

Gender Differences: Public Opinion during the 2013 Political Crisis in Egypt



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This paper uses survey data collected in June and July of 2013 to uncover gender differences in public opinion before and after the removal of Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi. In June and July of 2013, D3 Systems, Inc. commissioned a national CATI-based survey consisting of 1,001 Egyptian adults, split into two phases of approximately 500 interviews each. The authors of this paper analyze shifts in opinions from Phase I to Phase II to understand how the military coup may have influenced the views of men and women in Egypt. This paper supports the hypothesis that Egyptian women were less optimistic in the days following the coup than Egyptian men, as women remain skeptical of progress made after the 2011 revolution.

Introduction

Since the ousting of Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi on July 3rd, 2013, Egypt remains in a state of uncertainty. Supporters of the military's intervention claim the coup d'état was necessary to prevent civil war and restore democracy. Nearly one year later, however, hundreds of protestors have been killed and the political future of Egypt remains volatile. Although the divide between Islamists and secularists is most frequently discussed, differences among key demographic groups also explain Egyptians' attitudes and behaviors towards the political turmoil. Using public opinion data collected from June and July of 2013, this study explores gender differences in public opinion before and after the 2013 Egyptian coup.

Background

In January 2011, millions of Egyptians took to the streets to overthrow the 29 year regime of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, in what has become known as the "January 25th Revolution." Grievances of protestors stemmed from social and political issues, including basic human rights, police brutality, lack of free elections, lack of freedom of speech, corruption, and economic issues. After a violent 18-day uprising, resulting in at least 846 deaths and more than 6,000 injuries, Mubarak resigned as president and conceded power to the Supreme Council for the Armed Forces on February 11th, 2011.¹ Immediately following the end of Mubarak's regime, Egyptians were optimistic that the revolution would deliver a more democratic future.

¹ "Egypt Rises" Amnesty International, 2011.
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE12/027/2011/en/b33cf2ea-e057-4a34-905b-46a897c4fe6d/mde120272011en.pdf>

In June 2012, Mohamed Morsi became the first democratically elected president in Egypt. Months later, Morsi issued a constitutional declaration granting him the power to appoint the public prosecutor and to make all his decisions final and binding until the new constitution was approved and a new People's Assembly was elected.² Frustrated with Morsi's year-long reign in which Egypt faced economic and diplomatic crises, anti-Brotherhood protestors organized what was reported as one of the biggest political demonstrations in history. On June 30th, 2013, the Egyptian Armed Forces claimed 14 million protestors participated in demonstrations across the country.³ Anti-Morsi protestors accused the administration of using electoral victory to monopolize power on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood and impose Islamic law. The Egyptian Armed Forces issued a 48-hour ultimatum for Morsi's administration to meet the demands of the Egyptian people and avoid military intervention. On July 3rd, 2013, General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi announced the Armed Forces had removed President Mohamed Morsi from power and suspended the constitution.⁴ Tens of thousands of Egyptian Islamists rallied against the coup in support of Morsi, resulting in aggressive backlash from the Armed Forces. In the months to come, violent clashes erupted across Egypt between the Islamists and secularists. Egypt is becoming less democratic day by day, even with the presidential election to be held May 26th and 27th of this year. In what seems like déjà vu, Egyptians continue to question whether or not the country has made progress since the 2011 revolution.

Both the 2011 and 2013 revolutions speak volumes of the Egyptian populous' demands for systemic change in Egypt. Survey research provides an avenue for such voices to be heard by measuring Egyptians' attitudes towards the current political crisis. This paper analyzes the Egypt Pilot Study conducted by D3 Systems in the summer of 2013 in order to explore gender differences in public opinion. The questionnaire included questions about the political and economic situation in Egypt, attitudes towards the government, opinions of political leaders and political parties, in addition to

² English text of Morsi's Constitutional Declaration, 2012 (from Ahram Online).

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/58947.aspx>

³ "Millions flood Egypt's streets to demand Mursi quit" Reuters, 2013.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/30/us-egypt-protests-idUSBRE95Q0NO20130630>

⁴ "Egypt crisis: Army ousts President Mohammed Morsi" BBC, 2013. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-23173794>

questions capturing demographic information, such as age, educational level, religion, and work status, among others. This paper seeks to answer, “*What do Egyptian women think about the political turmoil in Egypt, and how do their perceptions differ from Egyptian men?*”

Survey Methodology

The Egypt Pilot Study is a CATI-based survey of the general public of Egypt, among households which own landline or mobile telephones. The original purpose of the Egypt Pilot Study was to experiment with different probability-based sampling approaches. The sample consists of 1,001 Egyptian nationals, aged 18 and older, split into two phases of approximately 500 interviews. Phase I was completed between June 27th and July 1st and Phase II was completed between July 5nd and July 8th. The differences between the two experimental sampling approaches include:

1. Mode breakdown (Phase I: 50% landline and 50% mobile; Phase II: 30% landline and 70% mobile)
2. Gender matching procedures (Phase I: no gender matching; Phase II: gender matching)⁵

Between Phase I and II, D3 Systems examined the data using a complex weighting scheme and made several changes to the sampling methodology for the second phase of the pilot to account for a telephone number probability of selection, non-response, frame multiplicity, and post-stratification to key demographics.⁶

Fieldwork was conducted by 26 native Arabic speakers. The sample was drawn using random digit dialing (RDD) procedures assisted by area codes geographically linked to provinces in the landline frame and to mobile provider codes linked to mobile providers in the mobile frame. Landline telephones were stratified by area codes⁷

⁵ D3 Systems experimented with gender matching procedures in order to examine how the gender of interviewers may influence refusal rates. In Phase II, gender matching was implemented through hand-off procedures. If the gender of the interviewer did not match that of the respondent, the interviewer handing off the phone to an interviewer of the same gender (or scheduled a call-back if there were no other interviewers available).

⁶ See full methodology report for more details about post-stratification weighting.

⁷ The smallest 11 governorates were grouped into one strata accounting for 8.2% of the population. The other 16 governorates acted as individual strata.

associated with governorates, while mobile telephones were selected randomly and not stratified by mobile provider codes.

On July 1st, hours after fieldwork on Phase I concluded, the Egyptian army issued the 48-hour ultimatum to the Egyptian government led by President Mohamed Morsi. On July 3rd, the Egyptian military removed President Morsi and announced the installation of a new civilian government. Due to these major developments, portions of the questionnaire were changed for Phase II of the Egypt Pilot Study, as new questions were added, some questions were revised, and some questions were eliminated. Fieldwork for Phase II began on July 5th and was completed on July 8th. Therefore, although this project was designed to be a two-phase methodological test, the opportune timing provides pre and post Morsi probability based samples.⁸

A general margin for error (MOE) Phase I and Phase 2 can be estimated by assuming a simple random sample, with $p=0.5$ and $n=500$ at the 95% CI level which yields a MOE of 4.38% for each phase.

Research Methodology

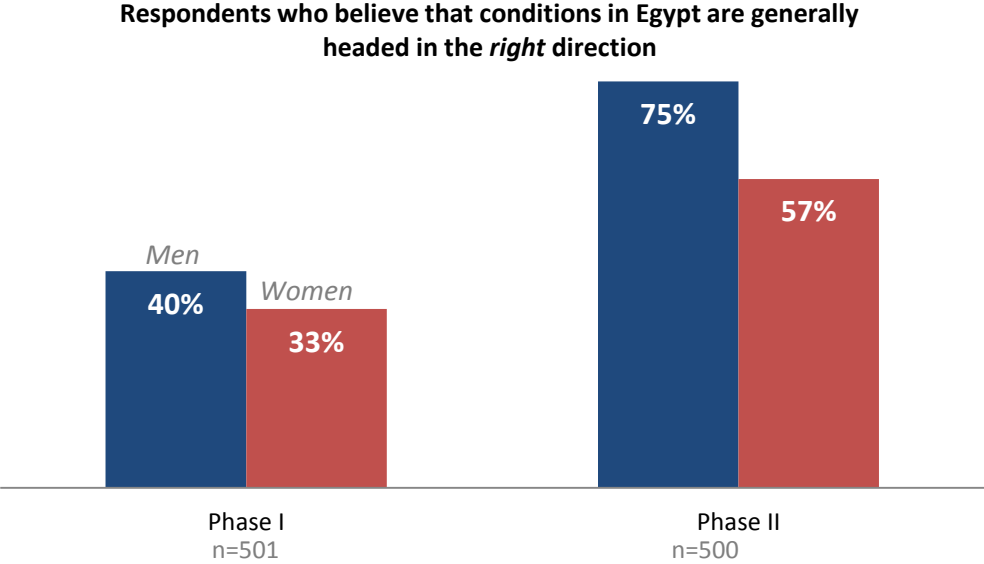
A variety of approaches were used to analyze the shift in opinion before and after the coup. Each phase of the study was viewed as an independent survey and differences in gender were analyzed on a phase by phase basis. Questions with either binary responses (yes / no) or netted Likert responses (very favorable net / very unfavorable net) were tested using a difference of proportions z test. Additionally, tests were conducted for the proportion of respondents who answered the strongest option of a Likert scale by gender in a similar manner. These tests were conducted using the survey package for the statistical software program R, which takes the overall survey design and weighting into consideration when calculating estimates and variances. This approach produces results which are much more conservative than analyzing the data as if it were a simple random sample.

⁸ For more details about fieldwork, please contact the authors for a full methodology report.

Key Findings

Overall, men and women alike report positive attitudes toward the ousting of President Morsi on July 3rd. Seventy percent of those interviewed before the coup said it would be “somewhat good” or “very good” if the armed forces took over for the current government. After the coup, 73% said they support (“strongly support” or “somewhat support”) the removal of President Morsi. Satisfaction with the performance of President Morsi dropped 7% after the coup (from 41% to 34%), and 52% reported a favorable opinion of the installation of the interim government.

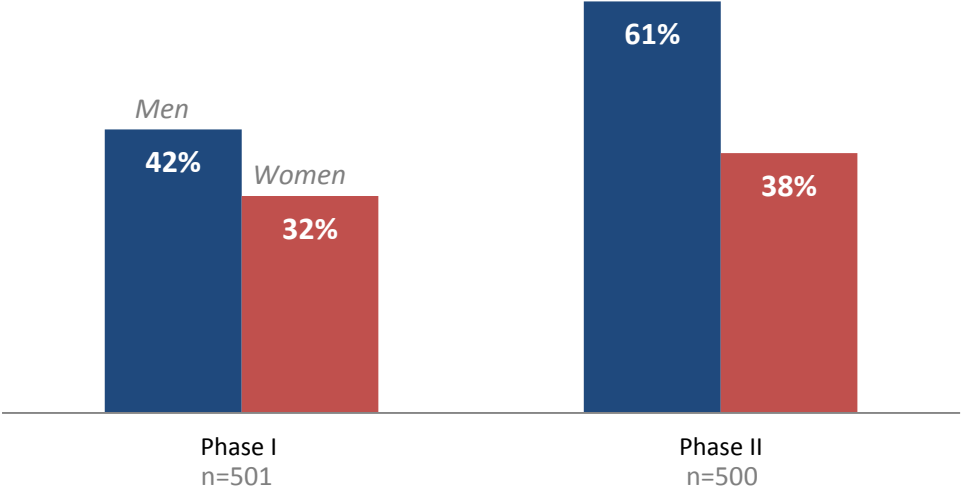
Prior to the military intervention, less than half of respondents (37%) reported that conditions in Egypt were headed in the right direction, while the majority (56%) reported that the country was headed in the wrong direction. After the coup, there was a dramatic shift in respondents’ outlook, with 67% saying Egypt is headed in the right direction. While there was no significant difference between the attitudes of men and women in Phase I, men were significantly more positive than women in Phase II.⁹ Three out of four men (75%) believe Egypt is headed in the right direction compared to just over half of women (57%).



⁹ Proportions test for percentage of respondents who answer “right direction” by gender. See Appendix for test results.

Although both men and women share favorable opinions about the removal of President Morsi, men were considerably more optimistic than women in the days immediately following the coup. This may be attributed to women’s skepticism regarding the country’s progress since the 2011 revolution. When respondents in Phase I were asked about the 2011 revolution, 42% of men and 32% of women said they “strongly agree” that Egypt is making good progress on achieving the goals of the January 25th revolution. After the coup, however, the percentage of men who “strongly agree” that Egypt is making good progress increased from 42% to 61%, while the percentage of women only increased from 32% to 38%.¹⁰ Such noticeable optimism from men is consistent across a number of variables, while women remain more skeptical.

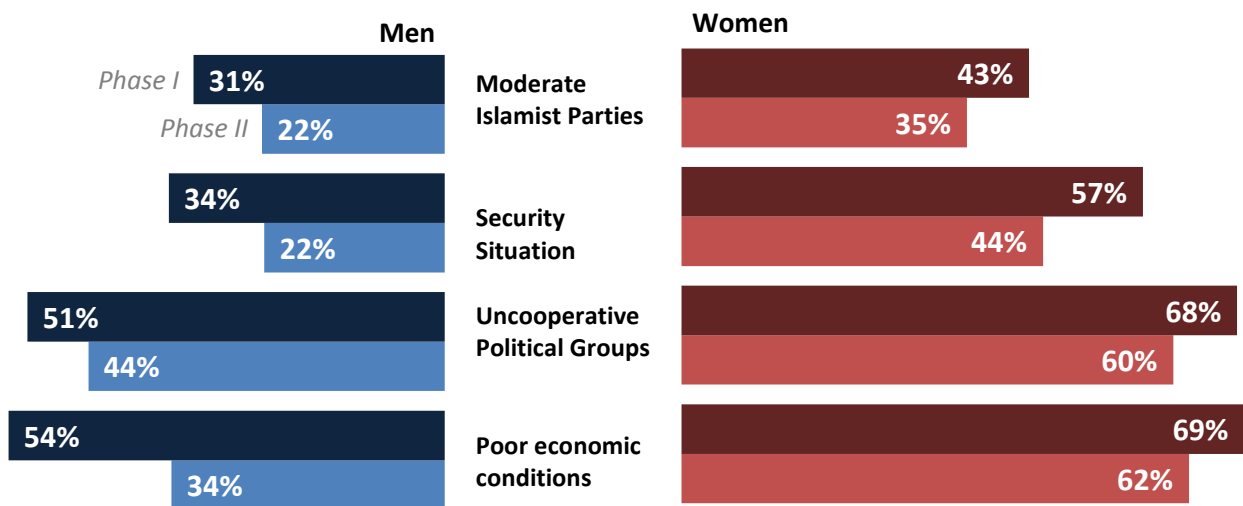
Respondents who "strongly agree" that Egypt is making good progress on achieving the goals of the January 25th revolution



¹⁰ Proportions test for percentage of respondents who answer “strongly agree” by gender. See Appendix for test results.

Respondents were asked a series of questions about issues that may pose a threat to the well-being of Egypt, including the security situation, poor economic conditions, the lack of cooperation among political groups, and a more prominent role of moderate Islamist parties. Respondents in Phase II are less likely to believe these issues are a “great threat” compared to those in Phase I. Although respondents as a whole have more positive perceptions of Egypt’s well-being after the coup, women continue to report more concern than men. For example, the majority of women in Phase II believe uncooperative political groups (60%) and poor economic conditions (62%) are great threats to Egypt, compared to much smaller percentages of men (44% and 34%, respectively).¹¹

Respondents who perceive the following issues to be a "Great Threat" to Egypt



Overall, Egyptians responded positively to the military intervention on July 3rd and men and women shared similar sentiments about the reasons behind the coup. The majority of respondents have an unfavorable opinion of the Muslim brotherhood (62%) and President Morsi (57%). Although perceptions of both men and women were more positive in the days following the coup, perceptions of women remain more skeptical than men. In Phase II, men were significantly more likely than women to say Egypt is headed in the right direction and agree that the country has made progress

¹¹ Proportions test for percentage of respondents who answer “great threat” by gender. See Appendix for test results.

since the 2011 revolution. Meanwhile, women were significantly more likely to perceive economic, political, and security issues as great threats for Egypt.

Limitations and Future Research

Although this paper has reached its aim of exploring gender differences in the Egypt Pilot Study, we acknowledge a number of limitations restricting this study. Since the original purpose of this two phase survey was to experiment with different sampling approaches, the sample size of each phase was limited to approximately 500 interviews. Due to the limited sample size, we could only compare gender differences between Phase I and Phase II. In order to explore gender differences across other demographic items (region, SES, age, education, etc.), we recommend increasing the sample size in future studies.

Another limitation lies in the difference between the Phase I and Phase II questionnaires. Political questions were revised and added in Phase II since the military coup occurred during the intermission between phases. Although the events of July 3rd provided for opportune analysis of public opinion pre and post-Morsi, some questions could not be analyzed longitudinally.

Cultural considerations may limit validity of responses. Based on D3's experience with public opinion surveys in primarily Muslim countries, we are aware that respondents often experience social desirability bias. In Phase II, it may have been socially desirable for respondents to provide positive reactions to the coup because the armed forces openly retaliated against pro-Morsi supporters. It may have also been socially desirable for women to respond positively, as men were overwhelming positive in the days following the coup. In future studies, we would recommend adding open-ended questions that would allow respondents to elaborate on why they have particular political attitudes. Adding qualitative items would allow for more robust analysis about gender differences and may help overcome social desirability bias, as respondents would be encouraged to explain their opinions.

Appendix: Proportions Z-Test Results

Q-1. Do you think that conditions in Egypt generally headed in the right direction or are they headed in the wrong direction?

1. Right direction
 2. Wrong direction
-
8. Refused (vol.)
 9. Don't Know (vol.)

Q1. Right direction (NET) Results

	Phase I	Phase II
Male	0.42	0.78
Female	0.34	0.60
<i>Z-statistic</i>	1.13	2.48
<i>P-value</i>	0.2573	0.00657

Q-2. Do you agree or disagree that Egypt is making good progress on achieving the goals of the January 25th revolution?

1. Strongly agree
 2. Somewhat agree
 3. Somewhat disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
-
8. Refused (vol.)
 9. Don't Know (vol.)

Q2. Strongly Agree (NET) Results

	Phase I	Phase II
Male	0.42	0.61
Female	0.32	0.38
<i>Z-statistic</i>	2.2484	5.1138
<i>P-value</i>	0.1707	0.0014

Q-14. Now I am going to ask you about some possible issues facing Egypt today. Please tell me whether you think they are a great threat, a moderate threat, a small threat, or not at all a threat to the well-being of Egypt. **(RANDOMIZE LIST)**

Threat	Great Threat	Moderate Threat	Small Threat	Not at all a Threat	Refused	DK
a. The security situation in Egypt	1	2	3	4	98	99
b. Poor economic conditions	1	2	3	4	98	99
c. Lack of cooperation among political groups	1	2	3	4	98	99
d. A greater political role for moderate Islamic parties	1	2	3	4	98	99

Q14a. The security situation in Egypt

Great Threat (NET) Results

	Phase I	Phase II
Male	0.34	0.22
Female	0.57	0.44
<i>Z-statistic</i>	-3.34	-3.20
<i>P-value</i>	.0008	0.0007

Q14b. Poor economic conditions

Great Threat (NET) Results

	Phase I	Phase II
Male	0.54	0.34
Female	0.69	0.62
<i>Z-statistic</i>	-2.25	-3.99
<i>P-value</i>	0.0248	<0.0001

Q14c. Lack of cooperation among political groups

Great Threat (NET) Results

	Phase I	Phase II
Male	0.51	0.44
Female	0.68	0.60
<i>Z-statistic</i>	-2.4386	-2.2159
<i>P-value</i>	0.0147	0.0133

Q14d. A greater political role for moderate Islamic parties

Great Threat (NET) Results

	Phase I	Phase II
Male	0.31	0.22
Female	0.43	0.35
<i>Z-statistic</i>	-1.6759	-1.8119
<i>P-value</i>	0.0938	0.0350