

# **Gender Politics in Transition: Women's Political Rights after the January 25 Revolution**

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*Gender Politics in Transition:  
Women's Political Rights after the January 25 Revolution*

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*To my family and  
to all women of the Arab revolutions*



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## ABBREVIATIONS

AAW	Alliance for Arab Women
ACT	Appropriate Communication Techniques for Development
ADEW	The Association for Development and Enhancement of Women
ANC	African National Congress
AWSA	Arab Women Solidarity Association
BWA	Bureau of Women's Affairs
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEWLA	Center for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
ECWR	Egyptian Center for Women's Rights
EFU	Egyptian Feminist Union
FEDTRAW	Federation of Transvaal Women
FIS	Islamic Salvation Front
FLN	National Liberation Front
FMG	Female Genital Mutilation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRC	Al-Azhar Islamic Research Centre
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MP	Member of Parliament
MWS	Muslim Women Society
NCCM	National Council for Childhood and Motherhood
NCW	National Council for Women
NDP	National Democratic Party
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NOW	Natal Organization of Women
NWF	New Woman Foundation
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him
SCAF	Supreme Council of the Armed Forces
SERNAM	National Service for Women
SNM	National Secretariat for Women
UN	United Nations
UNFA	National Union of Algerian Women



UN Women	United Nations entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UWO	United Women's Organization in the Western Cape
VAW	Violence Against Women
WNC	Women's National Coalition
WTO	World Trade organization
WWCC	Wafdist Women's Central Committee

## GLOSSARY

**Abaya:** it is a robe-like dress usually black which covers the whole body except the face, feet, and hands. It is the typical dress of women in the Arabian Peninsula.

**Dawa:** preaching Islam and spreading the message of the *Qur'an* and the worship of God.

**Fatwa:** legal opinions related to the Islamic faith and Islamic law issued by the Mufti.

**Hadana:** the wife's right to remain in the conjugal home during the period of child custody.

**Hadith:** the record of Prophet Mohammed's sayings (PBUH) which all together constitute the *Sunnah. Hadiths* and the *Qur'an* are considered the sources of the Islamic law, the *Shari'a*.

**Hanafi:** the largest of the four schools (*madhahib*) of religious jurisprudence in Sunni Islam. It is now predominant among Sunni Muslims in Egypt and Pakistan. Followed by 30 percent of Muslims worldwide, it is considered to be the most liberal.

**Haram:** something prohibited under the *Shari'a*. Its antonym is *halal* (permitted).

**Hijab:** is the common veil worn by Muslim women. It has different shapes and colors.

**Fitrah:** term developed by Sayyed Qutb to distinguish about women and men's roles. Because of their *fitrah*, women are more compatible with the role of caretaker.

**Ijtihad:** a personal effort, independent of any school of jurisprudence, to interpret Islamic law. By the end of the 10th century, theologians decided to close the doors of the *ijtihad* to solidify Islamic theology and free interpretation.

***Infitah***: introduced by Sadat it was a liberal policy which encouraged foreign investments in the country, privatization and the end of the state control over national companies.

***Jellabeya***: traditional Egyptian tunic mainly used by men.

***Jihad***: struggle in the name of God; holy war. There are different kinds of jihad: an internal struggle to maintain faith, the struggle to improve the Muslim society, or the struggle to defend Islam.

***Khalifa***: the head of state or the ruler of the Islamic *Ummah*. After the death of Prophet Mohammed, the community has been guided by four *Khalifa*.

***Khul' (no-fault divorce)***: The possibility for women to file for a no-fault divorce was introduced in January 2000 by a decree from President Hosni Mubarak. The law grants Egyptian women the right to ask for divorce without requiring them to provide evidence of harm or to find witnesses. However, women filing for *khul'* are required to forfeit their rights to alimony and their deferred dowry (*mu'akhar*) and to repay their advanced dowry (*muqaddam*).

***Majlis al-Shaab***: People's Assembly in Egypt, the lower house of the bicameral Parliament.

***Majlis al-Shura***: the Upper House of the Egyptian bicameral Parliament. The lower house is the People's Assembly.

***Maquis***: remote mountainous areas from which Algerian fighters launched the struggle for independence against the French in 1954.

***Moujahidats***: women heroines who participated in the fight for independence in Algeria.

***Niqab***: is a cloth for women that covers the face and let only the eyes visible.

***Shari'a***: Literally translated as the "right way or the path," it includes the body of laws based on the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. It regulates the public and other aspects of Muslims' private life. It covers many aspects of daily life, such as economics, business, politics, sexuality, criminal law, marriage laws, and of course, religious observances.

**Tafsir:** the science which aims to make clear the true meaning of the *Qur'an*, its injunctions, and the occasions of its revelation. The *tafsir* developed into a system of systematic exegesis of the *Qur'an*, and it has been employed by Islamic reformists in order to articulate a modern interpretation of the *Qur'anic* text.

**Tagammu':** leftist progressive unionist political party.

**Takhayyur:** in Islamic jurisprudence, it means choosing legal rules from a variety of sources.

**Thawra:** literally means "revolution" in Arabic.

**Ulema:** a scholar of Islamic law and religious leader.

**Ummah:** the Muslim community or people belonging to the religion of Islam all around the world.

**Wafd:** created in the 1920s, it is still a prominent nationalist and liberal party in Egypt.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This work is about the development of women's political roles and rights before and after the revolution of January 25. It will adopt Gramsci's hegemonic theory to identify the power game played between the Egyptian state and women's groups at the time of the three presidents and in the current post-Mubarak transitional period. It will investigate to what extent the state is willing to include women in national politics in its run toward democracy, and how secular women's groups (including NGOs)<sup>1</sup> will mobilize to counter-balance the hegemonic discourse and to succeed in improving women's political representation in the transitional government. Besides, this work, through an empirical study, will aim at underlying Egyptians' views on gender politics at large.

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<sup>1</sup> In Egypt a unified women or feminist movement has never existed. Differences have always persisted between secular and Islamist women, as well as women of different generations. Today the majority of the Egyptian feminists, pseudo-feminists, and activists are also members of civil-society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), making their activities mixed between a developmental approach based on social activism and a political orientation. For women activists I refer to Karam's definition of those "women that use a secular approach in articulating discourses on and of women, on a broad socio-political level" (Karam 1998, 4). Even though the term feminism has been often refused for its Western connotations and both cultural and political criticisms have been directed at it, feminist or pseudo-feminist groups in Egypt are still moved by "individual or collective awareness that women have been and continue to be oppressed in diverse ways and for diverse reasons, [attempting] towards liberation from this oppression involving a more equitable society with improved relations between women and men" (Ibid., 5). Those women that I interviewed for this work label themselves in different ways as belonging to the *al-haraka al-nissa'iyya* (the women's movement) and *al-haraka al-nassa'wiyya* (the feminist movement). Some women, even though they possess a feminist ideology, reject the term *al-haraka al-nassa'wiyya*, which seems to be discriminatory and related exclusively to women's problems. In this work I have specifically focused on secular-oriented activists who are those who advocate a separation between religion and politics, which does not necessarily denote anti-religious or anti-Islamic positions. Other forms of Arab feminism, namely Muslim and Islamic feminism, will not be considered in detail in this work. Moreover, this work does not want to generalize but also considering those groups and civil society organizations' activities related to women's political empowerment. Therefore, the work does not address issues related for example to female genital mutilation (FGM) or sexual harassment, a field to which, undoubtedly civil society organizations bring important support.

## **1.1 Research problem, objectives, and hypothesis**

The strong participation of women in the Egyptian revolution of January 25, which started to put an end to Mubarak's regime, offers a significant insight for studying the progression or decline of women's social and political rights in the current transition. Questions surrounding modern-day women's activism became especially interesting in light of the current political situation. It became increasingly difficult to ignore the role that women have played during the revolution and their apparent exclusion from any type of political consultations and reforms.

After having analyzed the roles that women have played in revolution struggles or independence movements in Algeria, Morocco, Iran, South Africa, and Chile, and the strategies adopted by women to be included politically in the transitional<sup>2</sup> and post-transitional periods, this work will consider in detail the case of Egypt and the relations between the state and women's groups in terms of the complex interplay of power and hegemony. Despite the active participation of women in the independence struggle of 1919, and the early efforts of feminist groups in Egypt between the '20s and the '40s, improvement of women's political and civil rights has been limited during the century. After the independence from British colonialism, women's support was no longer seen by male politicians as useful and women's rights were not included in the secular legislation and policies of the state (Badran 2009, 32; Mariscotti 2008, 38). Despite the different political orientations at the time of the three presidents, with the adoption of socialism first and liberalism then, women's political participation has always lagged behind the level of rights recognized in the Constitution and the laws regarding women. Furthermore, because of the power struggle played between the state and a resurgent conservative Islamism, social

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<sup>2</sup> A period of transition is the interval between one political system and another which usually results in the replacement of those currently in power. Transitions from authoritarian rule of the South American and Eastern European states are typical of all transitions.

relations in the family were left unaltered and women were left subordinated within the patriarchal structure of the family.<sup>3</sup> Women's rights have been exploited to counter-balance the commanding discourse of conservative Islam as a tool to reach the ends of the state in terms of consolidating its ideological hegemony (Karam 1998, 23). According to Gramsci's theory of hegemonic power<sup>4</sup>, the state struggled against women to both maintain and to gain political power and hegemony. Hence, for Egyptian women's groups, the issue has been that of counter-balancing gender subordination to the state's discourse and certain conservative Islamic groups while seeking alternative ways of social and political engagement (Karam 1998, 24). But without strategic alliances with influential political constituencies, women's groups' commitment to redefining gender roles remained marginal. Furthermore, because of the social belonging of these groups, it seemed to the Egyptian population that those who were calling for political rights were only secular women, not representatives of the majority of the female population. As Nawal El Sadawi said in this regard: "The women's movement kept away from an active involvement in the national and political life of the country, and limited its activities to charitable and social welfare work" (Baker 1998, 274). The Egyptian state has consequently promoted specific roles for women for pragmatic and ideological reasons upholding unequal gender relations by making authority out of political convenience. While the state did not independently give power to women, women failed to become strongly politically engaged.

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<sup>3</sup> Patriarchy is defined as a hierarchy of authority that is controlled and dominated by males in which women's roles are subordinate to the role of the father (Knauss 1987, xii).

<sup>4</sup> With the concept of hegemonic power, Gramsci describes the way in which relations of power work, both during ordinary times and during times of transition. With the idea of hegemony, Gramsci explores the interplay of coercion and consent which forms the dynamic of relations of power (Karam 1998, 24). Hegemony does not mean violence but it means ascendancy achieved through culture, institutions, and persuasion (Lorber 2010, 218). Gramsci explains that in order to fight this, there must be a politically strong struggle that involves a process of negotiation, concession, and underlying threat. This view of power is derived principally from the works of Antonio Gramsci and Michel Foucault. See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, and Michel Foucault *Power/Knowledge*.

Thus, this work, by taking the revolution as turning point and by analyzing current governmental policies toward women's political inclusion and social attitudes about women's rights, will try to identify the current relations of power between the state and women's groups. Various forms of women's political and civil activism will be studied by looking at the actions of old and new women's groups, how they have adjusted their demands, where they are heading, and which successes and/or problems they are currently facing.

The aim of this work is threefold. First, through a literature review and theoretical framework, I have set out to understand the development of the women's movement in Egypt in terms of its relations with state power and patriarchal discourse. This will be done by thinking back over the steps and the features of women's groups at the time of Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak. Secondly, the book will look at the participation of women in the revolution of January 25, post-regime state policies and women's groups adopted strategies to face the political challenges of the transition. Indeed, this study aims at taking a close look at the political participation of women, seen as a launching pad for reshaping and consolidating social equality in Egypt. Third, through an empirical study targeting Egyptian men and women, the book will provide data on themes related to gender politics and women's political rights in the country. Looking at the available literature, central questions are formulated as follows:

1. What is new in women's activism compared to the past in the way women's groups are struggling for political inclusion against male hegemonic power and social patriarchy?
2. To what extent is the Egyptian's transition including women in the political transformations after the January 25 revolution?
3. What experiences can be drawn from the other countries in order for women to succeed in their request of political representation?



#### 4. To what extent have Egyptians modified attitudes and social visions in relation to women's political rights and roles?

Through empirical and secondary literature research and by taking into consideration theories of power and an in-depth comparative analysis of the impact of previous transitional periods in Middle Eastern countries as well as the South African and Chilean experiences, and their post-politics, this work argues that for women's political rights to progress and for women to achieve a role in the transitional politics, women's groups and activists should engage politically in strong constituencies through visible presence in the streets, assimilating their requests to Egypt's democratic ones in order to express their demands in a manner of social justice. In order for women to be politically accepted, it will be fundamental, in this critical period, to equate women's requests to the broader cause of social justice and democratization to avoid labeling women's demands primarily as gender-driven. Egypt needs good women politicians who are not *porte-parole* of feminism but true leaders of everyone. As Badran has recently said, there is a need of a "new feminism embedded in revolution." This new feminism should announce itself from the core values of the revolution, maintaining its spirit while redefining its identity according to social demands of freedom, liberation, justice, dignity, democracy, and equality (Badran 2011). Only in doing so will women succeed in making sure that gender issues will actually be translated into positive gender outcomes in the post-transition period.

### **1.2 Academic and social relevance of the research**

The Arab revolutions and the current political transitions of the Middle East are new and absolute extraordinary phenomena and mark a turning point in the history of the world. As a political science researcher, I found it an unconditional duty to study and analyze the current political transformations

in Egypt, which, along those of Tunisia, have started the whole process.<sup>5</sup> The Egyptian revolution and the public participation of women in the protest movement is an important issue that should be investigated in order to understand what is really changing in the country, at the dawn of the process of democratization, in terms of gender politics and democratic rights.

The topic of representative democracy and women's political participation is indeed considered one of the most important political subjects that has increased in significance since the end of the last century and has attracted numerous researchers and politicians among those concerned with the matter of the political participation of women. However, there are still few academic discussions that deal with gender dynamics in transition to democracy and in consolidation of the new political institutions (Seidman 1999, 302). Today, any serious study or research pertaining to political transition and electoral legislations cannot fail to put forth this matter (Soufi 2009, 252). As Soufi also states, democratic systems cannot be implemented without solving the matter of the deficiency of female representation or its complete absence altogether in certain instances (Ibid, 253).

There exists a growing body of scholarly literature on the feminist movement in Egypt, mainly in terms of differences between its secular and Islamist wings (Ahmed 1992, Badran 1996, 2009; Baron 1994, 2005; Botman 1999; Karam 1998; Mariscotti 2008; Nelson 1996). Because of the novelty of the situation, this work seeks to contribute to the body of already existing research by examining the ongoing events, identifying the current path of relations between state and women, investigating the latest strategies

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<sup>5</sup> The discipline of international relations (IR) has been particularly reluctant to acknowledge feminist studies. However, as with other disciplines, feminists have been infiltrating and transforming the theory/practice of IR (Peterson 1998, 581). Feminist theories argue that international politics can be fully understood only by introducing gender study to the analysis of global politics; they describe women's invisibility and gender subordination in the theory and practice of IR. Feminist scholars like Peterson and Runyan advise on the importance of adopting gender lenses to investigate international politics (Dunne, Kurki and Smith 2007, 186).

of women groups, and looking at how women's issues are now included in the current political debate. In addition, this work will also examine the issue through an empirical study in order to combine literature review and field work observation, which, to my knowledge, very few have done before. In fact, except for a some research that, through interviews, has addressed members of the feminist movement, there has not yet been any serious scientific attempt made to analyze how ordinary Egyptians are experiencing not only the current events, but how they view women's involvement in political actions, the Personal Status Laws, the rise of Islamist groups, the feminist movement, and its effects upon public debate in the country.

Hence, by exploring the issue of women's participation in politics, it will be possible to evaluate the stage of political transformations toward which Egypt is progressing. It has been proved that development cannot be achieved without giving women rights and new instruments to empower themselves. Hence, it becomes necessary to focus particularly on improving women's political participation as a milestone on the way for Egypt to social and political modernization (Mustafa, Shukor and Rabi' 2005, 28). As Inglehart and Norris also argue in an interesting revision of Huntington's theory on the "Clash of Civilizations," gender equality is becoming the main indicator for judging the democratic status of a state (Rizzo, Abdel-Latif, Meyer 2007, 1152). Catherine Warricks also adds that gender issues have assumed a high relevance in the theory of political science. Gender is currently much more than a subcategory of politics, but it has a symbolic and functional significance across a wide variety of political issues (Warrick 2009, 179).

### **1.3 Methodology and structure of the field work analysis**

The bibliographic review of this work has been developed with consideration of diverse kinds of materials. During the days of the revolution and immediately after, I have looked at YouTube videos, articles, and Facebook groups in order to have a preliminary understanding of women's activism during the days of the revolt. In the time between February and August, I have been researching and collecting not merely books and journal articles but also conference proceedings, bloggers' posts and newspaper articles from the main Egyptian publications. This research has been considerably all-inclusive in order to propose an accurate chronologic representation of the events in question. Various press releases, petitions, and statements prepared by Egyptian women's groups and NGOs developed during and after the revolution have been also a source of analysis. Since my project aims to show the links between wider political culture and women's activism, I have also examined different academic as well as non-academic sources that deal with Egyptian politics. While newspaper articles, websites, etc., proved to be useful to observe and describe the current events, the book review mainly served as background study in order to propose a comparative analysis on the political involvement of women in worldwide revolutions and the social and political implications for women's rights following the end of these conflicts. Besides, the review has been useful to introduce the historical role of the Egyptian state and the changing policies under Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak and state's relations with women's groups. Among others, I looked to several scholars like Ahmed 1992, Badran 1996, 2009; Baron 1994, 2005; Botman 1999; Karam 1998; Mariscotti 2008; Nelson 1996; and Sullivan 1986 in order to compare and contrast the current implications with past history. Finally, a group of work that I am constantly referring to provides an analysis of the evolution of the legal system from the 1920s, when the first Personal Status Laws were codified, until the most

recent reforms. This group of texts investigates the status of women under the Islamic *Shari'a* and their rights in matters of divorce, marriage, custody, maintenance, testimony, and inheritance (Al Alami and Hinchcliffe 1996; Arabi 2001; Bernard-Maugiron 2010; Haddad, Yazbeck and Esposito 1998; Moussa 2006; Naveh 2001; Paonessa 2000; Zantout 2006).

The field work for this book was developed during the months of June and July, and it has followed a triangulated approach. In preparation to that, I conducted a daily analysis and scrutiny of printed and online media, and monitored Facebook. I developed my research through a multi-method research plan including qualitative (semi-structured interviews and focus groups) and quantitative (survey) analysis, and combined bibliographic and field research. In conducting focus group discussions, I have relied on a combination of personal observation and open-ended questions.

In this research, triangulation served to capture a more accurate, *holistic*, and contextual portrayal of the participants in the study. It also serves to validate the findings of the other methods used: “In this sense, triangulation may be used not only to examine the same phenomenon from multiple perspectives but also to enrich our understanding by allowing for new or deeper dimensions to emerge.” Besides, “the effectiveness of triangulation rests on the premise that the weaknesses in each single method will be compensated by the counter-balancing strengths of another” (Jick 1979, 603-604). Indeed, the use of a triangulated research strategy is not only aimed at confirming the validity of the research, but at deepening and widening the understanding of the political and social phenomenon being investigated. The mixing of methodologies, like the use of survey data with interviews, is the most profound form of triangulation (Olsen 2004, 1-3; Tellis, 1997).

The use of an empirical study also provided a complete exploration of the phenomenon in question, going beyond the experimental or quantitative research in order to give the researcher up completely to the real-life phenomenon (Tellis, 1997). Qualitative research allows for a more in-depth

description and explanation of the issue in its social context, represented through the voices of the actors involved. These findings cannot be stated as statistical evidence as they represent subjective perceptions that do not necessarily reflect the researcher's point of view (Duthie 2004, 3).

This work has mainly targeted two groups of interest. The first is composed by women activists, media experts, Muslim Brotherhood members, Islamic law experts, and academics, for a total of twenty-two people interviewed.<sup>6</sup> Different kinds of experts were included in this study in order to provide a good representation of the topics in question. These interviews, following the Leech categorization of "elite interviews" as respondents, can be categorized as experts about the topic at hand and can be treated as such (Leech 2002, 663). The scope of these semi-structured interviews has not been that of homogenizing the different kinds of respondents targeted, but of offering an in-depth account of those movements involved in the process. Interviews also had a more conversational quality than highly structured interviews, allowing for a deeper investigation of the reality being researched. Furthermore, in order to explore the feelings, ideas, and experiences of the average Egyptian, the field work relied on an empirical study of ordinary people composed of seventeen semi-structured interviews, three focus groups, one family focus group discussion, and one survey.

The field-work conducted among ordinary Egyptians has, however, only targeted literate people. Even though this work recognizes the anthropological and ethnographic studies conducted by Diane Singerman 1996 and Lila Abu-Lughod 2008 and their analysis of gender relations within scarcely educated and poor communities, this research, however, has adopted a conceptual research framework which would exclude illiterate people as target of analysis. Doing field-work with illiterate people would

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<sup>6</sup> The content of the interviews carried out with the experts have been presented in the third chapter and in some occasions also in the second chapter.

indeed require the application of certain anthropological approaches which go beyond the scope of this research.

The participants of the in-depth interviews were also mainly recruited using the snowball technique.<sup>7</sup> The first participants in the study shared with me the names of friends, relatives, neighbors, or colleagues that I might contact for further discussions. As for the in-depth interviews, the group consisted of eight men and nine women.<sup>8</sup> Most of the interviews lasted between twenty minutes to an hour and were held face-to-face in a café or at their homes. In only one case, interview was conducted by telephone. I really appreciated the Egyptian sense of collaboration and enthusiasm with this work. On several occasions, many Egyptians opened the doors of their homes, inviting me to speak about my research without fearing the interference of a foreign student in their private lives. It has been a combination of humanity and hospitality. Being a foreigner made possible for me to interview people from different social classes and level of education because I stood outside the Egyptian social hierarchy and political affiliations. All interviews and focus group discussions were recorded and transcribed immediately after.<sup>9</sup> For recording information, I also used a field diary to collect records about observations and analytical notes. Most of the interviews were conducted in Arabic with the assistance of a mother-tongue researcher who helped me on some occasions, working as an Arabic interpreter. In other circumstances, I managed to do interviews even in French and Italian. The translations of interviews and texts that appear in the work are mine. Some researchers helped me with the translation/transcription of Arabic interview types. In writing up the quotations, I have kept the written text as close to the original as possible.

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<sup>7</sup> Using this research technique, the first respondents on the basis of suggestions helped me to identify other people who might qualify for inclusion in the research.

<sup>8</sup> Table 1 gives an overview of the interviewed and their social attributes.

<sup>9</sup> This kind of research has been time-consuming. Qualitative information is sometimes difficult to be analyzed as it requires a long time to transcribe interviews.

**Table n.1 Interview participants**

<i>Resp. No</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Job</i>
1	Fares	28	Degree in Commerce-CU	M	Counter clerk
2	Adam	57	Degree in Literature	M	Director of TV educational program
3	Mervat	32	Degree in Psychiatry - ASU	F	Psychiatrist
4	Doria	30	Degree in Medicine-ASU	F	General Doctor
5	Amir	21	Student of Physical Therapy-CU	M	No
6	Fareeda A.	21	Degree in Foreign Languages- ASU	F	Freelance interpreter
7	Mariam	20	Student of Tourism- CU	F	No
8	Salma	57	Degree in Literature-CU	F	Writer and teacher
9	Farah	32	Student of Law-ASU	F	Lecturer
10	Mohmena	44	Degree In Literature-CU	F	School director
11	Ahmed A.	20	Degree in Commerce-CU	M	Oracle developer
12	Monir	26	Degree in Electronic Engineering-CU	M	Computer engineer
13	Marien	40s		F	French teacher
14	Zaneti	35	High school diploma	M	Taxi driver
15	Zen	39	Degree of Arts-CU	M	Theater director
16	Reem	41	Degree in Translation-AZU	F	Teacher
17	Ahmed B.	30	Degree in Journalism-AZU	M	Teacher

\*CU: Cairo University

ASU: Ain Shams University

AZU: Azhar University

AUC: American University in Cairo

HU: Helwan University

\*No stands for those that are still enrolled in a university programme while unemployed for those that have graduated.

In addition, three focus groups were held in order to explore in detail some of the issues elaborated upon individually during the interviews.<sup>10</sup> The first group discussion consisted of five persons and was held in my home (Table 2). The second one consisted of six participants and was held at the Cairo Opera House café' (Table 3). The third focus group consisted of four

<sup>10</sup> Focus group topics are presented in the appendix n. 6.



persons and again was held in my home (Table 4). These three focus groups lasted about an hour and half. The family discussion, which happened during a Thursday night family gathering, lasted around forty minutes. All participants to these focus groups were contacted using the snowball sampling technique, and they varied in age between twenty and sixty years old. All the findings show similar conclusions, and thus they have been analyzed in a combined manner. A study with this population of participants enabled me to draw conclusions on the common perceptions of women's political involvement in the revolution, women's rights and gender roles, *Shari'a* law, patterns of equality in family laws, and common perceptions of women's participation in the public sphere and in positions of leadership. Similar perceptions have been also tested through an online questionnaire.

**Table n.2 Respondents Focus Group 1**

<i>Resp. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Job</i>
1	Mohammed A.	29	Degree in Law-CU	M	Lawyer
2	Mahmoud A.	30	Degree in Media Press-AZU	M	English teacher
3	Leila	31	Degree in Economics-ASU	F	Online Teacher and translator
4	Somaya	26	Degree in International relations- American University of Beirut	F	Works at NGO
5	Nuran	24	Student of Political Science-AUC	F	Government employee

**Table n.3 Respondents Focus Group 2**

<i>Resp. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Job</i>
1	Fareeda B.	20	Student at Alsun-ASU	F	No
2	Suzanne	20	Student at Alsun-ASU	F	No
3	Mohammed B.	24	Degree in Tourism and hospitality-HU	M	Tour guide
4	Samy	26	Degree in Commerce-CU	M	Unemployed
5	Sayyed	21	Degree in Arts-HU	M	Unemployed
6	Ahmed C.	19	Student of Arts-HU	M	No

**Table n.4 Respondents Focus Group 3**

<i>Resp. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Job</i>
1	Khaled	28	Degree in Law-CU	M	Lawyer