in the overall number of armed forces compared with 1985: a 125% rise in the GCC group, 74% in the Mashreq group and 88% in the LDC group.

But military spending as a percentage of GDP remains very high in many Arab countries. It exceeds spending on both education and health in Oman, Syria and some other Arab countries for which full data on spending on education, health and the military is not available. And while the simple arithmetic average of military spending as a percentage of GDP is 2.5% in countries which have a middle human development growth, it is over 8% in four out of 14 Arab countries ofor which data is available. It is 2.5% in two Arab countries only, Egypt and Tunisia.

In addition to military spending, servicing the debt puts pressure on education and health expenditure. Debt service is greater than total expenditure on education and health in about half of the Arab countries for which the data needed to make this comparison is available. A simple arithmetic average of debt servicing as a percentage of GDP in the middle human development countries was 6.3 %, in 2000, but 8% or over in more than half the Arab countries for which data on servicing the foreign debt is available.

**Figure 3.21: Public spending on education and health, and on military and debt service**



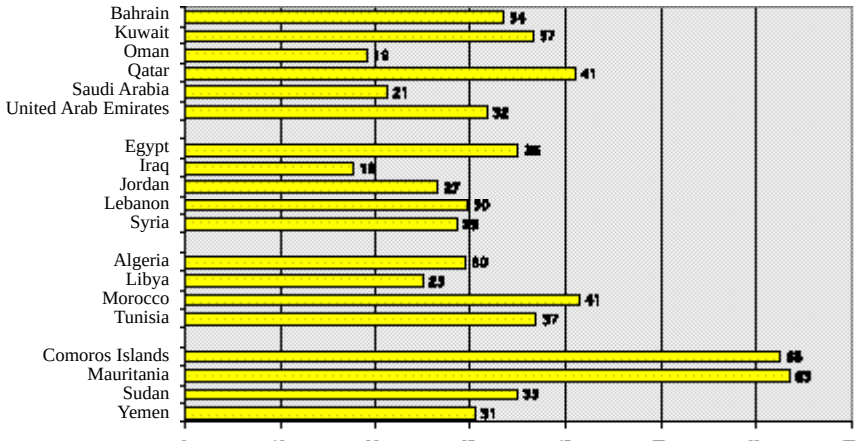

**Source:** The Human Development Report, 2002

This is what the data shows; the picture becomes gloomier if we take into account the fact that several Arab countries for which there is a lack of information, especially Somalia and Iraq, spend little on education and health and much on the military and servicing the debt.

## d. Discrimination by gender in economic activity4

The rates of economic activity for women in Arab countries are low compared with rates for men. On average, less than a third of adult women are engaged in an economic activity in the first three groups, and less than one half in the LDC group. The rate of economic activity for women rose in varying proportions in 1985-2000, to above 50% in three countries (Oman, Jordan and Algeria). But the rate of economic activity for women in all Arab countries, except Morocco, the Comoros Islands and Mauritania, is less than half the rate for men.

**Figure 3.22: Rate of economic activity for women (15 and above)**




**Source:** Human Development Report, 2002

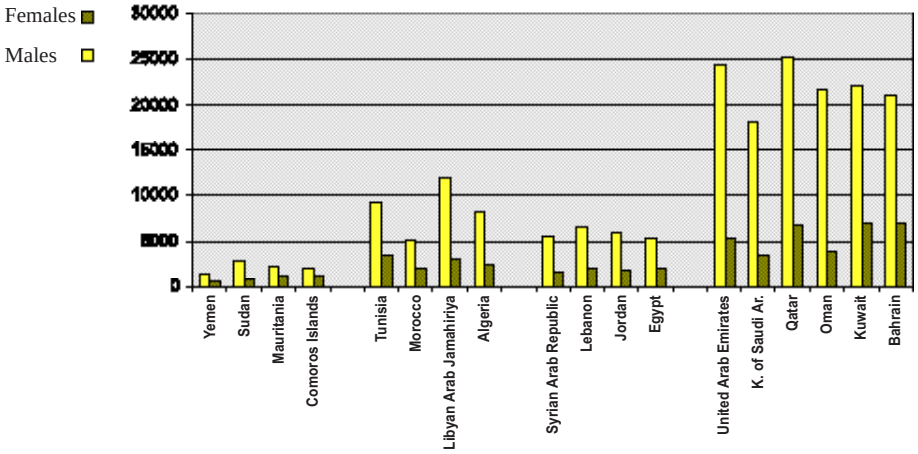
Arab women's effective role is even lower than the percentages shown in the Table. For the GCC group, the percentages reflect the rates of economic activity for all women, citizens and foreign workers included. As the rate of economic activity for foreign female workers rises, the rate for female citizens drops to lower than that indicated by the percentages in the Table.

Many women work in agriculture as unskilled or seasonal workers, or in other forms of low production. Thus the real contribution of women to overall production, which is economically valued and included in DP, is less than their numbers in the labor force. This is confirmed by the fact that the percentage of acquired income for women, compared to men, is lower than the percentage of corresponding economic activity. While the percentage of acquired income for women, compared to men, is 25% in the GCC group, 31% in the Mashreq and Maghreb group, and 43% in the LDC group, the corresponding percentages of economic activity for women are respectively 37%, 35%, 43% and 56% (Figure 3.22).

In the light of this, it can be said that Arab adolescent girls face low expectations regarding participation in income-yielding work, compared to adolescent boys with equal educational level and qualifications. They are offered low-productivity and low-wage work and jobs and may suffer from discrimination in salary and incentives.

**(11)** See the First Arab Woman Development Report, on globalization and gender: The Economic Participation of the Arab Woman, CAWTER 2001.

**Figure 3.23: Approximate acquired income (in dollars based on purchasing power parity), 2000**




**Source:** Human Development Report, 2002

## 6. Other aspects

### a. Womn's participation in politics

Arab women face problems for participation in decision-making, particularly in politics.5 Many of the challenges seem to be associated with religion but are really the result of history and culture. Women seem to have actively participated in decision-making in the early years of Islam; evidence shows that they themselves are partly responsible for the decline. In countries where women and men have equal electoral rights, the percentage of parliamentary seats held by women is very low, indicating that many women do not vote, or vote for men.

Women do not take much part in politics in many Arab countries, as shown in Table 6-1. In the GCC group, women are almost inexistent as regards voting and standing in parliamentary elections, or at ministerial level. In other Arab countries, women have since the 1960s gained the right to vote and stand in all elections. But their presence in the parliaments or ministries of these countries is still modest compared with the size of the female population.

As for the percentage of parliamentary seats indicator, the role of women has changed differently in the four groups over the 1987-1999 period. As Table 6-2 shows, the average percentage has remained unchanged (zero) in the GCC group; it first rose and then fell in the Mashreq and Maghreb groups; it fell and then rose in the LDC group. The average indicator of the percentage of women in decision-making positions at ministerial or post-ministerial level rose or remained stable in 1994-1998 in the four groups. From the growing percentage of women in decision-making positions, and the vacillating indicator of the percentage of parliamentary seats, one can conclude that senior officials with the power to appoint women to ministerial and post-ministerial posts are readier to boost women's political participation than the general voting public who elect women to parliament. In several Arab countries, such as Jordan and Kuwait, the executive has more advanced views than the legislature concerning women's political participation.

### b. Human rights and labour rights

Comparing Arab laws is difficult, because the multiplicity and overlapping and number of the laws is hard to reduce to indicators between which simple comparisons can be made. A rough general idea of the subject can be reached by the position on international law on human and worker's rights, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the basic conventions on the rights of workers, and the Convention on Children's Rights. As Table 6-4 shows, the GCC group, and the LDC group are those that least ratified a number of these conventions.

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Convention on Children's Rights, are the conventions most relevant to adolescence. The first is important in that it addresses anti-woman practices and sees gender equality as a goal; it thus includes adolescence and discriminatory practices against adolescent girls. Table 6-3 shows that only 14 Arab countries have ratified this Convention, and 8 countries have not, 4 of them belonging to the GCC group. Most of the countries which ratified it had reservations about Articles 2,7,9,15,16 and 29, based on cultural features or the Articles' contradicting Islamic law (Shari'a), that provides grounds for the law in most Arab countries, particularly regarding a woman's right to hand on her nationality to her children, equality of rights within the family, and the right to mobility and a house of her own. The countries with reservations expressed common reservations, but Kuwait objected to Article 7 on the women's right to political participation (it went against Kuwait's Constitution). The common reservations involve women having full equality of rights, thus affecting typical gender roles in family and society, and the strategic trend of these countries' policies. As to the short- and long- term effects on adolescent girls in particular, such attitudes determine current policies and the typical image on which today's girls must build their choices so as to conform to these future choices. The priorities of policies for adolescents will be radically different if equal rights in both the private and public spheres is preferred, or if the opposite is true.

The Convention on Children's Rights involves adolescence insofar as it sees childhood as extending from birth to maturity (18). Adolescents concerned by this Report (15-18) thus come under the Convention. All the Arab countries have ratified it, as have all the countries in the world except the U.S.A. But a number of these countries have expressed reservations about aspects that conflict with Islamic shari'a, or have said which clauses they have reservations about - Articles 2,6,7,9,13,14,16,17,20,21,26 and 30. These mainly concern adoption law, respect for the child's freedom of belief, conscience and religion, right to nationality, procedures of separation from the parents, and consideration of the child's best interests. The reservations reflect choices on inter-generational and intra-family relations and attitudes to modern educational choices. The Convention sees children (and adolescents) as persons/citizens with rights that they should be able to enjoy, and sees children as needing special care from society, the family and adults generally. This dual vision sees elements of citizenship and participation as growing with the child (particularly as regards adolescents between 15 and 18), including the child's right to participate in the family and society in general, and thus the reformulation of child/parent relations in the family, plus the need for changes in other relational and institutional spaces. The Arab countries' reservations about some of its clauses derive essentially from their reservations concerning the change in roles and type of relationship within the family itself, and the need to maintain age and gender hierarchy in the family and in society.

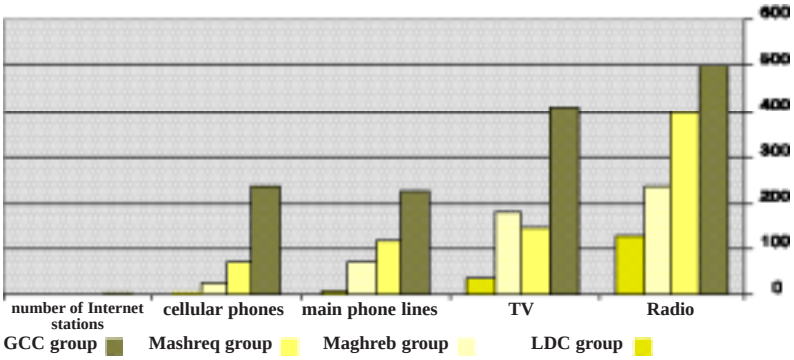
### c. Communications media

Modern communications media is important in society, especially for adolescents, as a way of accessing, and interacting with, the world, free from the control of parents and society. The media transmits and popularizes contacts and behavior that can be beneficial or not, that can fit the social environment or not. The effects depend on the personal and the social. The benefits of the media are bound up with the beneficiary's critical sense, which enables him/her to make conscious choices and interact positively with the contents.

The GCC group ranks first in terms of modern media availability, followed by the Mashreq group (except for TV), the Maghreb group, and last the LDC group. Kinds of media differ from one group to the next, depending on availability. The most modern (cellular phones and internet) are more important in the GCC group, while traditional media such as the radio and telephone have a larger place in the LDC group. The relative importance also varies within the same group: in the GCC group, for example, the United Arab Emirates ranks bottom for TV sets but top for cellular phones and internet stations. This is due to a complex set of economic (financial resources are required) and cultural-political factors (the spread of internet and cellular phones depends on the degree of cultural and information openness and on political considerations). Family ownership varies greatly between urban and rural areas.

**(6)** See the chapter on adolescence in Arab countries; as mentioned in the Algerian study prepared for this Report.

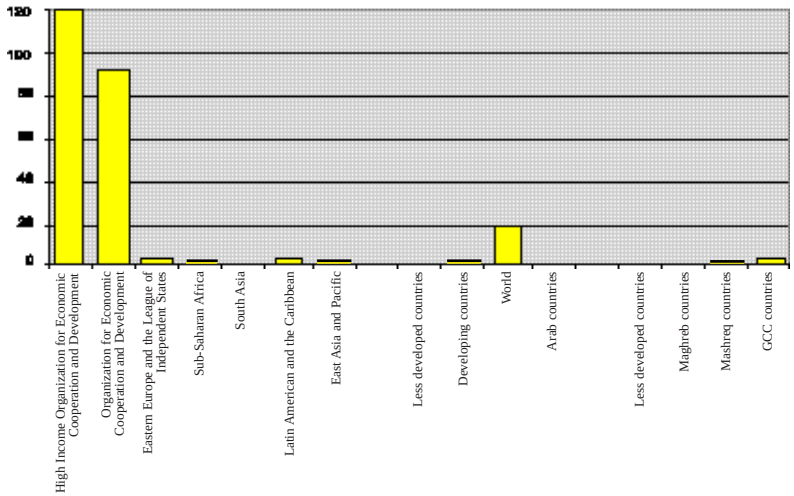
**Figure 3.24: Communications media (number of sets per 1000 persons)**




Sources: UNICEF, The State of the World's Children, 2002, and The Human Development Report, 2002

Compared to the developing countries, availability of radio, TV and ground phones in the Arab world is roughly that of the developing countries, but is lower where cellular phones and internet are concerned. Arab countries are unlike the developing countries as regards the two most modern communications media, particularly internet, the Arab region being the part of the world that uses this medium least.

**Figure 3.25: Number of internet stations in the Arab groups compared with other world regions (per 1000 persons)**

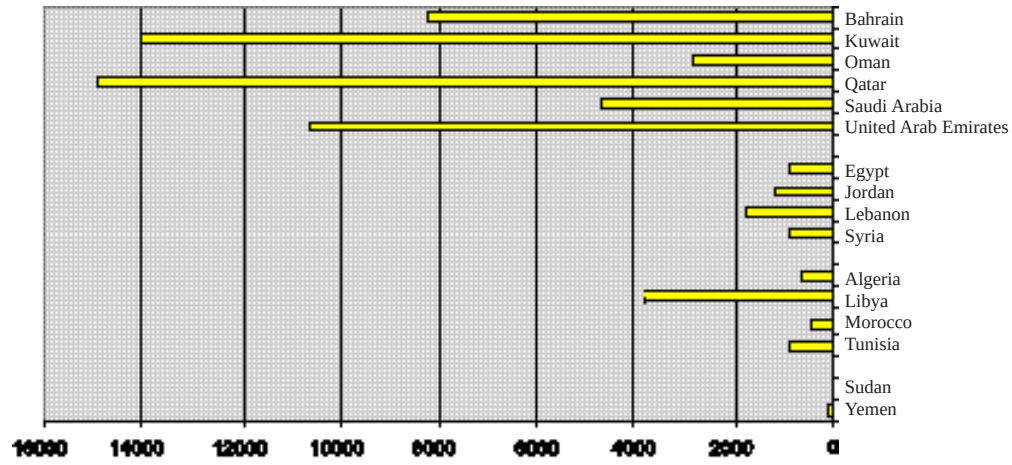



**Source:** The Human Development Report, 2002

## d. Energy and the environment

The Arab region has most of the world's oil exports, crude oil reserves and natural gas. Data shows that the per capita share of electricity consumption in the Arab world is generally 75% higher than in developing countries. Concentration of oil production in Arab countries has led to deep disparities in their electric energy consumption: electricity consumption per capita in Qatar is 320 times higher than in Sudan (14,871 kw/h compared to 46 kw/h). The fact that huge quantities of oil exist in the GCC group explains the rise in per capita share of electricity consumption there, where this share is higher than in the high-income countries of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

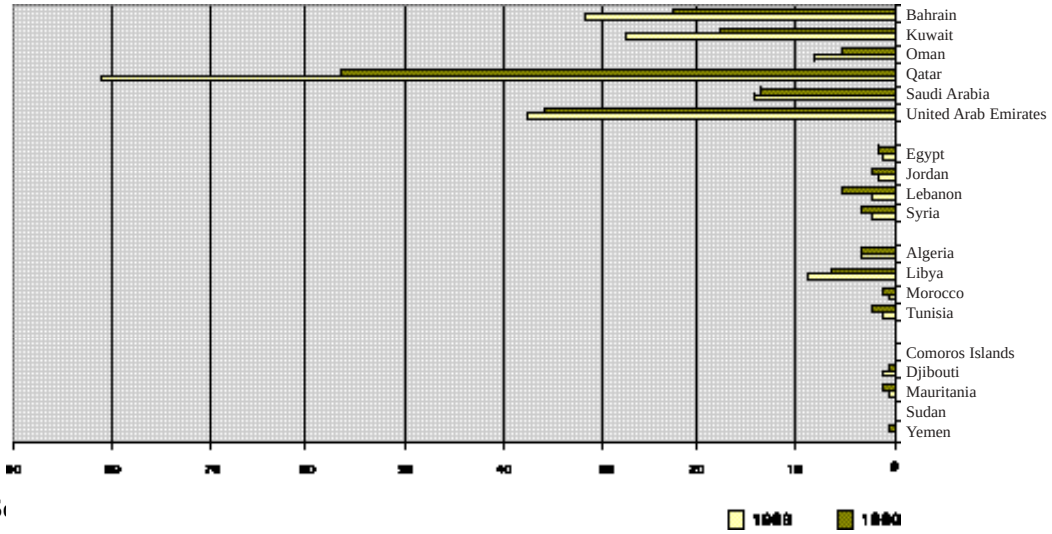
**Figure 3.26: Per capita share of electricity consumption (kw/h)**




**Source:** Human Development Report, 2002

Indicators of the per capita share of carbon dioxide emissions show that it is about ten times higher in the GCC group than in the Mashreq and Maghreb groups, due to the rise in the per capita share of oil and natural gas consumption in the first group. It is over 60 times higher than in the LDC group, as appears in Figure 3.27. This explains the rise in this share in the Arab world, considered as the highest in six regions of developing countries. This share is also twice the general average of the per capita share in the developing countries generally.

**Figure 3.27: Per capita share of carbon dioxide emissions in Arab countries (metric/ton)**

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The significance of the energy consumption and carbon dioxide emission indicator is wider than its environmental aspect in the narrow sense of the term and has to do with the lifestyle and economic activity of the country concerned. Consumption of electric power indicates a wide use of electric consumer goods (seen as an indicator of social welfare) and industrial activity, consuming more electric energy than other sectors of the economy. In the Arab world, the carbon dioxide emission indicator points to strategic industrial activity in the oil sector, and is much lower in the LCD group, where agriculture predominates.

## Conclusion: Data on Arab female and male adolescents

Available data on Arab adolescents is scarce, inconsistent and imprecise. There is little data or indicators on adolescent girls and boys, and the fact that the data was obtained by various statistical methodologies makes it difficult to use to compare Arab countries. This is mainly due to the absence of a serious attempt to define and provide adolescence-related indicators.

The main problems for preparing the Report were:

**1:** The limited availability or absence of data: most of it was collected as a result of interest in adolescence, but was an accidental result of relying on age divisions which were usually defined on the basis of demographic division by five-year age categories or educational levels, as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter.

Also, there is not much data on areas where interest is recent (information technology, unpaid women's labor, leisure) or that are seen as socially or politically sensitive (poverty, crime, discrimination against women). If there is data, it is often aggregate, not classed by gender, and focuses on quantitative, not the qualitative, aspects.

**2:** The data was inappropriate because out of date, or insufficiently distributed geographically, or without the statistical definition required for use. Also, some of the indicators from international sources do not fit the Arab world, or suffer from technical shortcomings such as absence of source data, or standard units.

**3:** Difficulty in comparing Arab countries due to different statistical definitions, period of time allocation, disparity of populations, percentages of representation, and difference of data between sources.

**4:** Dispersion of data. Since there is no specialized body concerned with collecting and supplying data on adolescence, data users waste a lot of time and effort gathering it.

# Conclusions and recommendations

# Conclusions and recommendations

## Similarity and difference

The Report contains certain questions and assumptions:

- Adolescence is a cultural and social phenomenon rather than an age-group or a physiological stage
- Adolescence, as a life phase or social construct, arose from the modernizing of European societies and its promotion of individualism. Does this apply to Arab societies? Does it have anything to do with modernity and individuality in the Arab world?
- Adolescence is when society prepares young girls/boys for their adult social role, with the consensus of family, school, etc.. But it is also when adolescents create their own futures as independent individuals. The crisis of adolescence, expressed in family/adolescent conflict, or generation gap, depends on the partial or total disparity between the social process of preparation and the individuals' projects.
- Practical observation shows varying degrees of similarity/divergence between adolescents' personality traits and attitudes. How should these be defined? Is there one single behaviour pattern, or many (modernity v. authenticity, westernized v. fundamentalist) for adolescent girls in the Arab world, or are the differences so great that no objective, specific pattern can be made out? If so, can a few trends be seen in areas not necessarily conducive to generalization?

There are other assumptions from which to start, and this Report has tried to test their validity by directly involving adolescents of both sexes in the study of each issue; they could speak for themselves. And what they said was used as a basic reference for testing out the assumptions and answering, to some extent, the questions asked.

Care was taken to prevent the Report being simplistic; this could have harmed the analytical, scientifically-based process. The data has to be read scientifically, using the knowledge and methodologies generally applied in research. The dialectics of facts, testimonies and scientific analysis produced the results and conclusions in the Report. It is hard to summarize all this in a final chapter, so we are presenting only conclusions that specifically concern practical actions and recommendations for devising policies to ensure more effective interaction with adolescents' aspirations, stressing what they see as the most urgent priorities.

### 1- Field survey : Conclusions and recommendations

#### Individual personally and autonomy

The interviews revealed a trait shared by adolescents in all Arab societies - a lack of coherent and cogent expression of the self. The space in which the adolescent lives seems to be split into relatively isolated sub-areas, each with its own rules. Although common values do exist, the behavioural articulation of such values in the areas observed is limited to a few only of those involved in the field survey. Adolescents interact differently with family, school, place of work, friends, club or even politics. The same adolescent may be flexible on female education but strongly opposed to women's employment or a modern family code.

The survey found limited concern among adolescents about the concept of historical continuity. Time is seen as a succession of moments or years (school years, leaving school, dropping a job, marrying, or, less frequently, a specific event). The interviews did not show an awareness of time as a chain, a personal history during which a personality is built up.

Researchers infer that the adolescent's individual, independent personality is still in the early stages of development. The Report concludes that current circumstances surrounding adolescent girls and boys are generally not conducive to shaping their projects as independent individuals on their own; the phenomenon is striking today, compared with the previous generation.

Comparison with that generation suggests that today's parents lived in conditions that were more propitious to developing their independent personalities when adolescents. Yesterday's adolescents were apparently more self-aware, more conscious of the impact of time and space on their lives, than today's.

There are exceptions to this general observation, particularly in cases where specific variables are concerned, like:

- belonging to the urban middle-class with a high level of education and openness to diverse sources of culture. Such a social background is a major factor in shaping an individual, fairly independent personality, offering greater familiarity with modern values and building a larger capacity for collective interaction. This was observed in many interviews done in practically all countries. Social status seems to prevail over other factors (country, religion, etc.)

- participation in the public sphere either via membership of a political party or group or via involvement in social activities within an association or institution. Here, family or personal experience is the major factor in developing an independent personality capable of consistent self-expression. Often the political or social activist is the most articulate, the most consistent in public or private action, and the most clearly committed to a coherent value-system. S/he is also more able to make a case or express an opinion on the basis of personal conviction rather than family or social pressure. This type of adolescent is usually from a family where one member (mostly the father) is involved in some public activity. Often parents and children share political and social attitudes, or parents have extra clout arising from their social and political standing, and do not need to be authoritarian. Thus, generation-gap tension is greatly reduced

- belonging to families experiencing social or economic hardship (poverty, unemployment, father's absence, death or separation of spouse(s), family disruption, etc.). Exposure to such experiences gives the adolescent specific skills, builds personality, and can lead to precocious maturity. Teenagers with family responsibilities such as the care of younger siblings, getting any kind of job, facing social and economic problems and still pursuing their studies (often with excellent results) can form well- developed personalities and have an acute sense of self-identity

- having a circle of friends and a specific behaviour pattern influenced by fashion and prevailing trends. Here, the adolescent's personality develops outside the family environment and free from family pressure. This does not necessarily shape an independent personality, but does help the adolescent adopt and emulate the life style of the community of which s/he is part. But imitating a pattern of behaviour or an idol does not mean the adolescent has thought about what motivated that choice. Espousal of an extra-family, community-based life-style cancels the sense of family, rules out conventional behaviour and builds a collective identity, not a truly distinctive, individual personality.

Several important gaps were noted in the surveys as regards the work of basic educational institutions such as the family and school. Both institutions, in which adolescents spend most of their time, have more or less failed to build up individual personality. They are not complementary, and fail to interact with the community of friends or the social, informational and cultural forces that affect society. This provides a fragmented approach to adolescent self-awareness and behaviour patterns, and offers different, sometimes contradictory, terms of reference.

A multi-dimensional reform is thus needed, based on the following steps:

**1-** Developing an individual personality endowed with a fair measure of self-awareness and independent initiative should be a basic educational objective, for adolescents to interact healthily with their society, family and school; this should use a dovetailing approach.

**2-** Finding a balance between individual, society and intermediary institutions based on participation and interaction. This requires a gradual approach that links the social and individual projects and can provide an alternative to both consumer-oriented individualism and to loss or marginalization of individuality (where the individual merges into the group).

**3-** Paying attention to age- and sex-based discrimination in society and trying to promote more flexible values that recognize the right to difference. Encouraging adolescents to participate in family, school and public life. Introducing a package of institutional, legal and cultural reform that takes account of contemporary developments in such areas as children's precocious mental maturity and access to knowledge, to better prepare them for more active participation.

## Health and reproductive health

The field survey revealed a lack of preventive and health care for adolescents, and a lack of integrated information on all aspects of reproductive and sexual health. The basic source for such information is often friends, media, books and relatives generally (especially with regard to girls' health problems). Adolescents tend not to have regular medical check ups, and psychological consultation is all but inexistent. Smoking and drinking is common.

The Report recommends that certain steps should be taken:

- Integrating health awareness, accident prevention, reproductive and psychological health and sex education within educational programmes, so that the school provides accurate scientific information on all these matters

- Starting innovative programs for groups where early marriage is rampant to curb and eventually eliminate this. Cooperating with proactive institutions and governmental and juridical authorities to have a minimal marriage age established

- Investigating late marriage as a phenomenon linked to economic circumstances and social habits that harms adolescents' physical and psychological health, as well as overall social status and behaviour patterns. Late marriage extends the period of time separating puberty from wedlock without society's being necessarily involved in this issue and its effects.

### Family relationships

The interviews showed the major importance of family for adolescents of both sexes, particularly girls. The difference is relative; it does not suggest that adolescent boys have loose relations with their families but that they have greater freedom and public mobility than their female counterparts. The relationship with parents and relatives is only relatively conflictual, with a marked prevalence of harmony and understanding and very few cases of either absolute submission or outright open conflict.

Areas of friction between adolescents and family are:

- Lack of dialogue generally between parents and children and excessive paternal authority in running family affairs. Occasional use of verbal and even physical violence, resulting in little or no participation in family decision-making

- A general tendency for discrimination in favour of boys, possibly depriving daughters of the right to education or limiting that right to the minimum. In most families gender segregation is the rule as regards household chores, leaving home, dress and choice of friends, all of which are bones of discord between teenager girls and parents

- Almost total failure of parents to provide their adolescent children with information on reproductive health and sex education, or to prepare them for the confusing stage of puberty and what follows. Parents seem unable to communicate, or know too little about such matters to raise them

- Lack of parental contact with or knowledge about their children's friends, and failure to follow up their school-life by attending school-run parents' committee meetings

- Dramatic effect of family breakdown on adolescents, mainly in terms of their present and future perceptions of family life.

The Report formulates a set of recommendations with one paramount objective: Making the family the primary groundwork for dialogue and communication. How to achieve this objective?

**1-** Work out parent-oriented programs via existing mass-media or direct contact, focusing on how to achieve school/family complementarity. The overall purpose is to extend dialogue within the family, develop parent/child negotiating skills and highlight the many participation-based models for promoting parent/child relations

**2-** Pinpoint the effects (mostly negative) of sex-discrimination between children in the same family, and strive to prevent girls being deprived of schooling. This could be done by means of awareness-raising action for parents and their adolescent children. It may be necessary to create social activity groups which adolescent girls can join once the parents are convinced that this is beneficial

**3-** Set up reproductive health awareness programmes for family members and educators. Encourage family and school to play their part in raising awareness about reproductive health and sexual education, on strictly scientific bases

**4-** Encourage the family to welcome and interact with their children's friends while respecting their right to privacy. Support joint inter-generational activities, for these can appeal to adolescents and offer them a break from activities restricted to youngsters in their age-bracket

**5-** Do an analytical field survey on family breakdown and its effect on the family generally, and children and adolescents in particular. Such breakdowns can have a terrible effect on children's psychological health, behaviour and attitudes to present and future relations with the family.

Most of these recommendations relate to public awareness and are thus the responsibility of the mass media and the schools.

## Need for a new school

Adolescents generally see school as necessary but unattractive, an unavoidable stage on the journey to employment and active life. Traditional teaching methods are repeatedly criticized as inefficient; when adolescents admire a teacher, they are not mainly moved by his/her competence but whether he/she listens to them and cares for them without moralizing or patronizing. The school chief supervisor is often seen as a jailer rather than an educator.

Adolescents also believe that educational reform programs (which prioritize equipment) do not address their own priorities, i.e. the relational dimension within the school and its pedagogical procedure. Any valid educational reform must address these priorities, and this requires a change in educational philosophy rather than money.

The Report suggests making the school into a place of participation by :

**1-** Boosting the child's sense of belonging to the school by making it an enjoyable and attractive place where s/he can develop her/his personality. This means making the school a place where there is participation rather than where knowledge is dictated in an environment dominated by a hierarchy and administrative restrictions

**2-** Improving teaching methods by focusing on proactive pedagogy, i.e. intense interaction with and motivating of pupils to help them participate and increase their research ability and critical judgment. Specific programs must be set up to ensure that teachers and educators are suitably retrained

**3-** Developing curricula that focus on modern technology, especially computer skills, and link the training provided by the school to the ever-growing requirements of public life

**4-** Helping pupils participate more fully within the school by setting up committees and clubs in which elected members who represent them can be fully involved in running school life. School should be where pupils prepare themselves for active participation in public life at local and national level

**5-** Including sports, arts and other activities in the curriculum and not categorizing subjects as core, secondary or optional. Sports etc. are very important for building a balanced personality and developing harmonious relationships between individual, community and society

**6-** Improving the schools' internal regulations by creating early warning mechanisms to settling disputes before they become open conflict between student and parents, administration or teachers. This could be done by negotiated means for compromise. School systems still lack flexibility and are run on outdated hierarchical lines. They need to be overhauled in the interests of democracy, participation and negotiation.

## Behaviour and hobbies

Some of the field survey's most important findings relate to the following:

- Great disparity between adolescent girls and boys as regards opportunities for hobbies, behaviour control and relatively different areas of interest

- Unequal involvement in a number of activities in general and per country in particular. This applies mainly to computer-use and sports, the latter being practically the preserve of boys, generally from well-off families

- Decline in reading and going to films or plays; widespread T.V. watching

- Every kind of music ranking highest among adolescents' interests in all countries

- Going out with friends is a major activity, although to a lesser extent in mixed (boy-girl) groups, mainly in poor and conservative milieus

- Too few institutions, facilities and infrastructure for adolescent activities; those available for low-income categories cost too much.

To address these issues, the most recurrent recommendations made by adolescents in all Arab countries concern:

- The need to provide adequate facilities (clubs, associations, youth clubs, sports centres, entertainment and cultural activities) in areas near to where they live, especially rural and poor urban areas, to take in more young people and attract more girls

- Setting up action plans and awareness-raising programmes to encourage reading, or provide computer equipment. The cost of books should be reduced; schools and other institutions should establish networks to enable girls and poorer adolescents to use modern technology. Efforts should be made to interest teenagers in the cinema and drama

- The need to valorize the arts, spread general culture, legal concepts, tolerance and respect for human rights, and care for and protect adolescents of both sexes, using to that end all available means (school, media, clubs, associations networks).

## Attitudes and values

The Report also found that religion is ever present, if in varying degrees, in the minds of adolescents of both sexes. It is usually bound up with tradition and social customs and is differently viewed (from marked extremism to downright flexibility). There is no clear-cut attitude to religion. There is no general pattern of piety unmixed with modern elements. Nor is there a modernism devoid of any religiosity. But religious culture per se remains weak: either a family legacy, the reflection of parental belief, or the result of new religious influences picked up at school or from the media.

Recommendations on this matter:

- Learning more about the religious heritage in the Arab world to help adolescents develop their knowledge of their own religion and understand other religions better; this will be instrumental in building a religious culture based on tolerance, exploring areas common to all religions and preventing extremism

- Learning to separate religion from tradition and custom, politics and ideology, to prevent adolescents being affected by their amalgamation

- Submitting to critical revision those sources of indoctrination that are propagated unchecked through the media, where religious sermonizing is used for political purposes.

## Politics

A clear contradiction was observed. Adolescents seem to be much interested in political issues worldwide and in the region, and ready to express clear, often radical opinions about these. But these same adolescents seem to reject involvement in political parties or movements.

Based on this observation, the following recommendation was made:

- Call on political parties to develop more advanced platforms and work methods and improve their image to attractive young people. They should also rehabilitate political action by moving away from the routine power struggle and ending the (frequent) inconsistency between word and deed. The negative image political parties offer of themselves is the main reason for adolescents' disaffection and mistrust of organized political action.

## Work, money and economic activity

Most adolescents see money as a means, not a end. They do not give it specific moral or social value, and many do not draw a distinction between money and capital. As to work and future career, most of them see this as an important, even essential activity without representing a central value around which the social order revolves. Most see consider work as compulsory for men but only desirable for women, and believe there is necessarily a social division of labor based on sex. Most see social status as decisive in choosing a job. They generally show little interest in the economic project as such, with a few exceptions, mainly male adolescents.

Trainees and other adolescents who join the labor market early consider working conditions generally unsatisfactory, with low wages and bad labor relations, including violence. Early school leaving and entry into the labor market usually seem to be linked to socio-economic circumstances.

Generally speaking there is poor careers guidance and little connection between school and labor market.

The Report made the following recommendations:

- Improve governmental and non-governmental vocational guidance and training programmes, moving away from traditional methods and designing innovative ideas for school/job interaction

- Develop labor laws to protect the rights of this class of worker, in terms of the minimal legal age required for work, working conditions, and regulations that apply to trainees

- Guarantee adolescents the right to union protection, social and health insurance and other labor-related rights and benefits

- Develop youth-oriented assistance programmes like income-generating projects, access to loans and proper vocational training. Such programmes should take into account young workers' expectations and the priorities they set on the social value of employment, and address their widespread belief in a sex-based division of labor. Adolescents prefer stable, permanent and secure employment over uncertain, privately-run projects.

## CONCLUSION... A New Beginning

The Report is a dense compendium of the basic material fed into the different chapters. It allows for multiple readings and can be used for additional analysis, which is, in fact, what CAWTAR intends to do in its forthcoming programme of work.

A question raised when the project started was what were the similarities and differences between patterns or models of adolescent life in Arab societies. Every chapter in the Report relates, directly or indirectly, to this question. Each was structured around an analytical, comparative approach to highlight the various factors and variables that bring together or keep apart groups of adolescents within one country or between one country and another. The investigation has shown that some factors have more impact than others on attitudes that are fairly common and are likely to cross borders within the Arab world, sometimes even beyond - in some areas. And factors of national identity and social and political history are likely to affect other areas.

Thus, when asked whether an archetype of adolescence in the Arab world exists, the answer seems fairly simple: No, because there is nothing to support such a statement.

But take a more complex question: is there a limited number of patterns or models of adolescence in Arab societies that present a high degree of internal consistency and are distributed according to clear-cut variables (e.g. a modern kind of adolescent, or a traditional type of adolescent, or again a religious type of adolescent)? The answer will be complex, because there are indicators that support, if only partially, such conclusions.

But this kind of classification is arbitrary and does not express the diversity of testimonies and experience in the interviews that appear in this Report. The picture the Report has painted is far more complex than the above questions might suggest. This is shown in the following facts:

**a-** There are dynamic forces behind the growing similarity of adolescents' attitudes and practices, which the Report links to four major factors:

- globalization and the ensuing consumersion
- appeal of fundamentalism and religious radicalism
- modernity
- revival of traditional society

**b-** There are dynamic forces behind the divisions and cult of private interests, mainly due to lack of altruism, personal consumerism and extremism. Unequal social, economic and cultural development between countries, as well as between groups within the same country, gives rise to diverse reactions that baffle any attempt at categorization

**c-** The archetypes mentioned above remain academic. Rarely in everyday life does one find adolescents behaving in a coordinated manner that combines convictions, intellectual values, attitudes, opinions and practices in a consistent whole. The most widespread type of behaviour in the overwhelming majority of cases relates to one specific area or term of reference alone.

Hence the great diversity of non-archetypal ways of thinking and behaving, varying with the peculiarities of the adolescent's temperament and condition. Archetypes are necessary for analytical purposes and for describing a given reality, providing the theory and assumptions on which a realistic analysis of an individual life is based. They may relate more or less closely to specific cases. But they do not necessarily correspond to them entirely. Adolescents across the Arab world share, in similar proportions, the diversity that exists within a single Arab country.

Finally, the conclusion resembles the introduction. And so does the Report: it is the outcome, the crowning, of nearly two years of research. And it is a start, a corpus for a follow-up of this research project on adolescence.

# Appendix 1

## Teenagers: opinions, attitudes and stereotypes

This Appendix (to the conclusions) is composed of three sections:

**1-** Teenage girls' and boys' opinions on the study
**2-** A presentation of the most important issues according to the interviewees
**3-** A classification of adolescent types and attitudes

## 1- Teenagers' opinions on the study

Researchers asked teenagers a direct question about their view of the study's usefulness. Answers ranged from a blunt «I don't know» to «The study's useful ...what next?» Some interviewees seemed more certain than others of its current and future usefulness. In general, they responded well to the questions, and their opinion of the study was positive.

## ...it allows us to learn and to cure

Most of the teenagers interviewed said the study was useful in that it made the true situation in the Arab world better known, and offered solutions and suggestions for some of the problems they face.

In their answers, the word «knowledge» recurs, focusing on three issues. The purpose of the study (to give a better understanding of how adolescents think); its presenting a better view of their problems and needs; and the need to intervene to solve these problems and needs. There is little focus on knowledge for knowledge's sake.

Rafik (18, Lebanon) thinks «the study is useful, since everyone needs to know what young people think; diagnosis can lead to cure». Waad (17, Yemen) says, «The study can be useful in dealing with some of the problems of youth and in understanding how they think and their opinions». Mohamed (17, Egypt) says: «Even if I do not see its usefulness now, I'm sure it's important for those concerned, and could be useful to me in the future. When I was asked to participate in the study and understood its objectives, I realized it was important. I also realized that there are people who are interested in different categories of society, and especially in young people.»

Teenagers believe that knowing how they think, their problems and needs, is vital for them to understand their lives and making comparisons with people of their age in their own country, other Arab countries and other parts of the world. They want to know what is «true and what is false,» discover what is «positive and negative» in their attitudes and behaviour, and find «similarities and differences between themselves and their peers». They want to know how other adolescents think, the differences between them and whether they are «normal» or not. Some believe that they «think differently from others and don't know whether what they say is right or wrong». This study can provide a scientific reference they can compare themselves with, and reassure them that they are «normal» (this expression recurs), i.e. like other people.

Wahid (15, Yemen) thinks it «will be useful in understanding youth problems, in comparing their situation in the Arab region, and in making researchers more familiar with the personalities of youngsters». Dina (15, Lebanon) thinks it will inform adolescents about other adolescents' opinions. Randa (16, Egypt) thinks it enables them to discover «how people think, the differences, if any, between different countries, and whether all teenagers think alike.» Others are interested in the statistics, since the scientific, documented approach can shed light on features and problems common to all teenagers and can help adults and adolescents themselves understand young people. This boils down to understanding how adolescents think and finding out how to deal positively with them.

## From the general to the specific

Do they expect the Report to be useful? Answers vary. Some have felt good during the interview and had a chance to discover their own hidden facets. Some want to make adult (family and teachers) behaviour more lenient. Others hope for a new awareness of the need to take steps to solve problems common to all adolescents. Some wish to widen its scope to include the whole Arab world, given similarities in culture and common denominators. Others look for a comparison with adolescents from all over the world, given the features shared by all those in this age group.

Answers link identifying problems to solving them. Some believe that publication of the Report will be useful for decision-makers and people working for women, in that it will enable them to identify needs, provide structures suited to teenage needs, and make decisions in accordance with teenagers' expectations and hopes. The Report highlights local and national features, offering comparisons between adolescents and other groups in society, and providing constructive, positive experiences to emulate and examples of mistakes to avoid. It also predicts future situations for adolescents.

The issue of parental responsibility was addressed. Some interviewees find the study useful in that it enables families to improve their knowledge of their offspring and handle them better. These opinions show the need for inter-generational dialogue. Dana (17, Lebanon) thinks «it may bring adults and adolescents closer, for they often have bad relations and do not understand one another, which leads to generational conflict». Dina (15, Lebanon) and Wassim (17) and Fella (15, Yemen) think it should be addressed to parents so they can learn how to deal with their children. Chamsa (16, Yemen) hopes it will bring an improvement in the situation of teenage girls, especially in relation to the specific problem of dropping out of school.

Many interviewees found the study directly useful. It allowed them to speak freely on questions and issues they do not often consider. Just having their answers listened to is comforting, and incites them to rethink some of the opinions and behaviour they haven't thought about before. They discover new facets of their personality, and new ways of distinguishing right from wrong.

Many interviewees insist: «You must listen to our opinions», «We also have our opinions», «People must know how this generation thinks, and not make fatwas on our behalf. This generation is also able to think, it is not just a lost generation. It is important that adults understand this.» Nahla (15, Egypt) says «it is important to conduct opinion polls, especially for youngsters whose voice is not heard.» Nermin (18, Egypt) says «to speak for ourselves» is essential. Many Moroccan interviewees say the study «enabled representatives of a generation that is generally not heard to say what they think». Nesreen (17, Lebanon) says «I don't know how useful this study is, but I see that it doesn't include negative aspects. It could be useful for some adolescents and help them overcome difficulties.» Some interviewees say they are newly aware of certain issues. For the first time, they can express their opinions, dreams, hopes and fears. Some are reconsidering former decisions (e.g. to drop out of school).

### But . . . what next?

Will the study have practical results? Will it affect decision-makers? Interviewees are mainly skeptical. They think it is important to «study people's situations, but numerous studies were conducted in the past, and I do not believe that there is much use to all of this. Usually, the topic ends up being the topic of a TV programme and nothing changes,» as Ilham (17, Egypt) says. Warda (16, Egypt) asks, through the researcher who interviewed her: «What is most important is what will you do next? How far will the study go? And who is willing to listen to us?» Teenagers see it as significant only if it is put into effect: «If it is going to be left in a drawer, it will be totally useless,» says Wasma (17, Yemen).

### . . . And some suggestions

The interviewees made suggestions, expressing their opinions about the study and their expectations of it:

- Publish the study as a book to offer its benefits to the public. Some explicitly told the researcher they wished to see the results after publication. This raises the issue of publishing the Report in a user-friendly version for teenagers, or publishing a simplified version. It also addresses the need to hold follow-up discussions and workshops on the Report's results and recommendations, with an active participation of teenagers, including those interviewed.

- Widen this type of study to include other groups. This may express a need to know how adults think and thus improve inter-generational communication.

- Work on a similar study for children

- Widen the scope of the study to include other Arab countries to know more about adolescents and discover similarities in problems and concerns.

- Do a comparative study on Arab and other teenagers. There is a curiosity as to differences and similarities between themselves and teenagers in Europe and elsewhere.

## A last question: what are you going to do with the study?

One of the most important questions teenagers asked those in charge of the study, and through them, decision-makers and their families is the following: «What are you going to do with this study? How will you benefit from improving our situation?» We pass on the question unaltered. We would like it to be an incentive for CAWTAR to continue working on the subject of teenage Arab girls, and come up with a practical answer to this question, which puzzles more than a quarter of the Arab population.

## 2- Main Issues in their view

The Report tried to avoid seeing adolescence as a time of crisis. But in conducting the research, it soon became clear how difficult this would be. The Report represents one step towards this goal, but in the interviews the young people expressed their anxieties about an unstable present and an unclear, worrying future.

The Report as a whole researches problems and needs. We present what interviewees see as their main problems. In general, these are not specific to any given country, except for a few examples regarding girls' education (especially relevant to Yemen and Morocco) and early marriage (Yemen). Otherwise, problems recur in all the countries, though their severity differs from one country to another. Here are the most recurrent problems, without specifying the country (except in some instances). The order is not significant; the questions were not asked to establish priorities:

• The right to education, especially for girls. This problem is stressed because some adolescents do not have any form of education, mainly due to tradition and poverty (Yemen) or poverty (poorer classes in Egypt and Morocco). For the more affluent social classes, the problem concerns the continuation of education at higher levels and in preferred fields of specialty

• Economic problems crop up in discussions with adolescents from different countries. Poverty, low wages, unemployment, unavailability of jobs and the housing crisis are among the issues raised. The issues are of two types: either a present problem expressing a present suffering (poverty, the housing shortage), or a future problem expressed as anxiety about an uncertain future (unemployment, the lack of work opportunities)

• Problems about relationships with parents and family, especially poor dialogue with parents, difficulty of getting along with them, different ways of thinking, over-strictness and lack of trust in children. Some interviewees mention parental quarrels that can lead to divorce. Some girls complain about violence or the excessive authority of brothers. The most common problem is the lack of communication between themselves and their families. Girls are treated differently from their brothers; they are more strictly controlled, and this can become a severe problem

• The lack of cultural institutions such as clubs or sport halls for young people especially in small villages and poorer neighborhoods. This is a major problem since it prevents them from practicing their hobbies, communicating with their peers and spending their free time in a useful leisure activity

• Drug use is a problem, along with smoking and other addiction. The issue of qat chewing in Yemen is also mentioned

• The lack of mixed education and public frequentation

• The absence of any sex education

• Worries concerning the current state of affairs, wars and conflicts in the Arab region and in the world

• Lack of freedom in the private and public spheres

## 3 - Personality of adolescent girls and boys

It proved difficult to avoid stereotyping. The study drew on experiences, using a pragmatic approach to similarities and particularities. But the scientific and self-critical approach requires a variety of tools such as categorizing individual cases, establishing grounds for comparison, and identifying differences and the factors that cause them. Analysis of the underlying structure of a particular case to compare it with a standard model is also required.

The analysis and the interviews seek to sketch personality profiles, attitudes, opinions and behaviour. It classifies these in flexible categories, avoiding repetition of traits common to individuals and reflecting attitudes and behaviour. But by a model we mean a structured construct, based on principles and perceptions and a high degree of internal coherence, and fairly stable. At the beginning of this Report, we thought we would need two models: the modern and the traditional teenager. But then we realised this was not realistic, and would actually harm our analysis and results.

In the light of this, we shall attempt to present the cases we encountered, grouped under common personality traits found in adolescent boys and girls. These categories are relative and highly flexible. This presentation will primarily cover models of individual personalities, and only to a lesser extent attitudes and behaviour.

## Personality traits

What follows is not a description of the personality of a given adolescent, but a set of general, common traits that recur in various countries for both sexes. Some seem more specific to a country or a particular group, or might be more gender-specific.

### The Educated Girl

She projects the image of one who thinks deeply before speaking and weighs her words. She has her own views on life, death, the meaning and purpose of life and power. She looks at life objectively and discusses 'adult' topics. She writes poetry, reads, listens to quiet music and withdraws into solitude from time to time. She feels different from other people, more rational and responsible than her peers, and only consumes moderately. If she is from the middle class, she will be interested in culture and literature; if from the poorer classes, she will draw on popular wisdom and exhibit a strong wish for isolation.

### The Liberated Girl

An urban, exclusively middle- or upper-class, girl. She is familiar with western culture and may adopt some of its behaviour patterns, or distance herself from, or criticize, such behaviour. She rejects tradition and seeks to succeed professionally. She aspires to a complementary, balanced partnership with the opposite sex, starting with a sentimental relationship before marriage. She might accept some form of limited, conditional sex. She has a sense of individuality and suffers from the generation gap within her family. She is looking for understanding.

### The Little Mother

She is usually the eldest sister in a medium or large family of limited means. In some cases she is the eldest in a family where one of the parents is dead, or where parents are divorced or separated. She is a little mother to her siblings, and sometimes her father. She manages the household, looks after younger siblings, and supervises and punishes them. She internalizes the role of a mother.

### The Diligent Girl

She is the 'model' girl who balances her needs and aspirations and the demands of her society. She is diligent, knows what she wants and has clear plans for her professional future. In most cases, this profession is socially respectable. She seeks a relationship with the opposite sex via traditional channels in social circles that are equal to or slightly above hers, with some flexibility and openness. Her industriousness serves as a mechanism to widen her future choices in terms of marriage and a career.

### The Frivolous Girl

She has many short-term relationships with the opposite sex. Often, she has family problems, mainly stormy relations between her parents or within the family. She may be, as her family says, an unwanted child. She mistrusts men, due to a personal experience or that of someone close to her. She often has problems at school and tries to show that she can gain and discard love, that she too has the power to give love and take it away. It is a game one can start and end without leading any further.

### The Spoiled Girl

She is often an only child or the youngest in a family of decent economic and cultural situation. She does no household chores and is the center of adult attention. She has a great deal of freedom compared to her immediate environment, thanks to the social or other favorable position of her family. All she has to do is complete her studies and decide on a future, either marriage and a career or marriage and a family of her own.

### The Ill-treated Girl

If poverty is combined with a rural or tribal setting (heavily patriarchal), her world is strictly confined. Her life revolves around house, chores, her reputation and her honor. Household chores are exhausting and she cannot even dream of not doing them for they are an unquestionable, basic duty. All she can hope for is lighter work and for the men of the household to treat her better. She is subject to verbal, moral and physical abuse. Patience, temperance and self-sacrifice are the highest values; love and feelings are repressed; to have sex leads to ruin. She is waiting for a husband, chosen by the family, and married to her at an early age. She hopes her marriage will free her from her daily chores, but her lot may worsen after marriage if she has problems with her husband and his family.

### The Provocative Girl

She often comes from a broken family or one with major problems. Her father may be unemployed, addicted, drunk, in jail or violent. Her family is scorned by the community. She often suffers from violence and contempt within her family, usually not very religious. She feels wronged and sees society as hypocritical, people saying one thing and doing another. She feels she has nothing to lose and flouts convention. She categorically rejects everything; those around her think she is provocative. She doesn't care, seeing herself as denouncing society's hypocrisy. She does not worry about the consequences of her acts, lives for the present and thinks she has no future.

### The Chained Girl

Usually from a poor class, she lives in a rural, conservative community, closely watched by her immediate and extended family and the community. Her reaction is to become depressed and withdraw to cry. Complaining about her lot changes nothing; she internalizes the impossibility of change. If she is restricted for a long time, she may resemble the ill-treated girl. Her situation can change for the better; she may be allowed a little more freedom. This depends on how her life evolves, on her choice of a partner and on her family's way of thinking.

### The Marginalized Girl

Often from a poor class, she lives on the outskirts of a city, in a slum; her house is poor and scantly equipped. Usually she does not go to school. She may be disabled or have a chronic disease. She thinks society looks down on her and people avoid her. She may be slightly better off, but she, or a family member, has had an accident or a problem with the law, and she withdraws from society. She feels wronged, but unable to change how people see her. She feels misunderstood by her family and swings between despair and violent anger against herself and those weaker than she is.

### The Submissive Girl

Often from a conservative, middle- to upper-middle-class family, she lets her family choose her friends because she trusts their judgment. She refuses to talk about sex, thinking any extra-marital relationship immoral and against tradition. She has a harmonious relationship with her parents, internalizes family values and rejects the idea of a conflict of generations. Her parents reward her for her model behaviour and seldom punish her. She believes in the traditional gender division of labor. Marriage and having a family are her priorities. She is a firm believer, in the moderate traditional mode.

### The Underprivileged Fighter

She feels her poverty acutely and is frustrated at being unable to provide for her own needs. She knows this will affect her educational and professional future, but keeps her self-pride and belief in her own worth. She is determined to change her situation. She is adamant about successfully continuing her education. Once on the labor market, she fights to strengthen her position and advance, using her strong personality and good communication skills. She believes strongly in the values of her environment. Others admire her for her aggressive stoicism.

### The Challenger

She has a strong personality, is stubborn, and thinks she has the right to live as she thinks right. She uses her negotiating skills with her family and friends, convincing them if possible, but never giving up. If she has to, she is cunning and challenges family and society. If her family reject her choice of partner she sticks to him. At school and in society, she has a drive to succeed; opposition gives her further strength to do what she wants. Any temporary disability or difficulty will only strengthen her determination to outdo herself and her colleagues.

## Specific culture, values and behaviour

Having looked at teenage personality traits, we shall examine some of the existing models for adolescent culture, values and behaviour from a different angle.

### The Globalized Model

Relatively speaking, we can say that a «globalized» model of the teenager exists. It corresponds to the image of the teenager in western consumer societies, especially the US. It is vehicled by the mass media, highly codified in terms of dress, taste in music, food, vocabulary and concerns. The «globalized» teenager is similar in all Arab countries. S/he is from the middle or upper class, code-switches between Arabic and a foreign language, wears international brand names or copies, likes pop music, watches TV and surfs the internet. Speed, not calm, is the most valued quality. Hair must be styled in the latest way; fast food eaten with friends is preferred to traditional cooking. S/he wants to start up a business, studies business administration and computer science, is not political and prefers superficial relations with the opposite sex.

But there is really no model for the traditional adolescent, because it would require certain elements which are lacking. Behaviour that is in keeping with social tradition and custom varies from one country to another and from one social context to another. A few general features recur. S/he greatly values the family and is less attached to friends than the «globalized» adolescent. S/he mainly listens to Arabic music, either classical, folkloric or popular. S/he dresses plainly, in keeping with ordinary, accepted fashion. S/he prefers professions that are socially rewarding and dislikes conflict and unconventional behaviour. Boys have a traditional view of women.

During the interviews, a possible third model emerged - the educated teenager, often influenced by modernity and usually from the urban middle class. S/he is critical of ‘old-fashioned’ social traditions and customs, but considers the ‘globalized’ teenager superficial and naÔve. S/he wants to appear cultured and enjoys listening to Arabic and western music, preferring the quieter, classical styles. S/he likes reading, going to the cinema and the theater, and uses computers moderately. S/he believes in equal rights for men and women and gives precedence to love over sexual gratification. S/he tries to fashion an individual personality and not copy others. S/he is open to political activity and other forms of social involvement.

### Belief

Faith, and the belief that religion is important, are shared by most adolescents. But their views on religion may vary greatly. We devised these possible categories:

### The Traditional Believer

S/he does not see her/himself as a zealot, does not try to deepen her/his understanding and does not regularly worship in an organized, collective way but believes in God, prays and fasts. Her/his religious ideas come from father, family, school and perhaps the media. Faith is like that of the parents and family. Religion means devoutness, the fear of God, good deeds and altruism. Girls dress modestly, sometimes with the veil, but without excess. Boys do not grow beards or wear special clothes. Priority is given to obeying and understanding the parents, since «God’s favor comes through satisfying one’s parents.»1 They get on well with family members.

### The Critical, Tolerant Believer

S/he thinks religion is too often mixed up with outdated traditions and does not know if these are part of, or extraneous to, it (but favors the second idea). Religious men and adults explain and perhaps misinterpret religion and cause it to lag behind the times. Wishing to come over as modern s/he only takes part in religious ceremonies on special occasions. S/he selects certain precepts and follows these strictly. Her/his relations with his family are rather strained, especially if it is conservative.

### The Philosopher

Religion is between him/her and the Creator. Faith is a private matter, not a question of show. Ritual is less important than moral principles and behaviour. S/he differs from others and rejects the idea that God should be feared. S/he believes that one can believe without belonging to a specific religion, sect or creed. S/he is critical of religious-based political movements and thinks religion should not interfere in politics, even less one's private life. S/he is attracted to secularism and the idea of a secular state, sometimes understanding the implications of this, sometimes impulsively. Usually s/he and the family have a varied cultural background.

### The Politicized Fanatic

This model, growing rapidly among teenagers, is near to the ideal model, satisfying certain criteria and ideas. In fact, there is no one model but models that vary with current and doctrine. Participation in group rituals and ceremonies is taken seriously; belonging to the group is vitally important. His/her own personality dissolves as s/he emulates the group leaders. Growing a beard and wearing particular garments of specific color is a sign of identity and belonging. Girls must wear the veil, which varies according to which group they belong to. The source of culture is the group, or some preachers in the media or who use other audiovisual means. S/he does not get on with the family, who do not share her/his religious fervor; if forced to choose between family and religious commitment, the latter has priority. S/he is intransigent on every tiny detail and rejects Itihaj (study of the Koran) and flexibility, seen as a way of neglecting religious duties. S/he has strict principles regarding relations with the opposite sex. This model is essentially masculine.

### The Political and Social Activitist

It is difficult to find a model that can withstand generalization. We have, however, identified a number of similarities for those who engage in political or social activity, despite diversity of inclination and field of work. Usually a family member has had an influence on the teenager, who shares their choices; this narrows the generation gap within the family. Different choices do not lead to open conflict but perhaps teenager/family friction. Better informed than peers or family members, s/he has a more coherent personality. S/he has good leadership skills and a greater than average aptitude for negotiation. Interests and hobbies are inclusive. When s/he does not belong to a conservative religious group, s/he favours mixing with the opposite sex. S/he shares some features with members of religious political parties whose activities do not exclusively center on behavioural and doctrinal issues, and members of secular parties and associations, and can communicate with them. S/he is usually able to balance the individual project and the family and society, and deal with difficulties in accomplishing her/his goals.

## In conclusion...

This Appendix started, and now ends, with our reservations regarding categorizing and the elaboration of models. We have sketched out a series of profiles or portraits of adolescents, using interviews, field remarks and data analysis. The rest of the Report, especially the testimonies of adolescent boys and girls and summaries of all the interviews, provides ample material for people to draw their own conclusions.

# Appendix 2

## Technical and methodological guide for studying Arab teenage girls1

Here we shall consider from a graphic angle how adolescent girls build up an identity. By identity we mean the set of representations the girls make of themselves, others, activities, views of the future, etc. in their attempt to balance social integration and the search for the self. We offer a preliminary guide on the study, methodology used, and problems experienced. We intended that each country team would make its own study and that these would be used to prepare an (Arab) regional Report, comparing results and analysing similarities and differences, and defining common future directions.

### Contributors to the Report

- The Center of Arab Women for Training and Research CAWTAR
- Supervisory committee and a coordinator
- A team of two researchers per country, represented by a coordinator.

### Significance and outcomes of the study

CAWTAR is committed to promoting the condition of women and thus must tackle issues related to modernity and social change. The move to modernity directly affects teenagers, being the time when committed, autonomous citizens are formed. Some would argue that teenagers are not a problematic segment of the population in Arab countries. In Arabic the word «adolescence» suggests fatigue, effort, and a quick transition from a provisional to a more permanent state.

Such a Report is necessary because adolescence does not take the same form in traditional Arab societies but reproduces and reasserts aspects of modernity. This is most clearly visible during the physiological change from childhood to maturity. Teenagers are witnesses of and actors in the continuity of tradition. They also witness the social, cultural and economic change and transformation of moral values that Arab societies are experiencing. They thus constitute a valuable indicator for measuring modernization and change in the Arab world.

### An approach that requires various fields of expertise

We used a minimum of four approaches in dealing with adolescence. Conclusions should be meticulously corroborated by the interviews and the analysis:

- **The psychological approach:** Adolescence is a transitional phase when young people change and learn. Individuality is molded via the balancing of social integration and personal development. The teenagers' sense of identity oscillates between argument, rebellion, invention and renewal.

- **The anthropological approach:** Stresses socio-cultural acculturation and the move from tradition to modernity, submission to independence, the child's to the adult world. Modernity allows teenagers to be viewed as a discrete part of the population for scientific research and development policy.

- **The sociological approach:** Adolescence is a phase of social integration. Adolescents are a force in the social change currently taking place in Arab countries, increasingly involved in politics and civil society. The question is, which adolescents, male and female, and for what societies?

- **The economic approach:** Adolescents enter the economy by working, doing odd jobs, consuming, engaging in economic exchange etc. and gradually become fully-fledged actors in the economy.

The first part of this guide consists of the basic questions (cf. the list of detailed questions in the Appendix) researchers should ask their teenage samples. It then goes into how to analyze and interpret the data from these interviews. The third section deals with the sample chosen by each country. The fourth examines some of the premises and technical aspects of the interviews conducted by the local teams.

# I. Topics of the study: initial format

The local researchers doing the field research had first to present the interviews in a summarized, consistent form. The four topics that were dealt with in the preliminary paper, and that all researchers should read, are summarized below:

## 1. Adolescents, individual identity and self-representation

Identity construction, individuality, independence in relations with others; puberty and physical change, sexuality and perception of the opposite sex, friendship and love, girl/boy differences

## 2. Relations with parents, heritage, breaking away, getting used to adult life

Changing family relations, positive confrontation; transforming traditional power relations; perception of parental, or adult, roles and projections into the future

## 3. Culture and group belonging

Behaviour as regards leisure, food, clothing and music; youth groups and places where social contact is made; the media, internet, reading (books); music. What are your tastes? Why?

## 4. Integrating into society and planning for the future

Social integration, the individual in the group; school and work; future aspirations and view of society; integration and participation in public life, politics, religion; crisis; belonging to a political movement or NGO; perception of dominant values (money, profit)

## Questions per topic (analytical summary of attached questions)

An analytical summary of questions can give researchers an overall view of all the questions when giving the interview.

### Introduction

How old are you? How many siblings do you have? What do your mother and father do for a living? Do you go to school? Are you in vocational training? Or another type of training?

**1. Tell me about yourself (hobbies and self-representation)**

• Self-representation: important turning points in your life, your qualities and faults, what image do you project, personally and socially? Your involvement in life, your view of power, love and sex, puberty, romantic affairs, sexual desire, marriage, your opinions and those of your parents, the ideal partner

**2. Tell me about your family (relationship with family members, customs and ways, breaking away from the family and getting used to adult life)**

• Relations within the family: how important do you see each member of the family, the girls' and boys' roles
• Parental supervision and self-assertion: family supervision, communicating with them, personal space allowed on a daily basis
• Conflicts with family and others. How do you assert yourself?
• Family heritage

**3. Tell me about your tastes, your friends, and your leisure activities (culture and relationship to the group)**

• Your taste in leisure and music, media, sport, food, physical and mental skills
• Youth groups and places for social mixing: where you go and the groups you associate with, leisure relationships, friendships and/or romantic boy/girl relations

**4. Tell me how you integrate in society and the work environment; future plans**

• Studies and academic choices: experience, the role of your family, your idea of success and future plans. For employed teenagers: the path you have chosen and professional career

• The role of teachers in your life, and possible conflict
• Aspirations for the future and view of society: participation in social, political and religious life, financial independence, the role of youth, the condition of women, gender intermingling

**Note:** All these questions can be used when interviewing specialists.

The questions represent general guidelines for researchers conducting the inquiries. Obviously, they should fit the discussion, ideally once a rapport has been established between interviewer and interviewee. (Other questions can and should be prepared but if general must be forwarded to the coordinator, since they might be useful to other researchers.) Researchers and coordinators should keep in touch by e-mail. When necessary, the coordinator will give new information to the supervisory committee.

The interview format is open-ended, encouraging teenagers to talk freely on any topic. This calls for flexibility and an ability to get the interviewee to talk frankly about the questions. But interviewers should not stray too far from the format devised by the supervisory committee, so that there is consistency within and between countries. Researchers can thus compare answers when analyzing the data.

## II. Reconstruction and analysis of data

Suggestions for analysing the data collected in the interviews

A country's overall situation should be examined before the Report is read

• Statistics on adolescents as a distinct group
• Historical and legal background, to see how adolescents have been dealt with in that country.

Interviewers must have read other research, at least 5-10 reference books or papers on adolescence, to support their analysis. Resources should be divided up (by theme, e.g. activity sector, family, life-style, individual and group psychology). They must also be familiar with local views on youth matters, the legal and cognitive situation, socio- economic and political plans and programs for them, and institutions concerned with teenagers, etc. The main topics are as follows:

**1.** Social policies and general programs for young people in each country
**2.** Public and private infrastructure provided for teenagers
**3.** Legal framework relating to young people and adolescents
**4.** Medical and social institutions.

Some of the readings may appear early in the Report. (The Bibliography is at the end)

National reports should refer to the questionnaire or offer additional questions

As said above, the questionnaire does not preclude changes being made to the topics or the analysis. Researchers will discover other topics when conducting the interviews. But consistency and logic are important, and the above topics must appear, in one form or the other, in the monographic reports of each country, to:

**1.** Decide how adolescents break the law and become delinquent: scenarios of conflict and confrontation. Classify misbehaviour by social type. Link delinquency to the society's democratic absorptive capacity, for instance, different ideas of delinquency according to social law (divorce for instance).

**2.** Stress that adolescence is not merely an age phase but a distancing from self and others; conflictual relations; introspection, self-evaluation, etc.

**3.** Highlight intellectual ability as regards teenagers' innovation and creativity and the dialectics of creative development and social renewal. See adolescence as a way of improving societies in flux.

**4.** Recognise that a feature of adolescence is the diversity and profusion of its models. Reexamine the religious model (past heroes glorified, a model shaped in mosques).

**5.** Examine teenagers' changing relations with their families; paternal supervision and conflict. Note where adolescents stand as regards professions that deal with young people (doctors, psychologists, educators, trainers, law specialists).

**6.** Recognize the modern values that underpin individualism and self-construction, how individual and collective values interact, the relations that tie an individual to the group, the relationship between personal value and independence, the prolongation or confirmation of adolescence.

**Question:** Do social factors prolong adolescence? What strategies help cope with the mass of choices that entry into the adult world involves?

**7.** Teenagers and communication via dress codes, music and religion; teenagers and the media.

**8.** Observe gradual changes in man/woman relations, forms of secularism, sexual relations; perception of sex and love; views of marriage.

**9.** Define places where social interaction can happen (schools, universities) and create a collective identity. Spaces for adolescents in the university, solidarity and clannishness, young people and parties.

**10.** Look at education and vocational training, careers guidance, the age for such training, the school's role. Study is not particularly attractive at this age.

**11.** Examine other issues such as unemployment, careers guidance, exclusion, the dangers of unemployment.

**12.** Examine views of the future: how teenage girls plan their role in society, see success, become socially integrated and participate in economic and financial life.

There is no one model of adolescence; there are as many adolescences as social milieus. The Report must classify these. Researchers can define distinctive behaviour, or a behavioural logic: the type who breaks the law, the drifter, the girl who attempts to fit into society, etc. Each of the reports produced by the national teams is at least 50-60 pages long. Once the data is collected, a meeting should take place with researchers to unify their national studies, without losing local specificities.

Then a comparative overview of the national studies should be drafted, and a report (combining five or six studies) issued. This will be done by the members of the supervisory committee. The overview will use material from all the studies and focus on differences and similarities existing between countries. The committee will make a comparative analysis of each country to highlight:

**1.** Variations in societal views of adolescence, and resources made available to integrate young people in each of the countries.
**2.** Adolescents as a separate age group. Key concepts such as modernization, individualism, generation conflict, social change and evolution, urbanization and acculturation should be redefined.
**3.** Comparing and clarifying some of the differences based on social principles.

**In conclusion,** the data collected in qualitative research must also be analyzed. Using the qualitative approach, researchers can look at rationales, concepts and value systems, and discover people's views and feelings. Adolescence is a time when young people must express themselves - speaking up is a liberating act. This approach combines methods drawn from the social sciences:

**- Analysis of cultural background:** a society's values and tenets
**- Perceptions:** an interpretative lens through which relationships to the world and others are seen, codifying behaviour and ways of communicating within society (Jodelet). They offer an insight into individual and group identity, values and beliefs, how future projections are shaped, what plans are based on

**- Biographies:** Individual life stories may reflect society. A life story is unlike a biography (past, present and future), for adolescence is a very short period. Interviews focus on basic elements of teenagers' lives and what sets one story apart from others (main events, turning points)
**- Comparative approach:** Comparative study of different countries highlights similarities and differences, and allows a comparison of how adolescence is conceived in various Arab, as well as European, countries.

## Selecting the sample for the field studies

This is an experimental study to show the changing nature of this age of transition, poised between tradition and modernity. It also deals with societies' opinions, and the number of teenagers sampled does not matter. We must:

• Target all teenagers of both sexes, not distinguishing between boys and girls and thus making teenage girls the subject of separate research
• Involve specialists and families in the research. It is possible in some cases to select and interview a parent, educator or psychologist
• Show how diverse are the opinions and rationales on adolescence. Researchers should not omit extreme cases or those with religious and atheistic backgrounds, or activists in political parties, clubs or associations.

The following should be taken into account when composing the sample:

-The family's socio-professional background
-Belonging to an urban or rural milieu, residential or poorer neighborhood, social class
-Level of educational achievement and professional path chosen
-Personal stance on tradition and modernity
-Position in the family (eldest, middle, youngest; number, sex, age of siblings)
-Other elements (self-reliance, group activism, difficulty in integrating).

20 teenagers should be interviewed per country, with 13 or 14 girls and 6 or 7 boys of between 15 and 18. They should be chosen according to the following criteria:

-school attendance in an urban environment
-school attendance in a rural environment
-vocational training or paid activity in an urban environment
-vocational training or professional activity in a rural environment
-middle class
-privileged class
-workers, small tradesmen and informal

10 specialists are selected, among them some teenagers' parents, to respect the correct progression of the interview. They should be specialists in either:

-health
-education
-specialist education and counselling
-psychology and psychiatry
-vocational training
-other children's speciality (journalism, art, poetry, etc.)

In their work or their relations with teenagers, the specialists play an active part. Researchers must analyze their views on adolescence and classify them (e.g. by profession). For working teenagers, workers and professionals could be used. People working in NGOs or other bodies can also be considered specialists.

Given time and budget constraints, samples cannot include girls living in remote parts of a country, especially if that country is big. Interviews should be conducted in one or two places, usually the capital and its surroundings (rural and urban areas), but the sample must be representative of the country as a whole. If there is time and money, researchers should certainly conduct interviews in other areas, especially if they see them as representative of a specific kind of teenager. The goal is not to present a partial coverage of models that exclusively represent urban teenagers in big cities, but to highlight the diversity of models responding to social and geographical factors.

## Profile of field researchers and interview techniques

Field Researcher - traits and qualifications Each field research team consists of two researchers who conduct the field study. If there is a need, and money, a third person can deal with the country's local institutional and socio-economic features. Researchers should analyze the data to avoid discrepancies. Each field researcher must have the following skills:

-tactfulness and modesty
-the ability to think critically and analytically and correct misunderstandings
-the ability to not collude with or try to get along with the interviewee; the interview should not be seen as a friendly chat
-the ability to rein in preconceived ideas and personal conviction
-good writing skills.

## Conducting the interview

The first question should encourage the interviewee to talk about the topics, and may focus on an idea that s/he likes to talk about in depth, as long as the overall objective is not lost. There might be some difficulty making the interviewee talk. Teenagers may be shy or have little to say. Interviews should last at least 90 minutes. A break may be given if the interviewee feels pressurized or ill at ease with the interviewer.

**Important element:** where the interview takes place. It should not take place in presence of another person, unless this presence is reassuring.

Interviewers must be able to adapt, but keep to the point and not be guided by the interviewees. Questions may need to be followed up by a «Why?» or a verbal or non-verbal message (a smile, a surprised expression) to get interviewees to elaborate. Interviewers must pace the discussion and not push interviewees into topics abruptly or indirectly, especially sexual topics. They may elicit answers indirectly, for instance, asking questions about the interviewee's friends. They should establish a rapport of trust with the interviewees without excessive agreement or direction.

Researchers can take one, two or more hours over an interview and not rely on their memory but record it (unless the circumstances are exceptional). If necessary, a researcher might interview the same interviewee twice.

Some interviews are easier done in groups. Such interviews offer insights into how adolescents think, and can yield extra information. But each interview, whether group or individual, is taken to be a single interview. For instance, a sample of twenty-five cannot be done as five interviews of five people. Group interviews are an additional exercise, designed to back up - not replace - individual interviews.

Interviews can be done at home, in an institution or elsewhere. We strongly advise against conducting interviews in the presence of the family. Researchers can decide on the venue depending on what is available, but must explain and justify their choice.

When the interview ends, researchers should quickly, before they forget, write down the answers to the questions, preferably on computer, plus their comments and initial analyses. They should describe the place and context of the interview, people present, and their own feelings about the adolescent's personality and appearance, involvement in the interview and interaction with the interviewer.

## Interviewer's handbook

**Important:** Interviewers should cover the following questions and can add more country-specific questions where necessary. They should ask their questions as they think best, in the local dialect and in a suitable tone. They may alter the topic order, to reflect priorities and so as not to interrupt the adolescents.

### Opening:

-How old are you?
-How many siblings do you have?
-What do your parents do for a living?
-Do you go to school? Are you in vocational or any other type of training?

### 1. Tell me about yourself (hobbies and self-representation)

• Self-representation: turning points in your life, your qualities and faults, what image do you project personally and socially?

-Was there one (or some) event/s that affected you and that you have an indelible memory of?
-What are the qualities usually attributed to you? Are they really how you see yourself? Why?
-In your opinion, what are your greatest faults and qualities?
-How do you see your social interaction and your relationships to others?

• Your involvement in life and your view of power

-Would you like to be involved in important activities, take risks, and defend causes or issues you believe in? If yes, why? Alone or with others? If not, why not?
-What is your view of power and those who represent it? Why is it important to comply with the powers that be?
-In some countries or contexts, girls wear the veil; what do you think of this?

• Love and sex, puberty, romantic relationships and sexual desire

-Do you have memories of puberty and the changes in your body? What were they? What were your impressions then?
-Can you talk about sex, how you see masculinity and how it is different from femininity?
-How do you see romantic relations or boy/girl friendships?
-Have you personally ever been in a romantic relationship? Can you tell me about it?
-Have you ever been the object of an adult's sexual desire, or of someone in your circle? What took place? How did you feel?

• Marriage: your opinions and those of your parents, the ideal partner.

-Do you think your parents' opinion matters in your choice of a suitable spouse? Why?
-Was there ever any question of your getting married? What were the circumstances?
-How do you see the ideal wife? Give me some characteristics and explain.
Note: All these questions can be put to the experts.

### 2. Tell me about your family (relationship with family members, customs and ways, breaking away from the family and getting used to adult life)

**• Family relations: how you see the importance of each family member, girls' and boys' roles**

-How do you rank among your siblings? Do you have easy or difficult relations with them? What is your place among your brothers?
-What roles have your father and mother, siblings, grandparents and others played in your life so far?

-Do you think the women in your family are treated in the same way as the men? Explain your answer.
-Do you have to do household chores? What do your brothers do?

**• Family supervision and self-assertion: parental control, communicating with them, personal space allowed on a daily basis**

-Do your family use your stuff, read your letters, answer the phone instead of you and watch what you do?
-If your family watches you carefully, how do they go about it?
-Do you have to tell your family about your activities, relationships and projects?
-Does your family monitor your appearance (dress, hairdo etc.)
-Do you have a private space of your own (a room, a closet?)

**• Conflict with the family and with others. How do you assert yourself?**

-Are there any topics you and your family disagree on? How do you handle such conflicts? Tell me about them.
-Does such conflict lead to your family using physical violence against you? What kind?
-Usually, when you need to speak frankly, who do you confide in? Why?
-Do you think you are «different» from - or opposed to - those around you? Do you need to «impose» your will? Are others understanding?

**• Family heritage**

-What have you learned from your parents, and those close to your family (grandparents, uncles)

All these questions can be used when interviewing specialists.

**Questions for specialists**

-Can you tell us about the family-related behaviour of teenagers in your milieu? What are their relations to their family and to the religious teachings they receive; compliance, distancing or rejection?
-Do you think the so-called conflict of generations exists? Why?
-What do you primarily attempt to teach adolescents?

### 3. Tell me about your tastes, your friends, and your leisure activities (culture and relationship to the group)

• Your taste in leisure and music, media, sport, food, your physical and mental skills

-What leisure activities do you enjoy? How important are music and cinema in your life?
-Do you follow the media? Do you watch the news on TV and films on TV or at the cinema?
-Do you read newspapers or books? Why?
-Are you good with computers? Are you familiar with internet? What has it allowed or could it allow you to do?
-What sort of food do you eat and like? Do you think your tastes have developed over the years? Why?
-Do you think clothing and outward appearance are important? Do you follow fashion?
-Do you do any sports? Are you interested in physical exercise?
-Have you ever been to see a psychologist, counselor or other type of specialist? In what circumstances, and how did it help?

• Youth clubs and social mixing: the places you go to and the groups you associate with, leisure relationships, boy/girl friendships and/or romance

-Tell me what you do outside the home: do your parents allow you to go out on your own, with your boy or girl friends, or with a relative? Where are you allowed to go?

-Are you a member of a group or a gang of youngsters your age? When do you meet? Where (public or private places)? Why?
-What are the features of the groups you associate with or have noticed? (Use of tobacco, drugs, violence, petty theft, etc.)
-Would you rather live alone or with your family?
-Do you have true boy and girl friends? Do you tell your secrets to friends your age? To boys or girls? Why? What do you have in common?
-Can you compare your interests with those of a group of boys (or girls)?

**Note:** All these questions can be used when interviewing specialists.

### 4.Tell me how you integrate in society and the work environment; your future plans

**Studies and academic choices: your academic experience, the role of your family, obsession with success and future plans. For employed teenagers: the path you have chosen and professional career**

-What type of studies are you pursuing? Are they easy or difficult? Why? What has been your academic experience so far? Can you comment on the main stages?
-How have choices regarding your studies been made (by your parents, on your own, or with the help of your family?)
-Do you think academic success is important? Why?
-What studies would you like to pursue and what profession would you like to have in the future? What does the family think of your choice?
-What type of work do you do? Are you satisfied with it? Why?
-What led and prepared you to choose that particular path?
-What are your plans for professional success? What are your ambitions in this area? Explain.
-How important is work in your life?

**• The role of teachers in your life, and possible conflict**

-At school, did any teachers influence you with their personality?
-Have you ever had conflicts with teachers? Did your family intervene?
-What is your view of boys and girls mixing at school?
-Are there any conflicts among the people around you at school (regarding use of tobacco, drugs, violence, delinquency)

**• Future ambitions and view of society: participation in social, political and religious life. Economic independence, money, the role of youth, the condition of women, gender mixing**

-Do you think that there are enough structures for young people (youth clubs and centers, schools, associations, public and private institutions)? How do you judge their performance? What do you suggest?
-Do you belong, or hope to belong, to a political or religious movement, an NGO or other type of organization? Why?
-Is religion important to you? Why? Explain.
-Are you in contact with NGOs or other organizations? Why?
-What is your view of the wars being waged in your neighborhood? Do you think these conflicts good or bad? What role would you like to play in them?
-Money: Have you got money? Who gives it to you? What do you do with it? Do you spend it as you like? If you had a lot of money, what would you do with it?
-What do you think happiness and success in life mean?
-What role will young people play in tomorrow's society?
-How do you see your future role as a father/mother, and the changing of the role of the family?
-What do you think of the situation of women in your country? Explain your answer.
-Do the new western ideas of love appeal to or influence you: gender equality, free love, divorce.

-If you could visit another country, which would you choose? Why?
-In what way do you think this study on adolescent girls in your country, and the Arab region, is important?

1 A Hadith of the Prophet
1 This document is based on a meeting hosted by the CAWTAR in February 2001, during which Imad Melliti gave a paper on The Situation of Adolescent Boys and Girls in Modern Arab Societies.

# 1- HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

## Table 1.1. : HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

| COUNTRY | Life expectancy at birth | Adult literacy rate (% age 15 and above) | Combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrollment ratio | GDP/ capita ppp US$ | Human Development Index HDI | | | GDP per capita (ppp US$) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Index Value | World rank | Arab World rank (20 countries) | |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 73.3 | 87.6 | 80 | 15084 | 0.831 | 39 | 1 | -2 |
| Kuweit | 76.2 | 82.0 | 59 | 15799 | 0.813 | 45 | 2 | -10 |
| Oman | 71.0 | 71.7 | 58 | 13356 | 0.751 | 78 | 8 | -38 |
| Qatar | 69.6 | 81.2 | 75 | 18789 | 0.803 | 51 | 4 | -25 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 71.6 | 76.3 | 61 | 11367 | 0.759 | 71 | 6 | -26 |
| UAE | 75.0 | 76.3 | 68 | 17935 | 0.812 | 46 | 3 | -19 |
| Average GCC | 72.8 | 79.2 | 67 | 13583 | 0.79 | 55 | 4.0 | -20.0 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 67.3 | 55.3 | 76 | 3635 | 0.642 | 115 | 13 | -10 |
| Iraq | 58.7 | 55.9 | 49 | *3205 | *0.567 | *117- 116 | 15 | *-3 |
| Jordan** | 70.3 | 89.7 | 77 | 3966 | 0.742 | 87 | 9 | 11 |
| Lebanon | 73.1 | 86.0 | 78 | 4308 | 0.755 | 75 | 7 | 20 |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Syria Arab Republic | 71.2 | 74.4 | 63 | 3556 | 0.691 | 108 | 12 | -2 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 68.1 | 72.3 | 69 | 3734 | 0.679 | 100 | 11.2 | 3.2 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 69.6 | 66.7 | 72 | 5308 | 0.697 | 106 | 11 | -22 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 70.5 | 80.0 | 92 | 7570 | 0.773 | 64 | 5 | -2 |
| Morocco | 67.6 | 48.9 | 52 | 3546 | 0.602 | 123 | 14 | -16 |
| Tunisia | 70.2 | 71.0 | 74 | 6363 | 0.722 | 97 | 10 | -26 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 69.5 | 66.7 | 73 | 5072 | 0.7 | 98 | 10.0 | -16.5 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | 59.8 | 55.9 | 35 | 1588 | 0.511 | 137 | 16 | 4 |
| Djibouti | 43.1 | 64.6 | 22 | 2377 | 0.445 | 149 | 19 | -28 |
| Mauritania | 51.5 | 40.2 | 40 | 1677 | 0.438 | 152 | 20 | -16 |
| Somalia | 46.9 | .. | 7 | .. | .. | .. | | .. |
| Sudan | 56.0 | 57.8 | 34 | 1797 | 0.499 | 139 | 17 | -7 |
| Yemen | 60.6 | 46.3 | 51 | 893 | 0.479 | 144 | 18 | 14 |
| Average LDCs | 53.0 | 53.0 | 32 | 1489 | 0.5 | 144 | 18.0 | -6.6 |
| World | 66.9 | .. | 65 | 7446 | 0.722 | .. | .. | .. |
| Developed countries | 64.7 | 73.7 | 61 | 3783 | 0.654 | .. | .. | .. |
| LDCs | 51.9 | 52.8 | 38 | 1216 | 0.445 | .. | .. | .. |
| Arab countries | 66.8 | 62.0 | 62 | 4793 | 0.653 | .. | .. | .. |
| West Asia and Pacific | 69.5 | 85.9 | 71 | 4290 | 0.726 | .. | .. | .. |
| Latin America and Caribbean | 70.0 | 88.3 | 74 | 7234 | 0.767 | .. | .. | .. |
| South Asia | 62.9 | 55.6 | 53 | 2404 | 0.570 | .. | .. | .. |
| Subsahara Africa | 48.7 | 61.5 | 42 | 1690 | 0.471 | .. | .. | .. |
| Eastern Europe and CIS | 68.6 | 99.3 | 77 | 6930 | 0.783 | .. | .. | .. |
| OECD | 76.8 | .. | 87 | 23569 | 0.905 | .. | .. | .. |
| High income OECD | 78.2 | .. | 94 | 27848 | 0.932 | .. | .. | .. |

* Human Development Report 2001, representing 1999 figures
**Gross enrollement ratios (primary, secondary and tertiary) have been modified for Jordan 1999 after the publication of HDR 2002 from 55% to 77%, which led to modifying the value and rank of human development index 2000 (Jordan).

**Source:** Human development report 2002

## Table 1.2. : HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX TRENDS

| COUNTRY | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GCC** | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 0.831 |
| Kuweit | 0.753 | 0.773 | 0.777 | .. | 0.812 | 0.813 |
| Oman | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 0.751 |
| Qatar | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 0.803 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 0.587 | 0.646 | 0.670 | 0.706 | 0.737 | 0.759 |
| UAE | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 0.812 |
| Average GCC | 0.670 | 0.710 | 0.724 | 0.706 | 0.775 | 0.795 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 0.435 | 0.482 | 0.532 | 0.574 | 0.605 | 0.642 |
| Iraq | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Jordan | .. | 0.636 | 0.658 | 0.677 | 0.703 | 0.717 |
| Lebanon | .. | .. | .. | 0.680 | 0.730 | 0.755 |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Syria Arab Republic | 0.538 | 0.580 | 0.614 | 0.634 | 0.665 | 0.691 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 0.487 | 0.566 | 0.601 | 0.641 | 0.676 | 0.701 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 0.501 | 0.550 | 0.600 | 0.639 | 0.663 | 0.697 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 0.773 |
| Morocco | 0.429 | 0.474 | 0.508 | 0.540 | 0.569 | 0.602 |
| Tunisia | 0.514 | 0.566 | 0.613 | 0.646 | 0.682 | 0.722 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 0.481 | 0.530 | 0.574 | 0.608 | 0.638 | 0.699 |
| LDCs | | | | | | |
| Comores | .. | 0.480 | 0.498 | 0.502 | 0.506 | 0.511 |
| Djibouti | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 0.445 |
| Mauritania | 0.337 | 0.360 | 0.379 | 0.390 | 0.418 | 0.438 |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sudan | 0.346 | 0.374 | 0.395 | 0.419 | 0.462 | 0.499 |
| Yemen | .. | .. | .. | 0.399 | 0.439 | 0.479 |
| Average LDCs | 0.342 | 0.405 | 0.424 | 0.428 | 0.456 | 0.474 |

**Source :** Human development report 2002

## Table 1.3. : GENDER RELATED DEVELOPMENT INDEX

| COUNTRY | Gender related development index 2000 | | life expectancy at birth 2000 | | read and write ( % of age 15 and above) 2000 | | Combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrollment ratio (%) 2000 | | estimated earned wage (ppp US$) | | HDI rank minus GDI rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rank | Value | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 40 | 0.822 | 75.8 | 71.6 | 82.6 | 90.9 | 83 | 77 | 7010 | 21059 | −2 |
| Kuweit | 44 | 0.804 | 78.6 | 74.5 | 79.7 | 84.0 | 61 | 57 | 6895 | 22186 | −2 |
| Oman | 78 | 0.722 | 72.6 | 69.7 | 61.6 | 80.1 | 56 | 59 | 3806 | 21804 | −10 |
| Qatar | 48 | 0.794 | 71.3 | 68.7 | 83.1 | 80.4 | 75 | 75 | 6864 | 25277 | −1 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 72 | 0.731 | 73.0 | 70.5 | 66.9 | 83.1 | 60 | 62 | 3466 | 18252 | −10 |
| UAE | 47 | 0.798 | 78.0 | 73.7 | 79.3 | 75.0 | 71 | 65 | 5320 | 24412 | −4 |
| Average GCC | 55 | 0.779 | 74.9 | 71.5 | 75.5 | 82.3 | 68 | 66 | 5560 | 22165 | −4.8 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 99 | 0.628 | 68.9 | 65.7 | 43.8 | 66.6 | 72 | 80 | 2003 | 5227 | −2 |
| Iraq | *107 | *0.548 | *65.3 | *62.3 | *43.2 | *63.9 | *44 | *57 | .. | .. | *−3 |
| Jordan | 84 | 0.701 | 71.8 | 69.1 | 83.9 | 95.1 | 57 | 53 | 1749 | 6014 | −1 |
| Lebanon | 69 | 0.739 | 74.6 | 71.5 | 80.3 | 92.1 | 81 | 76 | 2013 | 6704 | −4 |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Syria Arab Republic | 92 | 0.669 | 72.4 | 70.0 | 60.5 | 88.3 | 61 | 65 | 1537 | 5522 | −2 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 90 | 0.657 | 70.6 | 67.7 | 62.3 | 81.2 | 63 | 66 | 1826 | 5867 | −2.4 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 90 | 0.679 | 71.1 | 68.1 | 57.1 | 76.2 | 69 | 75 | 2389 | 8150 | −2 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 61 | 0.753 | 72.8 | 68.8 | 68.2 | 90.8 | 92 | 92 | 2921 | 11894 | −4 |
| Morocco | 102 | 0.585 | 69.5 | 65.8 | 36.1 | 61.8 | 46 | 58 | 2019 | 5068 | 0 |
| Tunisia | 81 | 0.709 | 71.5 | 69.0 | 60.6 | 81.4 | 72 | 75 | 3347 | 9320 | 0 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 85 | 0.682 | 71.2 | 67.9 | 55.5 | 77.6 | 70 | 75 | 2669 | 8608 | −1.5 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | 114 | 0.505 | 61.2 | 58.4 | 48.7 | 63.2 | 33 | 38 | 1136 | 2038 | 1 |
| Djibouti | .. | .. | 44.2 | 41.7 | 54.4 | 75.6 | 18 | 26 | .. | .. | .. |
| Mauritania | 127 | 0.429 | 53.1 | 49.9 | 30.1 | 50.7 | 37 | 44 | 1212 | 2150 | 1 |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sudan | 116 | 0.478 | 57.4 | 54.6 | 46.3 | 69.5 | 31 | 36 | 847 | 2736 | 1 |
| Yemen | 128 | 0.426 | 61.7 | 59.5 | 25.2 | 67.5 | 29 | 72 | 405 | 1384 | −7 |
| Average LDCs | 121 | 0.460 | 55.5 | 52.8 | 40.9 | 65.3 | 30 | 43 | 900 | 2077 | −1.0 |

Iraq figures are from HDR 2000, representing 1998 figures

**Source :** Human development report 2002

## Table1.4 : HUMAN AND INCOME POVERTY: DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

| COUNTRY | Human poverty index 1-2000 | | Probability at birth of not surviving to age 40 (% of cohorts) | Adult illeteracy rate (% age 15 and above) | % of population not using improved drinking water sources | Underweight children under age 5 (%) | population living below poverty line | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rank | Value | | | | | 1$ a day (1993 ppp $) 1983-2000 | 2$ a day (1993 ppp$) 1983-2000 | national poverty line 1987-2000 |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | .. | .. | 4.7 | 12.4 | .. | 9 | .. | .. | 15 |
| Kuweit | .. | .. | 3.0 | 18.0 | .. | 10 | .. | .. | 11 |
| Oman | 52 | 32.1 | 6.8 | 28.3 | 61 | 24 | .. | .. | 17 |
| Qatar | .. | .. | 4.8 | 18.8 | .. | 6 | .. | .. | 11 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 29 | 16.9 | 6.4 | 23.7 | 5 | 14 | .. | .. | 21 |
| UAE | .. | .. | 5.4 | 23.7 | .. | 14 | .. | .. | 3 |
| Average GCC | .. | .. | 5.2 | 20.8 | 33 | 13 | .. | .. | 13 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 48 | 31.2 | 10.3 | 44.7 | 5 | 12 | 3 | 53 | 22 |
| Iraq | *56 | *32.9 | *15.8 | *55.0 | *19 | *23 | .. | .. | 45 |
| Jordan | 7 | 8.2 | 7.9 | 10.3 | 4 | 5 | .. | 7 | 23 |
| Lebanon | 12 | 9.9 | 5.0 | 14.0 | 0 | 3 | .. | .. | 19 |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Syria Arab Republic | 34 | 19.3 | 6.9 | 25.6 | 20 | 13 | .. | .. | 22 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 31 | 20.3 | 9.2 | 29.9 | 10 | 11 | 3 | 30 | 26 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 39 | 23.4 | 10.5 | 33.3 | 6 | 6 | .. | 15 | 23 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 27 | 16.2 | 6.4 | 20.0 | 28 | 5 | .. | .. | .. |
| Morocco | 59 | 35.8 | 11.8 | 51.1 | 18 | 9 | .. | 8 | 19 |
| Tunisia | .. | .. | 7.8 | 29.0 | .. | 4 | .. | 10 | 14 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 42 | 25.1 | 9.1 | 33.4 | 17 | 6 | .. | 11 | 19 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | 51 | 31.9 | 20.6 | 44.1 | 4 | 25 | .. | .. | .. |
| Djibouti | 56 | 34.3 | 42.3 | 35.4 | 0 | 18 | .. | .. | 45 |
| Mauritania | 82 | 47.9 | 33.1 | 59.8 | 63 | 23 | 29 | 69 | 57 |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sudan | 53 | 32.7 | 27.3 | 42.2 | 25 | 17 | .. | .. | .. |
| Yemen | 69 | 41.8 | 20.0 | 53.7 | 31 | 46 | 16 | 45 | 47 |
| Average LDCs | 62 | 37.7 | 28.7 | 47.0 | 25 | 26 | 22 | 57 | 50 |

a- figures of countries of the GCC and the Machreq coutries and Yemen are of 1992 from Baquer 1996
* Human Development Report 2000
**Source:** Human Development Report 2002 ; Baquer, Mohamad Hussein, ESCWA, Poverty assessment in countries of ESCWA, 1996

# 2) POPULATION INDEXES

## Table 2.1. : DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

| COUNTRY | total population in million | | | Population annual growth rate | | urban population (% of total) | | | puplation under age 15 (% of total) | | total fertility rate (per women) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1975 | 2000 | 2015 | 1975-2000 | 2000-2015 | 1975 | 2000 | 2015 | 2000 | 2015 | 1970-1975 | 1995-2000 |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 0.3 | 0.6 | 0.8 | 3.4 | 1.4 | 79.2 | 92.2 | 95.0 | 28.2 | 20.2 | 5.9 | 2.6 |
| Kuweit | 1.0 | 1.9 | 2.8 | 2.6 | 2.5 | 83.8 | 96.0 | 96.9 | 31.3 | 25.9 | 6.9 | 2.9 |
| Oman | 0.9 | 2.5 | 4.1 | 4.2 | 3.2 | 19.6 | 76.0 | 82.6 | 44.1 | 41.5 | 7.2 | 5.9 |
| Qatar | 0.2 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 4.8 | 1.4 | 82.9 | 92.7 | 95.0 | 26.7 | 22.7 | 6.8 | 3.7 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 7.3 | 20.3 | 31.7 | 4.1 | 3.0 | 58.4 | 86.2 | 91.0 | 42.9 | 38.6 | 7.3 | 6.2 |
| UAE | 0.5 | 2.6 | 3.2 | 6.6 | 1.4 | 65.4 | 86.7 | 91.6 | 26.0 | 21.1 | 6.4 | 3.2 |
| Average GCC | 1.7 | 4.8 | 7.2 | 4.3 | 2.2 | 64.9 | 88.3 | 92.0 | 33.2 | 28.3 | 6.8 | 4.1 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 38.8 | 67.9 | 84.4 | 2.2 | 1.5 | 43.5 | 42.7 | 45.8 | 35.4 | 26.9 | 5.5 | 3.4 |
| Iraq | 11.0 | 21.8 | 34.1 | 3.0 | 2.7 | 61.4 | 75.9 | 81.6 | .. | .. | .. | 5.2 |
| Jordan | 1.9 | 4.9 | 7.2 | 3.7 | 2.5 | 57.8 | 78.7 | 81.1 | 40.0 | 36.4 | 7.8 | 4.7 |
| Lebanon | 2.8 | 3.5 | 4.2 | 0.9 | 1.3 | 67.0 | 89.7 | 92.6 | 31.1 | 23.8 | 4.9 | 2.3 |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Syria Arab Republic | 7.4 | 16.2 | 23.2 | 3.1 | 2.4 | 45.1 | 51.4 | 57.9 | 40.8 | 34.3 | 7.7 | 4.0 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 12.4 | 22.9 | 30.6 | 2.6 | 2.1 | 55.0 | 67.7 | 71.8 | 36.8 | 30.4 | 6.5 | 3.9 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 16.0 | 30.3 | 38.0 | 2.5 | 1.5 | 40.3 | 57.1 | 65.2 | 34.8 | 26.8 | 7.4 | 3.3 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 2.4 | 5.3 | 7.1 | 3.1 | 1.9 | 60.9 | 87.6 | 90.3 | 33.9 | 30.4 | 7.6 | 3.8 |
| Morocco | 17.3 | 29.9 | 37.7 | 2.2 | 1.5 | 37.8 | 55.5 | 64.4 | 34.7 | 28.1 | 6.9 | 3.4 |
| Tunisia | 5.7 | 9.5 | 11.3 | 2.0 | 1.2 | 49.9 | 65.5 | 73.5 | 29.7 | 24.8 | 6.2 | 2.3 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 10.4 | 18.8 | 23.5 | 2.5 | 1.5 | 47.2 | 66.4 | 73.4 | 33.3 | 27.5 | 7.0 | 3.2 |
| **LDCs** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | 0.3 | 0.7 | 1.1 | 3.2 | 2.8 | 21.2 | 33.2 | 42.6 | 43.0 | 39.8 | 7.1 | 5.4 |
| Djibouti | 0.2 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 4.4 | 0.7 | 68.9 | 84.0 | 86.9 | 43.2 | 41.5 | 6.7 | 6.1 |
| Mauritania | 1.4 | 2.7 | 4.1 | 2.7 | 2.9 | 20.3 | 57.7 | 73.8 | 44.1 | 43.5 | 6.5 | 6.0 |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 7.2 |
| Sudan | 16.7 | 31.1 | 42.4 | 2.5 | 2.1 | 18.9 | 36.1 | 48.7 | 40.1 | 35.4 | 6.7 | 4.9 |
| Yemen | 7.0 | 18.3 | 33.1 | 3.9 | 3.9 | 16.6 | 24.7 | 31.2 | 50.1 | 48.9 | 7.6 | 7.6 |
| Average LDCs | 5.1 | 10.7 | 16.3 | 3.3 | 2.5 | 29.2 | 47.1 | 56.6 | 44.1 | 41.8 | 6.9 | 6.2 |
| World | 4066 | 6057 | 7207 | 1.6 | 1.2 | 37.9 | 47.2 | 53.7 | 29.9 | 25.8 | 4.5 | 2.8 |
| Developed countries | 2908 | 4695 | 5773 | 1.9 | 1.4 | 26.1 | 40.0 | 48.5 | 32.7 | 28.1 | 5.4 | 3.1 |
| LDCs | 332 | 634 | 907 | 2.6 | 2.4 | 14.6 | 25.7 | 34.5 | 43.1 | 40.4 | 6.6 | 5.4 |
| Arab countries | 126 | 246 | 333 | 2.7 | 2.0 | 40.3 | 52.8 | 59.0 | 37.6 | 32.2 | 6.5 | 4.1 |
| West Asia and Pacific | 1293 | 1859 | 2108 | 1.5 | 0.8 | 19.7 | 37.7 | 50.1 | 26.9 | 21.3 | 5.0 | 2.1 |
| Latin America and Caribbean | 318 | 513 | 624 | 1.9 | 1.3 | 61.4 | 75.4 | 80.5 | 31.6 | 26.3 | 5.1 | 2.7 |
| South Asia | 828 | 1402 | 1762 | 2.1 | 1.5 | 21.4 | 29.4 | 35.0 | 35.1 | 29.0 | 5.6 | 3.6 |
| Subsahara Africa | 303 | 606 | 866 | 2.8 | 2.4 | 20.9 | 33.9 | 42.7 | 44.6 | 42.4 | 6.8 | 5.8 |
| Eastern Europe and CIS | 354 | 397 | 383 | 0.5 | -0.2 | 57.7 | 63.4 | 64.8 | 20.8 | 15.9 | 2.5 | 1.5 |
| OECD | 925 | 1129 | 1209 | 0.8 | 0.5 | 70.4 | 76.9 | 80.4 | 20.4 | 17.3 | 2.5 | 1.8 |
| High income OECD | 732 | 852 | 898 | 0.6 | 0.3 | 74.9 | 78.7 | 81.9 | 18.3 | 15.7 | 2.1 | 1.7 |

N. B. : Les données concernant l'Irak ont été puisées dans le rapport sur le DH 2000 et se rapportent à 1998.
**Source** : Rapport sur le développement humain 2002.

## Table 2.2: AVERAGE POPULATION GROWTH (%)

| COUNTRY | total population | | urban population | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1970-1990 | 1990-2000 | 1990-2000 | 1970-1990 |
| **GCC** | | | | |
| Bahrein | 4.0 | 2.7 | 3.2 | 4.5 |
| Kuweit | 5.3 | -1.1 | -0.9 | 6.3 |
| Oman | 4.5 | 3.5 | 6.5 | 13.0 |
| Qatar | 7.0 | 2.2 | 2.5 | 7.6 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 4.9 | 2.8 | 3.7 | 7.3 |
| UAE | 11.0 | 2.6 | 3.2 | 12.8 |
| Average GCC | 6.1 | 2.1 | 3.0 | 8.6 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | |
| Egypt | 2.3 | 1.9 | 2.1 | 2.5 |
| Iraq | 3.1 | 2.8 | 3.5 | 4.3 |
| Jordan | 3.5 | 4.1 | 5.0 | 5.0 |
| Lebanon | 0.5 | 2.5 | 3.2 | 2.2 |
| Palestine | 3.4 | 3.9 | 4.0 | 4.0 |
| Syria Arab Republic | 3.4 | 2.7 | 3.5 | 4.2 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 2.7 | 3.0 | 3.6 | 3.7 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | |
| Algeria | 3.0 | 2.0 | 3.4 | 4.4 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 3.9 | 2.0 | 2.7 | 6.8 |
| Morocco | 2.4 | 1.9 | 3.5 | 4.0 |
| Tunisia | 2.3 | 1.5 | 2.7 | 3.6 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 2.9 | 1.9 | 3.1 | 4.7 |
| LDCs | | | | |
| Comores | 3.2 | 2.9 | 4.6 | 5.1 |
| Djibouti | 5.9 | 2.3 | 2.7 | 7.2 |
| Mauritania | 2.4 | 2.9 | 5.7 | 8.2 |
| Somalia | 3.4 | 2.0 | 3.3 | 4.3 |
| Sudan | 2.7 | 2.3 | 5.3 | 5.1 |
| Yemen | 3.0 | 4.6 | 5.4 | 5.7 |
| Average LDCs | 3.4 | 2.8 | 4.5 | 5.9 |
| World | 1.8 | 1.5 | 2.4 | 3.0 |
| Developed countries | 2.2 | 1.7 | 3.1 | 4.0 |
| LDCs | 2.5 | 2.6 | 4.9 | 5.3 |
| West Asia and Pacific | 1.8 | 1.2 | 2.9 | 4.0 |
| Latin America and Caribbean | 2.2 | 1.6 | 2.3 | 3.3 |
| South Asia | 2.2 | 2.0 | 3.3 | 3.8 |
| Subsahara Africa | 2.9 | 2.6 | 4.7 | 5.2 |

**Source :** UNICEF: Official Summary : The State of the World's Children 2002

## Table 2.3: ADOLESCENT POPULATION EVOLUTION (FROM 15 TO 19)

| COUNTRY | 1990 | | | 2000 | | | 2010 | | | 2020 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Men | Women | Total | Men | women | Total | Men | women | Total | Men | women |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 35 | 18 | 17 | 52 | 27 | 25 | 66 | 33 | 32 | 51 | 26 | 25 |
| Kuweit | 182 | 91 | 91 | 217 | 111 | 107 | 215 | 109 | 106 | 214 | 109 | 106 |
| Oman | 162 | 81 | 81 | 275 | 139 | 136 | 372 | 189 | 184 | 482 | 245 | 237 |
| Qatar | 26 | 14 | 12 | 44 | 22 | 22 | 51 | 26 | 25 | 55 | 28 | 27 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 1464 | 759 | 706 | 2196 | 1126 | 1071 | 2928 | 1488 | 1441 | 3705 | 1885 | 1819 |
| UAE | 125 | 68 | 57 | 210 | 109 | 101 | 221 | 113 | 108 | 227 | 116 | 110 |
| Average GCC | 1994 | 1031 | 964 | 2994 | 1534 | 1462 | 3853 | 1958 | 1896 | 4734 | 2409 | 2324 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 5347 | 2767 | 2579 | 7567 | 3893 | 3674 | 7794 | 3984 | 3810 | 7934 | 4051 | 3883 |
| Iraq | 2008 | 1025 | 983 | 2503 | 1284 | 1219 | 3037 | 1549 | 1489 | 3975 | 2031 | 1944 |
| Jordan | 556 | 300 | 255 | 716 | 367 | 349 | 918 | 472 | 446 | 1151 | 588 | 562 |
| Lebanon | 293 | 148 | 145 | 311 | 157 | 154 | 367 | 187 | 180 | 324 | 165 | 159 |
| Palestine | 68 | 36 | 32 | 109 | 56 | 53 | 200 | 102 | 98 | 265 | 135 | 130 |
| Syria Arab Republic | 1334 | 679 | 655 | 1978 | 1002 | 976 | 2079 | 1055 | 1024 | 2409 | 1223 | 1186 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 9606 | 4955 | 4649 | 13184 | 6759 | 6425 | 14395 | 7349 | 7047 | 16058 | 8193 | 7864 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 2742 | 1409 | 1333 | 3510 | 1787 | 1723 | 3747 | 1906 | 1841 | 4191 | 2129 | 2062 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 480 | 244 | 236 | 691 | 352 | 339 | 644 | 330 | 314 | 803 | 411 | 392 |
| Morocco | 2702 | 1378 | 1324 | 3042 | 1547 | 1496 | 2853 | 1451 | 1401 | 3160 | 1608 | 1553 |
| Tunisia | 858 | 436 | 422 | 1043 | 534 | 509 | 946 | 486 | 459 | 945 | 487 | 458 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 6782 | 3467 | 3315 | 8286 | 4220 | 4067 | 8190 | 4173 | 4015 | 9099 | 4635 | 4465 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Djibouti | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Mauritania | 211 | 105 | 105 | 291 | 146 | 145 | 371 | 186 | 185 | 463 | 233 | 231 |
| Somalia | 805 | 401 | 404 | 1069 | 534 | 535 | 1463 | 734 | 729 | 2158 | 1081 | 1077 |
| Sudan | 2447 | 1244 | 1204 | 3455 | 1744 | 1710 | 3641 | 1846 | 1795 | 4277 | 2173 | 2104 |
| Yemen | 1304 | 670 | 634 | 1850 | 941 | 909 | 2816 | 1435 | 1381 | 3854 | 1978 | 1876 |
| Total LDCs | 4767 | 2420 | 2347 | 6665 | 3365 | 3299 | 8291 | 4201 | 4090 | 10752 | 5465 | 5288 |
| Gran total of Arab world | 23149 | 11873 | 11275 | 31129 | 15878 | 15253 | 34729 | 17681 | 17048 | 40643 | 20702 | 19941 |

**Source :** UN

## Table 2.4 : ADOLESCENT EVOLUTION (FROM 15 TO 19) % OF TOTAL POPULATION

| COUNTRY | 1990 | | | 2000 | | | 2010 | | | 2020 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Men | Women | Total | Men | Women | Total | Men | Women | Total | Men | Women |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 7.1 | 6.3 | 8.3 | 8.4 | 7.7 | 9.4 | 9.3 | 8.2 | 10.3 | 6.3 | 5.8 | 6.9 |
| Kuweit | 8.5 | 7.5 | 9.8 | 11.0 | 10.7 | 11.4 | 8.9 | 8.6 | 9.2 | 7.6 | 7.4 | 7.9 |
| Oman | 9.1 | 8.4 | 9.8 | 10.8 | 10.3 | 11.4 | 10.6 | 10.3 | 11.0 | 10.2 | 10.0 | 10.4 |
| Qatar | 5.4 | 4.3 | 7.6 | 7.3 | 5.6 | 10.5 | 7.4 | 6.0 | 9.5 | 7.2 | 6.2 | 8.7 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 9.1 | 8.3 | 10.3 | 10.2 | 9.4 | 11.1 | 10.2 | 9.6 | 10.9 | 10.2 | 9.7 | 10.6 |
| UAE | 6.5 | 5.5 | 8.4 | 8.6 | 7.1 | 11.3 | 7.8 | 6.5 | 9.7 | 7.2 | 6.2 | 8.4 |
| Total **GCC** | 8.7 | 7.8 | 10.0 | 10.1 | 9.2 | 11.1 | 9.9 | 9.2 | 10.7 | 9.7 | 9.3 | 10.2 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 9.5 | 9.7 | 9.3 | 11.1 | 11.2 | 10.9 | 9.7 | 9.8 | 9.6 | 8.8 | 8.9 | 8.7 |
| Iraq | 11.1 | 11.1 | 11.1 | 10.8 | 10.9 | 10.7 | 10.0 | 10.0 | 10.0 | 10.6 | 10.6 | 10.5 |
| Jordan | 12.0 | 12.5 | 11.5 | 10.7 | 10.7 | 10.8 | 10.4 | 10.4 | 10.4 | 10.5 | 10.4 | 10.5 |
| Lebanon | 11.5 | 11.9 | 11.0 | 9.5 | 9.8 | 9.2 | 9.9 | 10.2 | 9.5 | 7.8 | 8.0 | 7.5 |
| Palestine | 10.6 | 11.3 | 9.9 | 9.7 | 9.9 | 9.5 | 12.1 | 12.2 | 12.0 | 11.2 | 11.3 | 11.1 |
| Syria Arab Republic | 10.8 | 10.8 | 10.7 | 12.3 | 12.3 | 12.2 | 10.2 | 10.2 | 10.1 | 9.8 | 9.9 | 9.7 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 10.2 | 10.3 | 10.0 | 11.1 | 11.2 | 11.0 | 9.9 | 10.0 | 9.8 | 9.4 | 9.5 | 9.3 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 11.0 | 11.2 | 10.8 | 11.2 | 11.2 | 11.1 | 9.8 | 9.8 | 9.7 | 9.6 | 9.6 | 9.5 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 10.9 | 10.6 | 11.2 | 12.3 | 12.1 | 12.5 | 9.2 | 9.2 | 9.2 | 9.9 | 9.9 | 9.9 |
| Morocco | 11.3 | 11.5 | 11.1 | 10.7 | 10.9 | 10.6 | 8.7 | 8.8 | 8.6 | 8.6 | 8.7 | 8.5 |
| Tunisia | 10.5 | 10.6 | 10.5 | 10.9 | 11.0 | 10.7 | 8.7 | 8.8 | 8.5 | 7.7 | 7.9 | 7.6 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 11.0 | 11.2 | 10.9 | 11.0 | 11.1 | 10.9 | 9.2 | 9.3 | 9.1 | 9.0 | 9.1 | 8.9 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Djibouti | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Mauritania | 10.4 | 10.5 | 10.3 | 10.9 | 11.0 | 10.8 | 10.7 | 10.8 | 10.6 | 10.7 | 10.8 | 10.6 |
| Somalia | 10.4 | 10.4 | 10.3 | 10.6 | 10.7 | 10.5 | 10.4 | 10.5 | 10.3 | 11.5 | 11.6 | 11.4 |
| Sudan | 10.2 | 10.3 | 10.0 | 11.7 | 11.8 | 11.6 | 10.0 | 10.2 | 9.9 | 9.9 | 10.0 | 9.8 |
| Yemen | 11.3 | 11.8 | 10.7 | 10.2 | 10.3 | 10.1 | 11.1 | 11.1 | 11.1 | 11.3 | 11.3 | 11.2 |
| Average LDCs | 10.5 | 10.7 | 10.3 | 11.0 | 11.1 | 11.0 | 10.5 | 10.6 | 10.4 | 10.7 | 10.8 | 10.6 |
| World | 10.3 | 10.3 | 10.3 | 11.0 | 11.0 | 11.0 | 9.9 | 9.9 | 9.9 | 9.7 | 9.7 | 9.6 |

**Source :** UN department of economic and social affairs, World population prospects 1998 Revision, Vol I, Comprehensive tables, 1999

## Table 2.5 : FAMILY, MARRIAGE, BIRTHS AND MIGRATION

| COUNTRY | Family average size | Percentage of women headed families | People married at age 15-19 | | average age at first marriage | | Births per 1000 women aged 15-19 | women for every 100 migrant men 1990 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | women | men | women | men | | |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 5.6 | .. | 7 | <1 | 26 | 28 | 22 | 39 |
| Kuweit | 6.5 | 5 | 13 | 1 | 25 | 30 | 34 | 75 |
| Oman | 7.0 | .. | .. | .. | 19 | 26 | 80 | 50 |
| Qatar | 5.6 | .. | 14 | 4 | 23 | 27 | 66 | 35 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 7.4 | .. | 16 | 1 | 22 | 26 | 113 | 50 |
| UAE | .. | .. | 19 | 3 | 23 | 26 | 73 | 50 |
| Average GCC | 6.4 | .. | 14 | 2 | 23 | 27 | 65 | 50 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 4.9 | 13 | 14 | – | 22 | 26 | 65 | 89 |
| Iraq | 7.3 | .. | 28 | 15 | 22 | 26 | 45 | 65 |
| Jordan | 6.9 | .. | 9 | 1 | 25 | 28 | 43 | 109 |
| Lebanon | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 26 | 39 |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 142 | 67 |
| Syria Arab Republic | 6.0 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 44 | 90 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 6.3 | .. | 17 | .. | 23 | 27 | 61 | 78 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 7.0 | 11 | 10 | 1 | 24 | 28 | 25 | 122 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 56 | 44 |
| Morocco | 6.0 | 15 | 13 | 1 | 22 | .. | 50 | 97 |
| Tunisia | 5.4 | 11 | 3 | <1 | 25 | .. | 13 | 99 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 6.1 | 12 | 9 | 1 | 24 | .. | 36 | 91 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | 6.2 | 25 | 12 | 3 | 22 | 29 | 83 | 131 |
| Djibouti | 6.6 | 18 | 7 | 1 | 19 | 27 | 31 | 111 |
| Mauritania | .. | .. | .. | .. | 23 | 30 | 135 | 78 |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 213 | 99 |
| Sudan | 6.3 | 13 | 16 | .. | 24 | .. | 52 | 100 |
| Yemen | 5.8 | 12 | 24 | 5 | 19 | 23 | 102 | 15 |
| Average LDCs | 6.2 | 17 | 15 | 3 | 21 | 27 | 103 | 89 |

**Source :** UN, World Women 2000, 2000

## Table 2.6. : AVERAGE AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE ACCORDING TO RESIDENCY AND GENDER

| COUNTRY | survey year | urban areas | | rural areas | | total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | male | female | male | female | male | female |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 1995 | 29.5 | 26.0 | 27.6 | 24.7 | 29.0 | 25.4 |
| Kuweit | 1996 | – | – | – | – | 24.5 | 21.7 |
| Oman | 1995 | 26.7 | 20.2 | 24.5 | 18.6 | 25.6 | 19.2 |
| Qatar | 1998 | – | – | – | – | 26.4 | 22.9 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 97-96 | 25.4 | 22.1 | 24.4 | 20.6 | 25.2 | 21.8 |
| UAE | 1995 | 26.1 | 24.2 | 24.7 | 21.6 | – | – |
| Average GCC | | 26.9 | 23.1 | 25.3 | 21.4 | 26.1 | 22.2 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 2000 | 29.8 | 24.8 | 26.4 | 21.2 | 27.2 | 21.3 |
| Iraq | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Jordan | 1997 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Lebanon | 1996 | 30.9 | 27.5 | – | – | 30.9 | 27.5 |
| Palestine | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Syria Arab Republic | 1993 | 28.9 | 24.2 | 28.0 | 25.0 | 28.5 | 24.5 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | | 29.9 | 25.5 | – | – | 28.9 | 24.4 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 1992 | 31.2 | 26.9 | 28.8 | 24.5 | 30.1 | 25.9 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 1995 | 32.2 | 29.4 | 31.5 | 28.7 | 32.0 | 29.2 |
| Morocco | 97-96 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Tunisia | 95-94 | 30.8 | 26.7 | 29.0 | 26.3 | 30.1 | 26.5 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | | 31.4 | 27.7 | 29.8 | 26.5 | 30.7 | 27.2 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | |
| Comores | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Djibouti | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Mauritania | 1990 | 30.1 | 23.5 | 29.4 | 22.7 | 29.8 | 19.2 |
| Somalia | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Sudan | 93-92 | 32.7 | 26.7 | 29.6 | 24.2 | 31.1 | 25.3 |
| Yemen | 1997 | – | 16.9 | – | 15.9 | – | 16.0 |
| Average LDCs | | – | 22.4 | – | 20.9 | – | 20.2 |

**Source :** Mother and Child Health Database: Population studies unit, League of Arab States

## Table 2.7 AVERAGE AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF EDUCATION

| COUNTRY | Survey year | Illeterate | | Read and write | | Primary education | | intermidiate | | secondary and above | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | male | female | male | female | male | female | male | female | male | female |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 1995 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Kuweit | 1996 | 24.3 | 19.3 | 24.3 | 21.2 | 24.5 | 22.0 | 25.6 | 22.3 | 25.1 | 23.6 |
| Oman | 1995 | 24.8 | 16.9 | 24.9 | 18.5 | 25.4 | 22.0 | 26.1 | – | 26.8 | – |
| Qatar | 1998 | 28.6 | 19.8 | 25.8 | 20.3 | 26.2 | 22.5 | 26.3 | 22.5 | 26.0 | 24.6 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 97–96 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| UAE | 1995 | 25.1 | 18.9 | 25.9 | 22.8 | 25.1 | 23.9 | – | – | 26.3 | 26.2 |
| Average GCC | | 25.7 | 18.7 | 25.2 | 20.7 | 25.3 | 22.6 | 26.0 | – | 26.1 | 24.8 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 2000 | 24.3 | 20.2 | 25.7 | 20.9 | 27.6 | 22.9 | – | – | 29.9 | 25.9 |
| Iraq | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Jordan | 1997 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lebanon | 1996 | 29.6 | 27.0 | 27.8 | 25.2 | 29.9 | 25.8 | 31.2 | 26.1 | 32.8 | 30.0 |
| Palestine | – | | | | | | | | | | |
| Syria Arab Republic | 1993 | 26.8 | 23.1 | 26.6 | 22.0 | 27.5 | 23.7 | 28.1 | 24.7 | 30.5 | 24.5 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | | 26.9 | 23.4 | 26.7 | 22.7 | 28.3 | 24.1 | – | – | 31.1 | 26.8 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 1992 | 27.4 | 23.6 | 29.7 | 25.6 | 31.0 | 25.6 | 30.9 | 26.9 | 31.6 | 30.3 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 1995 | 33.2 | 27.4 | 32.3 | 27.9 | 31.5 | 28.8 | 32.1 | 29.3 | 32.1 | 30.8 |
| Morocco | 97–96 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Tunisia | 95–94 | 29.2 | 26.2 | 30.7 | 26.2 | 30.5 | 27.3 | 30.0 | 27.0 | 31.8 | 27.6 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | | 29.9 | 25.7 | 30.9 | 26.6 | 31.0 | 27.2 | 31.0 | 27.7 | 31.8 | 29.6 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Djibouti | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Mauritania | 1990 | 29.7 | 22.8 | – | – | 30.1 | 24.4 | 31.7 | 25.9 | – | – |
| Somalia | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Sudan | 93–92 | 28.2 | 22.2 | 30.7 | 24.5 | 30.8 | 25.1 | 32.6 | 28.8 | 32.6 | 29.1 |
| Yemen | 1997 | – | 15.8 | – | – | – | 17.6 | – | – | – | 16.0 |
| Average LDCs | | – | 20.3 | – | – | – | 22.4 | – | – | – | – |

**Source :** Mother and Child Health Database: Population studies unit, League of Arab States

## Tableau 2.8.: AVERAGE LIVING NEW BORNS ACCORDING TO FIRST MARRIAGE AGE

| Country | survey year | less than 15 | 15 – 17 | 18 – 19 | 20 – 21 | 22 – 24 | 25 – 29 | 30 and above | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **C. C. G** | | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 1995 | 7.3 | 5.1 | 3.3 | 2.6 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 1.4 | 4.3 |
| Kuweit | 1996 | 6.9 | 5.6 | 4.3 | 3.8 | 3.1 | 2.9 | 2.2 | 4.9 |
| Oman | 1995 | 5.7 | 4.6 | 3.4 | 3.4 | 2.3 | 2.1 | 1.1 | 4.8 |
| Qatar | 1998 | 6.4 | 4.7 | 3.5 | 2.9 | 2.5 | 2.3 | 2.1 | 4.0 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 97–96 | 6.5 | 5.4 | 4.1 | 4.1 | 3.8 | 4.6 | 6.6 | 5.3 |
| UAE | 1995 | 6.1 | 4.8 | 3.8 | 3.6 | 3.0 | 3.4 | 2.5 | 4.8 |
| Average GCC | | 6.5 | 5.0 | 3.7 | 3.4 | 2.8 | 2.9 | 2.7 | 4.7 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 2000 | 5.4 | 4.5 | 3.7 | 3.4 | 2.7 | 2.5 | 1.5 | 3.9 |
| Iraq | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Jordan | 1997 | – | – | – | – | | – | – | – |
| Lebanon | 1996 | 5.4 | 4.3 | 3.5 | 3.2 | 2.7 | 2.4 | 1.6 | 3.4 |
| Palestine | – | – | – | – | – | | – | – | – |
| Syria Arab Republic | 1993 | 5.6 | 4.8 | 4.2 | 3.9 | 3.3 | 2.7 | 2.2 | 4.3 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | | 5.5 | 4.5 | 3.8 | 3.5 | 2.9 | 2.5 | 1.8 | 3.9 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 1992 | 7.6 | 6.2 | 4.5 | 3.8 | 3.0 | 2.6 | 1.9 | 4.7 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 1995 | 8.8 | 7.4 | 5.8 | 4.2 | 3.3 | 2.4 | 1.8 | 5.7 |
| Morocco | 97–96 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Tunisia | 95–94 | 7.4 | 7.2 | 5.8 | 6.1 | 5.3 | 4.4 | 1.8 | 6.0 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | | 7.9 | 6.9 | 5.4 | 4.7 | 3.9 | 3.1 | 1.8 | 5.5 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Djibouti | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Mauritania | 1990 | 4.5 | 3.8 | 3.2 | 3.1 | 2.5 | 2.4 | 1.2 | 3.8 |
| Somalia | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Sudan | 93–92 | 5.9 | 4.8 | 3.8 | 3.2 | 2.8 | 2.3 | 1.1 | 4.5 |
| Yemen | 1997 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Average LDCs | | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |

**Source :** Mother and Child Health Database: Population studies unit, League of Arab States

## Table 2.9: PREGNANT WOMEN AMONG THE MARRIED ACCORDING TO PRESENT AGE (%)

| COUNTRY | survey year | -15 | -20 | -25 | -30 | -35 | -40 | -45 | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 1995 | 32.4 | 23.3 | 14.7 | 11.7 | 8.8 | 4.7 | 0.8 | 11.9 |
| Kuweit | 1996 | 32.7 | 27.8 | 25.2 | 25.4 | 13.6 | 2.9 | 2.5 | 19.2 |
| Oman | 1995 | 21.7 | 25.1 | 22.9 | 21.7 | 17.1 | 5.9 | 3.8 | 18.9 |
| Qatar | 1998 | 27.5 | 26.6 | 18.4 | 10.5 | 6.8 | 3.5 | 0.7 | 13.3 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 97-96 | 25.9 | 24.9 | 21.4 | 20.7 | 13.4 | 6.4 | 1.1 | 16.9 |
| UAE | 1995 | 32.0 | 28.0 | 22.3 | 18.5 | 13.3 | 7.2 | 4.3 | 19.7 |
| Average GCC | | 28.7 | 26.0 | 20.8 | 18.1 | 12.2 | 5.1 | 2.2 | 16.7 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 2000 | 22.0 | 22.4 | 17.1 | 10.4 | 6.3 | 1.8 | 0.4 | 11.1 |
| Iraq | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Jordan | 1997 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Lebanon | 1996 | 22.6 | 22.1 | 14.1 | 8.5 | 5.0 | 0.5 | - | 8.3 |
| Palestine | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Syria Arab Republic | 1993 | 28.1 | 24.7 | 21.1 | 12.2 | 8.8 | 3.1 | 0.8 | 14.6 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | | 24.2 | 23.1 | 17.4 | 10.4 | 6.7 | 1.8 | - | 11.3 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 1992 | 33.5 | 27.2 | 19.5 | 11.9 | 10.2 | 4.3 | 0.4 | 12.9 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 1995 | 26.7 | 25.8 | 22.9 | 17.8 | 12.1 | 6.0 | 1.6 | 14.1 |
| Morocco | 97-96 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Tunisia | 95-94 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 8.2 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | | 30.1 | 26.5 | 21.2 | 14.9 | 11.2 | 5.2 | 1.0 | 11.7 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Djibouti | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Mauritania | 1990 | 17.5 | 16.7 | 16.6 | 12.8 | 9.9 | 6.6 | 3.4 | 12.6 |
| Somalia | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sudan | 93-92 | 24.5 | 18.7 | 17.1 | 15.0 | 11.8 | 5.6 | 1.6 | 13.2 |
| Yemen | 1997 | 21.0 | 22.5 | 20.2 | 19.8 | 18.4 | 14.1 | 8.0 | 18.4 |
| Average LDCs | | 21.0 | 19.3 | 18.0 | 15.9 | 13.4 | 8.8 | 4.3 | 14.7 |

**Source :** Mother and Child Health Database: Population studies unit, League of Arab States

## Table 2.10: AVERAGE FERTILITY AGE ACCORDING TO AGE (1000 WOMEN OF THE STUDIED AGE GROUP)

| COUNTRY | survey year | 15-19 | 20-24 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 1989-88 | 16 | 124 | 222 | 214 | 176 | 75 | 11 | 4.2 |
| Kuweit | 1987-84 | 42 | 255 | 326 | 300 | 231 | 103 | 43 | 6.5 |
| Oman | 1989-88 | 134 | 389 | 343 | 297 | 255 | 133 | 22 | 7.8 |
| Qatar | 1987-84 | 43 | 169 | 261 | 215 | 131 | 51 | 27 | 4.5 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 1987-86 | 55 | 236 | 328 | 273 | 251 | 111 | 37 | 6.5 |
| UAE | 1987-86 | 55 | 201 | 259 | 288 | 191 | 128 | 60 | 5.9 |
| Average GCC | | 57 | 229 | 290 | 264 | 206 | 100 | 33 | 5.9 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 1991-85 | 73 | 207 | 235 | 158 | 97 | 41 | 14 | 4.1 |
| Iraq | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Jordan | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Lebanon | 1996-91 | 30 | 123 | 147 | 112 | 67 | 22 | 5 | 2.5 |
| Palestine | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Syria Arab Republic | 1993-88 | 61 | 164 | 225 | 189 | 129 | 64 | 11 | 4.2 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | | 55 | 165 | 202 | 153 | 98 | 42 | 10 | 3.6 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 1990-87 | 21 | 143 | 214 | 220 | 164 | 92 | 23 | 4.4 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 1995-90 | 7 | 74 | 181 | 229 | 193 | 109 | 24 | 4.1 |
| Morocco | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Tunisia | 1994-90 | 15 | 113 | 180 | 153 | 97 | 44 | 9 | 3.1 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | | 14 | 110 | 192 | 201 | 151 | 82 | 19 | 3.9 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Djibouti | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Mauritania | 1990-84 | 81 | 172 | 213 | 207 | 164 | 98 | 68 | 5.0 |
| Somalia | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sudan | 1993-88 | 53 | 167 | 215 | 210 | 162 | 74 | 33 | 4.6 |
| Yemen | 1992-87 | 102 | 283 | 315 | 284 | 258 | 172 | 120 | 7.7 |
| Average LDCs | | 79 | 207 | 248 | 234 | 195 | 115 | 74 | 5.8 |

**Source :** Mother and Child Health Database: Population studies unit, League of Arab States

**Table 2.11 :**

| Country | survey year | -15 | -20 | -25 | -30 | -35 | -40 | 45-49 | total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 1995 | 4.3 | 4.4 | 4.7 | 4.6 | 4.6 | 5.1 | 5.8 | 4.7 |
| Kuweit | 1996 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Oman | 1995 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Qatar | 1998 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Saoudi Arabia | 97–96 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| UAE | 1995 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Average GCC | | 4.3 | 4.4 | 4.7 | 4.6 | 4.6 | 5.1 | 5.8 | 4.7 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 2000 | 2.8 | 2.7 | 3.0 | 3.1 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 3.7 | 3.1 |
| Iraq | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Jordan | 1997 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Lebanon | 1996 | 3.1 | 3.6 | 3.6 | 3.8 | 4.1 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.0 |
| Palestine | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Syria Arab Republic | 1993 | 4.2 | 4.3 | 4.7 | 4.8 | 5.5 | 5.7 | 6.0 | 5.0 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | | 3.4 | 3.5 | 3.8 | 3.9 | 4.3 | 4.5 | 4.7 | 4.0 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 1992 | 3.5 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 4.1 | 4.4 | 4.6 | 4.7 | 4.2 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 1995 | 4.6 | 4.5 | 4.7 | 5.3 | 5.7 | 6.2 | 7.2 | 5.6 |
| Morocco | 97–96 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Tunisia | 95–94 | 3.0 | 2.9 | 3.0 | 3.2 | 3.4 | 3.6 | 3.6 | 3.3 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | | 3.7 | 3.7 | 3.8 | 4.2 | 4.5 | 4.8 | 5.2 | 4.4 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Djibouti | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Mauritania | 1990 | 6.1 | 6.4 | 7.1 | 7.4 | 8.1 | 8.8 | 8.7 | 7.5 |
| Somalia | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Sudan | 93–92 | 5.2 | 5.5 | 5.7 | 5.9 | 6.4 | 6.8 | 6.7 | 6.0 |
| Yemen | 1997 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 5.1 | 5.5 | 5.8 | 6.1 | 6.5 | 5.4 |
| Average LDCs | | 5.3 | 5.5 | 6.0 | 6.3 | 6.8 | 7.2 | 7.3 | 6.3 |

**Source :** Mother and Child Health Database: Population studies unit, League of Arab States

# 3) ENSEIGNEMENT

## Tableau 3.1. : Taux d'alphabétisation et de scolarisation

| Country | adult read and write rate (age 15 and above) | | youth literacy rate (15-24) | | Net enrollment ratio: primary | | Net enrollment ratio: secondary | | Tertiary students in science, math and enginering (as % of all tertiary students) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1985 | 2000 | 1985 | 2000 | 1985-87 | 1998 | 1985-87 | 1998 | 1994-1997 |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 76.8 | 87.6 | 93.2 | 98.4 | 97 | 97 | 82 | 80 | .. |
| Kuweit | 72.2 | 82.0 | 84.2 | 92.4 | 82 | 67 | .. | 57 | 23 |
| Oman | 45.5 | 71.7 | 74.0 | 97.9 | 69 | 66 | .. | 58 | 31 |
| Qatar | 74.4 | 81.2 | 86.8 | 94.8 | 92 | 86 | 66 | 67 | .. |
| Saoudi Arabia | 59.4 | 76.3 | 80.0 | 92.7 | 53 | 59 | 29 | .. | 18 |
| UAE | 69.0 | 76.3 | 79.7 | 90.7 | 89 | 83 | .. | 70 | 27 |
| Average GCC | 66.2 | 79.2 | 83.0 | 94.5 | 80 | 76 | 59 | 66 | 25 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 43.2 | 55.3 | 57.0 | 69.8 | .. | 92 | .. | .. | 15 |
| Iraq | .. | 55.0 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Jordan | 74.8 | 89.7 | 94.6 | 99.3 | .. | *99 | .. | 60 | 27 |
| Lebanon | 76.3 | 86.0 | 90.0 | 95.2 | .. | 78 | .. | 76 | 17 |
| Palestine | .. | *86 | .. | .. | .. | *92 | .. | .. | .. |
| Syria Arab Republic | 59.4 | 74.4 | 75.5 | 87.2 | 100 | 93 | 52 | 38 | 31 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 63.4 | 74.4 | 79.3 | 87.9 | .. | 91 | .. | 58 | 23 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 44.5 | 66.7 | 69.5 | 89.0 | 89 | 94 | 50 | 58 | 50 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 60.8 | 80.0 | 86.7 | 96.5 | .. | .. | .. | 71 | .. |
| Morocco | 33.5 | 48.9 | 48.3 | 67.4 | 58 | 79 | .. | .. | 29 |
| Tunisia | 52.6 | 71.0 | 78.3 | 93.4 | 94 | 98 | 32 | 55 | 27 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 47.9 | 66.7 | 70.7 | 86.6 | 80 | 90 | 41 | 61 | 35 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | 52.7 | 55.9 | 55.8 | 58.7 | 55 | 50 | .. | .. | .. |
| Djibouti | 46.7 | 64.6 | 66.6 | 84.0 | 32 | 32 | 11 | .. | .. |
| Mauritania | 31.9 | 40.2 | 37.9 | 48.9 | 33 | 60 | .. | .. | .. |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sudan | 40.0 | 57.8 | 57.7 | 77.2 | .. | 46 | .. | .. | .. |
| Yemen | 25.9 | 46.3 | 40.7 | 64.9 | .. | 61 | .. | 35 | 6 |
| Average LDCs | 39.4 | 53.0 | 51.7 | 66.7 | 40 | 50 | .. | .. | .. |
| World | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Developed countries | 62.7 | 73.7 | 78.4 | 84.6 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| LDCs | 39.4 | 52.8 | 52.3 | 66.0 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Arab countries | 45.8 | 62.0 | 63.1 | 79.1 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| West Asia and Pacific | 74.7 | 85.9 | 93.1 | 97.4 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Latin America and Caribbean | 82.4 | 88.3 | 90.8 | 94.0 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| South Asia | 43.7 | 55.6 | 57.4 | 69.8 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Subsahara Africa | 44.4 | 61.5 | 61.7 | 77.7 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Eastern Europe and CIS | 98.5 | 99.3 | 99.6 | 99.8 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |

* UNICEF 2001

**Source :** Human Development Report 2002
The state of the children and women in the middle east and North Africa, Unicef, 2001

## Tableau 3.2.: GENDER INEQUALITIES IN EDUCATION

| COUNTRY | Adult literacy rate | | youth literacy rate | | Net enrollment ratio: primary | | Net enrollment ratio: secondary | | Net enrollment ratio: university | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | female rate (% of aged 15 and above) 20000 | female rate (% of total males) 2000 | female rate (% of aged 15-24) 2000 | female rate (% of total males) 2000 | female rate (%) 1998 | female rate (% of total males) 1998 | female rate (%) 1998 | female rate (% of total males) 1998 | female rate (%) 1998 | female rate (% of total males) 1998 |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 82.6 | 91 | 98.6 | 100 | 98 | 102 | 85 | 112 | 32 | 156 |
| Kuweit | 79.7 | 95 | 93.2 | 102 | 67 | 98 | 58 | 101 | 27 | 214 |
| Oman | 61.6 | 77 | 96.3 | 97 | 65 | 98 | 58 | 102 | .. | .. |
| Qatar | 83.1 | 103 | 97.1 | 105 | 85 | 99 | 69 | 107 | 39 | 280 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 66.9 | 81 | 90.3 | 95 | 57 | 93 | .. | .. | 22 | 135 |
| UAE | 79.3 | 106 | 94.4 | 108 | 82 | 98 | 73 | 106 | .. | .. |
| Average GCC | 75.5 | 92 | 95.0 | 101 | 76 | 98 | 69 | 106 | 30 | 196 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 43.8 | 66 | 62.7 | 82 | 89 | 94 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Iraq | *43.2 | *68 | .. | *88 | .. | *66 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Jordan | 83.9 | 88 | 99.3 | 100 | *99 | 102 | *75 | 107 | .. | .. |
| Lebanon | 80.3 | 87 | 93.0 | 96 | 77 | 97 | 79 | 109 | 39 | 102 |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Syria Arab Republic | 60.5 | 68 | 78.8 | 83 | 89 | 92 | 36 | 92 | .. | .. |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 62.3 | 75 | 83.5 | 90 | 89 | 90 | 63 | 103 | .. | .. |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 57.1 | 75 | 84.2 | 90 | 92 | 95 | 59 | 101 | .. | .. |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 68.2 | 75 | 93.1 | 93 | .. | .. | 76 | 113 | 57 | 103 |
| Morocco | 36.1 | 58 | 58.3 | 77 | 73 | 86 | .. | .. | 8 | 75 |
| Tunisia | 60.6 | 74 | 89.2 | 92 | 96 | 97 | 56 | 103 | 17 | 97 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 55.5 | 71 | 81.2 | 88 | 87 | 93 | 64 | 106 | 27 | 92 |
| **LDCs** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | 48.7 | 77 | 51.8 | 79 | 46 | 85 | .. | .. | 1 | 75 |
| Djibouti | 54.4 | 72 | 79.4 | 90 | 27 | 72 | .. | .. | (.) | 100 |
| Mauritania | 30.1 | 59 | 40.6 | 71 | 58 | 94 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sudan | 46.3 | 67 | 71.5 | 86 | 42 | 83 | .. | .. | 7 | 89 |
| Yemen | 25.2 | 37 | 45.9 | 55 | 44 | 58 | 20 | 40 | 5 | 29 |
| Average LDCs | 40.9 | 62 | 57.8 | 76 | 43 | 78 | .. | .. | 4 | 73 |
| World | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Developed countries | 66.0 | 81 | 80.5 | 91 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| LDCs | 42.8 | 68 | 58.1 | 79 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Arab countries | 50.1 | 68 | 72.5 | 85 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| West Asia and Pacific | 79.4 | 86 | 96.4 | 98 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Latin America and Caribbean | 87.4 | 98 | 94.4 | 101 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| South Asia | 43.8 | 66 | 61.2 | 79 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Subsahara Africa | 53.6 | 77 | 73.0 | 89 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Eastern Europe and CIS | 98.3 | 99 | 99.4 | 100 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |

**Source :** Human development report 2002
* HDR 2000

## Table 3.3.: COMMITMENT TOWARD EDUCATION: PUBLIC SPENDING

| Country | Public spending on education | | | | Public spending on education according to level | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % of GDP | | % of government spending | | primary | | secondary | | university | |
| | 1985-87 | 1995-97 | 1985-87 | 1995-97 | 1985-86 | 1995-97 | 1985-86 | 1995-97 | 1985-86 | 1995-97 |
| **C. C. G..** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 5.2 | 4.4 | 12.3 | 12 | .. | 30.1 | .. | 34.5 | .. | .. |
| Kuweit | 4.8 | 5 | 13.4 | 14 | .. | *69.8 | .. | *69.8 | .. | 30.2 |
| Oman | 4.1 | 4.5 | 15 | 16.4 | .. | 40.9 | .. | 51.3 | .. | 7.0 |
| Qatar | 4.7 | 3.4 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Saoudi Arabia | 7.4 | 7.5 | 13.6 | 22.8 | *72.9 | *84.4 | *72.9 | *84.4 | 27.1 | 15.6 |
| UAE | 2.1 | 1.7 | 13.2 | 20.3 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Average GCC | 4.72 | 4.42 | 13.50 | 17.10 | .. | .. | .. | 60.00 | .. | 17.60 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 4.5 | 4.8 | .. | 14.9 | .. | *66.7 | .. | *66.7 | .. | 33.3 |
| Iraq | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Jordan | 6.8 | 7.9 | 15.8 | 19.8 | *62.9 | *64.5 | *62.9 | *64.5 | 34.1 | 33 |
| Lebanon | .. | 2.5 | 11.7 | 8.2 | .. | *68.9 | .. | *68.9 | .. | 16.2 |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Syria Arab Republic | 4.8 | 4.2 | 14 | 13.6 | 38.4 | 41.9 | 25.3 | 29.8 | 33.6 | 25.9 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 5.4 | 4.9 | 13.8 | 14.1 | .. | .. | .. | 57.5 | .. | 27.1 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 9.8 | 5.1 | 27.8 | 16.4 | .. | *95.3 | .. | *95.3 | .. | .. |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 9.6 | .. | 20.8 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Morocco | 6.2 | 5.3 | 21.5 | 24.9 | 35.3 | 34.6 | 47.6 | 48.8 | 17.1 | 16.5 |
| Tunisia | 6.2 | 7.7 | 14.8 | 19.9 | 44 | 42.5 | 37 | 37.2 | 18.2 | 18.5 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 8.0 | 6.0 | 21.2 | 20.4 | 39.7 | 38.6 | 42.3 | 60.4 | 17.7 | 17.5 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 36.6 | .. | 35.1 | .. | 17.2 |
| Djibouti | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Mauritania | .. | 5.1 | .. | 16.2 | 32.6 | 39.4 | 36.2 | 35.3 | 27.4 | 21.2 |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sudan | .. | 1.4 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Yemen | .. | 7 | .. | 21.6 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Average LDCs | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |

**Source:** Human development report 2002
*Total education before primary, primary and secondary

# 4) HEALTH CHALLENGES

## Table 4.1. : Health services and resources

| Country | Pop using adequate sanitation facilities | Pop using improved water sources %* | % births attended by skilled health staff % | Physicians per 100,000 person | Health expenditures | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | public (% of GDP) 1998 | private (% of GDP) 1998 | Per capita (ppp US$) 1998 |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 100 | 100 | 98 | 100 | 2.6 | 1.6 | 358 |
| Kuweit | 100 | 99 | 98 | 189 | .. | .. | .. |
| Oman | 95 | 94 | 91 | 133 | 2.9 | 0.6 | .. |
| Qatar | 100 | 100 | .. | 126 | .. | .. | .. |
| Saoudi Arabia | 99 | 94 | 91 | 166 | .. | .. | .. |
| UAE | 95 | 98 | 99 | 181 | 0.8 | 7.6 | 1428 |
| Average GCC | 98 | 98 | 95 | 149 | 2.1 | 3.3 | .. |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 97 | 92 | 61 | 202 | .. | .. | .. |
| Iraq | 92 | 83 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Jordan | 99 | 96 | 97 | 166 | 3.6 | 3.8 | 139 |
| Lebanon | 97 | 94 | 88 | 210 | 2.2 | 9.7 | 469 |
| Palestine | 100 | 96 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Syria Arab Republic | 94 | 93 | .. | 144 | 0.9 | 1.6 | 116 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 96 | 92 | 82 | 181 | 2.2 | 5.0 | 241 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 92 | 89 | 92 | 85 | 2.6 | 1.0 | .. |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 98 | 97 | 94 | 128 | .. | .. | .. |
| Morocco | 66 | 77 | 40 | 46 | 1.2 | 3.2 | .. |
| Tunisia | 83 | 97 | 90 | 70 | 2.2 | 2.9 | 108 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 85 | 90 | 79 | 82 | 2.0 | 2.4 | .. |
| LDCs | | | | | | | |
| Comores | .. | .. | 62 | 7 | .. | .. | .. |
| Djibouti | 55 | 90 | .. | 14 | 5.4 | 1.6 | .. |
| Mauritania | .. | .. | .. | 14 | 1.4 | 3.4 | 19 |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sudan | 60 | 60 | .. | 9 | .. | .. | .. |
| Yemen | 55 | 57 | 22 | 23 | .. | .. | .. |
| Average LDCs | 57 | 69 | .. | 13 | .. | .. | .. |

**Source :** Human development Report 2002
The state of the children and women in the middle east and North Africa, Unicef, 2001
* UNICEF 2001

## Tableau 4.2. : HEALTH CHALLENGES

| Country | Expected years of handicap at birth | | | Underweight fro age (% under age 5) | Cases of tuberculosis (per 100,000 persons) | Cigarette consumption per adult (annual average) | People living with AIDS/HIV | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | female | total | | | | Adultes en % de la population de 15 à 19 ans | Femmes en % de la population de 15 à 49 ans |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 6.8 | 8.7 | 7.8 | 9 | 33 | 1785 | 0.26 | 150 |
| Kuweit | 8.9 | 11.9 | 10.4 | 10 | 31 | 3080 | .. | .. |
| Oman | 8.6 | 9.7 | 9.2 | 24 | 10 | .. | 0.11 | 200 |
| Qatar | 7.4 | 11.8 | 9.6 | 6 | 44 | .. | .. | .. |
| Saoudi Arabia | 5.8 | 8.7 | 7.3 | 14 | 17 | .. | .. | .. |
| UAE | 7.3 | 9.8 | 8.6 | 14 | 33 | .. | .. | .. |
| Average GCC | 7.5 | 10.1 | 8.8 | 13 | 28 | .. | .. | .. |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 5.6 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 12 | 18 | 1221 | .. | 780 |
| Iraq | 7.5 | 8.7 | 8.1 | *23 | *126 | 1465* | .. | .. |
| Jordan | 5.6 | 8.2 | 6.9 | 5 | 6 | 1725 | .. | 150 |
| Lebanon | 5.1 | 7.2 | 6.2 | 3 | 21 | .. | .. | .. |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Syria Arab Republic | 5.8 | 8.2 | 7.0 | 13 | 35 | 1255 | .. | .. |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 5.9 | 7.6 | 6.8 | 11 | 41 | 1417 | .. | .. |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 5.7 | 8.1 | 6.9 | 6 | 48 | 930 | 0.10 | .. |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 5.3 | 8.1 | 6.7 | 5 | 30 | .. | 0.24 | 1100 |
| Morocco | 6.4 | 7.4 | 6.9 | 9 | 107 | 817 | 0.08 | 2000 |
| Tunisia | 5.0 | 7.2 | 6.1 | 4 | 23 | 1436 | .. | .. |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 5.6 | 7.7 | 6.7 | 6 | 52 | 1061 | 0.14 | 1550 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | 9.9 | 10.6 | 10.3 | 25 | 20 | .. | .. | .. |
| Djibouti | 7.3 | 7.0 | 7.2 | 18 | 694 | .. | .. | .. |
| Mauritania | 9.3 | 10.5 | 9.9 | 23 | 140 | .. | .. | .. |
| Somalia | 8.2 | 7.8 | 8.0 | .. | .. | .. | | |
| Sudan | 10.5 | 11.2 | 10.9 | 17 | 80 | .. | 2.60 | 230000 |
| Yemen | 7.6 | 8.3 | 8.0 | 46 | 73 | 797 | 0.12 | 1500 |
| Average LDCs | 8.8 | 9.2 | 9.0 | 26 | 201 | .. | .. | .. |
| World | .. | .. | .. | .. | 64 | .. | 1.20 | 18,500,000 |
| Developed countries | .. | .. | .. | .. | 72 | .. | 1.32 | 18,000,000 |
| LDCs | .. | .. | .. | .. | 95 | .. | 3.55 | 6,500,000 |
| Arab countries | .. | .. | .. | .. | 48 | .. | 0.35 | 250,000 |
| West Asia and Pacific | .. | .. | .. | .. | 49 | .. | 0.20 | 600,000 |
| Latin America and Caribbean | .. | .. | .. | .. | 43 | .. | 0.61 | 640,000 |
| South Asia | .. | .. | .. | .. | 99 | .. | 0.55 | 1,500,000 |
| Subsahara Africa | .. | .. | .. | .. | 121 | .. | 9.00 | 15,000,000 |
| Eastern Europe and CIS | .. | .. | .. | .. | 75 | .. | 0.48 | 270,000 |
| OECD | .. | .. | .. | .. | 17 | .. | 0.28 | 360,000 |
| High Income OECD | .. | .. | .. | .. | 13 | .. | 0.36 | 330,000 |

**Source :** Human development Report 2002 ; Human development report 2002
* HDR 2000 refering to a year different from the indicated

## Tableau 4.3. : LIFE EXPECTANCY, EVOLUTION AND DETERIORATION

| Country | Life expectancy at birth | | Infant mortality rate (for every 1000 live biths) | | Under five mortality rate | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1970-75 | 1995-2000 | 1970 | 2000 | 1970 | 2000 |
| **GCC** | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 63.5 | 72.9 | 55 | 13 | 75 | 16 |
| Kuweit | 67.3 | 75.9 | 49 | 9 | 59 | 10 |
| Oman | 49.0 | 70.5 | 126 | 12 | 200 | 14 |
| Qatar | 62.6 | 68.9 | 45 | 12 | 65 | 16 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 53.9 | 70.9 | 118 | 24 | 185 | 29 |
| UAE | 62.5 | 74.6 | 61 | 8 | 83 | 9 |
| Average GCC | 59.8 | 72.3 | 76 | 13 | 111 | 16 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 52.1 | 66.3 | 157 | 37 | 235 | 43 |
| Iraq | *57.0 | *58.7 | 105 | *104 | *127 | 130 |
| Jordan | 56.6 | 69.7 | 77 | 28 | 107 | 34 |
| Lebanon | 65.0 | 72.6 | 45 | 28 | 54 | 32 |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 29 |
| Syria Arab Republic | 57.0 | 70.5 | 90 | 24 | 129 | 29 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 57.5 | 67.6 | 95 | 44 | 130 | 50 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 54.5 | 68.9 | 143 | 50 | 234 | 65 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 52.9 | 70.0 | 105 | 17 | 160 | 20 |
| Morocco | 52.9 | 66.6 | 119 | 41 | 184 | 46 |
| Tunisia | 55.6 | 69.5 | 135 | 22 | 201 | 28 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 54.0 | 68.8 | 126 | 33 | 195 | 40 |
| **LDCs** | | | | | | |
| Comores | 48.9 | 58.8 | 159 | 61 | 215 | 82 |
| Djibouti | 41.0 | 45.5 | 160 | 102 | 241 | 146 |
| Mauritania | 43.5 | 50.5 | 150 | 120 | 250 | 183 |
| Somalia | .. | .. | 133 | .. | .. | 225 |
| Sudan | 43.7 | 55.0 | 104 | 66 | 172 | 108 |
| Yemen | 42.1 | 59.4 | 194 | 85 | 303 | 117 |
| Average LDCs | 43.8 | 53.8 | 150 | 87 | 236 | 144 |
| World | 59.9 | 66.4 | 96 | 56 | 146 | 81 |
| Developed countries | 55.6 | 64.1 | 108 | 61 | 166 | 89 |
| LDCs | 44.2 | 51.3 | 148 | 98 | 240 | 155 |
| Arab countries | 51.9 | 65.9 | 132 | 46 | 204 | 61 |
| West Asia and Pacific | 60.4 | 68.8 | 87 | 33 | 126 | 43 |
| Latin America and Caribbean | 61.1 | 69.4 | 86 | 30 | 123 | 37 |
| South Asia | 49.9 | 61.9 | 128 | 68 | 203 | 94 |
| Subsahara Africa | 45.3 | 48.8 | 135 | 107 | 223 | 174 |
| Eastern Europe and CIS | 69.2 | 68.4 | 34 | 20 | 42 | 25 |
| OECD | 70.4 | 76.4 | 40 | 12 | 53 | 14 |
| High income OECD | 72.1 | 77.8 | 20 | 6 | 26 | 6 |

UNICEF 2001
* HDR 2000 refering to a year different from the indicated
**Source :** Source: Human Development Report 2002
The state of the children and women in the middle east and North Africa, Unicef, 2001

## Tableau 4.4.: REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

| Country | Total fertility rate | | Fœtus care before birth | % births with skilled attendants | Mother Mortality rate 1000 living new vivantes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GCC** | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 54 | 2.9 | 97 | 98 | 23 |
| Kuweit | 50 | 2.8 | 95 | 98 | 5 |
| Oman | 31 | .. | 99 | 94 | 14 |
| Qatar | 43 | 3.2 | 98 | 99 | 10 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 32 | 5.1 | 90 | 91 | 7 |
| UAE | 28 | 3.3 | 97 | 99 | 3 |
| Average GCC | 40 | 3.5 | 96 | 97 | 10 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | |
| Egypt | 49 | 3 | 60 | 61 | 44 |
| Iraq | 44 | 5.6 | 76 | 72 | 274 |
| Jordan | 57 | 3.8 | 96 | 97 | 41 |
| Lebanon | 63 | 2.9 | 95 | 96 | 104 |
| Palestine | 51 | 5.9 | 96 | 97 | 75 |
| Syria Arab Republic | 46 | 3.7 | 80 | 87 | 71 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 52 | 3.8 | 81 | 83 | 107 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | |
| Algeria | 64 | 3.1 | 79 | 92 | 120 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 45 | 5.2 | 100 | 98 | 62 |
| Morocco | 58 | 2.9 | 56 | 46 | 228 |
| Tunisia | 71 | 2.1 | 92 | 90 | 56 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 60 | 3.3 | 82 | 82 | 117 |
| LDCs | | | | | |
| Comores | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Djibouti | 2 | 5.6 | .. | 56 | 710 |
| Mauritania | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sudan | 7 | 5.9 | 71 | 57 | 763 |
| Yemen | 21 | 6.5 | 34 | 22 | 351 |
| Average LDCs | 10 | 6.0 | 53 | 45 | 608 |

**Source :** The state of the children and women in the middle east and North Africa, Unicef, 2001

## Table 4.5. :Contraception prevalence according to actual age (%)

| Country | Survey year | -15 | -20 | -25 | -30 | -35 | -40 | 45-49 | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 1995 | 29.6 | 44.9 | 59.9 | 60.7 | 57.0 | 51.5 | 40.3 | 43.8 |
| Kuweit | 1996 | 8.0 | 28.6 | 33.3 | 42.2 | 39.1 | 37.6 | 28.4 | 34.6 |
| Oman | 1995 | 2.7 | 4.5 | 10.3 | 11.0 | 13.4 | 7.1 | 6.0 | 8.6 |
| Qatar | 1998 | 11.0 | 19.3 | 32.2 | 40.2 | 40.3 | 37.8 | 19.3 | 32.3 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 97-96 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| UAE | 1995 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Average GCC | | 12.8 | 24.3 | 33.9 | 38.5 | 37.5 | 33.5 | 23.5 | 29.8 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 2000 | 14.9 | 32.1 | 46.2 | 58.8 | 61.4 | 55.8 | 34.0 | 47.6 |
| Iraq | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Jordan | 1997 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Lebanon | 1996 | 35.0 | 52.0 | 57.9 | 67.3 | 67.8 | 66.8 | 47.4 | 61.0 |
| Palestine | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Syria Arab Republic | 1993 | 11.9 | 33.6 | 35.4 | 47.4 | 52.4 | 47.5 | 31.9 | 39.6 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | | 20.6 | 39.2 | 46.5 | 57.8 | 60.5 | 56.7 | 37.8 | 49.4 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 1992 | 26.4 | 39.5 | 52.7 | 56.1 | 56.4 | 52.2 | 38.9 | 50.7 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 1995 | 16.7 | 35.6 | 44.9 | 51.3 | 50.6 | 48.9 | 31.4 | 45.2 |
| Morocco | 97-96 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Tunisia | 95-94 | 19.7 | 44.1 | 55.7 | 63.6 | 68.1 | 65.3 | 53.0 | 59.7 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | | 20.9 | 39.7 | 51.1 | 57.0 | 58.4 | 55.5 | 41.1 | 51.9 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Djibouti | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Mauritania | 1990 | 4.1 | - | 4.8 | - | 3.5 | - | - | 4.1 |
| Somalia | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sudan | 93-92 | 5.3 | 8.2 | 11.6 | 13.4 | 10.3 | 7.2 | 7.2 | 9.9 |
| Yemen | 1997 | 5.1 | 8.5 | 10.5 | 11.7 | 12.5 | 8.8 | 5.1 | 9.7 |
| Average LDCs | | 4.8 | - | 9.0 | - | 8.8 | - | - | 7.9 |

**Source :** Mother and Child Health Database: Population studies unit, League of Arab States

## Table 4.6.: CHILD BIRTHS WITH COMPLICATIONS ACCORDING TO MOTHER AGE

| Country | Survey year | - 20 | 24-20 | 29-25 | 34-30 | + 35 | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GCC** | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 1995 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Kuweit | 1996 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Oman | 1995 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Qatar | 1998 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Saoudi Arabia | 97–96 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| UAE | 1995 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Average GCC | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 2000 | 14.7 | 10.0 | – | 11.0 | 12.9 | 10.8 |
| Iraq | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Jordan | 1997 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Lebanon | 1996 | 30.4 | 18.7 | 19.2 | 23.7 | 29.7 | 22.8 |
| Palestine | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Syria Arab Republic | 1993 | 6.1 | 5.3 | 6.3 | 6.5 | 8.2 | 6.5 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | | 17.1 | 11.3 | – | 13.7 | 16.9 | 13.4 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Algeria | 1992 | 13.0 | 11.4 | 9.4 | 8.4 | 10.2 | 9.7 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 1995 | 4.3 | 10.7 | 10.0 | 9.3 | 12.8 | 10.9 |
| Morocco | 97–96 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Tunisia | 95–94 | 49.2 | 24.3 | 30.7 | 25.6 | 26.4 | 27.4 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | | 22.2 | 15.5 | 16.7 | 14.4 | 16.5 | 16.0 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | |
| Comores | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Djibouti | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Mauritania | 1990 | 18.2 | 19.8 | – | 20.5 | 22.7 | 20.4 |
| Somalia | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Sudan | 93–92 | 15.8 | 9.4 | 7.4 | 9.9 | 7.7 | 8.6 |
| Yemen | 1997 | – | – | – | – | – | 14.9 |
| Average LDCs | | – | – | – | – | – | 14.6 |

**Source :** Mother and Child Health Database: Population studies unit, League of Arab States

## Table 4.7. : NUTRITION INDICATORS

| Country | underweight newborns % | women with anemia % | families using iodized salt % | Children provided with Vitamin A |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GCC** | | | | |
| Bahrein | 9.6 | 37 | 9 | .. |
| Kuweit | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Oman | 7.9 | 38 | 65 | 98 |
| Qatar | 9.7 | .. | .. | .. |
| Saoudi Arabia | 3.3 | .. | .. | .. |
| UAE | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Average GCC | 7.6 | .. | .. | .. |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | |
| Egypt | 2.3 | 24 | 56 | 12 |
| Iraq | 12.0 | 51 | 40 | 13 |
| Jordan | 9.4 | 29 | 86 | .. |
| Lebanon | 6.0 | 27 | 87 | .. |
| Palestine | 8.6 | .. | 37 | 16 |
| Syria Arab Republic | 6.0 | .. | 39 | .. |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 7.1 | 33 | 62 | 13 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | |
| Algeria | .. | .. | 69 | .. |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 4.7 | .. | 90 | .. |
| Morocco | 9.0 | 35 | 26 | 32 |
| Tunisia | 5.4 | 31 | 97 | .. |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 6.4 | 33 | 71 | .. |
| LDCs | | | | |
| Comores | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Djibouti | .. | 70 | .. | 41 |
| Mauritania | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sudan | 31.0 | .. | 1 | 60 |
| Yemen | 24.0 | .. | 54 | 85 |
| Average LDCs | .. | .. | .. | 62 |

**Source :** The state of the children and women in the middle east and North Africa, Unicef, 2001

# 5) ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

## Tableau 5.1.: ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

| Country | GDP/ capita annual growth rate | | GDP/ Capita | | Average annual change in consumer price index | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1975-2000 | 1990-2000 | Highet value during 1975-2000 (ppp US$) | Year of the Highest value | 1975-2000 | 1990-2000 |
| **GCC** | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 0.9 | 1.7 | .. | .. | 1.2 | .. |
| Kuweit | -0.9 | -1.4 | 25382 | 1979 | 2.0 | 1.8 |
| Oman | 2.8 | 0.3 | .. | .. | 0.1 | -1.1 |
| Qatar | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2.7 | -1.0 |
| Saoudi Arabia | -2.2 | -1.2 | 19525 | 1980 | 1.0 | -0.9 |
| UAE | -3.7 | -1.6 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Average GCC | -0.6 | -0.4 | .. | .. | 1.4 | -0.3 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 2.9 | 2.5 | 3635 | 2000 | 8.8 | 2.7 |
| Iraq | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Jordan | 0.4 | 1.0 | 4881 | 1986 | 3.5 | 0.7 |
| Lebanon | .. | 4.2 | 4385 | 1998 | .. | .. |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Syria Arab Republic | 1.0 | 2.8 | 3714 | 1998 | 6.7 | -0.5 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 1.4 | 2.6 | 4154 | .. | 6.3 | 1.0 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | |
| Algeria | -0.3 | -0.1 | 5997 | 1985 | 19.5 | .. |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | -6.7 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Morocco | 1.3 | 0.6 | 3632 | 1998 | 3.8 | 1.9 |
| Tunisia | 2.0 | 3.0 | 6363 | 2000 | 4.4 | 2.9 |
| Average Maghreb MDEs | -0.9 | 1.2 | 5331 | .. | 9.2 | 2.4 |
| **LDCs** | | | | | | |
| Comores | -1.4 | -2.4 | 2147 | 1984 | .. | .. |
| Djibouti | -5.0 | -3.9 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Mauritania | -0.1 | 1.2 | 1715 | 1976 | 6.1 | 3.3 |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sudan | 0.6 | 5.6 | 1797 | 2000 | 81.1 | .. |
| Yemen | .. | 2.3 | 893 | 2000 | 32.6 | .. |
| Average LDCs | -1.5 | 0.6 | 1638 | .. | 39.9 | .. |
| World | 1.2 | 1.2 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Developed countries | 2.3 | 3.1 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| LDCs | 0.3 | 1.3 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Arab countries | 0.3 | 0.7 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| West Asia and Pacific | 5.9 | 5.7 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Latin America and Caribbean | 0.7 | 1.7 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| South Asia | 2.4 | 3.3 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Subsahara Africa | -0.9 | -0.3 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Eastern Europe and CIS | .. | -2.4 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| OECD | 2.0 | 1.7 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| High income OECD | 2.1 | 1.7 | .. | .. | .. | .. |

**Source :** Human Development Report 2002

## Table 5.2. : CONSUMPTION INEGALITIES

| Country | Survey year | Share of consumption (%) | | | | Inequity measures | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | poorest 10% | richest 20% | richest 20% | richest 10% | richest 10% to poorest 10% | richest 20% to poorest 20% | Geni Index |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Kuweit | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Oman | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Qatar | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Saoudi Arabia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| UAE | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Average GCC | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 1995 | 4.4 | 9.8 | 39.0 | 25.0 | 5.7 | 4.0 | 28.9 |
| Iraq | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Jordan | 1997 | 3.3 | 7.6 | 44.4 | 29.8 | 9.1 | 5.9 | 36.4 |
| Lebanon | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Syria Arab Republic | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 1995 | 2.8 | 7.0 | 42.6 | 26.8 | 9.6 | 6.1 | 35.3 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Morocco | 99–1998 | 2.6 | 6.5 | 46.6 | 30.9 | 11.7 | 7.2 | 39.5 |
| Tunisia | 1995 | 2.3 | 5.7 | 47.9 | 31.8 | 13.8 | 8.5 | 41.7 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | .. | 2.6 | 6.4 | 45.7 | 29.8 | 11.7 | 7.3 | 38.8 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Djibouti | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Mauritania | 1995 | 2.5 | 6.4 | 44.1 | 28.4 | 11.2 | 6.9 | 37.3 |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sudan | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Yemen | 1998 | 3.0 | 7.4 | 41.2 | 25.9 | 8.6 | 5.6 | 33.4 |
| Average LDCs | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |

**Source :** Human Development Report 2002

* GINI index measures the inequalities in total consumption, a value of zero represents state of absolute equality and a value of 100 absolute inequality

## Table 5.3. : PUBLIC EXPENDITURES PRIORITIES

| Country | Public expenditures on education (% of total expenditures) | | Public expenditures on health (% of total expenditures) | | Military expenditures (% total expenditures) | | Debt service (% total expenditures) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1985-87 | 1995-97 | 1990 | 1998 | 1990 | 2000 | 1990 | 2000 |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 5.2 | 4.4 | .. | 2.6 | 5.1 | 4.0 | .. | .. |
| Kuweit | 4.8 | 5.0 | 4.0 | .. | 48.5 | 8.2 | .. | .. |
| Oman | 4.1 | 4.5 | 2.0 | 2.9 | 18.3 | 9.7 | 7.0 | 7.7 |
| Qatar | 4.7 | 3.4 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Saoudi Arabia | 7.4 | 7.5 | .. | .. | 12.8 | 11.6 | .. | .. |
| UAE | 2.1 | 1.7 | 0.8 | 0.8 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Average GCC | 4.7 | 4.4 | 2.3 | 2.1 | 21.2 | 8.4 | .. | .. |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 4.5 | 4.8 | 1.8 | .. | 3.5 | 2.3 | 7.1 | 1.8 |
| Iraq | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Jordan | 6.8 | 7.9 | 3.6 | 3.6 | 11.1 | 9.5 | 15.5 | 8.0 |
| Lebanon | .. | 2.5 | .. | 2.2 | 5.0 | 3.6 | 3.5 | 11 |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Syria Arab Republic | 4.8 | 4.2 | 0.4 | 0.9 | 6.9 | 5.5 | 9.7 | 2.0 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 5.4 | 4.9 | 1.9 | 2.2 | 6.6 | 5.2 | 9.0 | 5.7 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 9.8 | 5.1 | 3.0 | 2.6 | 1.5 | 3.5 | 14.2 | 8.4 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 9.6 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Morocco | .. | .. | 0.9 | 1.2 | 4.1 | 4.2 | 6.9 | 10 |
| Tunisia | 6.2 | 7.7 | 3.0 | 2.2 | 2.0 | 1.7 | 11.6 | 9.8 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 8.5 | 6.4 | 2.3 | 2.0 | 2.5 | 3.1 | 10.9 | 9.4 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | .. | .. | 2.9 | .. | .. | .. | 0.4 | 1.3 |
| Djibouti | .. | .. | .. | 5.4 | 6.3 | 4.4 | 3.6 | 2.4 |
| Mauritania | .. | .. | .. | 1.4 | 3.8 | .. | 14.3 | 10.7 |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sudan | .. | 1.4 | 0.7 | .. | 3.6 | 3.0 | 0.4 | 0.5 |
| Yemen | .. | 7.0 | 1.1 | .. | 8.5 | 5.2 | 3.5 | 2.6 |
| Average LDCs | .. | .. | 1.6 | .. | 5.6 | 4.2 | 4.4 | 3.5 |

**Source :** Human Development Report 2002

## Table 5.4 : ARMAMENT AND REFUGEES

| Country | Conventional weapons imports (million US $ of 1990) | | Total armed forces (1985=100) 2000 | Total refugies excluding palestinians- according to countries in thousands (2000) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1991 | 2000 | | by country of asylum | by country of origin |
| **GCC** | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 64 | 30 | 393 | (.) | (.) |
| Kuweit | 595 | 34 | 128 | 3 | 1 |
| Oman | (.) | 30 | 149 | 0 | .. |
| Qatar | 16 | 8 | 205 | (.) | .. |
| Saoudi Arabia | 1142 | 143 | 322 | 5 | (.) |
| UAE | 237 | 288 | 151 | 1 | .. |
| Average GCC | 411 | 89 | 225 | 2 | 1 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | |
| Egypt | 866 | 486 | 101 | 7 | 4 |
| Iraq | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Jordan | 35 | 280 | 148 | 1 | 1 |
| Lebanon | (.) | 1 | 366 | 3 | 9 |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Syria Arab Republic | 390 | (.) | 79 | 3 | 6 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 430 | 256 | 174 | 4 | 5 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | |
| Algeria | 1037 | 365 | 73 | 170 | 6 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | (.) | (.) | 104 | 12 | 1 |
| Morocco | 59 | (.) | 133 | 1 | (.) |
| Tunisia | 4 | 18 | 100 | (.) | 1 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 367 | 192 | 103 | 61 | 3 |
| LDCs | | | | | |
| Comores | .. | .. | .. | (.) | .. |
| Djibouti | 1 | 1 | 280 | 23 | 2 |
| Mauritania | 17 | (.) | 185 | (.) | 30 |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sudan | 39 | (.) | 185 | 415 | 491 |
| Yemen | 74 | 33 | 103 | 61 | 2 |
| Average LDCs | 33 | 17 | 188 | 166 | 131 |
| World | .. | .. | 78 | 11374 | .. |
| Developed countries | .. | .. | 97 | 8460 | .. |
| LDCs | .. | .. | 186 | 2996 | .. |
| Arab countries | .. | .. | 115 | 704 | .. |
| West Asia and Pacific | .. | .. | 81 | 595 | .. |
| Latin America and Caribbean | .. | .. | 94 | 38 | .. |
| South Asia | .. | .. | 110 | 4191 | .. |
| Subsahara Africa | .. | .. | 160 | 2929 | .. |
| Eastern Europe and CIS | .. | .. | .. | 463 | .. |
| OECD | .. | .. | 72 | 2476 | .. |
| High Income OECD | .. | .. | 64 | 2446 | .. |

**Source :** Human Development Report 2002

## Table 5.5.: GENDER INEQUALITIES IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

| Country | Female economic activity rate (age 15 and above) | | | estimated earned income (ppp US $) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Average (%) 2000 | record rate (1985=100) 2000 | % of male rate 2000 | Females | Males |
| **GCC** | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 33.5 | 118 | 39 | 7010 | 21059 |
| Kuweit | 36.6 | 97 | 48 | 6895 | 22186 |
| Oman | 19.2 | 151 | 25 | 3806 | 21804 |
| Qatar | 41.0 | 124 | 45 | 6864 | 25277 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 21.2 | 142 | 27 | 3466 | 18252 |
| UAE | 31.7 | 108 | 37 | 5320 | 24412 |
| Average GCC | 30.5 | 123 | 37 | 5560 | 22165 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | |
| Egypt | 35.0 | 115 | 44 | 2003 | 5227 |
| Iraq | *17.8 | *119 | *24 | .. | .. |
| Jordan | 26.6 | 157 | 34 | 1749 | 6014 |
| Lebanon | 29.6 | 122 | 39 | 2013 | 6704 |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Syria Arab Republic | 28.6 | 121 | 37 | 1537 | 5522 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 27.5 | 127 | 36 | 1826 | 5867 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | |
| Algeria | 29.5 | 154 | 39 | 2389 | 8150 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 25.0 | 122 | 33 | 2921 | 11894 |
| Morocco | 41.4 | 107 | 52 | 2019 | 5068 |
| Tunisia | 36.9 | 112 | 47 | 3347 | 9320 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 33.2 | 124 | 43 | 2669 | 8608 |
| LDCs | | | | | |
| Comores | 62.5 | 99 | 73 | 1136 | 2038 |
| Djibouti | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Mauritania | 63.4 | 98 | 74 | 1212 | 2150 |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sudan | 34.8 | 113 | 41 | 847 | 2736 |
| Yemen | 30.5 | 108 | 37 | 405 | 1384 |
| Average LDCs | 47.8 | 105 | 56 | 900 | 2077 |

**Source :** Human Development Report 2002.
* Human Development Report 2002

# 6) OTHER ASPECTS

## Table 6.1: WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

| Country | Year women received the right (A) | | year first women elected or appointed to actual parliament | Women in government at ministerial level ( % of total) 2000 | Women parliament seats (% of total) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | to vote | to stand for election | | | lower house | upper house or senate |
| **GCC** | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | B1973 | 1973 | B – | .. | B | B |
| Kuweit | C – | C – | C – | 0 | 0 | .. |
| Oman | CD – | CD – | CD – | .. | – | CD |
| Qatar | CD – | CD – | CD – | 0 | – | CD |
| Saoudi Arabia | CD – | CD – | CD – | .. | – | CD |
| UAE | | CD – | CD – | .. | 0 | .. |
| Average GCC | | | | | | |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 1956 | 1956 | 1957 | 6 | 2 | .. |
| Iraq | *1980 | *1980 | *1980 | .. | .. | .. |
| Jordan | 1974 | 1974 | 1989 | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| Lebanon | 1952 | 1952 | 1991 | 0 | 2 | .. |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Syria Arab Republic | 1949,1953 | 1953 | 1973 | 11 | 10 | .. |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | | | | | | |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 1962 | 1962 | 1962 | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 1964 | 1964 | .. | 13 | .. | .. |
| Morocco | 1963 | 1963 | 1993 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| Tunisia | 1957 ,1959 | 1957 ,1959 | 1959 | 10 | 12 | .. |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | | | | | | |
| LDCs | | | | | | |
| Comores | 1956 | 1956 | 1993 | .. | E | E |
| Djibouti | 1946 | 1986 | F | 5 | 0 | .. |
| Mauritania | 1961 | 1961 | 1975 | 14 | 3.8 | 2 |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sudan | 1964 | 1964 | 1964 | 5 | 10 | .. |
| Yemen | G1967 | G 1967 | .. | .. | 1 | .. |
| Average LDCs | | | | | | |

**Source :** Human development report 2002 .

A Cells with two entries indicate the year on which the right to vote and to stand for election were recognized on an equal basis, the first indicate the partial reconition of the right to vote or to stand for election.
B According to the actual constitution (1973) all citizants are equal before the law. Despite, women were not able to make use of their right to vote in the unique legislative elections of 1973.
C The right of women to vote and to stand for election hs not been recognized
D A parliament did not exist at all
E The parliament has been dissolved or halted for an undetermined period
F The country has not appointed neither elected a women yet in the parliament
G Indicates the former Democratic Republic of Yemen

* Human development report 2000

## Tableau 6.2. : Evolution de la participation politique de la femme

| Country | Seats in parliament held by women (%) | | | Women in decision making position (%) | | | | Submitted a national plan to UN secretariat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | at ministerial level | | at subministerial level | | |
| | 1987 | 1995 | 1999 | 1994 | 1998 | 1994 | 1998 | |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | .. | .. | .. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | yes |
| Kuweit | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | yes |
| Oman | .. | .. | .. | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | yes |
| Qatar | .. | .. | .. | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | yes |
| Saoudi Arabia | .. | .. | .. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - |
| UAE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | yes |
| Average GCC | .. | .. | .. | 0 | 0 | 0.8 | 2.0 | - |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 4 | yes |
| Iraq | 13 | 11 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | yes |
| Jordan | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | yes |
| Lebanon | .. | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | yes |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | - |
| Syria Arab Republic | 9 | 10 | 10 | 7 | 8 | 0 | 0 | yes |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 6.5 | 5.2 | 4.0 | 2.8 | 3.2 | 0.0 | 0.8 | - |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 2 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 8 | 10 | yes |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | .. | .. | .. | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | - |
| Morocco | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | yes |
| Tunisia | 6 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 14 | 10 | yes |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 2.7 | 5.0 | 3.7 | 2.0 | 2.5 | 5.5 | 7.0 | - |
| **LDCs** | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | 0 | 0 | – | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | yes |
| Djibouti | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | - |
| Mauritania | – | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 6 | - |
| Somalia | 4 | .. | .. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - |
| Sudan | 8 | 8 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | yes |
| Yemen | .. | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | yes |
| Average LDCs | 3.0 | 1.8 | 2.5 | 0.0 | 1.8 | 1.5 | 1.5 | - |

**Source :** UN, World Women 2000, 2000

## Table 6.3: Status of Major International Human Rights Instruments

| Country | Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women 1965 | International convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination 1965 | International convention on civil and political rights 1966 | International convention on social and political rights1966 | Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment 1984 | Convention on the rights of the child 1989 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GCC** | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | | ● | | | ● | ● |
| Kuweit | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Oman | | | | | | ● |
| Qatar | | ● | | | ● | ● |
| Saoudi Arabia | ● | ● | | | ● | ● |
| UAE | | ● | | | | ● |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | |
| Egypt | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Iraq | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● |
| Jordan | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Lebanon | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Syria Arab Republic | | ● | ● | ● | | ● |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | |
| Algeria | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Morocco | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Tunisia | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| **LDCs** | | | | | | |
| Comores | ● | ● | | | ● | ● |
| Djibouti | ● | | | | | ● |
| Mauritania | | ● | | | | ● |
| Somalia | | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Sudan | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Yemen | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

● ratification, accession or succession

● signature not yet followed by ratification

**Source :** Human Development Report 2002

## Table 6.4: STATUS OF FUNDAMENTAL LABOR RIGHTS CONVENTIONS

| Country | Freedom of association and collective bargaining | | Elimination of forced and compulsory labor | | Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation | | Abolition of child labor | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Convention 87(a) | Convention 98(b) | Convention 29(c) | Convention 105(d) | Convention 100(e) | Convention 111(f) | Convention 138(g) | Convention 182(h) |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | | | ● | ● | | ● | | ● |
| Kuweit | ● | | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● |
| Oman | | | ● | | | | | ● |
| Qatar | | | ● | | | ● | | ● |
| Saoudi Arabia | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| UAE | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Iraq | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Jordan | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Lebanon | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | |
| Palestine | | | | | | | | |
| Syria Arab Republic | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Morocco | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Tunisia | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| **LDCs** | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | |
| Djibouti | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | |
| Mauritania | ● | | ● | | ● | ● | | |
| Somalia | | | ● | | ● | ● | | |
| Sudan | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | |
| Yemen | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

● Convention ratified

● Ratification denounced

A) Freedom of association and protection of the right to or ganize convention 1948.
B) Right to organize and collective bargaining convention 1949.
C) Forced labor convention 1930.
D) Abolition of forced labor convention 1957.
E) Equal remuneration convention 1951.
F) Discrimination (employment and occupation) convention 1958.
G) Minimum age convention 1973.
H) Worst forms of child labor convention 1999.

**Source :** Human development Report 2002.

## Table 6.5: COMMUNICATION INSTRUMENTS

| Country | Number of appliance (for every 1000 individual) 1997 | | Telephone mainlines (per 1000 individuals) | | Cell phone subscription (per 1000 individuals) | Internet Terminals (per 1000 individuals) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Radio | TV | 1990 | 2000 | 2000 | 2000 |
| **GCC** | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 580 | 472 | 192 | 250 | 300 | 1.7 |
| Kuweit | 678 | 505 | 247 | 244 | 249 | 1.8 |
| Oman | 607 | 694 | 60 | 89 | 65 | 0.3 |
| Qatar | 450 | 404 | 190 | 268 | 202 | 0.1 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 321 | 262 | 77 | 137 | 64 | 0.2 |
| UAE | 355 | 134 | 206 | 391 | 548 | 14.3 |
| Average GCC | 499 | 412 | 162 | 230 | 238 | 3.1 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 317 | 119 | 30 | 86 | 21 | (.) |
| Iraq | 229 | 83 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Jordan | 271 | 82 | 58 | 92 | 58 | 0.1 |
| Lebanon | 907 | 375 | 118 | 195 | 212 | 1.7 |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Syria Arab Republic | 278 | 70 | 41 | 103 | 2 | (.) |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 400 | 146 | 62 | 119 | 73 | 0.5 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 227 | 391 | 32 | 57 | 3 | (.) |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 259 | 140 | 48 | 108 | 7 | (.) |
| Morocco | 247 | 115 | 16 | 50 | 83 | 0.1 |
| Tunisia | 224 | 100 | 38 | 90 | 6 | (.) |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 239 | 187 | 34 | 76 | 25 | 0.1 |
| **LDCs** | | | | | | |
| Comores | 141 | 2 | 8 | 10 | 0 | 0.1 |
| Djibouti | 84 | 45 | 11 | 15 | (.) | (.) |
| Mauritania | 146 | 25 | 3 | 7 | 3 | (.) |
| Somalia | 53 | 15 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sudan | 272 | 86 | 3 | 12 | 1 | 0.0 |
| Yemen | 64 | 29 | 11 | 19 | 2 | (.) |
| **Average LDCs** | 127 | 34 | 7 | 13 | 2 | (.) |
| **World** | 417 | 240 | 99 | 163 | 121 | 17.8 |
| **Developed countries** | 245 | 157 | 21 | 78 | 52 | 0.7 |
| **LDCs** | 142 | 23 | 3 | 6 | 3 | (.) |
| **Arab countries** | .. | .. | 35 | 77 | 38 | 0.2 |
| **West Asia and Pacific** | 304 | 252 | 17 | 104 | 74 | 0.6 |
| **Latin America and Caribbean** | 409 | 204 | 62 | 147 | 121 | 3.9 |
| **South Asia** | 110 | 53 | 7 | 33 | 4 | (.) |
| **Subsahara Africa** | 199 | 47 | 11 | 15 | 19 | 0.4 |
| **Eastern Europe and CIS** | .. | .. | 124 | 210 | 69 | 3.0 |
| **OECD** | .. | .. | 396 | 524 | 459 | 92.0 |
| **High income OECD** | .. | .. | 473 | 609 | 524 | 120.0 |

**Source :** UNICEF The state of the world's children 2002, Leadership Human Development Report 2002

## Table 6.6: FAMILIES OWNING SELECTED COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENTS ACCORDING TO THEIR RESIDENCY (%)

| Country | survey year | RADIO | | | TV | | | VCR | | | Sttelite dish | | | Main telephone | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | urban | rural | Total | urban | rural | Total | urban | rural | Total | urban | rural | Total | urban | rural | Total |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 1995 | - | - | 93.1 | - | - | 96.3 | - | - | 66.7 | - | - | 12.0 | - | - | 90.5 |
| Kuweit | 1996 | - | - | 98.2 | - | - | 99.1 | - | - | 90.9 | - | - | 57.2 | - | - | 96.9 |
| Oman | 1995 | 81.1 | 67.5 | 76.2 | 96.4 | 68.8 | 86.4 | 38.4 | 13.5 | 29.4 | 20.1 | 4.6 | 14.5 | 38.4 | 30.7 | 55.8 |
| Qatar | 1998 | - | - | 96.3 | - | - | 98.9 | - | - | 74.8 | - | - | 60.8 | - | - | 93.6 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 97-96 | 86.1 | 68.4 | 80.7 | - | - | - | 36.6 | 8.6 | 28.0 | 28.8 | 4.9 | 21.4 | 36.6 | 14.2 | 55.5 |
| UAE | 1995 | 91.4 | 87.5 | 90.2 | 98.5 | 97.3 | 90.2 | 80.5 | 65.3 | 75.7 | 38.7 | 14.3 | 31.0 | 80.5 | 91.6 | 94.8 |
| Average GCC | | 86.2 | 74.5 | 89.1 | 97.5 | 83.1 | 94.2 | 51.8 | 29.1 | 60.9 | 29.2 | 7.9 | 32.8 | 51.8 | 45.5 | 81.2 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 2000 | 89.3 | 74.6 | 82.0 | 94.5 | 84.3 | 89.4 | 22.0 | 2.3 | 12.1 | - | - | - | 22.0 | 11.0 | 27.8 |
| Iraq | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Jordan | 1997 | 84.1 | 73.0 | 82.2 | 93.0 | 84.7 | 91.5 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 19.7 | 37.9 |
| Lebanon | 1996 | 87.2 | 86.9 | 87.0 | 97.2 | 93.1 | 95.2 | 54.8 | 40.0 | 47.7 | - | - | - | 54.8 | 32.5 | 39.4 |
| Palestine | - | - | - | - | | | | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Syria Arab Republic | 1993 | 90.1 | 81.8 | 86.6 | 92.2 | 79.6 | 86.8 | 19.9 | 4.0 | 13.0 | - | - | - | 19.9 | 13.8 | 23.4 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | | 87.7 | 79.1 | 84.5 | 94.2 | 85.4 | 90.7 | 32.2 | 15.4 | 24.3 | - | - | - | 32.2 | 19.3 | 32.1 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 1992 | 82.5 | 68.4 | 75.7 | 94.5 | 70.8 | 83.0 | 8.5 | 1.2 | 5.0 | 22.2 | 4.9 | 13.9 | 8.5 | 4.2 | 20.2 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 1995 | 76.5 | 67.6 | 74.2 | 97.3 | 91.5 | 95.8 | 23.3 | 9.1 | 19.7 | 11.3 | 5.8 | 9.9 | 23.3 | 21.1 | 30.2 |
| Morocco | 97-96 | 82.7 | 76.8 | 79.7 | 90.4 | 46.7 | 69.5 | 29.9 | 3.4 | 16.6 | 32.4 | 3.2 | 17.8 | 29.9 | 2.1 | 20.7 |
| Tunisia | 95-94 | 83.7 | 61.4 | 75.3 | 93.0 | 62.3 | 81.5 | 15.6 | 3.2 | 11.0 | 3.7 | 0.6 | 2.5 | 15.6 | 1.4 | 16.5 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | | 81.4 | 68.6 | 76.2 | 93.8 | 67.8 | 82.5 | 19.3 | 4.2 | 13.1 | 17.4 | 3.6 | 11.0 | 19.3 | 7.2 | 21.9 |
| **LDCs** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Comores | - | - | - | - | | | | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Djibouti | - | - | - | - | | | | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Mauritania | 1990 | 63.5 | 39.9 | 49.7 | 17.4 | 0.6 | 7.6 | 4.5 | 0.1 | 1.9 | - | - | - | 4.5 | 0.0 | 1.1 |
| Somalia | - | - | - | - | | | | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sudan | 93-92 | 62.4 | 34.1 | 43.9 | 47.6 | 10.2 | 23.2 | 10.0 | 1.2 | 4.2 | - | - | - | 10.0 | 0.1 | 1.5 |
| Yemen | 1997 | 73.1 | 57.1 | 61.1 | 83.4 | 29.2 | 56.3 | 17.0 | 1.5 | 5.3 | 14.1 | 0.5 | 3.9 | 17.0 | 1.3 | 2.9 |
| Average LDCs | | 66.3 | 43.7 | 51.6 | 49.5 | 13.3 | 29.0 | 10.5 | 0.9 | 3.8 | - | - | - | 10.5 | 0.5 | 1.8 |

**Source :** Mother and Child Health Database: Population studies unit, League of Arab States

## Table 6.7: ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

| Country | Per capita electricity consumption | | Per capita CO2 emission (metric ton) | | Ratified environmental related conventions | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1980 | 1999 | 1980 | 1999 | Framework convention on climate change | Kyoto protocol to the framework convention on climate change | Convention on biodiversity |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 4970 | 8205 | 22.6 | 31.5 | • | | • |
| Kuweit | 5793 | 14011 | 18.0 | 27.2 | • | | ● |
| Oman | 614 | 2880 | 5.2 | 8.5 | • | | • |
| Qatar | 9489 | 14871 | 56.4 | 80.9 | • | | • |
| Saoudi Arabia | 1356 | 4710 | 13.7 | 14.1 | • | | • |
| UAE | 5320 | 10643 | 35.8 | 37.5 | • | | • |
| Average GCC | 4590 | 9220 | 25.3 | 33.3 | • | | • |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 380 | 900 | 1.0 | 1.6 | • | ● | • |
| Iraq | .. | .. | .. | .. | -- | -- | -- |
| Jordan | 387 | 1207 | 1.6 | 2.2 | • | | • |
| Lebanon | 789 | 1778 | 2.3 | 5.1 | • | | • |
| Palestine | .. | .. | .. | .. | -- | -- | -- |
| Syria Arab Republic | 354 | 863 | 2.2 | 3.3 | • | | • |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | 478 | 1187 | 1.8 | 3.1 | | | |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 265 | 581 | 3.5 | 3.6 | • | | • |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 1588 | 3876 | 8.8 | 6.8 | • | | • |
| Morocco | 223 | 430 | 0.8 | 1.2 | • | • | • |
| Tunisia | 379 | 911 | 1.5 | 2.4 | • | | • |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | 614 | 1450 | 3.7 | 3.5 | | | |
| LDCs | | | | | | | |
| Comores | .. | .. | 0.1 | 0.1 | • | | • |
| Djibouti | .. | .. | 1.1 | 0.6 | • | | • |
| Mauritania | .. | .. | 0.4 | 1.1 | • | | • |
| Somalia | .. | .. | .. | .. | -- | -- | -- |
| Sudan | 34 | 46 | 0.2 | 0.1 | • | | • |
| Yemen | 59 | 110 | 0.2 | 0.8 | • | | • |
| Average LDCs | 47 | 78 | 0.4 | 0.5 | | | |
| World | 1444 | 2066 | 4.3 | 4.1 | | | |
| Developed countries | 316 | 745 | 1.3 | 1.9 | | | |
| LDCs | 59 | 69 | 0.1 | 0.2 | | | |
| Arab countries | 489 | 1303 | 2.8 | 3.8 | | | |
| West Asia and Pacific | 253 | 804 | 1.4 | 2.4 | | | |
| Latin America and Caribbean | 845 | 1450 | 2.4 | 2.6 | | | |
| South Asia | 132 | 371 | 0.6 | 1.1 | | | |
| Subsahara Africa | 463 | 469 | 1.0 | 0.9 | | | |
| Eastern Europe and CIS | .. | 2895 | .. | 7.4 | | | |
| OECD | 4916 | 7001 | 11.0 | 10.9 | | | |
| High income OECD | 5932 | 8481 | 12.6 | 12.6 | | | |

• accession or succession.

● Signature note yet followed by ratificat

**Source :** Human development Report 2002

## Table 6.8: SELECTED HABITATION SPECIFICITIES

| Country | Survey year | Family average size | All types of rooms | | sleeping rooms | | Electric lightning type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | avg. Nbr of rooms in the house | avg. Occupants of each room | avg. Nbr of rooms in the house | avg. Occupants of each room | |
| **GCC** | | | | | | | |
| Bahrein | 1995 | 6.4 | 4.7 | 1.4 | 2.8 | 2.3 | – |
| Kuweit | 1996 | 6.9 | 8.1 | 0.9 | 4.3 | 1.6 | 99.2 |
| Oman | 1995 | 8.5 | 4.5 | 1.9 | 2.4 | 3.8 | 96.1 |
| Qatar | 1998 | 7.0 | 7.3 | 1.0 | 4.1 | 1.7 | 99.6 |
| Saoudi Arabia | 97–96 | 7.0 | 5.4 | 1.3 | 2.5 | 2.8 | 94.2 |
| UAE | 1995 | 7.8 | 5.6 | 1.4 | 3.4 | 2.3 | 99.2 |
| Average GCC | | 7.3 | 5.9 | 1.3 | 3.3 | 2.4 | 97.7 |
| **MDEs Machrek** | | | | | | | |
| Egypt | 2000 | 5.2 | 3.7 | 1.6 | 2.3 | 3.6 | 97.7 |
| Iraq | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Jordan | 1997 | 6.8 | 3.4 | 0.9 | 3.2 | 3.0 | 98.9 |
| Lebanon | 1996 | 4.9 | 3.8 | 1.5 | 1.9 | 2.9 | 98.1 |
| Palestine | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Syria Arab Republic | 1993 | 6.1 | 3.2 | 1.9 | 1.8 | 3.9 | 98.2 |
| Average Mashreq MDEs | | 5.8 | 3.5 | 1.5 | 2.3 | 3.4 | 98.2 |
| **MDEs Maghreb** | | | | | | | |
| Algeria | 1992 | 7.0 | 2.9 | 2.7 | 2.3 | 3.2 | 91.3 |
| Libya Arab Jamahirya | 1995 | 7.8 | 3.8 | 1.9 | 2.4 | 3.2 | 99.5 |
| Morocco | 97–96 | 5.6 | 3.3 | 2.2 | 2.3 | 3.0 | 54.6 |
| Tunisia | 95–94 | 5.4 | 2.8 | 2.1 | 1.9 | 2.9 | 86.3 |
| **Average Maghreb MDEs** | | 6.5 | 3.2 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 3.1 | 82.9 |
| LDCs | | | | | | | |
| Comores | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Djibouti | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Mauritania | 1990 | 5.2 | 1.8 | 3.6 | 1.1 | 5.1 | 8.0 |
| Somalia | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Sudan | 93–92 | 6.6 | 2.4 | 3.4 | 2.0 | 3.8 | 30.9 |
| Yemen | 1997 | 7.0 | 2.8 | 3.1 | 2.2 | 4.0 | 42.5 |
| Average LDCs | | 6.3 | 2.3 | 3.4 | 1.8 | 4.3 | 27.1 |

**Source :** Mother and Child Health Database: Population studies unit, League of Arab States