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The Egyptians of Britain: a migrant community in transition

by

Ghada Karmi

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Ghada Karmi
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About the author

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The Egyptians of Britain: a migrant community in transition

Ghada Karmi

Introduction

There has been an active process of migration from and within the Arab world for more than a century. This has included rural-urban population movement, inter-Arab migration, and migration outside the Arab world. With the discovery of oil in the 1950s, there was an explosion of labour migration to the new Arab oil states from other parts of the Arab world. The creation of Israel in 1948 led to an exodus of Palestinians, many of whom went to work inside and outside the Middle East region. Labour migration from the countries of North Africa to France and, to a lesser extent, other European countries has been a longstanding phenomenon. More recently, political strife and military conflict, for example in Iraq, Sudan and Somalia, have led to an increase in migration to Europe and the West.

Arabs have migrated to Britain since the nineteenth century, the oldest established communities being the Yemenis in the North East and the Syrian merchants of Manchester. This migration flow has increased dramatically in the last two decades for political and economic reasons and as a result of regional wars and conflicts. By the end of the 1980s, various estimates put the total number of Arabs living in Britain at 250,000-500,000, although, as we shall see, the national census figures do not corroborate this estimate. In addition, many Arabs come to Britain temporarily as tourists or for a variety of professional and medical reasons. Approximately half of all resident Arabs live in London, but not all of them are established here. Among the most settled are the Egyptians, Yemenis, Moroccans and Palestinians.

The Arabs of Britain are an unusual migrant group who retain their primary focus on their countries of origin, regard their stay here as temporary, no matter how long they have actually lived in Britain, and relate almost exclusively to other Arabs. For this reason, they tend to stay aloof from any involvement with British public life or British institutions. In this sense, they make a distinct and

interesting contrast with other migrants - for example, those from the Indian subcontinent - who have made considerable inroads into British public life.

An examination of the earlier literature reveals a real paucity of published work on the Arabs of Britain. A general overview is provided by Madawi Al-Rasheed in an article which appeared in 1991.[1] In addition, there is a short study of Arab migration and communities in Britain published in 1992 by Camilla El-Solh,[2] and another smaller article by the same author published in 1993.[3] Most recently, Al-Rasheed has produced a research study of the Arab community derived from information collected in the 1991 British national census.[4] Otherwise, there are a few studies on specific Arab groups. These include Fred Halliday's *Arabs in Exile*, which deals with the Yemeni community[5] and Richard Lawless's book on the same community.[6] Both Al-Rasheed and El-Solh have also published articles on the Iraqis[7] and Somalis[8] respectively. Karmi carried out a study of the Moroccan community which included data on second-generation Moroccans.[9] Until the present survey, which will be described below, no study has ever been carried out on the Egyptian community in Britain, despite the fact that it constitutes the largest single Arab migrant group and also one of the most settled in Britain today.

The current study was undertaken partly in order to fill this gap in knowledge. But it was also designed to throw light on the dynamics of integration and sense of identity within an important Arab migrant community which could provide a point of comparison with the behaviour of other migrant and especially Muslim communities living in Britain today. As such, it draws up a social and demographic profile of the Egyptians living in Britain, investigates their reasons for settling there, their sense of identity and belonging, and familiarity and integration with British systems and society. It also probes their perceptions of racism, their aspirations for their children, and future plans for themselves.

The Arab community in Britain

The exact size of the Arab migrant community in Britain is a matter of some controversy. This is because official figures, as derived from the national census and other government sources, differ markedly from those provided by the communities themselves. Our formal sources for population size come first and foremost from the 1991 census. This included for the first time a question on ethnic origin, as well as the traditional question on country of birth. In theory, the combination of these two should provide the best possible estimate for the size of foreign groups in Britain. However, in the case of the Arabs, confusion and hence underestimates have arisen because of misallocation by respondents describing their ethnic origin on the census forms. For example, many Arabs categorise themselves in the "White" category on the census, and some Egyptians categorise

themselves as "Black" or "African". Al-Rasheed claims that out of 23,000 Egyptian-born people responding to the census, as many as 17,000 described themselves as "White."[10] In addition, there are those who are British-born Arabs or who are born elsewhere outside the Arab world and do not designate their ethnicity at all. Recently, a new Arab population made up of people from south-west Iran (Arabistan) and many of them married to Iraqis, has arrived in Britain. These do not categorise themselves as Arabs but as "Arabistanis".

When interpreting the following census results, therefore, it is important to bear these qualifications in mind. The 1991 census estimated that there was a total of 96,723 Arabs in Britain, of whom 89,380 live in England, 4,431 in Scotland and 2,608 in Wales. Just under half of Britain's Arabs live in London (Table 1).

Population figures for the place of residence of Arabs in London is available from statistics compiled by the London boroughs themselves. These reveal that the main areas of Arab residence in London are Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, but there are significant Arab communities in many other parts of London (Table 2).

Table 1: Total number of Arabs in Britain and in London

Britain		London	
Algerians	3,622	Algerians	1,635
Egyptians	22,582	Egyptians	10,043
Iraqis	14,979	Iraqis	7,867
Jordanians	2,477	Jordanians	893
Lebanese	8,755	Lebanese	6,314
Libyans	6,426	Libyans	1,559
Moroccans	8,864	Moroccans	5,917
Saudi Arabians	3,837	Saudi Arabians	1,987
Syrians	2,744	Syrians	1,443
Tunisians	2,371	Tunisians	1,347
Other Middle East	20,066	Other Middle East	6,145
Total	**96,723**	**Total**	**45,150**

Source: OPCS 1991 Census

Table 2: Place of residence of Arabs living in London

London Boroughs with more than 1,000 Arabs, in descending order of size

1. Westminster
2. Kensington and Chelsea
3. Ealing
4. Brent
5. Barnet
6. Hammersmith and Fulham
7. Haringey
8. Hounslow
9. Wandsworth
10. Camden
11. Lambeth
12. Hackney
13. Richmond-upon-Thames

Source: London Research Centre (derived from census)

The census figures contrast strikingly with community estimates, the most reliable of which are those provided by El-Solh in 1992, before the census figures became available. Pooling several estimates from the Labour Force Survey, the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce, and the number of Home Office permits issued to Arabs for work and asylum, she derived a figure of 250,000 Arabs. While this figure is well above that in the census, it is also somewhat below that given by the communities themselves. The Egyptians believe that they number 60,000 in London alone, the Iraqis 70,000, and both Moroccans and Somalis each give an estimate of over 15,000. She makes the point that communities often inflate their numbers in order, among other things, to gain advantage with the statutory authorities and that hence such self-estimates are unreliable. Nevertheless, it is true that the largest Arab groups in Britain are the Egyptian and Iraqi communities. While the census shows the number of the former to exceed the latter, this may not reflect the true situation. Many Iraqis came here over the last ten years for political reasons and it may be assumed that a considerable number were reluctant to fill in the census forms, leading to an underestimate of their real numbers.

It has to be borne in mind that the population figures given above relate to Arabs settled in Britain and not to those who come here as visitors for

professional or other reasons. These constitute a large additional population, especially during the summer months. It is estimated that in the 1970s up to 200,000 Arabs came to Britain annually as tourists, and by the end of the 1980s about half a million Arabs lived here for most or part of the year.[11]

Arab migration to Britain

It seems that the earliest migration of Arabs to Britain occurred in the nineteenth century. These migrants were mainly Syrian and Moroccan merchants engaged in trade who settled in the industrial cities of the north around the middle of the century. Thereafter and towards the beginning of the twentieth century, Somalis and Yemenis, recruited by the British Merchant Navy, began to settle in British ports like Cardiff and Liverpool. When discharged from the navy after the Second World War, such seamen later became low-paid workers living in disadvantaged urban areas. During the 1940s and 50s, small numbers of Egyptians and Sudanese came here for professional reasons, as did Palestinians displaced by the 1948 conflict with Israel. But it was not until the 1960s that Arabs in significant numbers began arriving in Britain, mainly to seek work. Some of these were Egyptians, (both professional and unskilled workers), but most were Moroccans. The labour shortage in the catering and service industries in Britain at the time encouraged the arrival of these economic migrants. Moroccan migration, which was generally unskilled, continued into the early 1970s as more workers joined those already here. More Egyptians also arrived at this time. After 1973, there was an influx of wealthy Arabs who came to set up in business following the surge in incomes generated by the oil boom in the Gulf countries.

During the 1970s, the Lebanese civil war drove many Lebanese and Palestinians to Britain, many of them businessmen, journalists and intellectuals. Some of these immigrants and especially the Lebanese maintained only a base in Britain and commuted back and forth to Lebanon. Such people have either already returned to Lebanon or are waiting to do so now that the political situation there has improved. The 1980s saw the arrival of large numbers of political refugees and asylum seekers fleeing from Iraq, Somalia and Sudan. Likewise, semi-skilled and unskilled Lebanese asylum seekers came towards the end of the decade as a result of the continuing disruption of life in Lebanon. Many of these are now in low-paid jobs, are living in council accommodation and are unlikely to return home.

Aim of the Egyptian Community Study

The aim of the Egyptian Community Study undertaken in 1996 was to draw up a picture of the Egyptian community in Britain today. It utilised two types of

information: that derived from general, official and anecdotal sources, and that provided by an in-depth questionnaire survey conducted face-to-face with a sample of Egyptians in London. The questionnaire was designed to collect data on: demographic aspects; migration history; ideas about return to the home country; sense of identity and belonging; familiarity and integration with British systems and society; perceptions of racism; aspirations for the children of those questioned, and their future plans for themselves. Much of the information so derived is being made available for the first time since no similar previous studies of this community have ever been undertaken. A possible exception is the unpublished survey of Inji Toutounji carried out in 1993 as part of a student project for London University. This examined the degree of culture shock and psychological health of Egyptian migrants in Britain through a postal questionnaire survey of 45 subjects. She concluded that overall psychological health and degree of adjustment to life in Britain in her sample were generally good. Other than this, there have been no precedents for the present survey which might have provided a source of guidance or comparison.

As with many such surveys, a number of difficulties were encountered at the beginning. We found a prevailing suspiciousness and fear of imparting any personal information at all, even respondents' addresses. For this reason, we only recorded the area of residence without house numbers or street names. Some of our Egyptian contacts explained that this fear was a residue of the secret police and state surveillance tactics so prevalent in Egypt. Whether that was true or not, there was certainly a reluctance to provide detailed personal information for a purpose which seemed to be of no direct advantage to the respondent. Compliance in earlier community surveys that I have undertaken which focused on health issues[12] was much easier to obtain, because these were perceived as having the potential for benefiting respondents' health. No such objective was involved here and the formal reason for the study which was offered, namely that the information would help to us to understand and hence enhance the role of Egyptian migrants in British public life, was apparently not persuasive enough. In addition, particular questions such as those relating to employment and future intentions of settlement in Britain aroused hostility and sometimes a refusal to respond. This was possibly due to feelings of shame, since unemployment was a significant feature in the group, and also of embarrassment about drawing state benefit to support families. In addition, there was a defensiveness about admitting to an implied lack of patriotism in not wishing eventually to return to Egypt. Nevertheless, with much groundwork and considerable help from community figures and leaders, the cooperation of many people, often very generous, was finally enlisted and the survey could be undertaken.

The Survey: compilation

As stated above Survey information was collected from two main sources: first, interviews with community figures and leaders and second, the application of a face-to-face questionnaire to a sample of individual Egyptians. The questionnaire survey was conducted during February and March 1996, and the other interviews took place in the preceding three months. The sample of 55 people surveyed (33 men and 22 women) was drawn from a number of sources. The primary source was the Egyptian Community Association which has its premises in Earls Court, London. During the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, a large number of Egyptians congregate there daily for the *iftar* (the evening meal when fast ends), and since they come from all walks of life, it provided a highly suitable place for meeting them. Accordingly, about 60 per cent of the men who participated in the survey were interviewed there, and about a quarter of the women.

However, this source is not without bias, since the general membership of the Egyptian Community Association represents only a small number of Egyptians in Britain. The people we found there during Ramadan were self-selected and would have been observant Muslims. The number of men significantly exceeded that of women. In addition, the majority of those attending were middle and lower class with hardly anyone from the higher wealthy or professional classes. In order to rectify this bias in the sample, additional respondents were selected from other categories. These included doctors, businessmen, journalists, as well as women at home and people working as waiters, minicab drivers and in shops. People were located through the personal contacts of various respondents and others. This method proved especially useful in finding members of occupational groups. The Coptic community was specifically sampled since Copts would not have been found amongst the visitors to the Egyptian Community Association during Ramadan. All these efforts were designed to produce a sample which would be approximately representative of the Egyptian community in all its diversity. Nevertheless, it was not a truly random sample because an appropriate sampling frame was lacking, as might have been provided, for example, if Egyptians had all been concentrated in specific geographical areas or specific occupations. A way of circumventing this defect would have been to use a very large sample, but lack of resources prevented this. Given these reservations, the sample used in this study was the best compromise which could be achieved in the circumstances.

Before the main survey commenced, a pilot study was carried out on five people: four men and one woman. The outcome led to a useful modification of the questionnaire and methodology which were then amended prior to carrying out the main survey. What follows below is an account of the results of the total study, as derived from both general and questionnaire interviews. Tables of results of the survey are set out in the appendix at the end of this report.

An overview of the Egyptian community in Britain

A small number of Egyptians came to Britain to study in the 1930s and 40s, but the earliest proper migration took place in the early 1950s, after the officers' coup which brought Nasser to power in Egypt. These were mainly upper-class or professional people who were unhappy with the change of political regime and were overwhelmingly Muslim. Significant migration of Egyptian Copts took place only in the 1970s with the increasing support to Islamist groups given by President Sadat and a consequent fear of religious intolerance. While most of these Copts went to Canada and Australia, a small number came to Britain and settled here. In the 1960s, more Egyptians came to Britain to gain higher education or for work, but only in small numbers due to the prohibition on exit visas for Egyptians during Nasser's time. This changed in the 1970s as a result of President Sadat's new policy of economic liberalisation. Egyptians were able to emigrate more easily and did so in large numbers, facilitated by British willingness to grant them work permits and entry visas. About half of them came as economic migrants and found low-paid work, especially in catering and service industries. The rest were either professional people who wanted to develop their careers or others who came to study and obtain higher degrees. Not all of these came with the intention of staying here, but many in fact did so after finishing their studies. In addition, many businessmen arrived to establish commercial enterprises. Egypt became an "emigration country" in the 1980s, exporting many of its nationals to work abroad. A number of such emigrants who had encountered difficulties in the Arab world also came to Britain during the 1980s.

The size of the Egyptian community in Britain is a matter of some debate. It will be recalled that the census estimated this to consist of 22,582 people, but not a single anecdotal estimate from within the community corroborated this, even approximately. The Egyptian consulate in London has 23,000 people on its register, but the consul considered the true figure to be at least 100,000. It was said that many Egyptians hesitate to register themselves with the consulate as a result of traditional mistrust of officialdom. Another estimate gave the true number of Egyptians as between 80,000 and 150,000, and yet a third quoted 50,000. One businessman long established in Britain gave an estimate of 200,000, and the highest figure of all was cited by a woman journalist who estimated the real number to be 500,000. Many of these sources explained the wide discrepancy with the official figures as being due to the presence of large numbers of illegal Egyptian immigrants in Britain and also to fear of authority amongst those completing census forms. To this must be added the factor, noted above, of people categorising themselves in the census as other than Egyptian. As always in these situations, the truth is difficult to ascertain, but it would seem reasonable to assume that the census population figure for this group is an underestimate.

Egyptians living outside London are not associated with any specific place of residence in Britain. Forty per cent live in London, and there is another, smaller, concentration in Scotland. Otherwise, the rest are dispersed throughout the country. In London, the pattern of residence tends to reflect factors of affluence and occupation, rather than contiguity with other Egyptians or Arabs. Thus, wealthy or professional Egyptians tend to live in the better parts of London, such as Hampstead, St John's Wood, Kensington and Chelsea. People in middle-class occupations tend to live in Earls Court and Notting Hill, but many others live in suburban areas or just outside London, where housing costs are lower. Some people, however, identified the Bayswater/Edgware Road areas of central London as being "Egyptian Quarters". But it was quite clear that, on the whole, there are no Egyptian "ghettos" in this country.

As might be expected, the vast majority of Egyptians in Britain are Muslims. However, there is also an Egyptian Coptic community whose exact size is unknown, although members of the community gave an estimate of 5,000 people. There are nine Coptic churches in Britain, three of them in London. Many Copts are religious and are actively involved in church and community work. They have a reputation for being close-knit and supportive of each other. The majority are well educated, professional people who have done well in their country of adoption. There is a striking gender difference in the Egyptian community, where men outnumber women by two to one. This almost certainly reflects the pattern of labour migration found also in other similar groups, where the man is usually the first to emigrate and work in order to support a family left behind. Family reunions and marriage should reduce this tendency towards male migrant preponderance over time.

The Egyptian community is not homogenous and displays a spectrum of different social classes, based on occupation, wealth and "good" family. Various estimates put the "élite" (their term) class of professional, educated and wealthy people at between a half and a third of the total community. However, the Egyptian consul gave a figure of only 2-3,000 members of the upper class of professionals and bankers, with the rest being divided amongst middle and lower classes. The "élite" class consists of a large number of doctors (the Egyptian Medical Association quotes a figure of 1,400 doctors in Britain at least), academics, businessmen and financiers. Many of these have achieved considerable success and some have gained prominence in British society. The best known example of a prominent Egyptian in Britain is of course Sir Magdi Yacoub, the celebrated heart surgeon. There are also many Egyptian journalists, working especially for the Arabic press in London and for the London-based Arabic TV stations. Others are owners of small businesses, such as shops and restaurants. At the other end of the scale, many Egyptians are engaged in low-paid work in catering and industry or are unemployed. These latter groups are said to associate mainly with each other and to remain outside British society, while the élite class is well integrated with its peers

in Britain and with other nationalities. (Even so, it should be noted that the majority of Egyptians have retained their Egyptian nationality, and only a minority hold dual citizenship.) There is an impression that the classes do not mix and that a firm class structure exists in this community on similar lines to that found in the home country.

The Survey: results

The questionnaire was divided into several sections designed to provide a demographic and social profile of this community and its migration history and an assessment of its ability to integrate into British society.

1. Demography.

The sample consisted of 55 people, with a 60/40 per cent ratio of men to women. Their age spread was between 20 and 79, but most were concentrated in the 40-50 age group. Nearly two-thirds of them were married, considerably more women than men. Fourteen per cent were single and 16 per cent were divorced and in both cases men greatly outnumbered women. Half of the sample were married to other Egyptians and 29 per cent (all men but for three cases) were married to British spouses. All of the sample had been born in Egypt, the vast majority in cities, and only five people had a rural origin. Over 90 per cent had received their school education in Egypt and the rest in Britain. It was a well-educated group, for 91 per cent had received university education; 82 per cent of these had studied in Egypt and 13 per cent in Britain and some had studied in both places. Two people had attended university in the Arab world outside Egypt. Only two of the men and three of the women had not been to a university. A fifth had undertaken studies in literature and sociology. Commerce and engineering (the latter studied only by the men) were other favoured subjects. There were also graduates of economics, philosophy, anthropology and medicine, but in smaller numbers. One person had studied Egyptology.

The majority of the sample (40 people) had one or more children. On the whole, the households tended to consist of small nuclear families. Only two had extended families living under one roof. The commonest size of family, accounting for one-third of the total, consisted of two children. But one-tenth of couples had one child and another tenth had three children; one family had six. The median number in households was four (32 per cent of the total), but 29 per cent were living alone, nearly all of them men, and 18 per cent of households consisted of two people only. Half of the respondents lived in houses and the rest in flats; two-thirds of these properties were owner-occupier homes. Twenty-seven per cent were privately rented. A minority, under 10 per cent, lived in council accommodation. As for place of residence, inevitably this was mostly in London, since that is

where the survey took place. Even so, six of the people interviewed lived outside, two as far away as Newbury and Nottingham. Addresses within London were scattered all over the city, from Stanmore to Battersea. What pattern did emerge from this small sample showed that there was a small concentration of respondents living in the Earls Court, Bayswater, Fulham and Hammersmith area, thus lending credence to the anecdotal view given by one commentator that there were "Egyptian quarters" in these parts.

2. Language.

All but one person who had been brought up in Britain were literate in Arabic. In addition, everyone said they spoke English, three-quarters fluently and a quarter less so. However, the interviews did not always confirm this alleged proficiency in English. Some people's idea of speaking English amounted to knowing a few working words and sentences, and many who regarded themselves as fluent did not in fact speak or understand English well. Some people who had spent a long time in Britain tended to use a kind of "Egyptian English" in which Arabic and English words and phrases were freely interchanged as if they were one language, pronounced with a strong Egyptian Arabic pronunciation. It was not possible to tell from this survey what the respondents' written English was like.

More than half spoke other languages, the main other language being French (spoken by 81 per cent of those speaking other languages). This is not surprising since French was traditionally the most important foreign language in Egypt. But many respondents spoke other languages as well: German (16 per cent); Italian and Greek (6 per cent), and to a smaller extent, Russian and Turkish. Six per cent spoke South-East Asian languages such as Japanese and Korean.

3. Religion.

The majority of the sample was Muslim. Only seven out of 55 were Copts. The degree of religious observance among the Muslims was impressive. Nearly half prayed regularly and a further 37 per cent did so occasionally. Over 80 per cent (three-quarters of them men) went to pray in the mosque either every Friday or whenever they could. Some of those who did not wanted to but lived too far away from a mosque to be able to attend. The overwhelming majority fasted during Ramadan and of the six people who did not, three abstained on health and medical grounds. Half the sample ate only halal meat and a further quarter would do the same if it were available. However, only a minority of women wore the *hijab* or headscarf. The Egyptian Copts were also religious, since six out of seven attended church and two were regularly involved in church activities. However, the sample was so small that it is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions.

4. Employment.

Just under a quarter of the sample, that is 13 people, was unemployed and of these, two were still studying and one was retired. As to patterns of employment, a fifth of those working could be ranked as an "élite" class of company directors, bankers, doctors and academics. A small number (14 per cent) were engaged in low-paid catering and engineering work. But the majority, nearly two-thirds, were working in middle-class occupations such as media and translation, middle management and clerical work. This pattern would seem to corroborate the Egyptian consul's opinion about the Egyptian community's economic class composition. Comparison with previous employment patterns in Egypt showed interesting differences. A quarter were employed in the public services there as managers, social workers and the like. A fifth were working in teaching and research and a sizeable minority, 15 per cent, were engaged in media work and in engineering respectively. Only one person said he had worked in catering, and no one had been in business. A change in employment pattern is commonly found as a result of migration, where a process of de-skilling or "downward drift" often occurs, and a well-qualified person may end up in menial work. But, conversely, opportunities in the new country enable some migrants to improve their situation and move upwards. Both of these processes seem to have happened here.

5. Migration history.

The majority of the sample migrated to Britain after 1965, and this migration reached a peak in the years 1970-9. It continued but with lesser intensity throughout the 1980s. The earliest migrants came in the 1950s, but in tiny numbers: only three had arrived before 1964. Significantly more men than women migrated between 1964 and 1979, but in the 1980s the numbers roughly equalised. They gave various reasons for coming to Britain. The majority (64 per cent) said that they had not intended to stay at first and a further fifth had been undecided. Only 13 per cent had come with the intention of settling. Most men had come to Britain either for work, or to study and then work. Half the women had accompanied their spouses. Other factors were political dissent, either during Nasser's time or Sadat's subsequently. Some professionals felt their careers would develop better in Britain and some cited low pay in Egypt as a factor. Fourteen per cent of respondents said they had come to Britain as visitors and then found themselves staying and working.

As for their future intentions, 40 per cent said they intended to return to Egypt and a further 38 per cent thought they might do so once their children had completed their education. Only a minority of 21 per cent totally ruled out this possibility. The major reason given for return was to do with "going home" and re-joining the larger family in Egypt. Others said they felt like strangers in Britain and the rest (18 per cent) wanted to retire and die in Egypt. Those who did not

wish to return cited such reasons as being settled in Britain and being used to the lifestyle there (three of the latter were married to English spouses), as well as the need to see their children educated. Another reason had to do with the unsatisfactory economic and political conditions in Egypt. Respondents were also asked about their children's intentions regarding return to Egypt. A surprising percentage (43) believed that their children would return one day, while a quarter did not think so. Thirty-three per cent could not say what would happen, but most respondents had views as to what they wanted for their children. Two-thirds wanted them to return, albeit with their agreement. Reasons given were mainly to do with Egypt being their country and the need to maintain their culture and religion. The minority who did not want their children to return thought they would face financial and political difficulties in Egypt and would not be able to adjust to the different style of life there.

The vast majority of respondents visited Egypt regularly every year and some went two or three times a year. Only three people never went or rarely did so. The same majority also had a second home in Egypt and most of the rest were planning to have one. Although they retained a clear attachment to the country of origin, 82 per cent thought that they had benefited from coming to Britain and only 9 per cent thought they had not. The main benefit had been educational and professional development, but many people mentioned the general culture, organisation and experience available in Britain. Those who had not benefited put it down to difficulties in fitting in socially and to not succeeding financially. About half the sample said they were reasonably happy in Britain and a quarter were very happy. Nearly everyone thought that their children were either reasonably or very happy in Britain.

6. Integration.

An attempt was made through a variety of different questions to gauge the extent of integration of respondents into British life. They were first asked which nationalities they most socialised with and had as friends. The vast majority mixed with other Egyptians and other Arabs. Only 11 per cent said they had English people as good friends. The children on the other hand mixed equally with many nationalities, and a good third of them were most friends with English children. The adults spent the major part of their leisure time socialising with others, either in the home or going out to restaurants. However, 40 per cent were also cinema and theatre goers and a quarter said they went to museums and exhibitions.

The type of food mostly eaten at home was Egyptian/Arabic in 55 per cent of the cases, but 38 per cent ate a mixture of foods from different countries. In a third of the cases, TV-watching preference was equally divided between English- and Arabic-language TV; 29 per cent preferred to watch Arabic TV. People read Arabic and British newspapers in roughly equal proportions. Two-thirds of

respondents were members of the Egyptian Community Association and a third were members of the Arab Club of Britain, and some people of both. A quarter also belonged to British societies or institutes, mostly for professional reasons. Thirty per cent were members of British leisure and sports' clubs. Twenty-seven per cent did not belong to any club or society. A very small number, five people (9 per cent), had joined a British political party; six others (11 per cent) were members of their local school board and five people had joined a voluntary association. Respondents were asked if they would like to join a British association or society and the majority (40 per cent) were interested, especially in non-political associations.

All of them were familiar with the usual public services in Britain. Everyone was registered with a GP and most people had no special preference for an Arab or Egyptian doctor. Just under half had had actual experience of public services such as housing, job centres, and social security. Two-thirds had used the public lending library service, and only one person did not know that such a service existed. Likewise, just under half had attended an adult education course, and only two people did not know about this service.

When asked if they thought it important for Egyptians to play a part in British public life, the vast majority (87 per cent) replied positively because they thought it would help them as a community to have their rights represented and it would also lessen their isolation from society; in addition, they believed it would help them understand the Western mentality. However, half of them thought that it was difficult for Egyptians to enter British public life. They put this down to difficulties with language, to cultural differences and to racism and prejudice on the part of the British. In contrast, 35 per cent did not agree with this view: Egyptians were well-qualified people who were friendly and easy to get on with; if they worked together as a team, then there should be no bar to them being a successful part of British public life.

7. Identity.

In an effort to find out how respondents thought of their personal identities, they were asked to rank six variables in descending order of importance: Egyptian, Arab, Muslim/Coptic as relevant, British and other (for example, woman, human being etc.). The results showed that two-thirds saw themselves as Egyptians first and a quarter put this as second. Only 11 per cent put themselves as Arab first, and a half put this as third. Of the Muslim respondents, just under a fifth (19 per cent) saw this as their primary identity, but 46 per cent put it in second place. No Coptic respondent identified him- or herself as a Copt first, most of them ranking it third. Only one person saw himself as British first. However, 13 per cent of people defined themselves as human beings first, and in one case, as a woman.

Thus, the majority's primary identity was Egyptian first, then Muslim and then Arab.

The respondents were asked to rank their children's identities in the same way. According to this, one-fifth of the children saw themselves as British first and for a further 10 per cent, this came second. Even so, a half were said to identify as Egyptians first and a fifth would put this as second. A small minority identified as Arabs first and slightly more as Muslims. No one thought that a Coptic identity featured anywhere for any of the children. Thus, according to this, the majority of the children still saw themselves primarily as Egyptians, although a much larger number than the adults had begun to place their British identity first.

8. Women.

Women respondents were asked if coming to Britain had changed their lives. Fifty-three per cent did not think so, but the rest did. The reasons put forward were that there was greater independence and less social constraint in Britain; that they had more responsibilities but also more rights; living standards were better in Britain; but one mentioned a negative effect on her marriage. Half of the women thought that Egyptian society was better because there was greater family support, a better social life, and a feeling of emotional security. Forty-one per cent, however, thought Egyptian society was worse for women because they had to fight for their rights, there was little freedom for women at the political or social level, and British law protected women's rights. Most women did not feel that their husbands' behaviour had changed towards them since coming to Britain, but 22 per cent thought that the men had made them feel freer and less restricted. Seventy per cent wanted their children to marry another Egyptian.

9. Discrimination.

Nearly all respondents said they had experienced some form of racial discrimination in Britain and 82 per cent also said that they knew of other Egyptians who had had the same experience. They felt this discrimination operating especially in employment, where they said they were denied jobs because they were foreigners. The same thing applied to official dealings with English people and also in shops. Thirty-two per cent said that they felt discrimination "everywhere", in all public places, transport, when driving a car and so on. They knew people who had experienced discrimination in similar situations, especially in employment and in official dealings. A number of people, however, made the point that such discrimination was understandable on the part of the British against any foreigner, (*see below*).

Discussion and conclusions

In general, the Egyptians in Britain emerge as an affable, likeable group who have melted effortlessly into the multi-ethnic background of this country without making waves. They are friendly, sociable and keep a low profile in British society. Very few seem to have penetrated into British public life and very few seem to want to, despite having lived in Britain for twenty years or more on average. But at the same time, many of them have made good use of the opportunities they found in Britain to develop professional careers and businesses. Hence the considerable number of successful Egyptians in medicine, in journalism, in academic life and in commerce. Although many complained of racial discrimination in this country which had affected their job and career prospects, a number of people made the unexpected observation that such discrimination was understandable. "After all," one woman said, "it is their country and we don't belong here." And, alluding to discrimination over jobs, more than one man said that if he had to choose someone for a job in Egypt, he would naturally prefer an Egyptian over a foreigner, so why blame the British for doing the same thing? Other Egyptians cast doubt on the extent of this alleged discrimination. They thought that for some people it provided a good excuse for incompetence or other unsuitability for a job. On the whole, however, the general impression was of a non-belligerent, almost invisible community which does not seek friction and, as a result, excites little of the animosity seen with some other immigrant groups in Britain.

In this sense, Egyptians are typical of most Arab groups living in Britain today. If one excludes those, such as Somalis and Sudanese, who by reason of their external appearance invoke racist responses from white people, Arabs seem on the whole satisfied to live and let live in this society. The fact that they are able peacefully to pursue their primary links with the Arab world, both spiritual and practical, and to associate freely with other Arabs in Britain appears to many as a sufficient advantage in itself. It obviates the need to challenge or penetrate British institutions and public life, since the primary *raison d'être* of most Arabs is not a future in Britain as British people, but rather as temporarily displaced persons who will one day return to the homeland. And this idea persists, despite the length of time spent in Britain and the ready admission on the part of many Arabs that life in Britain has given them considerable benefits. Thus, the current survey found that only a fifth had decided never to return to Egypt; two-thirds wanted their children to return as well as themselves. This primary focus on the home country is reinforced by the annual visit to Egypt and the fact that the vast majority actually have a second home there.

In this sense, they resemble the Moroccan community in Britain, which likewise retains strong and living links with the home country. Every summer, during the children's school holidays, Moroccans traditionally leave Britain for Morocco, where they renew ties, find spouses for their children, and invest

money when they can in local enterprises. They see themselves as Moroccans before anything else, even though they mostly came to Britain in the late 1960s and 70s. This sense of identity is reinforced in the Moroccan case by the fact that there is a Moroccan "ghetto" in the North Kensington area of London, where the largest number of Moroccans are concentrated, living in close proximity to each other. But Egyptians do not have a comparable "ghetto", and although possibly more of them live in the so-called "Arab" areas of London - Bayswater, Earls Court and the lower Edgware Road - they cannot be said to form distinct Egyptian neighbourhoods. Yet, like the Moroccans, they identify primarily with their country of origin and socialise with and relate mostly to other Egyptians. They cannot be said to have integrated into British society but, unlike the Moroccans, this has not led to an inward-looking isolation, or to hostility and suspiciousness towards British people.

The fact that few Egyptians have entered public life in Britain does not seem to be due to a sense of isolation or a lack of competence. A majority asserted that it was important for Egyptians to do so, and the fact that they had not succeeded could be put down to British prejudice and cultural differences. Yet one was left with the strong impression that the real reason was not this but rather a lack of interest in British life within this community, probably for the same reasons which affect many other Arabs, as described above. But in addition, this may be a first-generation phenomenon, and the children of these Egyptians may well grow up to have more integrationist aspirations than their parents. It may also be linked to the length of stay of Egyptians in Britain, which has not been very long - twenty-five years at most. Comparison with the older migrant communities from the Indian subcontinent, for example, might be relevant here. These migrants have lived in Britain for at least a decade longer than the Egyptians (and most other Arabs, for that matter), and a second generation has grown up in Britain. Yet, their entry into British public life has accelerated only in the last five to ten years. It is possible that Arabs may follow a similar pattern, although, given their fixation on the Middle East, this is by no means certain.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the Egyptian community is not an easy one to categorise. It has no obvious distinguishing characteristic, such as a specific physical appearance or occupation or lifestyle. It contains a whole cross section of social classes, professions and skills, making it a society in microcosm united by an Arab/Islamic culture and a common allegiance to Egypt. Although it is Arab and mainly Muslim, it does not form a natural part of either the Arab or the Muslim community in Britain, but retains an identity of its own which may be called Egyptian. This is not as remarkable as it might seem, since there is in fact nothing which can be described as an Arab community or indeed a Muslim one in Britain today. Despite emergent attempts to create community structures for all Arabs, such as the Arab Club of Britain, Arab groups still relate to each other primarily on the basis of country origin. Although nominally defined as Arabs, they

often have too little in common to draw them together as one community. And of course, the Muslims of Britain are much less homogeneous, even though the concept of "British Muslims" is currently in vogue. The vast majority of these originate from the Indian subcontinent and have little to connect them with, say, Muslims from the Arab world or from Turkey or Bosnia and so on.

At the moment, the Egyptian community has a symbiotic, not an integrated, relationship with Britain, and seems not to strive for anything different. Anecdotal evidence suggested that the upper or professional classes of Egyptians were in fact integrated into British society, whereas the less well off and especially those doing unskilled work tended to stick together, excluding themselves from the larger society. Even so, the bulk of Egyptians in Britain do seem to be unintegrated. In this, they resemble a number of other migrant groups who do not identify with Britain and keep to themselves - as, for example, the Chinese or Armenian communities. Whether the next generation of Egyptians, especially those born here, will wish to behave in the same way as their parents remains to be seen. The current survey did not study the second generation, except anecdotally. But perhaps the example of Moroccan adolescents growing up in Britain studied by the author in 1994 might be instructive. Two-thirds of these saw their future as being in Britain; the rest said they would consider settling in Morocco, but mainly to retire. (In contrast, 72 per cent of the parents intended to return to Morocco.) Only 17 per cent of young Moroccans had Moroccan friends exclusively, the rest mixing with British and other nationalities (79 per cent of the parents mixed only with other Moroccans).

Comparison between the Egyptians in Britain and other Arab migrant groups which have been studied so far demonstrates some interesting variations. They differ markedly from the Iraqis, who form the second largest Arab migrant group in Britain. Unlike the Egyptians, these migrated to Britain overwhelmingly for political reasons, starting with the 1958 Iraqi revolution which overthrew the monarchy, through the Baathist take-over of 1968 to the two Gulf wars of 1980 and 1991. Unlike Egypt, Iraq has never been a source of economic migrants, but on the contrary has been a recipient of such migrants from elsewhere in the Arab world (including many Egyptians), the Indian subcontinent and the Far East. Middle-class and professional Iraqis coming to Britain have found themselves forced downwards in the socio-economic scale and have had to accept low-paid jobs or remain unemployed for long periods.[13] Because they are primarily political migrants, they are further disadvantaged by host society perceptions of them as potential troublemakers. In this sense, they could not be more different from the Egyptians who pose no perceived threat of any kind. And, as the present survey shows, the latter have suffered only a small amount of downward socio-economic mobility. On the contrary, many Egyptians had been able to develop and improve skills and careers in Britain which they felt they could not have accomplished in Egypt. However, both groups are primarily oriented towards the home country.

Iraqis, perhaps more strongly than Egyptians, perceive their migration to Britain as a temporary phenomenon and are totally absorbed by events at home.

The "myth of return" which animates a large number of migrant and refugee groups in Britain and elsewhere is a feature of Arab communities as well. This idea, expounded by Anwar in 1979 in relation to Pakistanis in Britain,[14] refers to the belief amongst migrants that their present place of domicile is only temporary, irrespective of their length of stay, and that they will one day return to the home country. The tenacity with which this view is held varies from being a firm aspiration to a nostalgic desire. Very often in this myth, the homeland becomes idealised and its society frozen in time at the point when the migrant or refugee left it. This dissonance with reality has led to the phenomenon whereby such migrant communities become more conservative and inflexible than their compatriots in the home country. When such people return, they frequently find themselves shocked and alienated on seeing that their original society has moved on and left them behind. The myth of return was found to be particularly strong amongst the Moroccan community in Britain. As has been noted with Moroccan migrant groups elsewhere in Europe,[15] these preserve the idea of an ultimate return to the homeland. They remain marginal in the host societies where they live, fail to integrate and constantly reinforce their attachment to Morocco through the annual "pilgrimage" they undertake there in the summer months.

The Iraqis in Britain are also subject to the myth of return, which is especially strong in this group. This is related to the fact that the majority are political exiles or refugees whose departure from Iraq was forced and who came here against their will. As a result, they remained focused on events in the home country and actively maintain their marginalisation in this society.[16] Many Iraqis came only recently to Britain and are still strongly attached to Iraq which is fresh in their memories. More remarkable is the continuing attachment of Yemenis in Britain to their home country. This community is one of the oldest Arab migrant communities in Britain, having come here at the end of the nineteenth century. Many of them married local English women and settled in English working-class areas in the ports and industrial cities of Wales and the North East. But they remained encapsulated from the main society and the first generation of Yemenis never learned more than a smattering of English. They and even their children still see themselves as Yemeni (and Muslim), are involved in their community organisations and maintain a strong interest in political events which occur in Yemen.[17] Racism in Britain against this group, despised for being "black", unskilled and poor, has undoubtedly played an important part in preventing its greater integration into British life.

For another Arab community in Britain, the dream of return has turned sour. The Somalis, many of whom came here in the last decade as asylum-seekers from the civil conflict in their country, feel the same need to return. But the continuing civil strife in Somalia and its shattered infrastructure which will take decades to rebuild, has convinced many that returning home can be only a cherished dream.[18] Many in this refugee group have suffered severe downward social mobility, since the bulk of Somalis who came to Britain in the last decade were middle-class, educated and professional people. They have had to face here the combined disadvantages of unemployment or low-paid work, poor housing and racial discrimination. They have not organised effectively as a community to try and overcome these problems, and the fact that they are divided into a group of "old-timers" - that is, retired and elderly former seamen who used to work for the British merchant navy and who are long settled in Britain - and the recent refugee arrivals has not helped. The former group never integrated and tended to marry women from Somalia, unlike the otherwise comparable Yemeni seafaring community in Britain. They have little in common with the newer Somalis and do not work effectively together as a single community.

The present study found that the Egyptians in Britain, although so different in other ways, are also influenced by the myth of return. Largely for this reason, they remain unintegrated in British society and do not aspire to be British. However, it may be that this picture is now slowly changing for them and for the other migrant groups who share the same idea. In the first place, we do not know how many of these migrants would, or do, return to the home country. While there have been some studies of return migration, information on this subject is still very sparse. Nor do we properly know how many would return if the circumstances which drove them from the home country were to change. There is anecdotal evidence that a number of the Lebanese exiles who came to Britain in the 1970s due to the civil war in Lebanon have now begun to return and more are predicted to do so, as Lebanon becomes more stable. Whether that will really happen in this or in other cases is not known.

But what does seem to be happening is a dawning appreciation on the part of many migrant groups, Arabs included, that it is possible to combine a life in Britain with remaining in one's own community. Thus, a migrant can live, work and bring up a family in Britain and at the same time live socially and culturally within his migrant group as if he were at home. In addition, he can visit the home country as often as resources allow and thus retain his ties with his own society. The advantages of this arrangement have been apparent to migrants from the Indian subcontinent for some time, none of whom seem to be planning to return home. It is likely that Arab groups are beginning to learn the same lesson, especially those who have come from areas of political repression and instability in the Arab world. Living in Britain, they can enjoy the relative freedom provided by a democratic and stable system, while simultaneously being part of an Arab cultural

environment. Arab food, restaurants, music and videos are all freely available in London which is also the major centre for the Arabic press and several Arab publishing houses. This symbiosis between migrant or ethnic communities which retain their separate identity and culture and the host society is an accepted form of behaviour for minorities in Britain, tolerated over many decades. And while opinions may vary as to the extent of anti-Arab discrimination in Britain - Moroccans did not complain of it, but Iraqis and Egyptians did - Britain's record on racial violence is relatively benign. Racism in France or Germany, for example, is much more virulent and overt.

This situation is not openly articulated by the Arab community here, but people are voting with their feet, so to speak. Arabs are becoming increasingly settled in Britain and the community is growing. It is for this reason that opinions about the wish to return expressed by members of the community need to be interpreted with caution. For example, the majority of Moroccan migrants in France have stayed there, despite the undisguised racial discrimination they have suffered and their attachment to the home country; and the Moroccans in Britain are no different. Although they visit Morocco devotedly each year, none of the labour migrants who came to Britain in the great wave of migration during the 1960s seem to have shown an inclination to return to the home country, at least by 1988.[39] Given the Egyptian community's higher skills and greater adaptability, it is unlikely that they will behave any differently. On the contrary, the indications are that they will continue successfully to develop careers and businesses in Britain. Anecdotal evidence shows that the Iraqis, who suffer greater obstacles to their acceptance in British society, are nevertheless also consolidating their presence in Britain - although the fact that many of them are barred from returning to Iraq may act as an additional incentive. In the context of these changes, the migrants' adherence to the idea of return may well have more to do with Arab honour and feelings of shame than any real intention of leaving Britain.

The important question that must now face Egyptians and other Arabs in the same situation is how long they wish to remain separate, non-participatory cultural entities within the larger society in Britain. Although Egyptians do not live in physical ghettos, unlike Moroccans in North Kensington or Somalis in London's East End, yet they and other Arab groups inhabit a cultural and social ghetto. As we have seen, they do not participate in British public life and have little say in the structures which govern their daily lives. They know more about what goes on in the Arab world than in their own local borough. The consequence of such attitudes is that Arabs today, despite their commercial and professional success, form an invisible minority in Britain without influence on any aspect of public life. The reason for this is in part linked to the fact that there is no "Arab community" in Britain. As may be seen from this study, the Egyptians are very different from the Moroccans, the Somalis, the Yemenis and the Iraqis and none of them identifies with the other as part of one community. Hence the clout

they could have had in terms of numbers and diversity is dissipated by their fragmentation into disparate sub-groups. But it is also the fact that Arabs in Britain do not really see themselves as a minority. Because they relate primarily to the Arab world where they are the majority, they have not developed the capacity to promote their interests with the establishment in Britain, as other minorities have done. At the same time, they do not in fact live in the Arab world, and hence they have ended up in a limbo between both places. The danger of this position is that it can lead to marginalisation in Britain and irrelevancy in the Arab world.

While the Arab community was busy building its life in Britain, this was not perceived as an important issue. It is only now, when the problems of daily life are solved that such dangers will become apparent. There are indications that many Arabs in Britain are now aware of the position. The Egyptians, who have shown themselves so adaptable to settling in British society, will in particular come to face this situation. They and all other Arabs will soon have to decide exactly where they and their children should belong.

Notes

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19 In July 1988 I carried out a short study in Larache, the northern town in Morocco from which the majority of Moroccan migrants to Britain come. I could find no single record of a returned migrant to the town, and townspeople I spoke to doubted that there would be.

Appendix:

Egyptian Survey Questionnaire Results

Egyptian Survey Questionnaire Results

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q1 Sex	33	22	55	60/40

N.B. Q2 asked about date of birth, but the data has been omitted here	Male	Female	Total	%
Q3 Age:				
20-24	1	-	1 of 55	1.8
25-29	1	-	1	1.8
30-34	5	3	8	14.5
35-39	1	3	4	7.3
40-44	5	2	7	12.7
45-49	10	9	19	34.5
50-54	3	-	3	5.5
55-59	2	5	7	12.7
60-64	4	-	4	7.3
65-69	-	-	-	-
70-74	-	-	-	-
75-79	1	1	2	3.6

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q4 Marital status:				
1. Married	17 of 33	17 of 22	34 of 55	61.8
2. Single	7	1	8	14.5
3. Divorced	7	2	9	16.4
4. Separated	2	-	2	3.6
5. Widowed	-	2	2	3.6
Nationality of spouse				
1. Egyptian	11 (1 Div)	17	28	50.9
2. British	13 (5 Div)	3 (1 Div)	16	29.1
3. Arabs	2	1	3	5.5
4. Others				
- Filippino	1 (1 Div)	-	1	1.8
- Greek	1	-	1	1.8

	Male	Female	Total	%
Place of birth:			55	
Q5 Where were you born?				
1. Egypt	33	22	55	100
a. Town	29	21	50	90.9
b. Village	4	1	5	9.1
2. Britain	-	-	-	-
3. Elsewhere	-	-	-	-

Div = divorced

	Male	Female	Total	%
Education				
Q6 Did you attend secondary school in:				
1. Egypt	31	20	51 of 55	92.7
2. Britain	2	2	4	7.3
3. Elsewhere	-	-	-	-
4. None	-	-	-	-

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q7 Did you attend university?				
1. Yes	31	19	50 of 55	90.9
2. No	2	3	5	9.1

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q8 If yes, where?				
1. Egypt	28	17	45	81.8
2. Britain	4	3	7	12.7
3. Elsewhere	1 (Lebanon)	1 (Iraq)	2	3.6
Note: Some studied in more than one university				

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q9 What did you study:				
- Law	1	1	2 of 50	
- Philosophy/History	2	-	2	
- Economics/Politics	4	1	5	
- Literature/Language/Sociology	5	7	12	
- Archaeology/Egyptology	1	-	1	
- Psychology/Anthropology	-	1	1	
- Commerce	3	5	8	
- Business/Management	4	-	4	
- Medicine	3	1	4	
- Engineering/Electronics	8	-	8	
- Art/Film studies/Music	1	2	3	

	Male	Female	Total	%
Languages				
Q10 Do you read and write in Arabic?				
1. Yes	33	21 (1 poor)	54 of 55	98.2
2. No	-	1	1	1.8

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q11 How do you speak English?				
1. Fluently	25 (2 not really)	17 (2 reasonably)	42	76.4
2. Not fluently	8	5	13	23.6
3. Not at all	-	-	-	-

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q12 Do you speak any other languages?				
1. Yes			32	58.2
- French	11	15 (2 little)	26	81.3
- German	4	1	5	15.6
- Italian	-	2	2	6.3
- Russian	1	-	1	3.1
- Greek	2	-	2	6.3
- Turkish	-	1	1	3.1
- Japanese/Malay/Korean	1	1	2	6.3
2. No	16	7	23	41.8
* Note: Some speak more than one language				

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q13 What is your religion?				
1. Muslim	32	16	48	87.3
2. Coptic	1	6	7	12.7
3. Other/none	-	-	-	-

	Male	Female	Total	%
If Muslim:			48	
Q14 Do you pray?				
1. Regularly	13	9	22	45.8
2. Occasionally	16	3	19	39.6
3. Never	3	4	7	14.6

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q15 Do you attend the mosque?	32	16	48	
1. Daily	-	-	-	-
2. Weekly	10	-	10	20.8
3. Occasionally	20	10	30	62.5
4. Never	2	6 (3 not available)	8	16.7

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q16 Do you fast during Ramadan?			48	
1. Yes	28	10	38	79.2
2. No	2 (1 medication)	4 (2 health)	6	12.5
3. Sometimes	2	2	4	8.3

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q17 Is your meat halal?			48	
1. Always	17	7	24	50.0
2. Sometimes	10 (if available)	3 (if available)	13	27.1
3. Never	5	6	11	22.9

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q18 Do you/does your wife/daughter wear hijab?				
1. Always	4/20	5/16	9/36	25
2. Sometimes	4	-	4	11.1
3. Never	12	11	23	63.9
NA	12	-	12	25

	Male	Female	Total	%
If Christian:			7	
Q19 Do you go to church?				
1. Daily	-	-	-	0
2. Weekly	-	2	2/7	28.6
3. Occasionally	1	3	4	57.1
4. Never	-	1	1	14.3

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q20 Are you involved with church activities?			7	
1. Yes				
- helping the community/				
visiting patents	-	2	2	28.6
2. No	1	4	5	71.4

	Male	Female	Total	%
Employment	33	22	55	
Q21 Are you currently employed?				
1. Yes	29	13	42	76.4
2. No	4 (2 students + 1 retired)	9	13	23.6

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q22 If yes, what is your current occupation?			42	
- Business/managerial	3	-	3	7.1
- Media/translation	6	4	10	23.8
- Medicine	2	2	4	9.5
- Middle management/clerical	9	4	13	31
- Catering	5	-	5	11.9
- Travel agency/administration	2	1	3	7.1
- School teaching/academic	1	1	2	4.8
- Engineering	1	-	1	2.4
- Musician	-	1	1	2.4

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q23 What was your occupation in Egypt?			**34**	
- Media	3/23*	2/11**	5/34	14.7
- Medicine	1	1	2	5.9
- Public service employee	6	3	9	26.5
- Catering	1	-	1	2.9
- Navigator/airport worker	1	1	2	5.9
- Teaching/research	5	2	7	20.6
- Engineering	5	-	5	14.7
- Secretarial	-	3	3	8.8
- Sports	-	1	1	2.9
*** 10 too young to work ** 11 married young during studies or after**				

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q24 What is/was your spouse's occupation?			**43***	
- Clerical	5/13	5/21	10/43	23.3
- Accountancy	2	-	2	4.7
- Nursing	2	-	2	4.7
- Catering	1	1	2	4.7
- School/university teaching	2	-	2	4.7
- Medicine	-	3	3	7
- Media	-	2	2	4.7
- Law	-	1	1	2.3
- Management	-	1	1	2.3
- Business	-	6	6	14
- Engineering	-	2	2	4.7
*** Note: Excludes single/separated/divorced**	12	-	12	
and those not working now	8	1 (single)	9	

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q25 If no, what was your occupation?			**13**	
- Office work	1	2	3	23.1
- Catering	1	-	1	7.7
- Art and media	-	1	1	7.7

	Male	Female	Total	%
Household			7	
Q26 Is your dwelling:				
1. House	12/33	15/22	27/55	49.1
2. Flat	20	7	27	49.1
3. Other	1	-	1	1.8

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q27 Is your dwelling:				
1. Owner/occupier	18	17	35	63.6
2. Privately rented	11	4	15	27.3
3. Council/Housing Trust	4	1	5	9.1

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q28 Who else lives at home with you?				
1. Spouse	16/33	18/22	34/55	61.8
2. Children 1	3	2	5	9.1
2	7	11	18	32.7
3	1	4	5	9.1
4	1	2	3	5.5
5	-	-	-	-
6	1	-	1	1.8
3. Others				
Live in nanny/flatmate	1	1		7.3
Parents and sister	2	-	4	
4. No one	14	2	16	19.1

	Male	Female	Total	%
Migration				
Q29 Which year did you come to the UK?				
1950-54	1/33	0/22	1/55	1.8
1955-59	1	-	1	1.8
1960-64	-	1	1	1.8
1965-69	2	4	6	10.9
1970-74	8	6	14	25.5
1975-79	9	1	10	18.2
1980-84	3	4	7	12.7
1985-89	6	3	9	14.5
1990-94	3	3	6	10.9

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q30 Why did you come?			55	
- Visit, then stay and work	8	-	8	14.5
- Work	9	4	13	23.4
- Study, then work	9	3	12	21.8
- Medical treatment	1	-	1	1.8
- With the family	3	11	14	25.5
- Political reasons (Nasser/Sadat)	2	2	4	7.3
- By accident/personal reasons (wouldn't say)	1	2	3	5.5

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q31 Did you intend to stay in the UK?				
1. Yes	3/33	4/22	7/55	12.7
2. No	19	16	35	63.6
3. Don't know	11	1	12	21.8

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q32 Do you intend to return to Egypt?			55	
1. Yes	14	8	22	40
2. No	5	7	12	21.8
3. Possibly	14	7	21	38.2

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q33 If yes, why?			22	
- It's home/Join the family	10	5	15/22	68.2
- Feel stranger here	2	1	3	13.6
- To retire/live and die	2	2	4	18.2

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q34 If no, why?			22	
- Settled here/left long ago	-	3	3	25
- Difficult financial and political situation	1	1	2	16.7
- Children's studies	1	1	2	16.7
- Used to lifestyle (married to English spouse)	3	2	5	41.7

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q35 Do you think your children			40	
will one day want to settle in Egypt?				
1. Yes	10	7	17	42.5
2. No	4	6	10	25.0
3. Don't know	6	7	13	32.5
NA			15	

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q36 Do you want your children to return			40	
to Egypt?				
1. Yes	15	10	25	62.5
- It's their country/maintain culture and religion	6	3	9	
- Be with the family	4	3	7	
- To settle, marry and work	3	-	3	
- Financial security	1	-	1	
- If they feel happy	1	2	3	
- If with parents	-	1	1	
2. No	2	2	4	10
- Difficult finance/political circumstances	-	2	2	
- Different style of living	1	-	1	
- Graduated and settled here	1	-	1	
3. Don't know	3	8	11	27.5

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q37 Do you ever go to Egypt?				
1. Yes, regularly	27/33	21/22	48/55	87.3
- once a year (at least)	17	17	34	70.8
- twice a year (at least)	4	2	6	12.5
- more than three times yearly	2	2	4	8.3
- every five years	4	-	4	8.3
2. Yes, occasionally	3	1	4	7.3
3. No, rarely	3	-	3	5.5

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q38 Do you own a home in Egypt?				
1. Yes	25	20	45/55	81.8
2. No	4	1	5	9.1
3. No, but planning to	4	1	5	9.1
If yes, what type?				
- house	15	18	33/45	73.3
- flat	8	2	10	22.2
- family house	2	-	2	4.4

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q39 Have you benefited from coming to live in the UK?				
1. Yes	27/33	18/22	45/55	81.8
- education/profession	6	5	11	
- work/finance	4	-	4	
- experience/self-reliance	6	5	11	
- health/medication	2	1	3	
- general culture	7	5	12	
- organisation/discipline	2	1	3	
2. No	2	3	5	9.1
- social difficulties	1	-	1	
- financial difficulties	1	1	2	
- no achievement	-	2	2	
3. Unsure	4	1	5	9.1

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q40 Are you happy in the UK?				
1. Yes, very	6/33	7/22	13/55	23.4
2. Yes, reasonably	14	10	24	43.6
3. Not very	10	2	12	21.8
4. No	3	3	6	10.9

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q41 Are your children happy in the UK?				
1. Yes, very	10	9	19/39	48.7
2. Yes, reasonably	8	8	16	41
3. Not very	1	2	3	7.7
4. No	-	-	-	-
5. Don't know	-	-	-	-
5. NA/children too young	-	-	17	-

	Male	Female	Total	%
Integration				
Q42 Who do you mostly have as friends?			55	
1. Egyptians	18	13	31	56.4
2. If yes, which Egyptians?				
- Middle class	5	3	8	
- Upper society	-	3	3	
- Different classes	3	4	7	
- Professionals	6	3	9	
- Educated people	2	-	2	
- Same age group	2	-	2	
3. Other Arabs			9	16.4
- Mixed categories	2	2	4	
- Professionals	2	1	3	
- Educated/intellectuals	2	-	2	
4. English people	3	3	6	10.9
5. Others	1	-	1	
6. Mixed/no special group	10	6	16	29.1
7. None	1	-	1	1.8
Note: Total numbers not equal to number of people of the questionnaire due to more than one choice				

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q43 Who do your children mostly have as friends?				
1. Egyptians	2	1	3/37	8.2
2. Other Arabs	2	3	5	13.5
3. Family members	1	-	1	2.7
4. English people	7	6	13	35.1
5. Others	1		1	2.7
6. Mixed/no special group	10	11	21	56.8
NA			18	

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q44 How do you mostly spend your leisure time?			55	
1. Socialising with others at home	21	11	32	58.2
2. Going to restaurants/cafés/night clubs	13	11	24	43.6
3. Going to theatres/cinema/opera	12	12	24	43.6
4. Going to exhibitions/museums/galleries	8	7	14	25.5
5. Other	13	9	22	40
- Sports/swimming/gym/horse-riding	7	5	12	
- Reading/writing/art activities	3	3	6	
- Parks/country walking	2	-	2	
- Church activities	-	1	1	
6. No one way	1	-	1	1.8

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q45 What food do you mostly eat at home?				
1. Egyptian/Arab food	20/33	10/22	30/55	54.5
2. Other food	1	3	4	7.7
- Ready made	1	-		
- Continental cuisine	-	2		
- Chinese	-	1		
3. Mixture	12	9	21	38.2

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q46 Do you spend more time watching:				
1. Arabic-speaking TV (if available)	9	7	16	29.1
2. British TV	16	8	24	43.6
3. Equally	10	8	18	32.7
4. Other (e.g. CNN, Sky)	5	2	7	12.7

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q47 Which do you read more regularly:				
1. Arabic newspaper	17	11	28	50.9
2. English newspaper	21	10	31	56.4
3. Other newspaper	2	1	3	5.5
- German	1	-	1	
- French	-	1	1	
- Asian	1	-	1	
4. No preference	2	2	4	7.3
5. Don't read newspaper regularly	4	2	6	10.9

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q48 Are you a member of any clubs/				
societies/associations				
1. Yes				
- Egyptian Community Association	19	7	26/40	65
- Arab Club	7	7	14	35
- British professional societies/institutes	10	-	10	25
- British clubs (sports)	6	6	12	30
2. No	7	8	15	27.3

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q49 Are you a member of any of the following?			55	
1. British political party	5	-	5	9.1
2. School board	4	2	6	13.9
3. Local British association	2	-	2	3.6
4. Voluntary association	3	2	5	9.1

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q50 Are you interested in joining any of the above?			55	
1. Yes	13	9	22	40
- Political parties	7	-	7	
- Voluntary association	4	6	10	
2. Don't know	2	3	5	9.1

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q51 Do you think it is important for Egyptians to join British public life?				
1. Yes	29	19	48/55	87.3
- Better understanding of western mind	5	2	7	
- Represent Egyptians/stand for their rights	9	9	18	
- Share with the British their public life	10	3	13	
- Not to be isolated from the society	5	5	10	9.1
2. No	3	2	5	
- Not effective	2	1	3	
- British don't accept foreigners	1	-	1	
- No point	-	1	1	
3. Don't know	1	1	2	3.6

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q52 Is it difficult for Egyptians to enter British public life?				
1. Yes	18	11	29	52.7
- Language problems	3	-	3	
- Cultural differences	4	1	5	
- Prejudice and racism	8	7	15	
- Needs effort, contacts and qualifications	3	3	6	
2. No	13	6	19	34.5
- Egyptians are qualified and communicative	6	3	9	
- Egyptian good nature and flexibility	2	-	2	
- If we make the effort/team work	5	2	7	
- Equal opportunity in Britain	-	1	1	
3. Don't know	2	5	7	29.1

		Male	Female	Total	%
Identity					
Q53 Which of the following best describes your identity?					
1. Egyptian	1	18/33	18/22	36/55	65.5
		10	3	13	23.6
		2	1	3	7.7
		1	-	1	1.8
2. Arab	1	5/33	-	6/55	10.9
		3	5	8	14.5
		17	10	27	49.1
		2	-	2	3.6
3. Muslim	1	7/32	2/16	9/48	18.8
		14	8	22	45.8
		4	5	9	18.8
		3	-	3	6.3
4. Coptic	1	-	-	-	-
		-	2	2/7	28.6
		1/1	2/6	3	42.9
5. British	1	1	-	1/55	1.8
		2	2	4	7.3
		-	3	6	10.9
		3	2	5	9.1
6. Other (e.g. human being,	1	5	2	7/55	12.7
woman)	2	-	2	2	3.6
		3	-	3	5.5
		1	2	3	5.5

Note: Tables for Q53 and Q54 set out responses for each category in rank order of preference of respondent. For example, in category "1. Egyptian" above, the underlined figure shows what percentage of 55 respondents put themselves as Egyptians first, then the next line shows what percentage put themselves as Egyptians second and so on. The same applies to all the subsequent categories in the left-hand list.

		Male	Female	Total	%
Q54 Your children? (N.B. "Coptic" does not appear					
because no one chose this category of identity)					
1. Egyptian	1	8	12	20/39	51.3
		5	3	8	20.5
		-	1	1	
2. Arab	1	2	-	2	5.1
		1	3	4	10.3
		-	2	2	
3. Muslim	1	2	1	3	7.7
		3	4	7	17.9
		2	1	3	
5. British	1	4	4	8	20.5
		1	3	4	10.3
		-	3	3	
		1	1	2	5.1
6. Human being	1	-	2	2	
		-	-	-	
		1	-	1	
Don't know/NA				16	

	Male	Female	Total	%
Women only				
Q55 Has being in the UK changed your			21	
life as a woman?				
1. Yes		10		47.6
- Feel independent/no constraints		6		
- More responsibilities/more rights		2		
- Negative effect on marriage		1		
- Better living standards		1		
2. No		11		52.4
3. NA		1 (young when she came)		

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q56 Is Egyptian society better for women?			22	
1. Yes		11		50
- Feel secure socially and financially		5		
- Social aspects of life		3		
- Family support		3		
2. No		9		40.9
- Need to fight for rights		1		
- Political climate/no freedom		7		
- British law protects women		1		
3. Don't know		2		9.1

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q57 Has your husband's behaviour changed			18	
towards you since coming to the UK?				
1. Yes		4		22.2
- Feel free with no restrictions		3		
- Negative influence on marriage		1		
2. No		14		77.8
NA		4		

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q58 Do you want your son/daughter to marry			20	
another Egyptian?				
1. Yes		14		70
2. No		-		-
3. Don't know		6		30
NA		2		

	Male	Female	Total	%
Men and women				
Q59 If you have an emotional or family problem				
who do you consult for help?			55	
1. Family member	12/33	11/22	21	38.2
2. A friend	14	8	22	40
3. Your doctor	2		2	3.8
4. Psychiatrist/Psychotherapist	-	-	-	-
5. Other	1	1	2	3.8
- Priest	-	1	1	
- Solicitor	1	-	1	
6. No one	4	2	6	10.9

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q60 If there were a personal counselling service				
available for Arabs, would you use it?			55	
1. Yes	12	7	19	34.5
2. No	16	15	21	38.2
- It's personal/privacy	8	8	16	
- Not necessarily Arab service	3	3	6	
- Don't believe in it	5	4	9	
3. Don't know	4	-	4	7.3

	Male	Female	Total	%
Discrimination				
Q61 Have you ever had difficulty getting on				
or experienced hostility because you are				
Egyptian in any of the following?			55	
1. Employment	9	4	13	24.1
2. Official dealings	8	2	10	18.5
3. Hospital/GP surgery	2 (dentist)	5	4	7.4
4. Shops	4	5	9	16.7
5. Elsewhere	13	1	18	32.3
- You feel it everywhere	7	4	8	
- On the road/travel/driving	3	-	7	
6. Public places/housing	3	-	3	
Total	36/33	18/22	54/55	98.2

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q62 Has anyone you know had such difficulties?			55	
Yes	31	18	45	81.8
- On the road/pubs	3	1	4	
- Employment/official dealing	6	3	9	
- Job discrimination	2	3	5	
- Many, can't recall	12	3	15	
- Don't know	8	4	12	21.8

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q63 Are you registered with a GP?				
1. Yes	33/33	22/22	55/55	100
2. No	-	-	-	

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q64 When you see a specialist, do you prefer				
to consult:			55	
1. Egyptian doctor	2	2	4	7.3
- Easy to communicate with	2	-	2	
- More concerned/friends	-	2	2	
2. Other Arab doctor	1	1	2	3.8
- Common language	1	1	2	
3. English doctor	5	4	9	16.4
- Better qualifications	4	2	6	
- Being the majority	1	-	1	
4. Don't mind	25	15	40	72.2

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q65 Would you/your wife/daughter prefer				
a woman doctor?			46	
1. Always	9	-	9	19.6
- Being religious	6	-	6	
- Used to/tradition	3	-	3	
2. For some things	3	10	13	28.3
- Gynaecology	3	10	13	
3. Never (don't trust them)	-	1	1	2.2
4. Don't mind	12	11	23	50
Not applicable	9	-	9	

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q66 Are you satisfied with the treatment				
you receive from the NHS?				
1. Yes	21/33	12/22	33/55	60
2. No	11 (1 doesn't use it)	7(3 don't use it)	18	32.7
- Waiting time	5	6	11	
- Low standard services	6	1	7	

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q67 Do you use private medicine?			55	
1. Always	3	2	5	9.1
2. For some conditions	15	15	30	54.5
- Gynaecology/delivery	-	8	8	
- Optician/dentist	4	4	8	
- Osteopath/radiotherapy	2	1	3	
- Serious problems/psychology	9	5	14	
3. Never	15	5	20	36.4

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q68 Have you had any contact with other public services (social services, housing, job centre etc)?				
1. Yes	15/33	8/22	23/55	41.8
- No	18	14	32	58.2
2. If yes, which?				
- Job centre	7	3	10	
- Housing	9	3	12	
- Social security	3	3	6	
- Community midwives	-	1	1	
- Describe experience and whether satisfied				
- Satisfactory/helpful	10/15	6/8	16/23	69.6
- Not satisfactory/useless	5	2	7	30.4

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q69 Do/did you use the public lending library service in your area?				
1. Yes	23/33	13/22	36/55	65.5
2. No	10	8	18	32.7
3. Don't know about it	-	1	1	1.8

	Male	Female	Total	%
Q70 Do you/have you ever attended adult education courses?				
1. Yes	15	9	24	43.6
- Business studies	2	2	4	
- Language	2	8	10	
- Computer/electronics/satellite	7	-	7	
- Tourism	1	-	1	
- Catering	3	-	3	
- Arts	-	3	3	
2. No	16	13	29	52.7
3. Don't know	2	-	2	3.8

NA = Not available