



**musawah**

For Equality in the Muslim Family

## **Musawah Global Life Stories Project**

# **DOCUMENTING WOMEN'S LIFE STORIES IN DEALING WITH PRACTICES OF *QIWAMAH* AND *WILAYAH* IN THE MUSLIM FAMILY**

## **Egypt Country Report**



**2016**

This report, which was submitted to the Musawah Secretariat by the country team,  
has been lightly edited by the Secretariat for format and style.

## Table of Contents

<b>SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF WOMEN IN EGYPT</b> .....	1
Household composition.....	1
Education of the household population .....	2
Gender Inequality Index (GII).....	3
Female circumcision .....	4
Prevalence of female circumcision among women age 15–49 .....	4
<b>LIFE STORY: AMINA</b> .....	7
Biographical information.....	7
Upbringing and youth.....	7
Education .....	7
Going to university .....	8
First marriage and life in France.....	8
Activism in Egypt .....	9
Moving to the USA.....	9
United Nations Committee of the International Psycho-Analytic Association .....	9
Non-Governmental organizations in consultative relationship with the UN.....	10
International activism .....	10
Amina’s story analysis .....	10
Education .....	10
Husband as protector .....	10
<b>LIFE STORY: NADIA</b> .....	12
Biographical information.....	12
Introduction .....	12
Upbringing and youth.....	12
First marriage.....	12
Second marriage .....	13
Business in Cairo .....	14
Present time in Cairo .....	14
Reflections .....	14
Nadia’s story analysis .....	15
<b>LIFE STORY: SARA</b> .....	16
Biographical information.....	16
Introduction .....	16
Upbringing and youth.....	16

<b>The turning point in power dynamics</b> .....	17
<b>Leading an independent life</b> .....	17
<b>Present time</b> .....	18



## SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF WOMEN IN EGYPT

### Household composition

Table 2.3 presents the distribution of households in the 2008 EDHS sample by sex of the head of the household, and by the number of de jure household members. These characteristics are important because they are often associated with socio-economic differences between households. For example, female-headed households frequently are poorer than households headed by males. In addition, the size and composition of the household affects the allocation of financial, and other resources among household members, which in turn influences the overall well-being of these individuals. Household size is also associated with crowding in the dwelling, which can lead to unfavourable health conditions.

Characteristic	Urban	Rural	Urban Governorates	Lower Egypt		Upper Egypt		Frontier Governorates	Total		
				Total	Urban	Rural	Total			Urban	Rural
<b>Household headship</b>											
Male	84.9	88.0	84.0	87.4	85.7	88.2	86.9	85.5	87.7	93.0	86.6
Female	15.1	12.0	16.0	12.6	14.3	11.8	13.1	14.5	12.3	7.0	13.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Number of usual members</b>											
0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0
1	7.4	3.7	8.7	4.5	6.5	3.7	4.6	6.0	3.8	6.0	5.5
2	13.5	10.2	14.2	11.7	13.4	11.0	10.3	12.5	9.0	12.3	11.8
3	16.4	12.3	17.2	14.7	15.7	14.2	11.9	16.2	9.4	11.1	14.3
4	23.2	18.4	23.7	22.6	25.2	21.5	16.3	20.6	13.6	16.1	20.7
5	21.0	18.9	20.5	21.9	23.0	21.4	17.0	19.9	15.2	17.9	19.9
6	10.3	14.6	8.8	13.0	10.5	14.0	14.3	12.5	15.4	14.7	12.5
7	4.8	8.7	4.4	6.0	4.0	6.9	9.6	6.4	11.5	8.1	6.9
8	1.7	4.7	1.5	2.1	1.1	2.5	6.1	2.7	8.2	3.7	3.3
9+	1.5	8.5	1.0	3.5	0.5	4.8	9.9	3.2	13.9	10.0	5.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of households	9,159	9,809	4,182	8,348	2,466	5,881	6,204	2,338	3,865	235	18,968
Mean size	4.1	5.1	3.9	4.5	4.0	4.7	5.3	4.4	5.8	5.1	4.6

Note: Table is based on de jure members, i.e., usual residents.

(Source EDHS 2009)

Most EDHS households were headed by males; the head was female in only 13 percent of the households surveyed. There were differences in the proportions of households headed by females across residential categories. Sixteen percent of households in the Urban Governorates had a female head compared with 12 percent of the households in rural areas of Lower and Upper Egypt. The Frontier Governorates had the lowest proportion of female-headed households (7 percent).

The average EDHS household had 4.6 persons per household. Slightly less than one-third of the households (32 percent) had three or fewer members, while 15 percent of the households had seven or more members. In general, rural households were larger than urban households. For example, only 8 percent of urban households had seven or more members, compared with 22 percent of rural households. Household size varied from an average of 3.9 persons in the Urban Governorates to 5.8 persons in rural Upper Egypt.

## Education of the household population

The educational level of household members is among the most important characteristics of the household because it is associated with many phenomena including reproductive behaviour, use of contraception, and the health of children. Primary education in Egypt starts at age 6 and consists of six years of schooling. A further three-year period, known as the preparatory stage, is considered basic education and is compulsory. The secondary stage, which includes another three years of schooling, is not compulsory.

During the household interviews, questions were included on the highest level of schooling completed for all household members age six and older, and on recent school attendance for household members age 6-24 years. The information collected on the educational attainment of all household members is presented in Tables 2.4.1 and 2.4.2.

A comparison of Tables 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 highlights the gap in educational attainment between males and females. Overall, 85 percent of males in the 2008 EDHS households had ever attended school, compared with 72 percent of females. The median number of years of schooling for men was 6.7, which is almost 2 years higher than the median for women (4.9 years).

Background characteristic	No education	Some primary	Completed primary	Some secondary	Completed secondary	More than secondary	Don't know/missing	Total	Number	Median number of years
<b>Age</b>										
6-9	12.2	87.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	100.0	4,057	0.4
10-14	2.4	56.0	1.1	40.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	4,684	4.6
15-19	3.9	5.1	3.9	59.1	15.7	12.3	0.0	100.0	4,587	8.7
20-24	6.5	5.5	3.7	12.6	41.8	29.7	0.1	100.0	4,256	10.6
25-29	8.0	7.5	6.6	11.4	42.9	23.5	0.2	100.0	3,411	10.4
30-34	8.9	8.5	5.2	15.3	41.5	20.5	0.0	100.0	2,617	11.1
35-39	13.8	11.4	3.6	12.9	41.5	16.7	0.0	100.0	2,351	11.2
40-44	20.2	12.5	5.6	10.1	33.9	17.7	0.0	100.0	2,309	11.1
45-49	23.4	13.8	6.4	9.7	26.7	20.0	0.0	100.0	2,154	8.5
50-54	30.0	14.5	7.6	7.1	23.2	17.6	0.0	100.0	1,781	5.7
55-59	37.2	11.3	7.8	7.6	19.5	16.5	0.0	100.0	1,504	5.2
60-64	39.8	11.1	9.1	5.7	17.6	16.7	0.0	100.0	1,046	4.8
65+	59.7	11.1	6.3	4.4	9.0	9.3	0.3	100.0	1,798	0.0
<b>Residence</b>										
Urban	9.6	21.2	4.2	18.4	24.5	22.0	0.0	100.0	16,290	8.9
Rural	19.1	25.9	4.3	20.1	21.9	8.5	0.2	100.0	20,267	5.4
<b>Place of residence</b>										
Urban Governorates	9.2	21.1	5.1	19.5	23.4	21.7	0.0	100.0	7,241	8.6
Lower Egypt	14.9	23.9	4.6	19.3	23.8	13.4	0.1	100.0	15,814	6.6
Urban	8.9	21.7	3.9	18.1	25.3	22.1	0.0	100.0	4,334	9.2
Rural	17.1	24.7	4.9	19.7	23.3	10.1	0.1	100.0	11,480	5.9
Upper Egypt	18.1	25.3	3.3	19.3	21.8	12.0	0.2	100.0	12,980	5.8
Urban	10.9	20.8	3.1	16.8	25.1	23.2	0.1	100.0	4,357	9.5
Rural	21.7	27.6	3.4	20.5	20.1	6.3	0.2	100.0	8,622	4.8
Frontier Governorates	14.4	21.8	5.2	18.7	29.2	10.5	0.2	100.0	521	7.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>36,556</b>	<b>6.7</b>

An examination of the education distributions for successive cohorts indicates that there have been changes over time in the educational attainment of both men and women. For example, the median number of years of schooling is 10.6 for males age 20-24 years, nearly double the median for males in the 50-54 age groups (5.7 years). The improvement in educational attainment has been even more striking for women; the median number of years of schooling is 10.5 for females age 20-24 years, around three times the median for females in the age group 40-44 (3.6 years).

As a result of the gains in female education, the gap in the educational attainment between males and females has almost disappeared among younger cohorts. For example, the differential in the median number of years of schooling is 0.1 years between men and women age 20-24. Urban residents were more likely to have attended school and to have remained in school for a longer period than rural residents. The results in Tables 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 also show that gender differences in educational attainment are less evident in urban than in rural areas. For example, the median number of years of schooling is 5.4 years among rural men, 2.5 years greater than the median among rural women (2.9 years). The difference is much smaller in urban areas, where the median number of years of schooling is 8.9 years for men, compared with 7.6 years for women.

By place of residence, gender differences in the likelihood of attending school are most evident in rural Upper Egypt, where 78 percent of men had ever attended school, compared with 57 percent of women. The gender gap is least apparent in urban Lower Egypt, where 85 percent of women had some education, compared with 91 percent of men.

**Table 2.4.2 Educational attainment of female household population by age and residence**  
Percent distribution of the de facto female household population age six and over by highest level of education attended or completed and median number of years of schooling, according to background characteristics, Egypt 2008

Background characteristic	No education	Some primary	Completed primary	Some secondary	Completed secondary	More than secondary	Don't know/missing	Total	Number	Median number of years
<b>Age</b>										
6-9	16.4	83.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	100.0	3,770	0.4
10-14	4.6	53.2	1.0	41.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	100.0	4,582	4.6
15-19	9.2	2.8	2.7	53.1	18.6	13.6	0.0	100.0	4,554	8.8
20-24	15.4	3.7	2.8	10.4	40.2	27.4	0.1	100.0	4,758	10.5
25-29	20.6	6.8	3.6	9.4	39.5	20.1	0.0	100.0	3,949	10.3
30-34	26.8	7.3	3.8	13.0	33.8	15.1	0.1	100.0	2,822	8.9
35-39	36.2	9.1	2.7	9.6	31.0	11.4	0.0	100.0	2,640	7.3
40-44	42.8	12.5	4.4	6.4	24.5	9.4	0.0	100.0	2,471	3.6
45-49	50.5	12.9	5.8	4.3	17.0	9.4	0.1	100.0	2,220	0.0
50-54	51.5	13.8	6.5	3.7	13.2	11.1	0.1	100.0	1,786	0.0
55-59	62.4	12.4	7.2	3.3	8.6	6.0	0.1	100.0	1,450	0.0
60-64	66.7	10.4	4.8	3.5	7.9	5.7	1.0	100.0	1,108	0.0
65+	80.3	7.6	3.2	1.1	3.6	2.6	1.6	100.0	1,781	0.0
<b>Residence</b>										
Urban	18.2	18.9	3.9	16.7	23.2	19.1	0.1	100.0	16,648	7.6
Rural	36.0	22.2	2.6	16.2	17.5	5.2	0.3	100.0	21,244	2.9
<b>Place of residence</b>										
Urban Governorates	18.5	19.0	4.4	16.8	21.8	19.5	0.1	100.0	7,443	7.3
Lower Egypt	26.5	20.7	2.9	16.2	23.1	10.5	0.1	100.0	16,268	5.3
Urban	15.3	18.7	3.5	16.1	26.5	19.8	0.2	100.0	4,415	8.7
Rural	30.6	21.4	2.6	16.2	21.9	7.1	0.1	100.0	11,853	4.3
Upper Egypt	35.4	21.8	2.7	16.4	15.4	7.8	0.3	100.0	13,690	3.2
Urban	20.0	18.9	3.3	17.1	22.5	18.2	0.1	100.0	4,462	7.2
Rural	42.9	23.3	2.4	16.1	12.0	2.8	0.5	100.0	9,228	1.0
Frontier Governorates	30.2	18.7	5.0	18.8	17.9	9.0	0.4	100.0	492	4.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>28.2</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>37,892</b>	<b>4.9</b>

(Source EDHS 2009)

### Gender Inequality Index (GII)

The Gender Inequality Index (GII) reflects gender-based inequalities in three dimensions – reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity. Reproductive health is measured by maternal mortality and adolescent fertility rates; empowerment is measured by the share of parliamentary seats held by each gender and attainment at secondary and higher education by each gender; and economic activity is measured by the labour market participation rate for each gender. The GII replaced the previous Gender-related Development Index and Gender Empowerment Index. The GII shows the loss in human development due to inequality between female and male achievements in the three GII dimensions. (For more details on GII please see Technical note 3 in the Statistics Annex).

Egypt has a GII value of 0.59, ranking it 126 out of 148 countries in the 2012 index. In Egypt, 2.2 percent of parliamentary seats are held by women, and 43.4 percent of adult women have reached a secondary or higher level of education compared to 59.3 percent of their male counterparts. For every 100,000 live births, 66 women die from pregnancy related causes; and the adolescent fertility rate is 40.6 births per 1000 live births. Female participation in the labour market is 23.7 percent compared to 74.3 for men.

In comparison, Morocco and Syrian Arab Republic are ranked at 84 and 118 respectively on this index.

**Table D: Egypt’s Gender Inequality Index for 2012 relative to selected countries and groups**

	GII value	GII Rank	Maternal mortality ratio	Adolescent fertility rate	Female seats in parliament (%)	Population with at least secondary education (%)		Labour force participation rate (%)	
						Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>Egypt</b>	0.59	126	66	40.6	2.2	43.4	59.3	23.7	74.3
<b>Morocco</b>	0.444	84	100	10.8	11	20.1	36.3	26.2	74.7
<b>Syrian Arab Republic</b>	0.551	118	70	36.5	12	27.4	38.2	13.1	71.6
<b>Arab States</b>	0.555	—	176	39.2	13	31.8	44.7	22.8	74.1
<b>Medium HDI</b>	0.457	—	121	44.7	18.2	42.1	58.8	50.5	79.9

(Source HDR 2013)

### Female circumcision

Although the government has banned the practice, female circumcision (also referred to as female genital cutting) has been a tradition in Egypt since the Pharaonic period, and adherence to the custom remains widespread. The 2008 EDHS obtained information from all survey respondents on their circumcision status. The survey also asked all ever-married women about the circumcision status of their daughters age 17 and younger. In the case of circumcised women and daughters, additional questions were included on the age at which the circumcision took place, and the person who performed the circumcision. The survey also investigated women’s and men’s attitudes toward the practice.

### Prevalence of female circumcision among women age 15–49

Table 15.1 confirms that the prevalence of female circumcision is widespread in Egypt; 91 percent of all women age 15–49 have been circumcised. However, the results also suggest that adherence to the practice may be declining in some population groups. For example, while exceeding 80 percent, female circumcision rates among women under age 25 are lower than rates in the 25–49 age groups, where 94-96 percent of women have been circumcised. The rate also is lower among never-married than ever-married women (81 percent and 95 percent, respectively). It is possible that some of the younger, never-married women will be circumcised before they marry. However, as seen below, few Egyptian women are circumcised after age 15.

Table 15.1 shows that urban women are less likely to be circumcised than rural women (85 percent and 96 percent, respectively). The practice is much less common in the Frontier Governorates (66 percent) than in other areas in Egypt. The likelihood that a woman is circumcised also declines with the woman’s education level, and is markedly lower among women in the highest wealth quintile than in other quintiles (78 percent versus 92 percent or higher).



**Table 15.1 Prevalence of female circumcision among all women 15-49 by background characteristics**

Percentage of all women 15-49 who have been circumcised according to selected background characteristics, Egypt 2008

Background characteristic	Percentage who have been circumcised	Number of women age 15-49
<b>Age</b>		
15-19	80.7	1,064
20-24	87.4	1,091
25-29	94.3	906
30-34	95.2	688
35-39	96.4	673
40-44	96.2	568
45-49	96.0	550
<b>Marital status</b>		
Ever-married	95.2	3,983
Never married	80.5	1,556
<b>Urban-rural residence</b>		
Urban	85.1	2,352
Rural	95.5	3,188
<b>Place of residence</b>		
Urban Governorates	85.9	1,073
Lower Egypt	92.9	2,415
Urban	84.1	603
Rural	95.8	1,812
Upper Egypt	92.6	1,970
Urban	86.2	623
Rural	95.6	1,347
Frontier Governorates	66.3	82
<b>Education</b>		
No education	97.6	1,461
Some primary	96.4	394
Primary complete/some secondary	88.8	1,248
Secondary complete/higher	87.4	2,436
<b>Work status</b>		
Working for cash	88.4	866
Not working for cash	91.5	4,674
<b>Wealth quintile</b>		
Lowest	95.4	1,001
Second	96.1	1,123
Middle	95.2	1,099
Fourth	91.8	1,105
Highest	78.3	1,212
Total	91.1	5,540

Regarding the person performing the circumcision, Table 15.3 shows that the majority of circumcised women (63 percent) report that *dayas* were responsible for the procedure. Trained medical personnel (primarily doctors) performed most of the remaining circumcisions (32 percent).

**Table 15.3 Person performing circumcisions among all women by residence**

Table 15.3 Person performing circumcisions among all women by residence											
Percent distribution of all women age 15-49 years who are circumcised by persons performing the circumcison, according to urban-rural residence and place of residence, Egypt 2008											
Person performing circumcison	Urban	Rural	Urban Governorates	Lower Egypt			Upper Egypt			Frontier Governorates	Total
				Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural		
Doctor	27.5	22.1	23.1	24.1	30.7	22.1	25.0	31.6	22.3	24.9	24.2
Nurse/other health worker	10.6	5.8	10.3	7.9	11.9	6.7	6.1	9.7	4.6	7.4	7.7
Daya	57.3	66.3	62.0	61.5	51.0	64.6	64.5	55.4	68.3	65.7	62.7
Barber	1.4	2.6	0.8	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.0	1.3	2.3	0.4	2.1
Ghagaria	1.1	1.8	1.4	2.4	1.4	2.6	0.6	0.1	0.8	0.8	1.5
Other	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Don't know	2.1	1.3	2.2	1.4	2.3	1.2	1.6	1.7	1.6	0.9	1.6
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	2,000	3,044	922	2,244	507	1,737	1,825	537	1,288	54	5,044

(Source EDHS 2009)

### Works Cited

- El-Zanaty, F. A. (2009, March). *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2008*. Retrieved from: [www.measuredhs.com/pubs/pdf/FR220/FR220.pdf](http://www.measuredhs.com/pubs/pdf/FR220/FR220.pdf)
- UNDP. (2013). Human Development Report. The Rise of the South; Human Development in a Diverse World. Retrieved from: <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/HDR/2013GlobalHDR/English/HDR2013%20Report%20English.pdf>

## LIFE STORY: AMINA

### Biographical information

- Name: Amina
- Born: 1938
- Profession: Psychoanalyst and Human Rights Activist
- City: NY, USA.

### Upbringing and youth

Amina tells us how she grew up in a wealthy well-known family in one of El Menia's villages. She starts talking about her grandmother and she describes her as an educated woman, though she never went to school. She paid money to her male siblings who went to school to teach her what they have been learning. Amina tells us how her grandmother influenced her. After the death of her grandfather, her grandmother moved to their house. Amina used to read different books to her and one of the topics was about the interpretation of dreams. Interestingly, Amina always relates this to how her interest in psycho-analysis started.

Amina's mother was her grandmother's only child and she wanted to protect her from the neighbour's landowners. At that time, it was very common that if the family rejected a marriage proposal, the rejected suitor's family would abduct the girl and force her to marry their son. That is why the grandmother decided to marry her daughter at a very young age, and married her to someone whose family was known for respecting women. Amina's mother married at the age of 14 or 15, and was 20 years younger than her father.

Unlike her grandmother, Amina's mother was not interested in an education. Yet she insisted that the girls of the family should receive a high-quality education. Amina tells us that her father was against the idea of sending the girls to school, because from his point of view, they would eventually end up as house wives, which was quite sufficient for girls. As the eldest daughter, Amina tells us that she faced many obstacles: "I was faced with rejection all the time, and I had to fight for everything to get what I wanted".

### Education

Amina tells us that her parents sent her to a French convent school. Amina's father thought that she would go to school and learn how to draw and to play the piano in order to be a good house wife. Amina's education was all in French and she tells us that her father was not pleased that she and her younger sister spoke Arabic with a French accent, so he got them a private tutor to teach them Arabic. At the same time, the ministry of education forced French schools to provide Arabic courses for Egyptian students. Amina excelled in these courses and memorized Al-Manfalouti's works and got several medallions in Arabic language competitions. Amina highlights here that this was the time when she became aware of the importance of mastering the Arabic language, and how a good knowledge of the language strengthened her sense of belonging to the country. She tells us that she started to read different magazines and to read more about British colonization in Egypt and about the Palestinian cause. She did not fully understand the whole picture, but she started to be more aware of such issues.

Amina talked about another obstacle she faced regarding her education. Her father promised her if she got good grades in school, she would be allowed to continue her education and go to university. He thought at the time that she was not going to pass her exams and that she will get low grades. To his surprise, she passed all her exams and demanded that he fulfills his promise. However, he refused to give her permission. Amina started what she describes as a hunger strike to protest against her father's decision. She locked herself in her room, cried, did not speak to any member of her family,

and refused to eat anything. In the night of the third day of her strike, her father woke her up and informed her that he will give her permission to go to university provided she agreed to some conditions: that that she would not get a job after graduation and that she would study law. Amina had wanted to study math not law. However, she agreed to study law but started negotiating the work restriction and convinced her father that she can start a career after she obtained her PhD. Her father approved.

### **Going to university**

Amina tells us that her father insisted that she would go to the University of Alexandria not the University of Cairo. Since living in the university hostel was not an option for her father, the whole family had to move from El-Minia to Alexandria. Amina's brother did not like the move and objected: why would the whole family move away from their home city where they were all well known for the sake of the girls' education? This matter was a cause of tension between Amina and her brother.

In 1953, Amina went to Alexandria University, Faculty of Law, a year after her sister joined the Faculty of Agriculture. About her sister's education Amina recalls: "everything was easier for her, she was a year and a half younger and my entrance to university was a gain for her too". Amina remembers how strict and conservative her father was. He believed that girls and boys should always be separated even within the family, and he used to pay her unexpected visits on campus to check on her. Nevertheless, Amina remarks that her father can still be considered as progressive considering his background, and due to the fact that he ultimately supported the education of his daughters.

Amina tells us that at the age of 16 or 17 she was approached by members of the Muslim Brotherhood who collected money for the families of Muslim Brotherhood detainees. After having a few discussions with them she ended up wearing the veil. Wearing the veil was not common in Egypt at the time and Amina was attacked by her colleagues in the student magazine, as she was the only girl in her faculty to wear a veil. Amina's parents were against that decision and they criticized repeatedly. Her relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood opened up a space for her to discuss politics and religion. Amina recognizes though that she was a bit of an extremist in her religious practice.

### **First marriage and life in France**

In her last year at university, the issue of marriage was brought up as a topic of discussion within the family. Amina wanted to pursue her Master's degree in France, and in order for her family to agree she had to be married and to travel with a husband. She was introduced to her first husband Ahmed El-Qusheiri who was also a graduate of the Law school and was pursuing his Ph.D. in France. In February 1958, they announced their engagement, and in April of the same year they got married. They spent a year together in Egypt before going to France. Amina recalls that year as very painful and tedious as she had to live with a difficult mother-in-law. Her mother-in-law constantly attacked and criticized her and she felt helpless because she was not able to go back to her parents' house. Life with her mother-in-law was unbearable, she said. However, the year passed and both, Amina and her husband, moved to France.

She arrived in France in February 1959 and her classes started in December of that year. Her memories of this period are happy and cheerful. She described it as a very educational and eye-opening period where she immersed herself in reading all kinds of books, specially the books that were banned in Egypt such as books by Emile Zola and Sartre. Having access to these books was like being given a prize. "There were numerous prohibitions in school, but now Amina you are in France, go to the libraries, go anywhere you wish", she said laughingly. When Amina was asked if she wore the veil in France, she said that it was more of a scarf than a veil. However, she had started to reconsider her decision and to reread books on religion from a different perspective, and she ended up discarding the veil. Regarding

her marriage, Amina recalls that her relationship with her husband was closer, that they shared good times, that they acted as friends.

At that time, Amina registered for a Diploma in General Law. She was not very enthusiastic about her subjects, except for the class in the History of Ideas. However, she started attending seminars by Lacan about psycho-analysis. She was also introduced to an Egyptian psycho-analyst who was living in France, and was encouraged to read and find out more about psycho-analysis.

By 1964, her father had passed away and her husband had finished his Ph.D. and it was time for her to go back to Egypt with her husband. Amina's mother wrote to her and told her: "you went to France to get the Ph.D. so do not come back before getting it". She stayed and lived alone in France for two years. When she returned to Cairo on a visit, she discovered that her marriage was in crisis. She was very disappointed with her relationship; her husband was a totally different character and had a very weak personality in his relationship with his mother. She much preferred the life she had with Ahmed El-Qusheiri when they were in France. Amina went back to France to finish her Ph.D. Meanwhile her mother became sick and died. Her family waited until after she defended her thesis before delivering the news of her mother's death. It was a very painful experience, as she was excited to meet her mother and show her the certificate with her Ph.D. degree. "All my academic achievements were accompanied by a family loss: my father died while I was studying for my Master's, then my mother died before I completed my Ph.D. It was a big shock!". After a while she could not continue living with her husband and they were divorced.

### **Activism in Egypt**

Amina became very active in civil society activism in Egypt. She worked with The Arab Lawyers Union and focused on human rights and women's rights generally, and the Personal Status Law specifically. She also worked with the novelist and longtime activist, Latifa Al-Zayaat, in the Committee for the Defense of National Culture against Normalization with Israel. Around 1979, the same group, Amina, Latifa Al-Zayaat, along with Nawal El-Sadaway, tried to establish a feminist non-profit organization. However, it did not work as the project faced many legal issues among other problems.

### **Moving to the USA**

Amina tells us that in 1985 she moved to USA with her second husband, and here she remarks that it was her first time to travel from Egypt with an identity other than Egyptian. It felt weird. Amina decided to study psycho-analysis, and at the same time she was the representative of The Arab Lawyers Union within the United Nations. This is how her affiliation with the United Nation started. The issues that Amina was involved in were in the field of development, particularly how to integrate a psycho-analytic discourse that tackles challenges facing developing countries. She tried to prove that psycho-analytic methods can be applied within the framework of political and economic analysis. She noticed that all the emphasis was on how to develop the community, and that there was no focus on the human being. "We never cared about the emotional and psychological aspect, and in order to overcome economic deterioration, we had to include the psychological and social development for each person".

### **United Nations Committee of the International Psycho-Analytic Association**

She chaired The United Nations Committee of the International Psycho-Analysis Association and was also a founding member for the committee. Amina told the story of a smear campaign she was subjected to in early 2002 by some members of The American Psycho-Analysis Association for not defending Israel during her participation in the Durban Conference, as well as for her personal political views about Israel. She was criticized and attacked and some members demanded her resignation from the Association. She was subjected to an "inquisition", to use her words, as the matter was to a vote. However, the majority of members voted in favour of Amina. Amina's standing as a prominent

psychoanalyst was recognized in 2012, as she was nominated by International Association of Applied Psycho analysis for her efforts and contributions in the development of the field of applied psycho-analysis especially regarding issues of women's and child's rights.

### **Non-Governmental organizations in consultative relationship with the UN**

Amina was also a former president of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations, and her work with them was a very enriching experience. It enabled her to meet people from around the world and to give her an insight into how organizations such as, Human Rights Watch <https://www.hrw.org/>, Amnesty <https://www.amnesty.org/en/>, and Women Health Coalition <https://iwhc.org/> deal with the different governments from the grassroots base also she learned about how they influence decision makers, how to approach friendly and non-friendly governments. Amina believes that the role of NGOs is of the utmost importance.

### **International activism**

Amina participated, and was a key contributor to several important international conferences that addressed women's issues. In 1994, she attended the International Conference on Population and Development that took place in Cairo, Egypt. A year after, 1995, she participated in the Fourth World Conference on Women that was held in Beijing. About her experience in Beijing she says: "it was a very beautiful venue for solidarity". She described her involvement in the conference as one of the most beautiful, inspiring experiences she ever had. She was inspired by the impressive women she met from Africa and Asia and from all over the world, but it was painful for her to see how cruel life can be for women, especially for poor women living in developing countries.

Amina is a quiet, very unassuming woman who has clarity of mind and direction. She does not put herself forward as a trail blazer, but for the generations of women who worked with her, she is a role model and a pioneer. Her story is important because as she quotes a French saying: "it's the little stories that make history".

### **Amina's story analysis**

**a) How do dominant (articulated in codified and non-codified law) interpretations of QIWI impact the choices women make in their public and private lives?**

#### **Education**

In Amina's story, *qiwamah* and *wilayah* were featured in parents – children relationship. At that time, women's role was restricted to the domestic and traditional roles, so the father was against the idea of sending his daughters to school. He had the sole authority to determine all decisions related to his daughters. For instance, he decides whether his daughters can or cannot attend school, when they get marry and to whom. Though Amina and her sister were able to receive primary and secondary education, it was a huge fight with their father to receive higher education and go to university. As a result of attending university, the whole family had to move to Alexandria. This issue affected adversely Amina's relationship with her brother, who had been against the idea of allowing his sisters to go to university.

#### **Husband as protector**

Amina's parents forced her to get married after graduation. The only way for her to travel and to pursue a Master's degree out of Egypt was to be married. For her parents, she needed a male figure as a companion to protect her throughout her journey. It was an arranged marriage, and she felt very unhappy in her marriage.

It is not clear whether the restrictions that Amina suffered from are the result of the direct interpretations of QIWI's texts, or a result of the conservative nature of the rural background her father comes from. Her family comes from an upper-middle class, yet they are greatly influenced by the cultural traditions of the place they arise from.

***b) How do such interpretations contribute in shaping women's sense of self and affect women's capacity to enjoy their human rights (civil and political; economic, social and cultural rights)?***

Amina was conscious that all the restrictions she suffered from were due to her gender. She was aware that she had to fight for her rights as she said, "I was faced with rejection all the time, and I had to fight for everything to get what I wanted". Amina's resistance to the dominating powers of her parents manifested in several incidents throughout the story. To illustrate, she started a hunger strike to continue her higher education, and to convince her father. Throughout her academic years, she studied hard and excelled in her studies in order to sustain her right in education. The obstacles that Amina encountered in her fights for education and in her arranged marriage helped her to develop a strong sense of self. It also shaped the person she is today. Amina is a pioneering human rights and women's rights' advocate. She dedicated her entire life to support women's cause and a key contributor to several important international conferences that addressed women's issues.

On the other hand, the mother had an important role in supporting Amina's fight in claiming her rights. Interestingly, she encouraged Amina not to go back to Egypt with her husband, and to stay in Paris until she completes her postgraduate studies.

## LIFE STORY: NADIA

### Biographical information

- Name: Nadia
- Age: late 40s (Did not want to tell me her real age)
- Profession: Taxi Driver
- City: Cairo, Egypt.

### Introduction

Nadia has three children; twins (boy and girl, age 17) from her first marriage, and a young girl (age 14) from a second marriage.

### Upbringing and youth

I grew up in a very modest family in Bab El-Sheeriya. I used to love school and I did excel in it, beside school I had also to help my mother in the housework. Being the eldest of my siblings, I became aware of the responsibility over my shoulders to support my parents in providing for the household and the big family. While still a student at university, I started working, mostly in the service and tourism industry. After graduating from the Faculty of Agriculture in Cairo University, I held a position of a research assistant in one of the prestigious state-owned research centers. My monthly salary for this job was 120 EGP (which is less than 20\$ in the present).

I had to make a decision whether to choose between social status as a young researcher with a dream of holding a Ph.D. and working as a university professor, or financial stability. In late 1980s, I used to make more than 1,500 EGP from my job in the service industry, owned a car and helped my parents in supporting my siblings. My decision was to quit the researcher job and focus on a more lucrative career.

At that time, I knew that social status will never compensate for the harsh economic situation of my family and me. My first love was a young sailor from a well-off family. Despite the love between us and the fact that we were officially engaged, his family forced him to break off the engagement as they thought that my family and I are not good enough.

All alone, I worked very hard and I became the main provider for my family, paying for the education and marriage of my younger brothers and sisters. After a few years working in Cairo, I received a job offer as an event (mostly weddings) organizer in Dubai, U.A.E. My first years in Dubai are the best days in my life, and I was happy. I had enough money to support myself and my family. I used to go out, buy so many gifts to my family in Cairo and save money.

### First marriage

After several years in Dubai, I met my first husband; a co-worker in the same hotel I worked for. He was a nice Egyptian young man, and we got married in Dubai. I did not seek my parent's approval, for me they had no opinion about it. I was the eldest, and my younger sisters were already getting married. My mother was happy that her eldest daughter is getting married and that I am happy in Dubai.

I paid for most of the marriage costs and for the new household's expenses. At that time, I knew that marriage is not about love, but rather about partnership. I was not happy with my husband because he was not a good partner. I started to notice how different we are. I was most annoyed by two things; not being ambitious and being thrifless, and most of our arguments about money ended up with him beating me. After getting pregnant, I had to quit my wedding organizer job because of its long hours. My new job was an administrative job in a governmental hospital, and the money was not as much as



the first job, which caused more fights with her husband. After giving birth to my twins; I tried to balance between work and my duties as a mother. I could not afford baby care and I did not have family or friends to help me with the twins. In addition, my relationship with my husband became hateful and violent that I started to worry about how it will affect my children. After a year of working two shifts; one at the hospital and another one at home as Nadia describes, I had to leave the twins with my mother in Cairo.

After getting a divorce, I managed to get my focus on my career again. I was motivated by the desire to maintain a decent standard of living for my children; especially that I was away from home. Being a divorced woman made me change some of my habits. As a divorced woman living alone in a foreign country, I had to be aware of how others perceive me. I used to spend most of my time between work and home. I did not go out with friends as I used to before getting married. At that time, I decided that I will never marry again until I met Ramy; who became my second husband.

## Second marriage

I remember my first impressions of Ramy as a well off charming handsome young man. Though I was not interested in re-marrying at that time, I fell in love with him. For my second marriage, my family insisted that a family member should meet Ramy before the wedding in Dubai. One of my brothers, who used to live in a nearby country in the Gulf, flew to Dubai to meet Ramy. My brother was impressed by Ramy and thought highly of him. My mother was happy and advised me to marry him, especially that he is young, never been married before and owned a small business in Dubai. My family thought that marrying Ramy is a golden opportunity considering my situation as a divorced woman with two children.

I could not have been happier during my first weeks with Ramy. I experienced happiness that I have never felt before in my first marriage. However, everything suddenly changed. Ramy started being aggressive to me and behaving violently. He started telling me about problems with his business and that he needed money to save his business. I gave him the money so we can be happy again.

After few months of behaving strangely, Ramy told me that he was married to another woman before we got married. Ramy told me that he has possessed extraordinary powers which made him charming. He has these powers because he was married to a *jinnia* and that he has started a family with her. Ramy told me that his marriage to the *jinnia* is the reason behind his strange behavior and violent acts, as the *jinnia* and her children are jealous of me and want me out of Ramy's life. Actually, I believed Ramy and decided to help him.

Despite my many attempts to help him, Ramy was still very violent to me. He was beating me, pulling my hair and punching me. After getting pregnant, Ramy became more aggressive blaming the *jinnia* and business problems for his violent behavior. For every few weeks; I would have a few days off until he starts acting violently again. I was on my own while giving birth to my youngest daughter as he did not go to the hospital and I had no friends to support me.

While my daughter is still a newborn, Ramy convinced me of helping him to obtain a loan from a bank in Dubai. I applied for the loan under my name, especially that the banks encouraged government employees to apply for loans. Our arguments about the loan increased in intensity; especially that Ramy did not pay the money to the bank regularly as it was required.

I started asking for divorce, but Ramy dismissed my request. After months, I succeeded at convincing him. When we went to the court to make our divorce official, I found out that Ramy has already bribed one of the employees in the court, so he would tell the judge that I've been seen with a strange man in his car, which is an indicator of my illicit behavior. While being shocked by the accusation, the judge

told me that there is a witness on the incident and he refuses to grant me divorce. Interestingly, a few months later I met that witness and he did not recognize me until I confronted him.

A few months later, Ramy left Dubai suddenly without telling me, leaving me alone with a new born child and a debt worth tens of thousands of Dirhams. I spent three years paying the loan back to the bank while providing for my baby in Dubai and my children and mother in Cairo. In some days, I did not have enough money to buy proper food for myself. After living in harsh conditions for these years, I decided to go back to Egypt. I did not want to be away from her children and family any more.

### **Business in Cairo**

When I went back to Cairo, I could not find a job where matching my experience. By coincidence, I started a small business of buying and selling used cars. My past marriages helped me survive in a male dominated market. I felt that no man can intimidate me anymore. I am used to be the only woman on most of the business meetings I attended, and that I managed to gain respect from all my business partners. Interestingly, this respect was not always easily obtained. Once, I had to hit a man in a business meeting after he said a sexually explicit remark about me. If I have not done so, my business would not have survived for another day.

After buying a taxi, a friend advised me to keep the taxi and to employ drivers. After being let down by drivers who were not committed enough, I decided to work on the taxi by myself, it started by coincidence. For several months, I did not tell my mother and siblings about my new job. While my mother did not mind my new job and encouraged me, my siblings were skeptic and sometimes shameful. My youngest sister complained that her mother in law is not happy about the new job. Although my sister is still not very happy about me being a taxi driver, yet family can't make me quit.

### **Present time in Cairo**

In the present, Nadia's taxi is popular, especially among local and international NGOs. Nadia travelled to most parts of Egypt while working with NGOs documenting the Egyptian Revolution. Nadia is regularly interviewed by local and international media. Nadia is a very ambitious woman. Nadia is now seeking to establish an academy for female drivers, where she can teach females how to drive and to prepare them for working in the field. Nadia also is aiming to integrate women's issues in the academy in order to develop a feminist consciousness for the ladies who are going to attend; so that they can deal with all kind of harassments that women in Egypt would face especially if they are female taxi drivers. As a single mother and the family breadwinner, Nadia is trying to support women with same situation by giving the priority for them in the academy. Moreover, Nadia aims that by the second batch of the academy she would push to have a syndicate for female drives to investigate and tackles their problems.

While her ex-husbands do not provide for the children, Nadia is currently providing for her three children who spend their time between Alexandria and Cairo. Nadia lives in Imbaba in an apartment that she bought during staying in Dubai.

### **Reflections**

A few years ago, a friend of mine told me about a story about a female taxi driver whom she has recently met. When I met her, I was impressed by her strong character and witty sense of humor. On my first trip in her taxi, I noticed that she always has a smile on her face. She smiled for other drivers saluting her as she is possibly the first taxi driver they have ever seen on the streets of Cairo. Strangely enough, she also smiles at angry individuals who never hesitate to show how annoyed they are that she is behind the wheel of a taxi. let alone the cigarette in her left hand popping out of the window.

## Nadia's story analysis

**a) How do dominant (articulated in codified and non-codified law) interpretations of QIWI impact the choices women make in her public and private lives?**

In Nadia's story, the concept of *qiwamah* and *wilayah* was introduced through parents- children relationship and husband- wife relationship. Nadia has been the main provider for her family since graduation that allowed her to have more autonomy on herself. It has been clear that Nadia tried to defy the concept of *wilayah* in her relationship with her parents. In her first marriage, Nadia did not seek the approval of her parents and she took the decision entirely by herself. However, after she had a failed marriage, her parents insisted to be involved in the process of her second marriage and to approve the suitor.

In Nadia's both marriages, she was the main provider. Unfortunately, both Nadia's husbands were very violent and brutal to her. Though she continued to contribute with great amount of money in the household's expenses, she remained to suffer severely.

**b) What kinds of divergences (e.g. from dominant interpretations of QIWI) exist on the ground? And how can we explain these divergences? For example, are they a product of active negotiations? And how so?**

The class issue plays an important role in Nadia's story. Nadia comes from lower class where it is highly affected by the cultural influences of *qiwamah* and *wilayah*. Achieving economic independence is not enough to overcome patriarchal authority. Nadia is the main provider in her family and in her marriages; however, this did not affect the power relationship between her parents and her husbands. The economic independence she had allowed her to exercise autonomy, but she could not escape male dominating authority. On the contrary, the economic independence that Nadia enjoyed threatened her husbands' masculinity. Her husbands resorted to violence to show more authority in the relationship.

On the other hand, Nadia's experiences empowered her to sustain her autonomy in her private business in Cairo.

## LIFE STORY: SARA

### Biographical information

- Name: Sara
- Age: 27 years old
- Profession: Researcher and Activist
- City: Cairo, Egypt

### Introduction

Sara is a feminist and political activist working with a leading women's NGO in Egypt. A graduate of the English department at Cairo University, she started working in the field of women's rights since she was a freshman in college. Initially she began as a volunteer, then later on as a professional upon graduation in 2009. She is the head of an NGO program supporting women's political participation.

### Upbringing and youth

I grew up in a house where my parents come from different intellectual backgrounds; my father is not that religious, he is more of a social conservative person. Like any regular Egyptian man, he is trying to take care of his daughters and to raise them up on general conservative values; it is worth noting that I'm the eldest daughter and I have two younger siblings, Monawho is 21, and Adam, my 9-year-old brother. He used to fast in Ramadan as a habit, but I never saw him praying. My mother is more religious than my father, she is a typical Egyptian religious woman in the sense of wearing veil, and praying the 5 prayers on time. She used to urge us to maintain our prayers all the time, and if we didn't she would reprimand us. So, there is a clear difference in my parents' backgrounds.

Throughout my years in school and university, taking decision in my personal life was never confined to me. Even though my father was trying to be more flexible and to allow some space to develop autonomy on my life, still I had to go back to my parents. In terms of relationships, my father did not mind that I would have a romantic relationship. Actually, since I was in school my father encouraged me to tell him if I had a boyfriend, and not to be secretive about it. My boyfriend used to pay me visits in my house; I cannot deny that I had some sort of freedom. Regarding my mother's view on this matter she was not pleased at all, but she dealt with him as my future partner and husband in order to accept it. When they allowed some extent of freedom, I used to think that I am more privileged than other girls of my age.

Another example that manifests differences between my father and my mother, was during my third year in university when I was offered a scholarship to the United States for a year. My mother opposed the idea for many reasons. For her, how come a young girl travels alone and stays abroad without a father, a brother, or a husband. As if I need a sponsor to be on my own. On the other hand, my father was on my side. For him, this was a good opportunity that should not be wasted. My boyfriend at that time did not support me and was against the idea, and my mother was on his side since he is the potential husband. In that matter, my father tried to reinforce my autonomy, and that I should not allow my partner to have that kind of authority in my life. I think that at this time when my feminist consciousness started to develop; I realized that I cannot tolerate that kind of authority over my life. I would accept that my parents might have the right to have some sort of control over my life, but not my partner.

This was my first relation and it was a long term one, it started in secondary school and I ended it in fourth year of university. It was a very traditional relationship, and my partner used to criticize my look and how I get dressed all the time. Back in my days in university I did not care to do my hair and wear

makeup. He used to tell me that I should exert more effort to look more feminine, and to take more care of how I look. Not only he did not like my style, but he also had comments on my friends and whom I should be friends with and whom I should not on, both genders. All my decisions should be monitored by him, until he made me choose either between him or traveling abroad for the scholarship, and this is the only way for our relationship to continue.

I did not yield to his threats, and I made it clear for him if that was the cost, then I am willing to pay. In order for him to accept my decision, he said that this trip is an exception and that he won't allow this to happen again. Besides, that I should acquiesce to all his decisions such as wearing the veil so that he would be able to present me to his family, also that I won't work in a job that requires traveling. I was very conscious when I decided to terminate this relationship. Afterwards it was very clear to me that being in a relationship with someone who is having control over my decisions is not acceptable anymore. I need to be autonomous in my life and being in a relationship should not contradict with that.

### **The turning point in power dynamics**

When I started to work and to be financially independent, I felt a change in the power dynamics with my parents especially when I started to contribute in the household expenses. Though it was not substantial contributions, yet it gave me more power and freedom in terms of mobility. Throughout university and after, I was never allowed to stay out late, I had to be home by 10 at the latest. To be honest, I had a problem with my father regarding curfews, and it simply shows duplicity. How come he let me travel and live all alone for a year, and when I am at home it's not acceptable to come back home after 10:00. During my work as English instructor in a private centre, I had to stay out late till 12:00 am, and sometimes till 1:00 a.m. My parents were not very pleased, yet they accepted as it is part of the job. So, I used to take advantage of that and whenever I wanted to stay out late with friends, I use this argument that I stay out late for work, then why not for social activities?!

Unexpectedly, my father's reaction towards my long stay out was much harsher and aggressive than my mother. In my opinion, it has to do with the fact that I made a contribution in the household, which according to his value system should not happen; he felt a bit more impotent particularly financially after his retirement. Another point my father kept criticizing is how I spend my time, and he was upset that I invest my time on social activities instead of investing it on Master's degrees. Actually, I used to make excuses for him that as a parent he has the right to exercise authority over me.

### **Leading an independent life**

The 25<sup>th</sup> of January revolution and the little fights to join Tahrir sit-in and protests are another important shift in my life. At this point, the boundaries were different and the conflict was not over my mobility as much as on my safety. They were really worried about my life; they did not care if I came back home at 4:00 as long as I came home safe. My father came to the understanding that this is a very substantial moment that requires a very substantial participation from my side. I tried to use this for the favour of my participation in the political scene. On the other hand, I never faced obstacles with my parents regarding my involvement in politics, and working in human rights field. Sometimes my mother questions the nature of my job in a very sarcastic way. In other times, they would try to put down from my spirit, and that what I do won't change the society.

Lately, I decided to move out of the house and live on my own, a decision that was not easily received by my parents, specifically my father who was furious and very aggressive to me. Interestingly enough, my father's desire to control my mobility all the time was never associated with being more conservative towards the idea of having a boyfriend and spending time with him in our house (probably because it made my relationship under my parents' supervision). This was very contradicting and confusing for me, how he presents himself as a progressive person when it is only limited to one aspect.

Though I have a total independent life, still my parents try to interfere crudely in my life. I try to make it clear for them through my actions that I am leading an independent life. My mother is still trying to accept the new situation, though every now and then she shows her reproach. I understand that it is not easy for her and according to her background, I am supposed to be married now at least. However, it is my father that still cannot bear the idea of moving out of his place. Yet moving out of house did not stop him from interfering in my life. He always has this big question mark on how I spend my time. This has been very irritating for me; because how I spend my time is a private thing of no one's business. I am very satisfied regarding how far I made in my career. I might have been able to achieve more on the academic level, but I do not think I would have done more given the surrounding circumstances.

## Present time

My relationship with my father is full of ups and downs, and the more spaces I gain in terms of my independence, the more he becomes violent. It never develops to physical violence, he is being aggressive and violent verbally. The main idea he wants to demonstrate is rejection, and that I won't be accepted within the family with the lifestyle I am adopting. He really cares about his social image and my behaviour defies that image. To my surprise, I've always expected this kind of reaction from my mother who always tried to control my life in that way rather than my father. In fact, my relationship with my mother developed into a friendship by the time, it is not parenting anymore. I came into conclusion that our fathers are conservatives and patriarchal no matter how progressive they pretend to be.

## Reflections

### Sara's story analysis

**b) How do dominant (articulated in codified and non-codified law) interpretations of QIWI impact the choices women make in her public and private lives?**

In Sara's story, concepts of *qiwamah* and *wilayah* were introduced through parents- children relationship. Sara's life has not been directly affected by codified legal interpretations of QIWI. However, non-codified interpretations of QIWI might have provided the cultural justifications for Sara's parents' actions.

**C) What kinds of divergences (e.g. from dominant interpretations of QIWI) exist on the ground? And how can we explain these divergences? For example, are they a product of active negotiations? And how so?**

While her rising income generating abilities allowed her to negotiate her position in her family's household. However, the father, supported by patriarchal cultural views, did not stop his attempts to influence Sara's decisions. Sara's story is an interesting example of how young women utilize financial independence and career success in negotiating their parents' authority.