Egypt:
Time Use Surveys and Policy Case Study

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Identify and Prioritize

In 2006, in cooperation with Egypt’s Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), the Economic Research Forum (ERF) designed the Egypt - Labor Market Panel Survey - 2006 (ELMPS 2006). The first longitudinal survey was conducted in 1998. A second round was in 2006, followed by a third round in 2012. The 2006 round was the first to examine time use in its questionnaire.

These longitudinal studies are nationally representative and cover topics such as household assets and durable goods, education, employment, migration, women’s unpaid work, women’s status and fertility, household enterprises, remittances, and non-work related income. The survey’s panel design makes it possible to study various phenomena over time. For example, the questionnaire includes a large number of retrospective questions about the timing of major life events such as education, residential mobility, jobs, marriage, and fertility.

The Population Council wanted to create an evidence base for research that makes a difference in terms of policies and programs that target regional and gender-specific youth disparities and youth unemployment, while focusing on youth.1

So it identified a need and created the Survey of Young People in Egypt for 2009 (SYPE 2009). This survey collects data on five key life transitions of education, work, family formation, health, and civic and political participation. It follows and expands the scope of the earlier Adolescence and Social Change in Egypt (ASCE) survey, conducted by the Population Council in 1997. The Council designed the survey in cooperation with the National Center for Examinations and Educational Evaluation, which designed and pretested the aptitude tests included in the survey, along with CAPMAS, which handled sample design.2,3 The Council also managed the metadata production, while the Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC) assisted with data collection and processing.4

Collect and Analyze

In Egypt, time use data has been collected as part of some national surveys.


The 2006 Labor Market Panel Survey sample consists of three types of households: those visited in 1998, split households formed by or joined by an individual who was part of the 1998 data collection round, and a refresher sample of 2,500 households. According to Barsoum (2007), The ELMPS 2006 final sample consists of a total of

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1 Population Council n.d.
2 The Center aims to develop an educational evaluation system in Egypt by defining its philosophy, methodology, methods and tools used by specialists.
3 CAPMAS is the official statistical agency of Egypt that collects, processes, analyzes, and disseminates statistical data and conducts the census.
4 IDSC’s mission is to impartially support government decisions by offering advice on the best policy scenario mix and analytical research.
8,349 households distributed as follows: (1) 3,684 households from the original ELMS 1998 survey; (2) 2,167 new households that emerged from these households as a result of splits; and (3) a refresher sample of 2,498 households.5

Of the 23,997 individuals interviewed in 1998, the number of those still alive or in the country in 2006 was 22,987. Of those, 17,357 (75.5 percent) were successfully re-interviewed in 2006, forming a panel that can be used for longitudinal analysis. The 2006 sample contains an additional 19,743 new individuals. Of these, 2,663 individuals joined the original 1998 households, 4,880 joined the split households, and 12,200 were part of the refresher sample of households.

According to Barsoum (2007), interviewers asked children, ages 6–17, and all women, ages 18–64, questions about time use and domestic work. Data about time use was collected retrospectively through self-recall with the interviewer. The questions on domestic work are detailed and ask about time spent on various domestic chores during the past 7 days, but not on a daily basis: “Did you spend time cooking in the past seven days? How much time did you spend on it?”

For care activities, which are defined in the questionnaire as “caring for the sick or the elderly” and “taking care of children/ child care,” two types of questions are asked:6

- “Did you spend time caring for the sick or the elderly in the past seven days? (while not doing other chores) How much time did you spend on it?”
- Did you spend time taking care of children in the past seven days? (while not doing other chores) How much time did you spend on it?”
- “Did you spend time on childcare at the same time that you were doing other activities in the past seven days? How much time did you spend on it?”

Although the questionnaire does not refer to care activities undertaken by more than one member, the questions indicate that the care activities were collected as a) primary or first activity only, and b) as either a secondary activity, or a primary activity but with a secondary activity as well.

The time use questions covered the last seven days. Given that recalls over the past week are subject to higher margins of error, than, for example, recall of activities over the past 24 hours, this may have somewhat diminished the quality of the data.

The Economic Research Forum (ERF) is the primary investigator for the ELMPS 2006.7 The data collection was administered by the ERF in collaboration with the Egypt’s Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics.

**Survey of Young People in Egypt - 2009 (SYPE 2009)**
The SYPE sample is nationally representative, covering all governorates in Egypt.8 It is a stratified, multi-stage cluster sample. The primary sampling units (PSUs) come from the CAPMAS master sample, which is based on a 2006 census. The SYPE sample had 455 primary sampling units (PSUs), divided between urban and rural localities. The SYPE sample included 11,372 households corresponding to 20,200 male and female household members ages 10–29, according to Barsoum et al. (2010).9 However, not all of them were selected.

Based on the Kish grid technique used to eliminate sample bias, selection rules were adopted to randomly select from each household: one young person (either male or female) in the 10–14 age group, one female and one male young person, ages 15–21, and one female and one male young person, ages 22–29. A total of 16,061 young people were selected to be interviewed as part of this survey. Of this group, 15,029 young people were interviewed.

Data about time use was collected retrospectively through self-recall with the interviewer, referring to the previous week and to the previous day. Respondents were asked to report the hours and minutes they spent the previous day on 27 different activities, which can be grouped into eight activity categories: personal, school, domestic, market work, spare time, religious, voluntary, and commuting activities. However, the questionnaire does not specify if the activity is undertaken separately or simultaneously with other activities, and it does not refer to care activities undertaken by more than one person. Example questions are: “Were you involved in [ACTIVITY] during the last week?” “Were you involved in [ACTIVITY] yesterday?” “How many hours were you involved in [ACTIVITY] yesterday?” (ACTIVITY= sleeping, bathing, eating, household chores inside the house like clothes/dish washing, cleaning, cooking, mending...). The care activities are defined according to the questionnaire as “domestic duties: care of children, sick, or elderly”.10 These questions do not indicate that the care activities were collected as primary or secondary activities.

The SYPE 2009 was administered by the Population Council, the Information and Decision Support Center, the National

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5 Barsoum 2007
6 Economic Research Forum n.d.
7 Economic Research Forum 2016a
8 Economic Research Forum 2016c
9 Population Council 2010
10 Economic Research Forum n.d.
The survey was funded by the Canadian International Development Agency, the World Bank, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the Netherlands Embassy, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and the United Nations Children’s Fund.

**Egypt - Labor Market Panel Survey - 2012 (ELMPS 2012)**

The Egypt - Labor Market Panel Survey 2012 (ELMPS) in 2012 is the third round of a periodic longitudinal survey that tracks households and individuals interviewed in 2006, some of whom were also interviewed in 1998. The Economic Research Forum is the primary investigator of the ELMPS 2012. The data collection was administered by the ERF in collaboration with the CAPMAS.

According to Assaad and Krafft (2013), the final sample for the ELMPS 2012 was 12,060 households, corresponding to 49,186 individuals, and consisting of 6,752 households from the 2006 sample, 3,308 new households that emerged from these households as a result of splits, and a refresher sample of 2,000 households. Of the 37,140 individuals interviewed in the 2006 survey, 28,770 (77 percent) were successfully re-interviewed in 2012. These individuals, 13,218 of whom were also tracked in 1998, form a panel that can be used for longitudinal analysis. The 2012 sample also includes 20,416 new individuals.

The 2012 data collection process involved two phases: an enumeration phase undertaken in 2011, focused on locating households and individuals from the 2006 sample, and a fielding phase for the full 2012 survey from March 1, 2012 to June 10, 2012. As stated in the questionnaire, the time use data pertains to all individuals, ages 6–64. Data about time use was collected retrospectively through self-recall with the interviewer regarding his/her time allocation during the past seven days. Domestic activity data gleaned were not very detailed, as the questions grouped activities together:

- “Did you spend time cooking, washing dishes, doing laundry and ironing, cleaning your house in the past seven days? How much time did you spend on it?”
- “Did you spend time caring for children, the sick or the elderly at the same time that you were doing other activities in the past seven days? How much time did you spend on it?”

Here, care activities are defined as “caring for children, the sick or the elderly”. The questionnaire does not refer to care activities undertaken by more than one member of the household.

**Inform and Influence**

Researchers can gain access to this data by applying for access on the ERF data portal. This survey was used multiple times in academic research and policy briefs.

**Egypt - Labor Market Panel Survey - 2006 (ELMPS 2006)**

Hendy (2010) uses ELMPS 2006 data to analyze time use in invisible unpaid work within the household and among both males and females. She also studies the effect of marriage on women’s work habits and time allocation. She finds that marriage increases domestic labor for women, which in turn can explain the low labor force participation of married females in Egypt.

**Survey of Young People in Egypt - 2009 (SYPE 2009)**

Roushdy et al. (2011) provided a report about the SYPE 2009 data. Chapter 8 of the final report includes a descriptive analysis of how youth spend time, including some comparisons by gender and rural-urban residents. It explores how young people spend their time, whether between work or leisure, providing information about their societal roles, and attitudes.

As the report notes, the analysis of time use is a prominent tool for understanding gender-role differences. While time spent by youth in personal maintenance and school related activities does not vary much by gender or across other background characteristics, the researchers found that labor market activities and domestic chores do vary greatly by sex. Males tend to spend more time in paid and unpaid market work, while females spend more time on housework and care activities.

**Egypt - Labor Market Panel Survey - 2012 (ELMPS 2012)**

This survey was used many times in academic research and policy briefs. Hendy (2015) investigates the reasons behind the persistently low female labor force participation in Egypt over time and across the different economic sectors, using...
the Egypt Labor Market Panel Surveys (ELMPS 1998, 2006, 2012). She analyzes the determinants of Egyptian women’s participation in the labor markets. Among the factors studied, she uses female time allocation from ELMPS 2006 and 2012. She finds, as Table 1 shows, that women who were married once or still are tend to spend larger shares of their time on care activities than never-married women. Those married once or who are still married and employed spend more time on domestic chores and care activities than unemployed ever-married women.

### Policy

The 1994 Civil Status Law and the 1996 Child Law, amended in 2008, ensure that every Egyptian child grows up in a responsible family, protected from all kinds of violence, abuse, mistreatment, and exploitation. The law also protects children from all types of discrimination and guarantees equality among children in exercising all their rights.18

Meanwhile, through the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the government establishes several childcare projects and amenities for childcare.19 In 1959, the ministry developed the Alternative Family System to enroll children deprived of family care, especially those without family members, into families chosen according to certain conditions and criteria to ensure these children are cared for and safe.

The ministry also established the Child Project, which focuses on providing services and developing children’s programs in rural society by providing an appropriate environment for the care and development of preschool children and providing opportunities for their integrated development.

Furthermore, the Working Child Project works to foster and develop working children from the age of 6 to 15 years and aims to create the opportunity for the child to grow fully integrated in all physical, mental, and emotional aspects. It also provides a full meal weekly and raises awareness in the community about the negative effects of child labor. The project also attempts to compensate for missed schooling by helping the child integrate into society as a child and with literacy classes.

Additionally, children’s libraries all over the country target children between 6 and 15. They aim to care for children socially, culturally, and educationally during their free time.

Moreover, the government launched several Accommodation Institutions, which are homes for children deprived of family care because they are orphaned or their families disintegrated. These homes aim to provide social, educational, health, vocational, religious, and recreational care for these deprived children.

### National Care System and Policy Ecosystem

Key stakeholders in the National Care System include:

- The Ministry of Social Solidarity: social care programs and amenities for women, children, elderly and disabled
- The Ministry of Health and Population: institutions and care programs for the elderly and disabled
- Nongovernmental organizations collaborate with the Ministry of Social Solidarity to provide certain care programs.

The care policies in Egypt cited above were established before time use data was gathered. Therefore, the data

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<th>Not Employed</th>
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<td>Never Married</td>
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<tr>
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<td>13.1</td>
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<td>N (Observations)</td>
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<td>396</td>
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Table 1. Hours per week spent on housework and carework by females, ages 15-64 by marital status and employment status, 2006–2012.

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17 Hendy 2015
18 Arab Republic of Egypt 2008
19 Arab Republic of Egypt, Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs. n.d.
cannot be said to have had a direct policy impact. The absence of a link between the time use data and policies can be explained by the fact that the data was gathered without a specific policy objective in mind. In addition, there was no demand among primary governmental users for this data.

However, there is potential for the data to be used to influence policy directly or indirectly. For example, the Ministry of Social Solidarity, could use this data to update its national care system. Time use data may also influence policymakers indirectly by raising their awareness about the amount of time females spend on domestic work and care activities, which affects in turn their labor market activities.

This data on female invisible unpaid work complements the rich information and studies we have about women’s labor market activities. Studying these two together would enable us to better understand the market behavior of women, and thus design and implement the right policies to raise the persistently low female labor force participation rates in the MENA region.

Although house chores and care activities earn no money and are not counted in national accounts, these activities take up much time that could have been invested in the labor market. Therefore, policies that aim to facilitate the family and house life of females and reduce the gender-biased labor division within households are an investment in the country’s economy in general.

References


