



IDSC IN BRIEF

Acting as the Egyptian Cabinet's Think Tank...Our mission is to impartially support the government decisions through proposing best policy scenario mix and preparing analytical research to improve the socio-economic well-being of the Egyptian society.

Since Egypt has embarked on an ambitious reform process, the climate surrounding such process has increasingly become more complex and interconnected. It has become evident that public policy design demands a variety of professional policy options.

IDSC derives its success from being a multidisciplinary institution which is capable of meeting these outstanding demands. Moreover, operating at the heart of the decision-making process in Egypt, IDSC encourages public debate on its research findings, which are openly available to all members of the society.

Being a progressive organization, IDSC works to establish cooperation linkages with international counterparts. The main purpose is to share knowledge and integrate best practices into its operations. We appreciate our existing partnerships and we look forward to developing new ones hoping that through cooperation in mutual areas of interest, we will have a significant impact on developing the decision-making process in Egypt.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The New Social Contract Policy Conference:

Towards the Integration of Economic and Social Policies

The path to the future, if it would lead to prosperity, must be based on scientific methods. Believing in this fact, the Social Contract Center (SCC) was established, as a partnership project between the Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The Social Contract Center's main target is to provide technical support for human development efforts, from a rights-based perspective. The SCC rests on a developmental foundation based on the principle of good governance. In addition the Center monitors Egypt's progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, with special focus on poverty reduction.

The Social Contract Center works to define a more solid relation between society's actors; namely, the government, the civil society, the private sector and the citizens who form the corner stones of the SCC and cooperate to build trust and accountability between each other.

The SCC has organized a conference on January 18th and 19th. The conference tackled questions like "what good is economic development if it does not benefit the ordinary citizen?"

The Conference initiated a national dialogue on public policies between society's different forces, aiming to reach consensus on:

- Clear and defined social goals to developmental efforts.
- Coordination between economic and social policies to reach these social goals.
- Regular monitoring and evaluation of indicators which measure the progress in reaching these goals.

The conference witnessed signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the Social Contract Center and the General Authority for Investment GAFI. The purpose of this MOU is to establish a basis for cooperation between GAFI and the SCC. It expresses a joint commitment to the formulation of a concrete partnership on areas of cooperation, which will aim to undertake joint activities, establish a continuous policy dialogue as well as adopting joint actions on issues of mutual interest.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Manar El Shorbagy Delivers a Speech at IDSC

IDSC welcomed Dr. Manar El Shorbagy, Professor of political science at the American University in Cairo, to deliver a speech about the origins and developments of the American-Israeli relations.



Dr. Manar El Shorbagy

Dr. El Shorbagy started her speech by introducing the two main streams of thought which justify the strong bilateral relations between the United States and Israel. The first stream emphasizes the existence of the Jewish lobby in the United States. The second stream emphasizes the strong relations by protecting the American interests in the Middle East region. Dr. El Shorbagy argues that such relations can not be solely justified by one of those two factors; rather it is the combination of both, representing what's known as the revolving door phenomenon.

The strength of the Israeli Lobby is a result of the diversified lobbying methods and techniques used, as well as

the ability of this lobby to defeat all opposition forces by using the traditional arguments of anti-Semitism or being a self hating Jew.

Dr. El Shorbagy has highlighted a very important reality in the American society which is the inconsistency between the two main Jewish organizations in the United States, namely the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations (COP) on one hand and the desires of the ordinary Jewish American people on the other. Moderate organizations were oppressed except for some informal movements. This was the case until the establishment of the J-Street organization in 2008. J-Street represents the political arm of the pro-Israel, pro-peace movement.

Dr. El Shorbagy concluded by referring to the fact that the existence of organizations like J-street represents a glimpse of hope for the Israeli-Palestinian cause. She added that many parties including the Obama administration and the Arab world should benefit from such organizations.

Reports:

THE INFORMATION AND DECISION SUPPORT CENTER RELEASES A SERIES OF INFORMATION REPORTS ABOUT DIVERSE ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE PUBLIC AND DECISION-MAKERS.

THE FOLLOWING INTRODUCES ONE OF THESE REPORTS.



Late Age of Marriage: Is It a Problem that Needs a Solution?

Family has always been the center of the Egyptian society and is much appreciated by adults and children alike, therefore marriage holds a great place in the Egyptian and Arabian culture, as it grants spouses, especially women, higher levels of respect and community acceptance.

The Egyptian society is witnessing many changes in its marriage patterns, as early marriage is no longer the norm. The average age of marriage for both males and females has risen. A greater number of youth remains unmarried until a late age, and may not marry at all. There are over one million young men and women in Egypt who passed the age of thirty without marriage.

I- Marriage Patterns in the Egyptian Society: An Overview

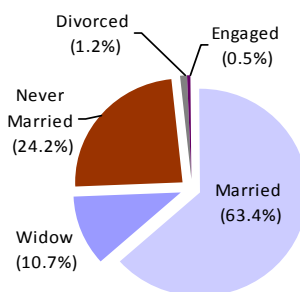
1. Population Marital Status

in 2006:

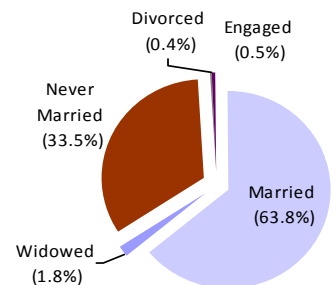
- The percentage of married females aged 16 and above, reached 63.4%, and the percentage of females who had never married was 24.2%, whereas the percentage of widows reached 10.7%.
- The percentage of married males in the age of 18 and above reached 63.8%, and the percentage of males who had never married was 33.5%, whereas the percentage of the widowed was 1.8%.

Population Marital Status in 2006 *

Females (16 years and above **)



Males (18 years and above)



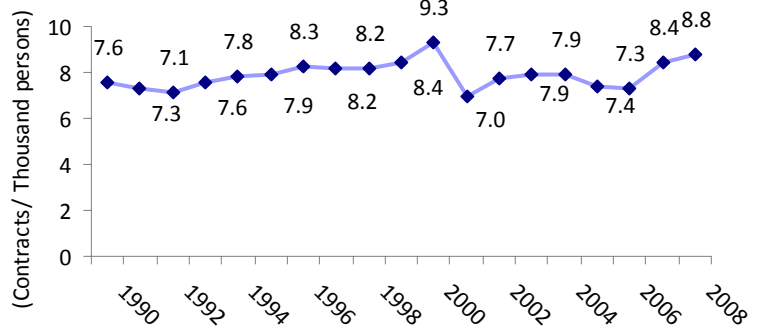
* Calculated data.

** The legal marriage age in Egypt has been changed to 18 years, by the law number 6927 for the year 2008.

2. Marriage Patterns (1990-2008):

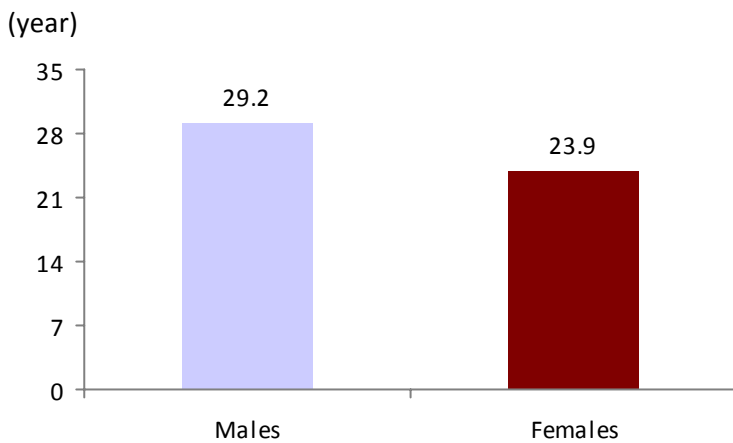
There is a general increasing trend in the total rates of marriage in the Egyptian society during 1990-2008, as the overall rate of marriage reached 7.6 marriage contracts per thousand persons in 1990, and 8.8 contracts per thousand in 2008. It is worth mentioning that the highest rate of marriages was reached in the year 2000 (9.3 contract per thousand persons), then it notably decreased in 2001 to reach its lowest value (7 contracts per thousand persons).

Marriage Rates in Egypt (1990 – 2008)



Sources: CAPMAS, Egypt in Numbers Book 2007.

Average Marriage Age by Gender in 2008



Source: CAPMAS, Bulletin of Marriage and Divorce 2009.

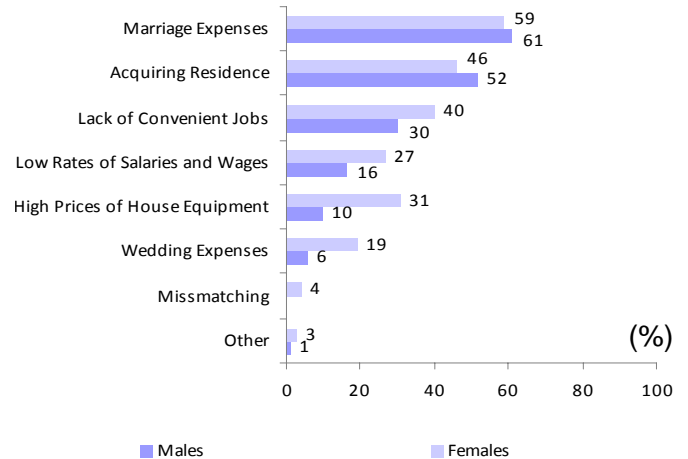
4. Youth’s Opinion on the Major Obstacles they Face in Getting Married:

Marriage expenses is the major obstacle which causes marriage delay in youth’s opinion, as 61% of males and 59% of females view it as the main obstacle, followed by the difficulty of acquiring residence (52% of males and 40% of females). Then came the lack of convenient jobs, (30% of males and 40% of females). Finally comes mismatching between couples, with a rate of 4% for females only.

3. Average Age of Marriage in 2008:

- The average marriage age for males reached 29 years in 2008, contradictory to youth's opinions for the ideal age for men to get married (between 25 and 26 years).
- The average female age at marriage reached 24 years in 2008, conflicting with youth's opinion about the ideal age for women to get married (between 21 and 22 years).

Main Obstacles which Face Youth in Getting Married*



*Multiple answers were allowed

Source: Cairo Demographic Center, Egyptian Youth Status and Direction Survey in 2006.

II - Marriage Delay

1. Delay in Marriage Age

(According to Gender):

- In 2006, about 1.044 million of Egypt's total population were 30 years old and above, they have never been married.
- More than 673 thousand males in 2006, were 30 years old and above, and they have been never married, representing 5% of total males in this age group.
- As for the number of females in the same age group, who have never been married in 2006, there were approximately 371 thousand females, representing 2.8% of total females in this age group.

Number and percentage of those who were never married in 2006 in the age range (30 years and above)*

Age Group (Year)	Total	
	Number (Thousand)	Percentage (%)
30 – less than 35	552.9	11.7
35 – less than 40	210.2	4.5
40 years and above	281.1	1.6
Total (30 years and above)	1044.2	3.9

Number and Percentage of Females who have never been married in 2006

Age Group (Year)	Females	
	Number (Thousand)	Percentage (%)
30 – less than 35	1560.0	6.8
35 – less than 40	78.0	3.3
40 years and above	136.8	1.6
Total (30 years and above)	370.8	2.8

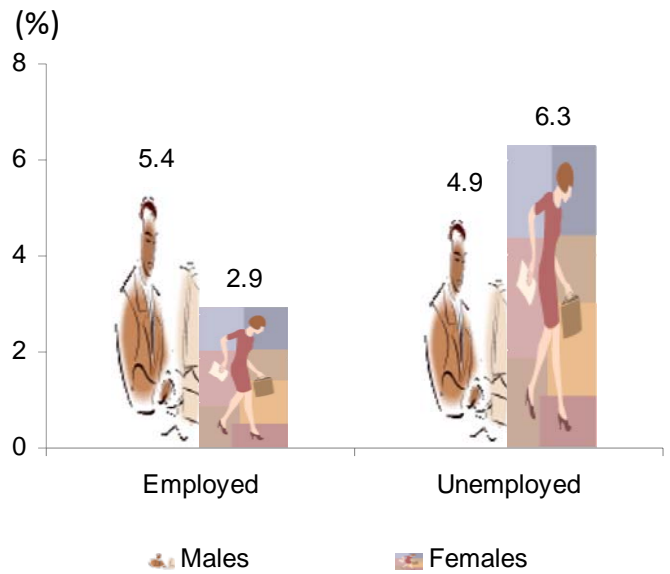
Number and Percentage of Males who have never been married in 2006

Age Group (Year)	Males	
	Number (Thousand)	Percentage (%)
30 – less than 35	396.9	16.5
35 – less than 40	132.2	5.7
40 years and above	144.3	1.6
Total (30 years and above)	673.4	4.9

3. Delay in Marriage Age (According to Work Status)

- The percentage of males who have never been married – in the age group 30 and above – is higher between unemployed males (5.4%) compared to employed ones (4.9%) in 2009.
- Females’ engagement in the labor market has an effect on delaying their marriage age, as the percentage of working females who have never been married – in the age group 30 years and above – increased to reach 6.3% compared to 2.9% for unemployed females in 2009.

Unmarried Population according to Work Status
(30 years and above)

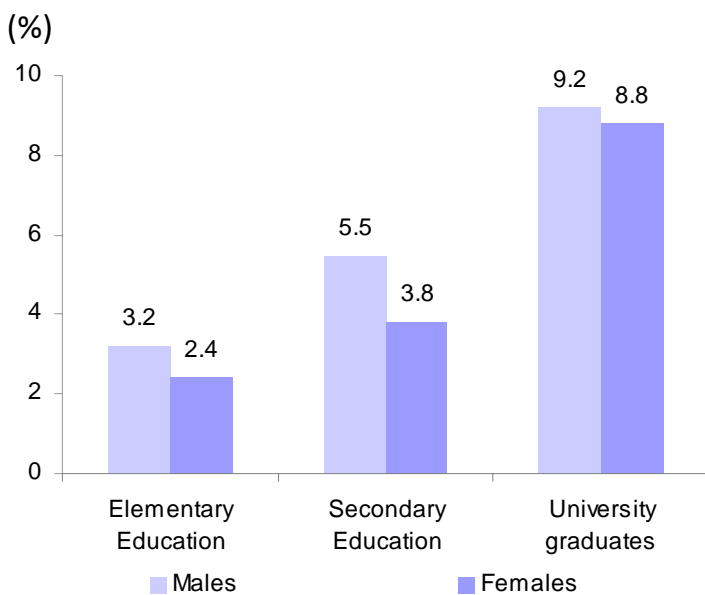


Source: IDSC, Observatory of the Egyptian Household Conditions, July 2009.

4. Delay in Marriage Age (According to Educational Level)

- There is a strong inverse relation between the educational level and marriage age, as the higher the educational level, the lower the percentage of married males and females.
- The percentage of unmarried males and females – 30 years and above – reached its peak at the higher education level (9.2% for males, and 8.8% for females) compared to the secondary education stage (5.5% for males and 3.8% for females).

Unmarried Population according to the Education level (30 years and above)



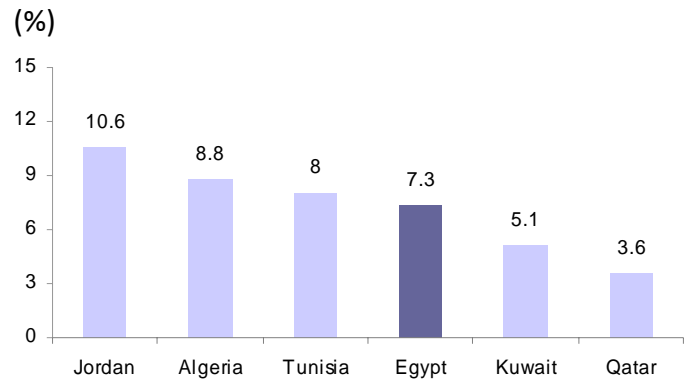
Source: IDSC, Observatory of the Egyptian Household Conditions, July 2009.

III- Marriage Delay in Egypt compared to some Arab States

1. Total Marriage Rates in Egypt (Compared to a number of Arab States):

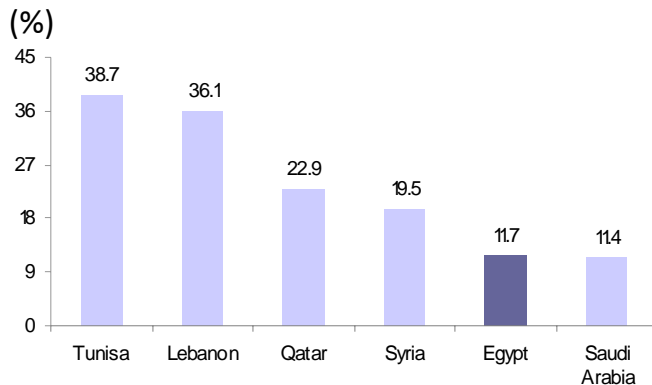
In 2006, Jordan scored the highest marriage rate between the Arab states with 10.6 contracts per 1000 persons, followed by Algeria (8.8 contracts per 1000 persons), then Tunisia (8 contracts per 1000 persons), then Egypt (7.3 contracts per 1000 people), and Kuwait (5.1 contracts per 1000 persons), and finally Qatar (3.6 contracts per 1000 persons).

Total Marriage Rate in Egypt Compared to Some Arab States in 2006



Source: Osman, Maged and Hanan Gerges, 2009, Marriage Patterns in Egypt, 26th International Population Conference.

Percentage of Unmarried Persons in Age Group (30-34) in Egypt Compared to some Arab States during (2004-2007)



Source: Data gathered from various sources.

2. The percentage of Unmarried Persons in the Age Group (30 – less than 35 years) in Egypt (Compared to a number of Arab States):

The percentage of unmarried persons in the age group 30-34 years compared to the same group of total population reached 38.7% in Tunisia, 36.1% in Lebanon, 22.9% in Qatar, and 19.5% in Syria, while this percentage is lower in both Egypt and Saudi Arabia to reach 11.7% and 11.4 respectively.

3. Average Marriage Age in Egypt (Compared to a number of Arab States):

- The Average female marriage age varies between Arab states, as it ranges between 22 to 29 years, this average in Egypt is 24 years.
- For males in Egypt, the average marriage age ranges between 22 to 26 years.

Polls that Tell:

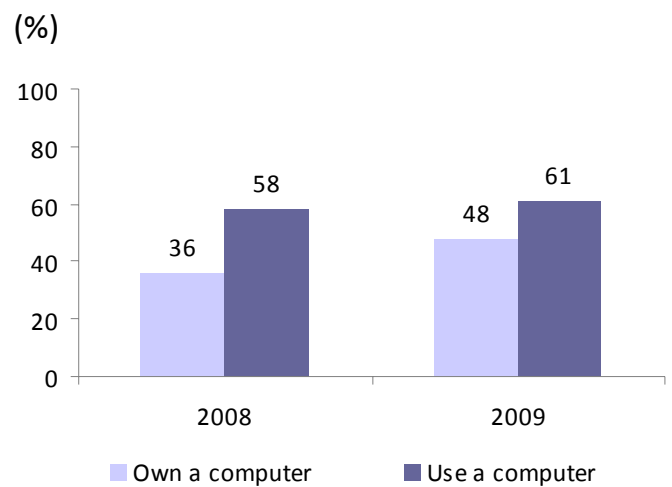
The past two decades have witnessed a revolution not less important than the 19th century's industrial revolution. The World Wide Web has revolutionized the way we receive and send information. It has actually been one of the main pillars of globalization, which is the transfer of information from one place to another, in virtually no time. Due to Egypt's developing nature, the World Wide Web has penetrated the Egyptian society slower than the more developed countries. How much slower though is what the poll at hand attempts to figure out, with special emphasis on youth.

Youth Opinion Towards the Utilization of the Internet

1. Use of computer and internet among youth:

- More than half of the sample in 2008 and 2009 polls are computer users.
- In the 2009 poll, the ratio of computer users differed with respect to gender, geographic location, educational level, age, and economic level. The following are found to be computer users:
 - 72% of males, 50% of females.
 - 91% of urban areas, 51% of rural areas.
 - 95% of university graduates, 62% of secondary graduates, 13% of the below than secondary graduates.
 - 91% of the high economic level, 45% and 52% of average and below than average economic levels, respectively.
- The percentage of internet users - according to the latest report issued by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology- has reached 13 million users (By the end of the period January – March 2009).

The Percentage of Computer Ownership and Usage among Youth



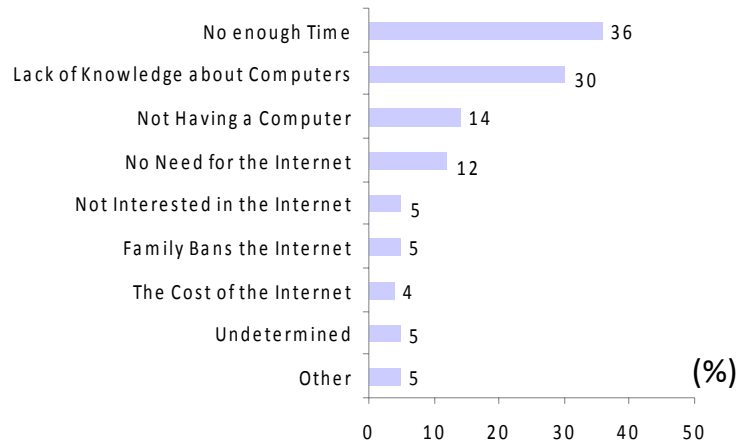
- The percentage of internet users out of computer users has reached 60% in 2009 compared to 52% in 2008. The following represents the characteristics of the internet users sample:
 - 75% of males, 37% of females.
 - 75% of urban areas, 46% of rural areas.
 - 80% of university graduates, 49% of secondary graduates, 6% of the below than secondary graduates.
 - 76% of the high economic level, 43% of average and below than average economic levels.

- The main obstacle for not using the internet was not having enough time (36%), then comes the lack of knowledge about how to use the internet (30%).
- Fields of internet use: The primary use of the internet among youth is getting news updates with a ratio of 74% and 82% in 2008 and 2009 polls respectively, then comes downloading songs, films, programs, and games with a ratio of 68% and 79% in 2008 and 2009 polls respectively. However purchasing through the internet represented the minimal use of the internet with a ratio of 4% and 5% in 2008 and 2009 polls respectively.

2. Youth Opinions on Internet:

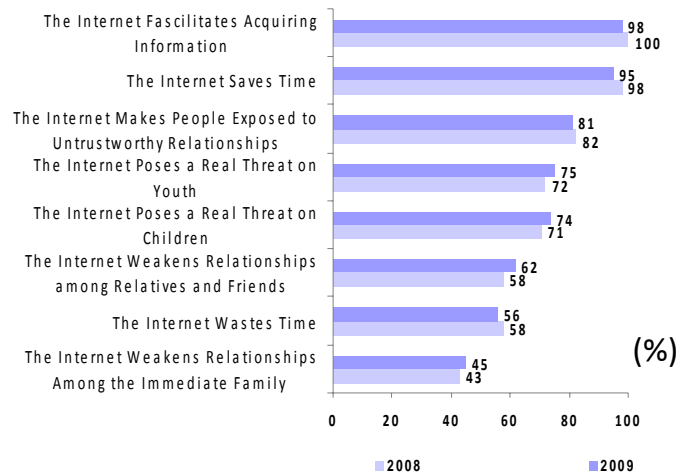
- Almost all respondents agreed that the internet makes it easy to access information with a ratio of 98% and 100% in 2008 and 2009 polls respectively.
- Most of the respondents agreed that the internet may lead to untrustworthy relationships with a ratio of 82% and 81% in 2008 and 2009 polls respectively.
- About three-quarters of internet users (72% and 75% in 2008 and 2009 polls respectively) of the sample agreed that internet represents a real threat on youth and children.

Main Reasons for not Using the Internet



- As for the Rate of using the internet: 44% and 38% of internet users in the sample use internet on daily and weekly basis respectively. 49% of internet users – of daily and weekly users - use the internet less than 10 hours a week.

Percentage of Respondents who Agreed on these Statements



- More than half of internet users (58% and 62% in 2008 and 2009 polls respectively) in the sample agreed that using the internet weakens relationships among relatives, friends and even among the members of the immediate family.

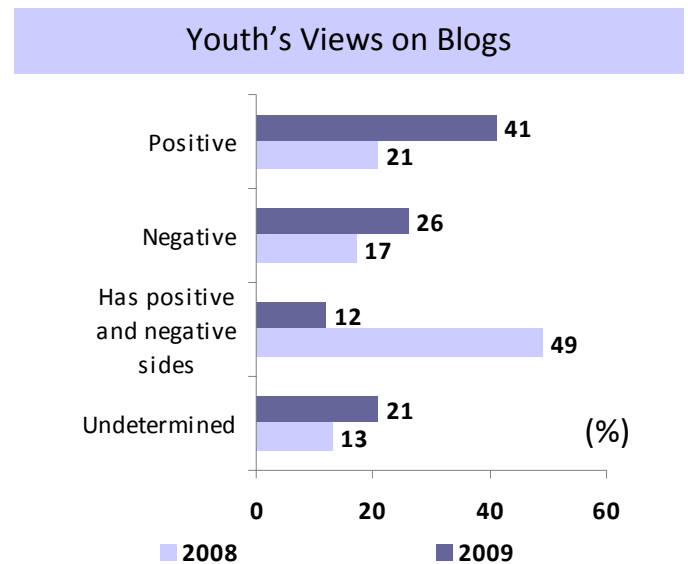
- About 91% of internet users in the sample view internet as a trustful source of information though a lower percentage 36% in 2009 poll and 47% in 2008 poll trust to give their personal data on the net.
- One of the surprising findings of the poll is that most of the internet users in the sample agreed on having a law that imposes restrictions on what is viewed on the internet with a ratio of 89% and 90% in 2008 and 2009 polls respectively.

3. Youth Knowledge of the Fair Use of the Internet Policy, and their Opinion on the Issue:

- The fair use policy of the internet is a policy drafted by the National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (NTRA) in August 2009- yet still not executed. The policy's objective is to put a maximum limit on data downloading and uploading for every user.
- 28% of internet users in the sample know about the fair use policy, out of which 63% see that it is an unfair decision, while 19% of them see it as fair.
- The main factor behind youth's negative views about the law is the imposition of limitations on data downloading.
- While the main two factors behind supporting the law is that such law may lead to the limitation of the abuse of the internet as well as lead to the fair distribution of internet usage among different segments.

4. Youth's opinions and participation in blogs:

- About 40% and 39% of the sample's internet users in 2008 and 2009 polls respectively heard about blogs; out of which 10% and 11% in 2008 and 2009 polls respectively have read a blog before, and 11% have created their own blog in 2009 poll.



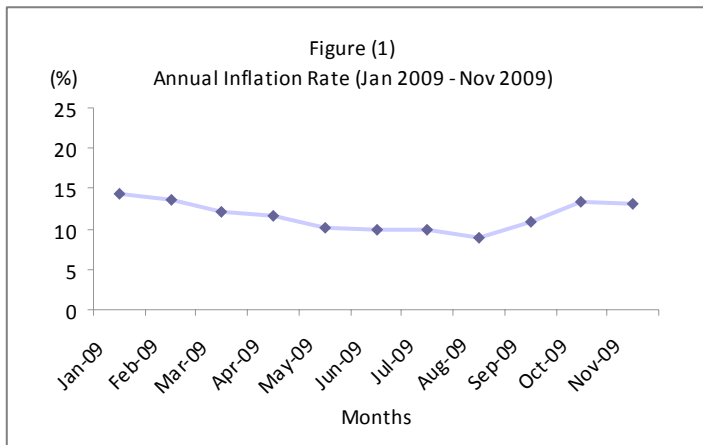
- The youth's positive views about blogs have increased from 21% in 2008 poll to 41% in 2009 poll on the positive side, and from 17% to 26% on the negative side.

Figures to Remember:

The IDSC Economic and Social Indicators Bulletin is a monthly summarized record of the most important facts about the financial, real, and social aspects of the Egyptian economy. The newsletter presents a number of these vital figures and indicators that provide you with a quick snap shot on the Egyptian economy.

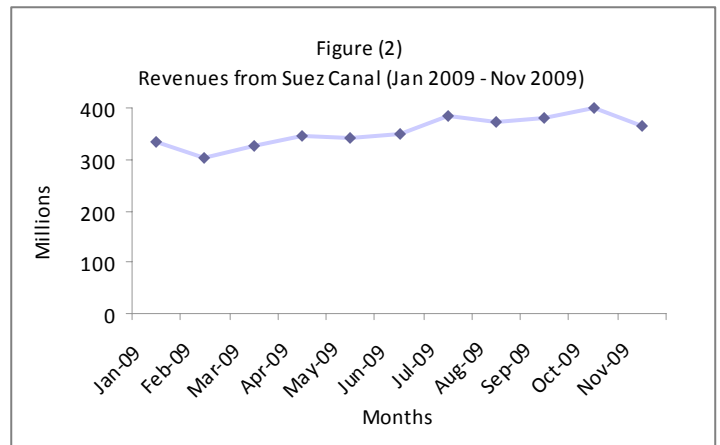
Financial Indicators:

Inflation Rate: The Egyptian economy enjoyed a decrease in its inflation rate from 14.3 % in January 2009 to 13.2 % in November 2009.

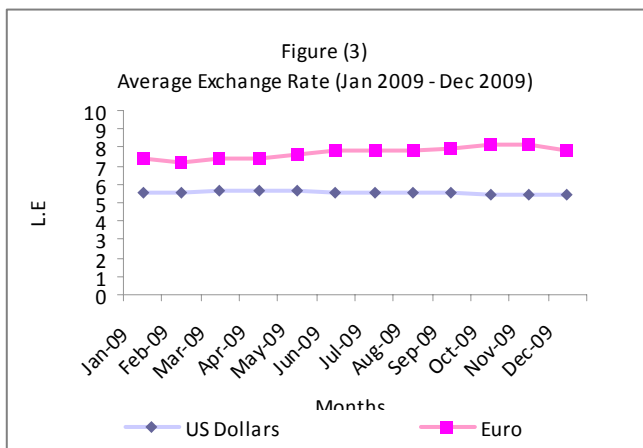


Real Economy Indicators:

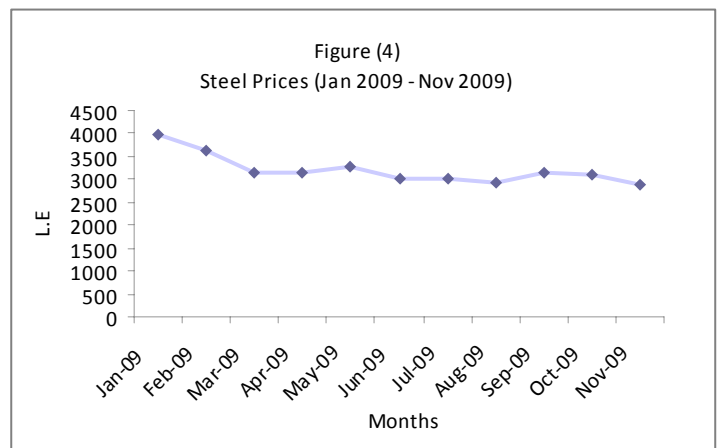
Revenues from Suez Canal: Suez Canal revenues witnessed minor fluctuations from January to November 2009.



Exchange Rate: The exchange rate of the Egyptian pound can be described as stable since the beginning of 2009.



Average Steel Prices: Steel prices have decreased through the first 3 quarters of 2009 from L.E. 3981 in January 2009 to L.E. 2888 in November 2009.



Average exchange rate (Dec.09):

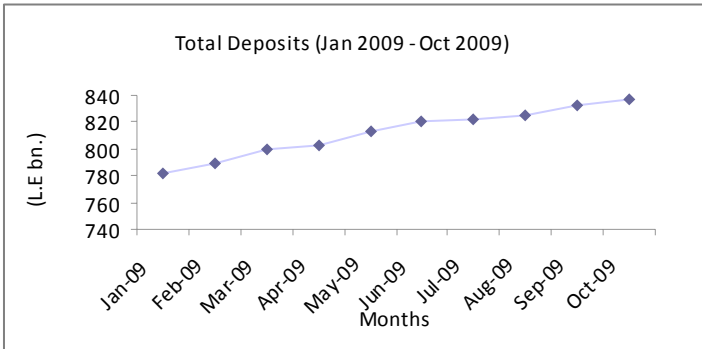
EUR: L.E 7.03

USD: L.E 5.52

Other Figures:

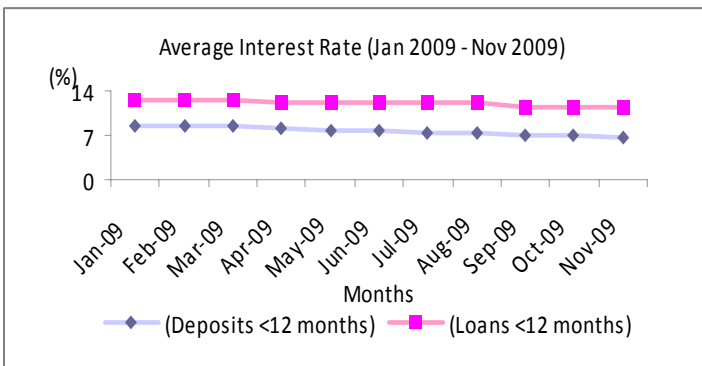
Banking Indicators:

o **Total Deposits:** Total deposits have enjoyed an increase through 2009 from L.E 780.5 billion in January 2009, to L.E 837.3 billion in October 2009.



Source: Central Bank of Egypt.

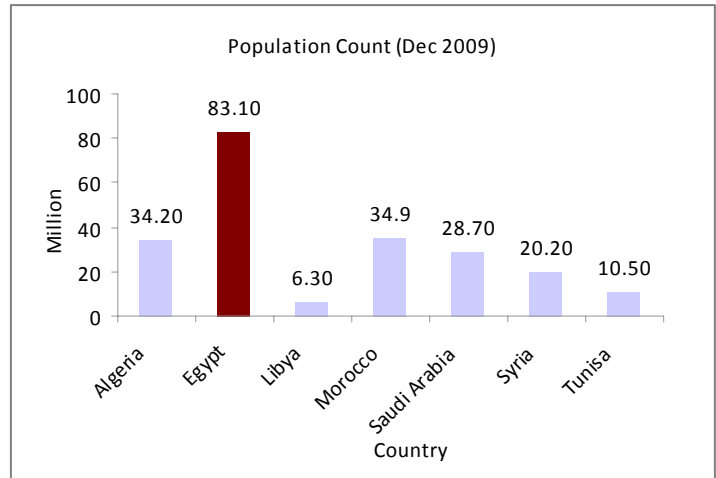
o **Interest Rates:** As a result of the decrease in the Central Bank's rate, average interest rate on deposits have decreased – from 8.3% in January 2009 to 6.8% in November 2009 – accompanied by a decrease in loans interest rate from 12.6% in January 2009, to 11.3% in November 2009.



Source: Central Bank of Egypt.

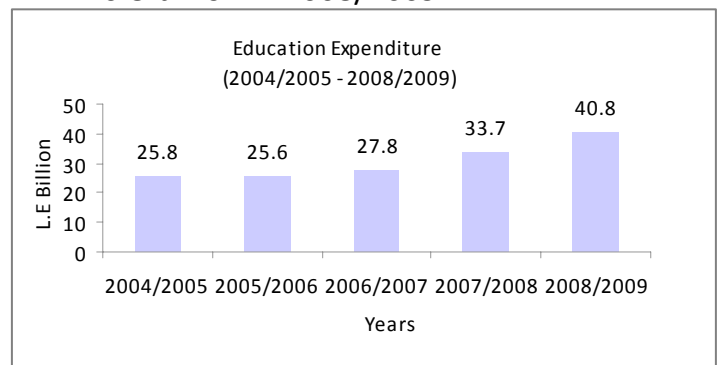
Social Indicators:

- o **Population (2009):** 83 Million.
- o **Total Fertility Rate (2009):** 2.66 children born/woman.
- o **Infant Mortality Rate (2009):** 27.26 deaths/1000 live births.
- o **Life Expectancy at birth (2009):** Males 69.6 years, females 74.8 years.



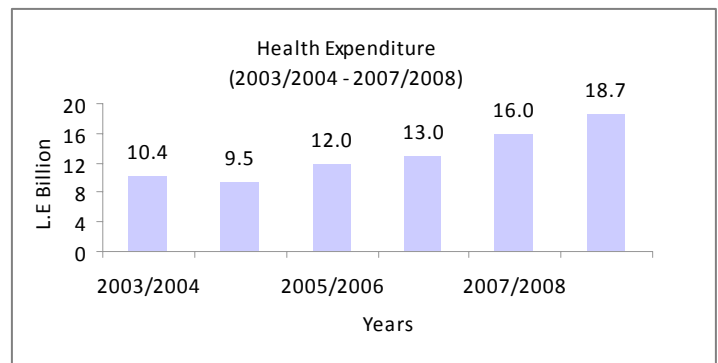
Source: CIA World Fact Book, 2009.

o **Education Expenditure:** Government expenditure on education has increased from L.E 25.8 billion in 2004/2005, to L.E 40.8 billion in 2008/2009.



Source: Ministry of Finance.

o **Health Expenditure:** Government expenditure on health has increased from L.E 10.4 billion in 2003/2004, to L.E 18.7 billion in 2008/2009.



Source: Ministry of Finance.



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