Addressing fertility concerns in Mashreq countries: An illustrative study of Egypt fertility plateau

presented to
Seminar on ”Fertility Trends and Prospects in the Arab Countries”

By

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With support from Iman Mostafa and Mohamed Salem
Contents:

I. Introduction
II. Fertility Trends and Population Policies in Mashreq countries.
III. Profile of Fertility in Egypt, Jordan and Syria.
IV. Egypt Plateau: In Depth Analysis.
V. Egypt Plateau: Policy Options.
I. Introducing Mashreq Countries

1- Countries Covered

Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria

Def: countries to the East of Egypt and North of the Arabian Peninsula. (ref.36)

Egypt occupies an ambiguous situation. Usually seen as part of neither Mashreq and Maghreb. When it is grouped, closer to Mashreq. (ref.36)

Kuwait is excluded: Another grouping: Mashreq, Maghreb, Gulf GCC, Arab Least developed (ref. 38)
2- Overall Comparison

TFR in Arab region (3)  
While declining remains higher
Than all other regional

Asia (2.4)
Latin America (2.3)
World Average (2.6)

Within Region: Gradient in Fert., Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>TFR</th>
<th>e_o</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maghreb</td>
<td>lowest (2.2)</td>
<td>second best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCC</td>
<td>second (2.7)</td>
<td>highest (69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashreq</td>
<td>Third (3)</td>
<td>third (66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least dev.</td>
<td>Highest (4.4)</td>
<td>least (55)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3- Situating Mashreq Countries: (Pop. Indicators)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Arab countries</th>
<th>Mashreq countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;5 million</td>
<td>Comoros Djibouti Mauritania Bahrain Qatar Kuwait Oman</td>
<td>Palestine(4), Lebanon(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15 million</td>
<td>Somalia Libya Tunisia UAE</td>
<td>Jordan (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-50 million</td>
<td>Yemen (26), Saudi Arabia (29) Morocco (33), Algeria (37) Sudan (46)</td>
<td>Syria (21) Iraq (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+ million</td>
<td></td>
<td>Egypt(84)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## I. Introducing Mashreq

### 3- Situating Mashreq Countries: (HDI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Low Human Development</th>
<th>Medium Human Development</th>
<th>High Human Development</th>
<th>Very High Human Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arab countries</td>
<td>Sudan, Djibouti, Comoros, Mauritania, Yemen</td>
<td>Morocco, Algeria</td>
<td>Tunisia, Libya, Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Bahrain, Qatar, UAE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashreq countries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Jordan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3- Situating Mashreq Countries: (Economic Indicators)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arab countries</th>
<th>Mashreq countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low income</td>
<td>Comoros Mauritania</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower middle income</td>
<td>Djibouti Sudan Yemen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Egypt Iraq Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper middle income</td>
<td>Algeria Libya Tunisia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Jordan Lebanon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High income</td>
<td>Bahrain Kuwait Oman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qatar Saudi Arabia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UAE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 3- Situating Mashreq Countries: (TFR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TFR</th>
<th>Arab countries (source)</th>
<th>Mashreq countries (source)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5+</td>
<td>Sudan (HHS 2010)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yemen (FHS2003)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saudi Arabia (FHS1996)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-</td>
<td>Djibouti (FHS2002)</td>
<td>Iraq (MICS 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UAE (FHS1995)</td>
<td>Palestine (FHS 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kuwait (FHS1996)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-</td>
<td>Bahrain (FHS1995)</td>
<td>Egypt (DHS2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Syria (FHS 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jordan (PFHS 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-</td>
<td>Tunisia (FHS 2001)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Algeria (FHS2002)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morocco (PFHS 2003-4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lebanon (FHS 2004)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: This table is based on the most recent surveys and the time reference is for different years (refer to appendix table (a2)). The Gulf countries are for single years in the mid nineties and are very different from recent U.N. (2011) estimates as the surveys collected data from nationals only.
Among 4 groupings in Arab Region; Fertility. And Mortality. Third (before least advantageous) Excluding Egypt (very large pop.) and Lebanon (very low TFR) Mashreq countries cluster in middle position (size, HDI, economy, TFR)
II. Fertility and Pop. policies in Mashreq Countries

1. Fertility level: Three distinct groups
   - Lebanon (1.7)
   - Egypt (3), Jordan (3.8), Syria (3.5)
   - Iraq (4.5), Palestine (4.6)

2. Fertility Trends: Current plateau (different timing)
2. Population Policies

- High (Iraq, Palestine) and very low fertility (Lebanon)

  growth: Satisfactory
Policy in growth: maintain or no intervention
Fertility: satisfactory
Policy on fertility: no intervention
ICPP 94: Iraq did not participate
Palestine: no explicit policy, pronatalist in Palestine society
2. Population Policies

• Mid level fertility (Egypt, Jordan, Syria)
• Different commitments, timing

  Egypt: Explicit, strong, early
  Jordan: Explicit, strong, much late
  Syria: Gaining momentum, weak, recent
Details Population Policies

Egypt: Explicit Pop. Policies, Starting 1970’s, F.P.P. √

- 1985: NPC established
- 1986-2007: Three successive 5 years plans
  (TFR=2.1 by 2017)
Details Population Policies

Jordan: Explicit Pop. Policies (lower Fert.) Starting 1990’s, F.P.P. √

1993 Birth Spacing National Program
2002 Higher Pop. Council
Details Population Policies


- **1980’s**: Shift Towards. F. P. in PHC
- **2001**: Population Conf.
- **2003**: Syrian Agency for F.P. N.P. Com. (Weak)
III. Profile of Fertility in Egypt, Jordan, Syria

1. Similar levels + Plateau + Diff. Policies
   Egypt (3), Jordan (3.8), Syria (3.5)
   Very diff. sizes, diff. economic, medium HDI

2. Regional Variations:
   Egypt: Smaller range, gov. (2.6 - 4.2)
       All regions (2.6-3.0) except Rural Upper Region (3.6)
   Jordan: Smaller range at a higher level (3.6 - 4.5)
       Larger gov. (3.6-4)
   Syria: Wide range (2.08-6.8) three groups (2-3, 3-4, 4.7-6.8)
### 3. Proximate Determinants of Fertility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Egypt 2008</th>
<th>Jordan 2009</th>
<th>Syria 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TFR</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMFR</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$C_c$</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPR (modern)</td>
<td>60.3 % (57.6)</td>
<td>59% (42%)</td>
<td>53.9% (37.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Currently marries (&lt; 30)</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age at first marriage</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>25.3*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$C_m$</td>
<td>0.58**</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Singulate Age at marriage
** for year 2005
3. Different Proximate Determinants

- TFR in Egypt is shaped by CPR while marriage inhibiting role remains minor.
- Both Marriage and CPR are reinforcing each other in Jordan.
- TFR in Syria is shaped by marriage supported by CPR of Modern Methods 37.5%.
## 4. Fertility Desires and Their Satisfactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Egypt 2008</th>
<th>Jordan 2009</th>
<th>Syria 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desired number of Children</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted Births</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted Pregnancy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(among pregnant women at survey time)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discontinuation rate</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmet need</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Unhealthy features of the reproductive pattern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Egypt 2008</th>
<th>Jordan 2009</th>
<th>Syria 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Births of order 4 and more</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Births born within a birth interval &lt;24 months</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Births to mothers less than 20 or 40 years and more</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using contraception before having 1 child</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Desired number of Children

Desired Fertility in both Jordan and Syria much higher than Egypt and the reproductive pattern less healthier.

Also the unsatisfaction of desires for lower number of children is similarly much higher in Jordan and Syria.
IV- Egypt Fertility Plateau: Indepth Analysis *

Key Questions:

1- Potential contribution of meeting demands vis a vis lowering desires

2- Why desires have stagnated around 3?

3- Why desires are not lower than expected for females in urban areas and for females with favorable characteristics?
1- Potential contribution of meeting demands vis a vis lowering desires

TFR actual= 3.0
TFR excl. not wanted births= 2.69 (1)
TFR excl. not wanted births + later= 2.54
TFR excl births to women aged <20 or >40= 2.67 (2)
TFR (ensuring healthier reproductive patterns and meeting demands (1 + 2))= 2.40
TFR (excluding births of order 3&+ for women who desire 3&+)= 2.11
Unmet need= 9.2%,
Discontinuation rate= 25%(Side effects +health + failure)= (48%)
want to become pregnant (36%)
A remaining potential contribution of F. P. Program.
Comparing Potentials

- Different patterns: Rural Upper Egypt fertility is still declining while other urban and rural areas are showing fertility plateau.

Trends in the TFR for Different Regions
Comparing Potentials of F. P. Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural UPPER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of birth unwanted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No More</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No More +</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhealthy Pattern</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Short spacing Age &lt;20 &amp; 40 +</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmet Need to limit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>limit + space</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Need for Disaggregated Policy
High levels of missed potential practices in rural areas

- The qualitative research shows that services are inaccessible to some communities, especially those living in remote areas, and the shortage of female service providers hinders the utilization of FP services.
- There has been a sharp decrease in the percentage of women that have been exposed to any FP message, from 92% in 2005 to 64% in 2008.
- If unmet need for limiting was satisfied in Rural Lower Egypt and Rural Upper Egypt this will lead to increase in contraceptive use to 69% and 57.9%, respectively, in addition TFR will decline to 2.3 in both.
Desire = 3?

- One child unacceptable (loneliness, selfish, death).
- Three (ideal, the same as two).
- Three guarantees: two sex composition
  Death (Migration!)
  Siblings support
- Two supported only for Economic Affordability.
- Justification for 4 or more
  - Benefit of child labour
  - Sex balance (Particularly for boys)
## Youth values and demand

### Youth values (unmarried)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean desired</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural upper</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3- Why desires are higher than expected for females in urban areas and for females with favorable characteristics?

Desired number of children

Urban areas  2.8   No education  3.3   Working for cash   2.8

Rural Areas   3.0   Secondary +  2.7   Not working for cash  3.0
- Urban Anomalies

Definition of Urban

1- Towns (11%) <50,000 located within rural adm. Units (capitals of districts)

2- Small cities (48%) (50,000-1m.) regardless of other features

3- Capital/ large cities (41%)
## Towns more similar to rural areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Rural areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TFR</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmet need (%)</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean desired number of children</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age at marriage</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% E.M. women with no education</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Urban Anomalies (large within urban variation) higher index of deprivations (42%)

TFR in Greater Cairo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Slum area</th>
<th>Non-slum area</th>
<th>All urban Greater Cairo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TFR</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Female Characteristics

Successful Achievers of 2

- highly selective marriage > 30,
- no strong sex pref.,
- highly educated,
- (67.1% VS. 40.3%)
- high part. In labour market
- (47.8% VS. 24.6%)
- high socio economic
- 48.3% VS. 25.5%
- wife + husband desires
- (84.7% VS. 75.8%)
Women employment per se is not an influencing factor

- Women employment does not necessarily lead to lower desires/fertility.
- Low skill jobs are associated with higher fertility levels.
- Interestingly, women having jobs with low security are associated with higher risks of having 4 or more children.

Female characteristics:

Distribution of respondents by number of live birth and index of job quality
Policy Options

I) Addressing Plateau

1. Improving Performance of F. P. Services
   * RH Paradigm relevant statements √
   * action X
   - Success Criteria (TFR) X
   - Integration with MCH X
   - Gender X
   - Inter Sectoral X
   * Disaggregated policies X
   * Data / Evidence / Research X
   * Monitoring & Evaluation X
2- Women Empowerment & Gender Dynamics
   * Transformative changes
   * Ideational Changes

3- Socio-Economic Development
   Inequalities & Challenges
II) RISKS

1- Non integration of Pop. Dynamics in Dev. Policies
   - Diagnosis of Challenges & Priorities
   - Articulation of Vision / Policies
   - Clear Messages

2- Organizational / Structures Concern

3- Conservative & Uninformed Discourse on Gender, Fertility Policies, Backlash.
Endnote:

Based on Findings of an SRC project in partnership with UNFPA/ASRO, Egypt

“http://www.aucegypt.edu/research/src/Pages/PopConf_studies.aspx"
 References:


13-Massarweh, I. 2011. Fertility Plateau in Jordan . Paper was done under the project “Policies to address fertility plateau in Egypt, Jordan and Syria” coordinated by the Social Research Center (SRC) of the American University in Cairo (AUC) and supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Cairo Office.


26- Sayed, H. 2011. Egypt’s population policies and Organizational Framework. Paper was done under the project “Policies to address fertility plateau in Egypt, Jordan and Syria” coordinated by the Social Research Center (SRC) of the American University in Cairo (AUC) and supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Cairo Office.


30-Syrian Commission for Family Affairs. 2011. Demographic Transition Towards Demographic Balance in Syria. Paper was done under the project “Policies to address fertility plateau in Egypt, Jordan and Syria” coordinated by the Social Research Center (SRC) of the American University in Cairo (AUC) and supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Cairo Office.


