CHILD LABOUR IN OLD CAIRO AND THE ROLES CHILDREN NEGOTIATE THROUGH WORK, LEISURE AND FAMILY BONDS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at 49 child labourers from a poor district in Old Cairo, Egypt and how they negotiate their roles. The children are all employed by the pottery factories in Old Cairo, and work six days a week for an average of 11 hours a day. Most of these children have never received any formal education and are under the legal age of employment. The thesis will explore the children’s interactions with their families, friends and employers through the use of case studies, structured interviews and photo-elicitation. Most of the children attended a centre run by a local NGO that was geared to enhance their skills as artists, attending every week on Fridays, their only day off. The age range studied was from 9 to 15 years of age.

The families of these child labourers depend on them financially, just as the children depend on their parents for security and nurturing. Child labourers participate actively within their own lives, constantly negotiating constraints and rights that they believe are important to them. Families actively seek what is best for the family as a unit, which includes preserving the pride of the family at all costs.

Education is continually contrasted against the children’s employment, yet education comes with many hidden costs and with longer term gains. For the child labourers and their families the here and now is what dictates what is most suitable for the families. Children’s rights, based on conventions and legislations in the Arab world, have very little weight compared to the traditional customs that families apply to their own situation.

While child labour, specifically hazardous labour, is not the ideal place for children to inhabit, it is also by many accounts their choice to continue in the role. The child labourers had voices and, when asked, speak about their hopes and dreams. Many, specifically boys, stated their preference to stay within the labour market. It is therefore the aim of this thesis to represent the voices and describe the lives of these children, as well as to address their ability to follow and negotiate for their rights.
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<td>AUC</td>
<td>American University in Cairo</td>
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<td>CAPMAS</td>
<td>Central agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, Egypt</td>
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<td>CIDA</td>
<td>Canadian International Development Fund</td>
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<td>CSPAD</td>
<td>Centre for Studies and Programs of Alternative Development</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>EIU</td>
<td>Economist Intelligence Unit</td>
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<td>ERSAP</td>
<td>Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>IPEC</td>
<td>International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour</td>
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<td>IREWOC</td>
<td>International Research on Working Children</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>NHASD</td>
<td>New Horizon Association for Social Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>OHCHR</td>
<td>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>PBUH</td>
<td>Blessings and Peace be upon him (Muhammad)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCREAM</td>
<td>Supporting Children’s Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
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Ahl | Kin, extended family, tribe.
Ahl-al Bait | Family of the Prophet, or can signify a modern meaning of those living in the house.
Bait | House.
Hadith | The meaning of the Hadith was revealed to the Prophet by God which he revealed to his followers in his own words.
Ijtihad | Reasoned interpretation of the Quran, Hadith and Sunah.
I'sa | Family
Khawagaya | Foreigner
Ola | A pottery urn used to keep water cool for drinking.
Quran | The book of God.
Shari'ah | Islamic rule of law.
Shisha | Water pipe for smoking tobacco.
Sunah | The examples of the Prophet’s life, which include sayings of the prophet and the way he conducted his life.
Surah | Chapter in the Quran.
Um | Mother
I would first like to thank my Mother, Ms. Mirvet Abou Shabanah, for all her support, without it I would not have begun the Ph.D. process or persisted through it and my Grandparents who always pushed me to start the process. I would also like to thank and dedicate this thesis to the 18 families in Old Cairo and the 49 children that inspired me to write their stories. My thanks extends to my supervisors Dr. Jane Fielding and Dr. Jo Moran-Ellis for their persistence and vision and to Ms Agnes McGill for all her assistance throughout my years at the University of Surrey. To Dr. Nadia Atif who always challenged me further to think outside the parameters I set. To Mr. John Zada for bringing to my attention the problem of child labour in Egypt. To Dr. Ahmed Abdullah, may God rest his soul, for his dedication throughout his life to find ways to help the marginalized children of Old Cairo. To Mr. Shaaban Zaki for his endless devotion to the children of Old Cairo. I would also like to thank Dr. Aly Mansour, Mrs. Mona Fahmy, Ms. Mariam Mansour, Mr. Mustafa Mansour and Ms. Marwa Mansour for their support in helping me get to the finish line. To Ms. Fatma Ibrahim for her constant devotion to everyone in our family. I would like to also show my appreciation to New Horizon for Social Development for their successful interventions aimed at helping the families in Old Cairo. To the Centre for Studies and Programs of Alternative Development for their efforts in helping me get to know the area and child labourer's in Old Cairo. To Ms. Maureen Issa for being a constant pillar of optimism and encouragement, and for always being there through all the trials and tribulations of living in Cairo. To all the people at the World Health Organization, specifically Dr. Haytham Khayat, Dr. Ghada Hafez, Dr. Said Arnaout and Ms. Joanna Vogel who extended their hand to help the children in this thesis and beyond. I would like to especially thank Dr. Kumars Khoshchashm for all his wonderful words of wisdom, brilliant sense of humour, constructive criticism and poignant poetry, as well as his instance that I just finish! I would like to also thank Dr. Suad Joseph for teaching me the importance of the family in any research on the child and to Dr. Sherifa Zuhur who always believed I could go this far. I would like to also thank all my amazingly supportive friends, Mr. Art Johnson, Ms. Aysha Ahmed, Mr. Loai Omran, Dr. Sirkka Koukamine, and Dr. Simon McCarthy. I thank everyone who inspired and helped in my path.
I would like to dedicate this thesis to the voiceless children, may you one day be heard...
Chapter One

Introduction: Children in Egypt
1.1 Introduction

Children all over the world possess and share similar characteristics. Whether in Egypt, Latin America or elsewhere, the differences that affect children are the environmental and social networks within which they are born and raised. In Egypt, there are significant gaps between classes; this is reflected in the services and privileges afforded to children, which determines their socioeconomic opportunities in life. Children who are poor and have very little access to basic needs will in many instances end up working to help their families subsist. Based on this premise, the object of this thesis is to understand how these child labourers flow between adult domains and behaviours and negotiate their lived realities within the agency of childhood and that of adulthood. To do this, one must examine the socioeconomic, political and demographic factors that lead children to the labour market.

The study conducted for this research is on children who are brought up in the poorer neighbourhoods, deprived even from the essentials of life including basic shelter, water and sanitation, medicines, and proximity to basic health care services and education. The lower class neighbourhoods where the poorer children are born and raised are built casually. They mostly consist of shacks or clay huts placed next to one another at random; there is not the aesthetic convergence that occurs when trees are planted or a playground is created, there is just dust. Poverty breeds hunger, overcrowding and disease which in turn create hardship for the people contained in such conditions. Arab families work as a unit; as such, families do what is best for the family which may mean sending one of their children to work and another to school. Neither is seen as better than the other but rather what is in the best interest of the family as a whole.

There are no roads between these makeshift dwellings, but rather passages that are rarely straight for more than few meters and which are made according to the discretion of the neighbourhood occupants. No vehicles could ever enter the poor neighbourhoods as the passages are too narrow. In these winding passages are children who labour and survive. This research was conducted with those children in mind. These conditions create an
environment where the need for children to work is present. Poverty, with all its meanings, is the main factor in locating children in the labour market. These factors are influenced by the microeconomic and political policies which exist in Egypt. Thus to understand children in the labour market and their families in Egypt, an examination of the country from the micro level is relevant before revisiting the macro structure of the family unit.

1.2 Demography and People

Egypt lies in the North East Coast of Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, stretching between Libya and Gaza, and in the south bordering Sudan (see Illustration 1.1). Its people are mostly made up of a Hamitic race, 88% Sunni Muslims and the rest mostly Coptic Christians (Wikipedia (2006). The country is divided into 26 governorates with 97 percent of the population living around the Nile Delta (UNICEF, 2002b). Less than six percent of the country is habitable.

Egypt produces: crude oil and petroleum products, cotton, textiles, metal products, chemicals, cotton, rice, corn, wheat, beans, fruits, vegetables; cattle, water buffalo, sheep, goats, textiles, food processing, tourism, chemicals, hydrocarbons, construction, cement, and metals; the European Union is its strongest trading partner (CIA, 2001). Two-thirds of the world’s antiquities can be found within Egypt’s borders, as well as the oldest university in the world, al-Azhar, cementing its long tradition of culture and heritage. Its importance in the world’s political arena has been proven throughout the centuries and its relevance as a pioneer in many fields for the Arab world makes it a country rich for any field study.
1.3 A Brief History of Modern Egypt

In 1952 a group of military officials known as the Free Officers changed Egypt from a kingdom to a republic. The revolution, while peaceful in its introduction, dramatically changed the socio-economic makeup of the country. Egypt within a few short years was transformed from a feudalistic agrarian society to an industrialized socialist economy, displacing the leading elite from their stronghold over the country. Industry accounted for only 10 percent of the GDP in 1952, cotton was the leading commodity produced, and the new regime set out to redistribute the land and industrialize the country. All investments, which were mainly in the hands of non-Egyptians, were nationalized including the Suez Canal. Industry doubled within two years and structural development
programmes such as the high dam were constructed, but this led to “surplus labour, low productivity and the shortcomings of bureaucratic planning. Waves of nationalization and greater state control led to complacent disregard of competition” (Vatikiotis, 1991:398).

By 1967, having been through two wars, Egypt was on the brink of bankruptcy. By 1977, during the presidency of Anwar Sadat (1970-1981), a peace plan was a necessity and a relaxing of the import laws, known as the open door policy, was adopted. Egypt began to move forward in a new climate of peace. However with the assassination of President Sadat, the country was thrown into a period of retraction by the new president and a time of caution (Vatikiotis, 1991).

1.4 The Economic Dilemma

Today, President Husni Mubarek (1981-currently) remains the leader of the country and under his twenty-five years in office Egypt has had a number of strong infrastructural programs implemented but faces great challenges. Unfortunately, due to various political and economic crises Egypt has had a number of setbacks - the ever growing population - 1.8 fertility rate (UNFPA, 2006:98) - has now reached 75.4 million (UNFPA, 2006:) creates a heavy burden on a country with a GDP of US$ 92.8 billion (EIU, 2005:22). Thus the social sectors such as education, social services, health, and others have suffered dramatically (UNICEF, 2002b).

In 1991, under a new initiative from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Egypt embarked on an Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program (ERSAP). ‘The ERSAP was meant shift the current Egyptian economy’ from a “centrally planned economy with a relatively small private sector to a decentralized, market based and outward oriented economy in which the private sector plays the leading role” (ILO, 2001:1). During the first five years of the plan the economy stabilized, although this may not have been completely due to the policy, as a $10 billion loan was written off by the United States as a reward for Egypt’s participation in the Gulf War effort. The direct
result of ERSAP has been a severe shortage of employment as the government began to
lay off employees under an early retirement scheme, due to its new adopted policy of
privatization. Those that were laid off had very few skills appropriate to the new private
market sector; consequently, women were affected a great deal more than men.

As the international markets began to crash, beginning with the Asian crisis, Egypt began
to feel the impact (EIU, 2006). The effects of September 11, 2001 have been by far the
most disastrous on the economy; tourism shrunk and in a service industry that made up
49 percent of total GDP this has caused a number of hardships (EIU, 2006). The
economic situation since then has begun to improve and inflation in the country has
began to finally subside after

the pass-through effect of the large nominal depreciations of 2001 to 2003,
inflation rose. Measured by the consumer price index, inflation remained
close to 12% from May to December 2004, while the wholesale price
index was 17% over the same period. Inflation started declining from the
end of 2004, bringing 12-month rates of inflation to below 7% in early
2005, and is projected to decline further to around 5% in 2006

However, during 2001 to 2003, the Egyptian government faced a number of economic
obstacles such as the easing of restrictions and taxation on imported goods which made it
difficult to maintain or attract foreign investment in the country. Large infrastructural
projects were halted as the government was the sole guarantor, but with the Egyptian
pound in disarray during the same period the government was unable to continue to
guarantee such projects, which led to a decline in the construction industry which “grew
2% in 2004/05, down from 4.7% in 2003/04” (EIU, 2006:32).

The Egyptian pound was floated in January 2003, after having been
pegged to the dollar for almost a decade since ERSAP. Following some
serious fluctuations, the black market rate converged towards the bank rate
by the second half of 2004. In December 2004, the government formally
launched an interbank market for foreign exchange among banks and
flexibility in exchange rate setting was restored (UNDP, 2002:87).

1 The early retirement scheme did not include any specified age group, thus a woman of twenty years of age
could leave work under this plan.
The Ministry of Planning reported that unemployment rates were at 11 percent in 2003 and declined to 10 percent in 2005 (UNDP, 2002:101). “It is estimated that GDP will have to grow by 6% to 7% to fully absorb the labor [sic] force, which is projected to grow by up to 3% per year for the next two decades” (UNDP, 2002:101). In the 1990s, 42 percent of all job growth was in the public sector, accounting for 28.6% of all employment in 2003 (UNDP, 2005:102).

Governance in Egypt has also affected the economic stability and has fended off foreign investment. Although, Egypt has comprehensive local governance the system is still centralized.

The country’s 26 governorates are divided into 133 districts, each of which contains one major town and between four and eight village councils representing a main village and several smaller satellites. Working parallel to the central government, every governorate, district and village council has an appointed executive officer; an appointed executive council, composed of ex officio advisers who control financing and administration; and a popular council of representatives elected by residents. Local communities depend on central financial subsidy, and the degree of local democracy hinges on individual governors. These officials, appointed and removed at the whim of the president, are responsible to the prime minister in his role as chairman of the Supreme Council for Local Administration. Governors of the most important provinces, notably Cairo, Giza and Alexandria, have ministerial rank (EIU, 2006:28).

In reality, the government is burdened with archaic bureaucracy and corruption has weakened its role for effective management.

1.5 The Shackles of Poverty

It is impossible to measure the extent of abject poverty in Egypt (ILO, 2001).

Poverty estimates showed that, in 1999/2000, overall poverty in Egypt stood at 20.15 percent, using the lower poverty line. Thus almost 12 million could not satisfy their basic food and non-food needs. The poverty gap index was 3.78 percent, implying an average poverty deficit of the poor of L.E.206 ($36). Using the upper poverty line, overall poverty in
Egypt rises to 52.06 percent, representing almost 32 million individuals (ILO, 2001:10).

However, samples carried out on small portions of the population show in some areas that those living on under $2 per day have reached almost 70 percent (CSPAD, 2002). Another survey conducted in 2005, in al-Fawakhir and Batn al-Baqurah by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization showed 77.7 percent lived under $1 a day (WHO and MOHP, 2005).

Egypt, today finds itself with the highest number of people under the poverty belt within the Arab region; it has pledged to try to alleviate and reduce poverty among its people though this seems rather unlikely in the immediate future. Those living under the line of poverty have very few choices in life. Many social programmes today are simply unable to contribute the resources that families need. In turn, this has left many families in a complex situation, forcing them to abandon their traditional agrarian way of life in the southern parts of the country for the promise of better opportunities in the urban centres, specifically Cairo. Cairo's population has grown from 2 million in 1952 to approximately 20 million (University of Texas, 1995) at the present time, all inhabiting an area of 12,780 km² (Egyptian State Information Service, 2001). The city is unable to withstand the pressures of 30% of its population living in an area that was designed for 4 million (see illustration 1.2).

The Egyptian population was an estimated 69.5 million as of mid-year 2001. Children (0-19 years old) constitute almost half (45 per cent) of the population, and young children (0-4 years old) constitute 12 per cent. Historically, the rate of population growth in Egypt has been very high, placing huge pressure on the country's scarce resources. Between 1975 and 2001, the population increased by an estimated 88 percent, or an average of over 1.25 million persons per year. Although there has been a decrease in the fertility rate in recent years, available statistics suggest that total fertility remains as high as 3.9 children per woman (Gazaleh, Bulbul, Hewala, and Najim, 2004:1).
The Egyptian government maintains that it has reduced fertility rates yet the evidence in low income communities shows otherwise. Large families have fewer opportunities in rural communities so they move to the urban centres. As always, poverty is linked to high fertility rates and the average number of children in a family in Cairo has remained at five (WHO, 2004).

The mass exodus of migrants to the urban centres has been labelled by the donor community as the ‘ruralization of urban areas’ a term that has also meant the migrant
workers imposing their traditions on the environment surrounding them. The rapid urbanization has allowed 44 per cent of the population living in Egypt to migrate to the urban centres (Gazaleh, et al, 2004).

They usually reside with or near their relatives, forming foci of interrelated families. They work mostly in the informal sector, earning low and unsteady wages. They have limited social and economic mobility. Many still keep strong contacts with their rural relatives and send them financial support (Yousry and Atta, 1997:9).

Migrants bring other migrants from their villages setting up replicas of their villages in squatter areas all over Cairo. The first migrant might be working as a superintendent of a building or house; he will then bring his family, who will live with him in one room. In the industrial areas, such as the pottery area, which is the focus of this study, it is very common to find that the sample population comprises of a handful of families making up thousands of residents. They are all squatters, who are constantly being threatened with eviction by the government and yet they grow and more join them from their rural villages. The situation has escalated as agricultural land is lost every year, to the extent that many families live alongside the dead in the cemeteries that occupy one third of the old city of Cairo. These families have managed not only to export their traditions and daily life to the cities but also have been quite resourceful in getting water and electricity into their communities (WHO, 2004).

By maintaining the set traditions, migrant workers tend to reproduce as many children as in their agrarian villages, yet in the urban setting this is causing overcrowding and, more importantly, lack of viable economic opportunities. These families cannot educate their children as they can barely maintain them physically. The solution is to place the older children in the labour market in order to cope with the reality of the economic environment (Yousry and Atta, 1997).
1.6 Education as a System

"Studies indicate that early childhood programs directly contribute to social mobility and breaking the cycle of poverty" (UNDP, 2002:66). Egyptian law since 1923 has stated that education is a compulsory right. Literacy rates are improving gradually, 56.2 percent of all adults above the age of 15 are literate (UNDP, 2005:215). President Abd al-Nasser’s (1954-1970) socialist system era introduced incentives that encouraged college graduates to get a degree, which was followed by a guaranteed job in the public sector (Hoodfar, 1999). The socialist system of the 1960s caused an increasing rate of disguised unemployment among the work force (Ibid). In the 1970s, President Sadat tried to correct the mistake of the 1960s by diverting the Egyptian economy towards the capitalist system, utilizing what was coined as the open-economic-door policy promoted by the International Monetary Fund (Ibid). The economic open-door policy created a new elite and a backlash ensued when President Mubarek came to power, reverting the country to a closed economy until the early 1990s when ERSAP was introduced by the IMF. The Egyptian government failed to privatise many of its public assets until 2005, when it began to relinquish more of its public holdings (EIU, 2006). The increase in population, coupled by the rise in college graduates has led to an economic crisis. Unemployment is slowly on the rise from 8.1 percent in 1999 to 11.2 percent in 2005 (EIU, 2006). Among college graduates it is even higher, "at almost 40% for men and over 50% for women. Underemployment is estimated to affect between one-third and one-half of all workers (EIU, 2006:27).

Egypt, since 1991, has been committed to raising literacy and child enrolment in the schools.

The rigid education system, with its emphasis on rote learning over critical thinking and its ranks of poorly paid and trained teachers, is failing to supply the labour market with the necessary skills. Illiteracy has fallen gradually but is still high, with the adult literacy rate standing at 55.6% in 2003, according to the UNDP, up from 47.1% in 1990. Moreover, within the key 15-24 age group, the literacy rate was still only 73.2%. Egyptian official figures show the total number of illiterate persons falling from
12.7m in 2003 to a still-substantial 10.9m in 2006 (of whom approximately 70% were women) (EIU, 2006:16).

Unfortunately, despite all its efforts the country lacks the resources to do so and has been unable to achieve any success in this field. Formally, the attendance statistic for primary school is 100 percent (UNDP, 2002b), with 98 percent remaining until 5th grade (UNICEF, 2000b). Unfortunately the reality is quite different according to numerous NGO surveys. Parents facing high expenses associated with schooling their children reach a point by the 5th grade where they extract their children from the system, and while five years of schooling according to UNICEF is what determines a literate status (UNICEF, 2002b), in reality, this may not be enough. “There also is developing country evidence suggesting that most low-income family children leaving primarily school even after several years have not attained functional literacy” (Myers, 2001:45).

Compulsory education in Egypt ends after the 5th grade. The second stage of a child’s education is known as ‘Idadaya, and although this level remains compulsory, attendance drops to 74 percent (UNDP, 2002b). The final stage of a child’s education is non-compulsory, and is known as Sanawayya. Statistics show that there is a further drop in children’s attendance to 18.1 percent (UNDP, 2002b). According to UNDP, the ratio of girls to boys in the ‘Idadaya stage is almost 1:2; whereas in the tertiary level the ratio of girls to boys drops to 1:2.5 (UNDP, 2002b).

Schools remain over crowded which makes it difficult for teachers to teach and children to comprehend.

Currently 40% of the schools have a class density far exceeding the average of 40 children per classroom; in fact many classes reach 80 students which makes learning of any kind virtually impossible. In addition to classroom crowdedness the kinds of furniture used are not fitting for activity-based learning. That is why reducing class density to an average of 40 children per classroom and creating more space for children to learn with quality, is recommended. A total of LE 12.7 billion is required for providing more classrooms and their appropriate furniture (UNDP, 2002:20).

2 All UNDP attendance statistics are based on a 1995 year.
In addition, teachers are poorly paid and tend to lack proper qualifications.

The Ministry of Education (MOE), as the main provider of in-service teacher training, does not have the capacity to cater for the training needs of all employees, even within the traditional parameters. This has led to the adoption of the one size fits all strategy whereby all teachers receive the same training at the same time irrespective of the wide variation of their qualifications (only 46% of employed teachers are graduates of Faculties of Education) (UNDP, 2002:64).

The socioeconomics of the household play a significant part in attendance of both boys and girls, but particularly with girls enrolment (Population Council, 2000). Lower income families tend to put less value on education. “Work and Marriage were rarely stated as main reasons for leaving school among boys and girls, respectively, which undermines long established beliefs and stereotypes about Egyptians placing work and marriage high in the order of major factors competing with education” (Population Council, 2000:73). This is not to say that economics are not a factor in dropout rates of children from schools, but it is not seen as a direct reason, based on the Adolescence and Social Change in Egypt (ASCE) survey conducted by the Population Council. Parents are finding very little value associated with continuing children’s education and thus are more willing to allow their children to follow a vocation rather than continue in an endeavour that is not guaranteed to raise their standard (Rugh, 1985).

For the most part, education is provided free of charge in Egyptian public schools. However, households incur some direct and indirect costs. Direct costs include expenditures on school supplies (e.g., uniforms and books), on transportation, and on some user charges instituted by the Ministry of Education since the 1980s. There are also costs arising from the pervasive practice of group and private tutoring. Indirect costs consist essentially of the opportunity cost of time spent in school (World Bank, 2004).

Overcrowding in schools, families income and teacher’s lack of motivation and qualifications make it difficult for children to remain in the school system if the labour market looks more inviting.
I have described the larger national policies and realities that affect the Egyptian child labourers’ families. I would like to turn the discussion back to the families which play a key role the child labourers’ life choices and lived realities.

1.7 The Egyptian Family Nucleus

To create a family in Egypt, a man must marry a woman and have children. Families cannot exist without marriage or children, and neither can children be born without marriage or live without families. While children are born without mothers being married, the incidences are low and the both the mothers and their children are ostracized by the society they live among. The same is true for a husband and wife who do not have children; again, society is relentless in questioning their inability to conceive.

Thus, marriage in Egypt is a highly regarded institution and is seen as a part of a religious duty. When Egyptian couples marry, the culture prescribes that the groom acquires their residence, pay a dowry and purchases an engagement ring. The monetary value of these requirements is set by the families of the bride and groom, based on what the groom can provide. The bride and her family then take the dowry and buy the furnishings for the household. The tradition and customs related to marriage differ slightly from one municipality to another.

In the last decade, marriage has become a hurdle for most young men and women beginning their lives together, as the lack of economic opportunities have increasingly put marriage on hold. Couples are having longer engagements or simply not getting married as early. In contrast, this has not been a hurdle for the lower socioeconomic classes who according to the ASCE survey have continued to engage in early marriages and childbirth possibly due to a stronger traditional system. “The survey found that childbearing increases throughout the teenage years, from less than 1 percent among 15-year-olds to 9 percent among 17-year-olds to a full 25 percent among 19-year-olds” (Population Council, 1998:39). These statistics indicate a number of health concerns,
which remove women from the educational system and thus perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

The government has prohibited early marriages where the minimum age must be 16 years. Unfortunately, families that decide to marry off their girls that have not reached the age of 16 either do not produce a birth certificate for the girl or delay registration of the marriage until she is of age (Population Council, 1998:39).

In lower socioeconomic classes, the family structure is vital for the survival of the family. Mothers who are uneducated instil a fierce loyalty within their children and tend to be quite attentive to their offspring’s needs. They also rely quite heavily on older children to take care of the younger ones (UNICEF, 2002b). Eighty percent of adolescents feel that they have a say and that their opinions are taken into consideration, according to the ASCE survey (Population Council, 2000).

Divorce in Egypt is increasing, changing the structure of the nuclear family. Female headed households are also increasing, but predominantly a grandparent or a male sibling of one of the parents becomes the head of the household. This is also the case when the father is unable to work or find employment. Adolescents are also taking on the burden of providing for the household either in the presence of the father or without it. Studies conducted in the Arab world show that, for a number of reasons, men are not fulfilling their roles as providers within the families, and women are being forced to take on the roles of both provider and nurturer (Gubrium and Holstein, 1990). Although, the paradigm that has become universally known as the family tends to include a two parent household, and only recently accounted for both being gainfully employed. “We now speak of the family paradigm as a central organizer of its shared constructs, sets, expectations, and fantasies about its social world” (Gubrium and Holstein, 1990:41). The breakdown of the family, however, has caused a serious setback for women, since they have not been equipped with the necessary tools to survive in a patriarchal culture.

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3 The legal age to wed is 16 years.
4 This is based on anecdotal evidence.
Some traditions reserved for safeguarding families stem from superstitious beliefs. It is thought with a name a curse can placed on a member of the family, thus many families take precautions to ensure against such occurrences.

It is very common to see children in this country [Egypt] with a charm against the evil eye, enclosed in a case, generally of a triangular form, attached to the top of the cap; and horses often have similar appendages. The Egyptians take many precautions against the evil eye; and anxiously endeavour to avert its imagined consequences (Lane, 2003:249).

During this study a number of parents showed evidence of such superstition (presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven), refusing to give me their names and preferring not to be photographed.

1.8 Labour versus Work

Child labour in Egypt involves, by some informal estimates, 3 million children (U.S. Department of Labour, 1998); however, official statistics report less than half a million children working. In 1988 the number of children under 14 in the labour force was reported at 1.3 million according to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS). The US Department of Labor conducted a study mandated by the US Congress to investigate child labour worldwide. Then by 1995, the number of working children dropped to 361,300 (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998). The data collection methodology had simply been changed and did not “include a specific module for collecting in-depth information on child labour” (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998). The problem, according to the Egyptian government, had simply taken care of itself despite the country’s economic crisis. El-Deeb, who had prepared the CAPMAS report, stated at a UNICEF Conference on Children, that the numbers had been skewed as CAPMAS had simply removed an intricate part of the household survey that was meant to gauge an estimate of working children. “The precipitous drop in the number of child labourers and their percentage of the work force has been attributed to changes in data collection methodology and accuracy” (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998). Today, there
is no government census that can give a clear and precise data that explains the extent of children in the Egyptian labour force, this despite the Egyptian Government being a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Many of the working children, boys and girls, are employed in the agricultural sector seasonal and annual jobs. Other sources of employment are also available especially in the urban centres. Unfortunately, all employment offered to children under the age of 16 is illegal and considered part of the informal labour market and thus cannot be accounted for (Social Research Centre, 2003).

Working from within, the informal labour market has a devastating effect on children as there is no overseeing body to maintain the wellbeing of these children. A child under the age of 16, according to international and Egyptian law, is not to be employed in any hazardous labour; despite that, the reality is quite different. Children in Egypt are constantly exposed to dangers and, if the effect is not realized immediately, it becomes evident as they grow older when various maladies take their toll on them as adults. Long working hours, poor wages, appalling working conditions, abuse by employers are some of the many hazards children are exposed to daily (Population Council, 1998).

1.9 International Conventions for Change

There are a number of agents for change working to ratify or at the least improve the lives of these children. Children in the labour force are a fact that cannot be disputed or denied, for these children play a vital role in the survival of the family. It is irrational to define a child in abstract terms, there children have real lives and those that depend on them. Another discrepancy is the western notion of dependency. A child may be a dependant by western definition, but “in other times, and places, children have routinely been expected to contribute to the household economy” (Panter-Brick, 2000:7). “In many places, work for children between the ages of six and twelve plays a major part in their development, being vital to the child’s acquisition of skills, sense of self-worth, and
family relationships. It is not play or schoolwork which takes precedence but economically productive labour” (Panter-Brick, 2000:8).

UNICEF defined child labour to include:

- Full-time work at too early an age
- Too many hours spent working
- Work that exerts undue physical, social, or psychological stress
- Work and life on the streets in bad conditions
- Inadequate pay
- Too much responsibility
- Work that hampers access to education
- Work that undermines children’s dignity and self-esteem, such as slavery or bonded labour and sexual exploitation
- Work that is detrimental to social and psychological development (UNICEF, 1996:24).

A distinction is made between child labour and child work. Child work is considered any work that does not interfere with a children’s development or harm them in any way, but can provide an added source of income to a family. Child labour as defined previously is much more hazardous to a child’s development and is thus unacceptable to the welfare of children (UNICEF, 2001).

The UN Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC) recommends that children should be given protection and allowed to thrive in a family environment. The CRC stresses that children should be exposed to: “the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity” OHCHR (1997-2003). While the CRC has been a noble effort on behalf of children, it still falls short of giving children tangible rights. The Convention has succeeded in acting as a basis for states, NGOs and academics to speak about and investigate the rights of children. On the other hand it has failed to force countries to implement any of its recommendations. Another criticism of the CRC has been its failure to allow children’s voices to be heard, even though in its very body, the CRC calls for this practice to be carried out.
Many Muslim countries chose to add amendments that in many ways nullified their adherence to the treaty. The idea behind allowing countries to ratify the treaties with amendments is based on the concept that at least they are party to an international, binding agreement. Unfortunately, where the CRC fails is in the implementation aspect; whilst it is quite strict on the rights and preservation of the integrity of the child, there is no body to enforce such a theoretical framework.

1.10 A Centre for Change

Studying children and assessing their needs in order to create a better future has become the concern of a number of NGOs. One such organization, The Centre for Studies and Programs of Alternative Development (CSPAD), had taken on such a task in Old Cairo among children working in pottery factories. CSPAD was created from the concept that any child labourer could harbour a great deal of talent but just needs someone to harness it. A gifted child labourer was discovered in Old Cairo over twenty years ago, and with the guidance of a few artisans he became one of the world’s leading potters. Mohamed Mandur has become the model of what CSPAD had hoped to achieve with the children they have tried to help.

CSPAD created a centre in Old Cairo to train 24 children, 11 girls and 13 boys, in reading, writing and art. Every day these children went to the pottery factories and worked on menial tasks, never learning any skills and literacy. These young children who were gifted and eager to learn when given the proper environment, wanted to succeed like their role model Mohamed Mandur.

The NGO Centre that was created also tried to ensure the children’s health and wellbeing was constantly maintained and improved. In Egypt, malnutrition in children was a concern (UNICEF, 2000) and thus the idea of serving a warm meal was essential to the plan. The children were encouraged to play and enjoy themselves even while learning. In this venue the children negotiate a more relaxed relationship with adults. Thus the concept of feeding the mind and body was constantly emphasized by CSPAD.
1.11 Child Labourers’ Roles and Relations

The NGO Centre\(^5\) empowered the working children in several ways. The NGO Centre started by offering literacy classes which the working children needed as most of them had dropped out of school by the age of 9. NGO Centre also tried to enhance the marketable talents among the working children by discovering and harnessing what the children would create in their free activity sessions. The NGO Centre propagated children’s labour rights in order to optimize the protection of the working children in that area. On the social level, the NGO Centre recommended family interactions and had even promised to eventually invite parents to come and attend special literacy sessions that would be designed for them.

The fluidity of the relationships between children and adults could be seen through interdependencies which were constantly negotiated over space and time (James, Jenks, Prout, 1998). Children learned various strategies in order to negotiate their boundaries, such as avoidance and coping (Punch, 2001). The order of the child within the family was rather vital as it is assumed that the children belonged and were owned by the family (Oakley, 1994). Yet the children negotiated within those parameters to find their niches, moving through the winding paths unscathed.

1.12 Chapters

In Chapter Two, I shall develop the construct of the child as a relevant and active participant in their lived realities. This will be established through the available literature on the generational approach toward the construction of a child, the CRC and finally the role of the child within a Muslim, Egyptian state. Although, both Chapter Two and Three will tackle the literature on the child, Chapter Two will focus on establishing the child as an active participant who has a voice that should be heard, as stated by the CRC.

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\(^5\) CSPAD’s Centre will be here on referred to as the NGO Centre.
In Chapter Three, I will investigate the definition of child labour and the differences in definitions. Through the available literature on child labour, I shall investigate the determinants of child labour, families and children’s role in participating in the labour market as well as the different types of labour that exist around the world and in Egypt specifically. I shall also describe the different types of tasks in which the child labourers are employed. The latent affects of child labour will be looked at. Finally, I shall describe the legislation and country specific context.

In Chapter Four, I will explore the qualitative and quantitative methodologies that are used to conduct the research to gain a much perspective on the child labourers’ lives. As such, structured interviews, visual methodology and case studies will be used. I shall also describe the practical aspects of doing field research with children in Egypt.

Chapter Five will begin to analyse the data produced from the research and detail the roles that child labourers negotiate within their lived realities. As the children grow older they gain additional income and can sustain themselves on their own quite easily, yet many chose to remain within the security of their families. The importance of this chapter to the thesis is that it will describe the arena of participation and interaction in which the children attempt to thrive to ensure their for families’ survival.

Chapter Six will analyse the data produced from the research on the children’s use of their leisure time. Although this was a sparse commodity, the children cherished this time to play with their friends and siblings. The gender difference will be explored in children’s usage of their time and where they were permitted to go for their leisure.

Chapter Seven will explore the families’ roles in the child labourers’ lives. The children’s need for the families’ security is weighed against the families’ need for their children’s loyalty. Children felt close to their families and fulfilled their obligation and responsibilities toward their families.
Finally, Chapter Eight will lay out the prospective gained by the research. The patterns of behaviour that the children exhibited as they negotiated from one agency to another and the resiliency that the children showed toward the harshness of their environments will be concluded.

1.13 Thesis Statement

Children in the Arab world are an integral part of the family structure and unit, and the same can be said for families that simply are unable to survive without offsprings. Thus, any study of child labour in the Arab world must reflect the role of the family in the child labourer’s life and the child labourer’s role in the family must be examined as well. While children’s voices must be heard so must those of the families that raise them, for in the Arab world there is no separation of families from children as there is no separation of children from families. I chose to examine this complex, symbiotic relationship of child labourers and their families, as well as how children negotiate their roles in their environment, in order to present an alternative to how child labourers have been viewed in the past, particularly to contribute to both the Arab sociology of the child and to find ways and means of combating hazardous child labour.

The children’s ages varied in and around the pottery factories, where many as young as 6 were spotted. I chose to focus the interviews solely on a sample of children working in the pottery factories in order to limit the scope of the research. Thus, numerous children working in the garbage dump, the metal factories, and other jobs were excluded.

This thesis will examine the following dimensions of child labour:

- The determinants of child labour and the impact of hazardous labour on the well being of the children that participate in it;
- The children’s relationship and role with their employee, investigating the children’s ability to thrive in an adult world;
• The children’s relationship and role with their parents, the security and
dependence of the families will be examined, as well as the children’s role within
the families;
• The families relationship with their children and their approach to their
upbringing;
• The children’s relationship and role among their friends and the NGO Centre, the
children’s free time will be observed and analyzed;
• The lives of these children in an environment that is hostile toward childhood will
also be studied;
• The child’s ability to realize and then utilize their power to negotiate their space
and rights.

1.14 Conclusion

The concept that the child has no real defined parameters within an increasingly
demanding world through which they have to negotiate their way has never been
explored in the context of Egypt or that of child labourers. The child must learn early on
to manoeuvre between what is seen as a more adult realm and the realm of children, in
order to gain power and a role within their space. As a child labourer, the child is thus
thrust into a world that is not of their realm and must acclimatize him/her self to this
world in order to survive. The family depends on the children’s ability to become
familiar with the adult world in order to not lose their rights in the labour force. Children
must fight like adults to make sure they get a fair wage, not work extended hours or
suffer abuse.

These children find themselves in a unique position as they do not fit the category of
adult labour which entitles them to rights and benefits, but rather they are marginalized
with no legal recourse. Employers are quite aware of this unique relationship that they
have with the children and continue to profit further from it knowing that in Egypt no one
will question them. Thus, empowering children with the right kind of knowledge and
skills is vital for their survival and negotiation of the boundaries in their societies.
Knowing their rights and having the skills to further themselves allows them to negotiate a better role in today’s labour market. This comes from education and experience.

The main question that my thesis sets out to answer is: “Is it the case that child labourers play differing roles among the actors within their lives and how do their families negotiate their roles toward their offspring?” The children flow from one relationship or actor in their environment to another, constantly taking on different roles. The parents’ roles are also questioned as they sometimes are no longer the breadwinners for their families when their children take on this role. The role of childhood is questioned, as it cannot be defined in simple polar categories of child versus adult.
Chapter Two

Constructions of Children and Childhood
2.1 Introduction

This chapter will introduce childhood as a social construction, and the role of children as social actors, generational relations, social agency and social competence, in their cultural and socio-economic context. The research will also present the relational process between children and their families, positions of children and childhood, peer relations and society’s attitude towards marginalized children (Mayall, 2002). The chapter will start by reviewing the definition of childhood, taken from the position of the west, and the dominant constructs of childhood. A historical construction of childhood will follow to show similarities, contradictions, and the evolvement process that led to the contemporary definitions of childhood. It will also examine how the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) contributes to, challenges and draws on the dominant Western constructions of children. Understanding dominant constructions of children in Arab societies requires an understanding of children in Islam as well as in the socioeconomic, local and national, and family settings in which they live. This will be examined in the second half of this chapter.

In this chapter I will try to construct the argument that the children that I have chosen for this research are like many children around the world who want to be heard and have a very distinctive voice that should be heard. Establishing children as actors negotiating their lived realities is vital to the sociological understanding of children which I will continue to address throughout this thesis.

2.2 A Western Sociology of Children and Childhood

Alanen (2001) draws on the Mannheim concept of generations to understand childhood and children as a product of inter-generational relationships located within specific socioeconomic and cultural contexts. The environment in which children and adults are enveloped is constantly altered by socioeconomic and cultural factors which influence both. The construction of childhood or children is within such an environment and which
involves both the agency of children and the agency of adults. Within those agencies lies a set of practices that leads to a construction of children and it is through:

Such practices that the two generational categories of children and adults are recurrently produced and therefore they stand in relations of connection and interaction, of interdependence: neither of them can exist without the other, what each of them is (a child, an adult) is dependent on its relation to the other, and change in one is tied to change in the other (Alanen, 2001:21).

There is not a single ‘construction’ of children but rather many that evolve and develop as children flow through intergenerational and peer groups. This flow of children through generational and intergenerational stages, social relations, and peer groups contributes to the construction of the child labourer, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

The Oxford Dictionary of Sociology’s definition of childhood is: “either an offspring or someone who has not reached full economic and jural status as an adult in society,” otherwise known as “an age-related period” (Marshall, 1998:69), is merely defining children through a dependency rather than a case by case in-depth look at children as social actors actively participating in the direction their lives are moving toward. This thesis proposes to examine child labourers through a ‘competence paradigm,’ which:

seeks to take children seriously as social agents in their own right; to examine how social constructions of ‘childhood’ not only structure their lives but also are structured by the activities of children themselves; and to explicate the social competencies which children manifest in the course of their everyday lives as children, with other children and with adults, in peer groups and in families, as well as the manifold other arenas of social action” (Hutchby and Moran-Ellis, 1998:8).

The ‘competence paradigm’ seeks to investigate children as active actors in their lived realities. Children are independent agents, investigated without any pre-construction of what children should be, but for what they have done. Furthermore, special attention should be given to how boys versus girls flow between their lived realities (McNamee,
Research on child labour tends not to place enough emphasis on the distinction between girls and boys, which can provide helpful insight as to how a tradition is sustained. Girls and boys may achieve the same goal; however, the process may be quite different.

The Western (UK) construction of childhood has in the past ten years begun to disintegrate. The notion that children are “dependent, non-productive, and maintained within the family unit” (Morrow, 1994:142) has been proven false, largely due to research conducted on children in the labour force. Children live in the present tense; they are active in the construction of their lives, but constantly presenting themselves as beings in the here and now, conscious of their activities as important to their futures (Mayall, 2002).

Dependency notions differ from region to region “while in many countries children are seen as dependent until well into their teens, in many others they are expected to be fully independent from an early age” (Boyden, 1997:203). Boyden points out that in England it is illegal to leave children under the age 14 alone without adult supervision while in Peru the national census found that a significant number of children under 14 years of age are heads of households and are expected to care for younger siblings (Boyden, 1997). In the Arab world men and women, until they get married, are traditionally subject to their parents’ control because they remain in their parents’ household. “The manner in which the transition to adulthood is achieved may also differ radically from one country to the next” (Boyden, 1997:203).

2.3 Historical Construction of Childhood

This research starts with an understanding of the history of children’s sociology in order to identify how children are referred to and perceived in the various literature presented. The literature, which has been the basis of all international conventions on children, refers to a Western socialization and developmentalist model of children, as well as children’s rights. The Arab body of literature has yet to produce a theoretical,
sociological account of children in peacetime; thus one is forced to examine the Western body of literature that is available and find similarities that can be useful in comprehending the complexity of Arab children. This has been due to the Arab world having been plagued by a number of conflicts for almost half a century, which has focused much of the research on children during conflict rather than in bouts of peace.

Within the context of this chapter, I will try to explore the history and the sociological construction of children and childhood. Following this, I will concentrate on the child labourers’ lived realities within a harsh environment that has marginalized their existence and on the definition given by the CRC in Article 1, “a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years” (OHCHR, 1997-2003: Article 1). Thus, for the purpose of this research, I have utilized this legal, international categorization of a child as being in an age group defined from birth to 18 years of age.

The definition of childhood and children has been subject to a great number of discussions. Childhood has been described as:

The social world in which man is born and within which he has to find his bearings is experienced by him as a tight knit web of social relationships, of systems of signs and symbols with their particular meaning structure, of institutionalized forms of social organization, of systems of status and prestige, etc... (Shultz, 1970:80).

Children in contemporary discourses are a symbol of hope. One cannot look to the future without thinking of the next generation that will continue our legacy and this position has been the basis of international policy concerning children. The problem with confining childhood to such a restricted definition is that children are always viewed as strictly dependent in the absolute sense. Children have been measured by their knowledge levels; they are constantly learning and acquiring new information, reliant on adults to feed their hunger and upon absorbing what society deems as enough knowledge for children to develop into adulthood. Thus, a concept of socialisation is pertinent, for it is that knowledge or socialisation that allows children to pass into maturity or adulthood. The socialisation process requires: “a child to develop from a newborn entrant to a
participating member in social arrangements around him, he must undergo a learning process over the course of growing up through successive stages of life” (Speier, 2001:182).

The construction of children forms an essential part of this research. Thus, it is important to understand how the construction of childhood appeared. There is always a “relationship between conceptual thought, social action and the process of category construction and, therefore, definitions of childhood must to some extent be dependent upon the society from which they emerge” (Hendrick, 1997: 35). It is just as important to understand how cultural and socioeconomic influences can change the social construct of childhood. In the past, societies and civilizations have brought forth elements essential to the agencies that governed the social construct of childhood. Some of these elements have survived throughout the centuries to find their way into modern conventions and legislations, while others have been disregarded. “Concepts of childhood – are shown to be neither timeless nor universal but, instead, rooted in the past and reshaped in the present” (James and Prout, 1997b:232).

In Greek civilization, emphasis was placed on the notion of early education which symbolized a modern form of childhood. The Romans approached childhood much like early modern historical accounts of childhood, “by claiming for it the need to be sheltered from adult secrets, particularly sexual secrets” (Postman, 1994:9). Literature of all kinds – including maps, charts, contracts, and deeds – collects and keeps valuable secrets” (Postman, 1994:13). Postman uses the construction of the child to contend that once children gain knowledge they lose their innocence and become members of the adult world. According to Postman, childhood ended at seven in medieval times, “because that is the age at which children have command over speech” (Postman, 1994:13). Following these civilizations was the Muslim civilization which brought with it a code of moral values for life (Qutb:1970) Most of what is written about children in Islam is written in the form of directions to parents, both in Hadith and Quran, and does not reflect the environment in which children construct their lived realities. Pursuant to the Muslim civilization came the emergence of the European nation state from which the next source
of knowledge came. Europe had come out of the Middle or Dark Ages ready to tackle what proceeded to be the industrial revolution, giving rise to new technologies such as the printing press.

The printing press in Europe initiated a need to educate people on how to survive a move from an oral-visual to a literacy-based culture. The rapid spread of the presses and print information during the first fifty years of printing had a significant impact on literacy, standardizing language and popularizing the vernacular (Luke, 1989:52). Carmen Luke explains that during the Sixteenth Century there was the “emergence and development of a discourse — pedagogy — that expresses changing attitudes and ideas about children” (Luke, 1989:2). Children were seen as “distinct social beings who developed characteristics and needs in identifiable stages” (Luke, 1989:2). This in turn gave rise to a system of mass education and allowed Lutheranism to spread.

By the 1800s the idea of children’s education and schooling had flourished in most of Europe. Childhood tried to preserve the innocence of children and yet develop their ability to expand their horizons through education. Various religious reformation also emphasized the role of education from an early age in order to instil piety and religious conviction. “One development, above all others, turned children into attractive research-subjects, namely, the opportunities afforded to investigators by mass schooling” (Hendrick, 1997: 47). It is no coincidence that all higher learning began at theology-based institutions, including the oldest university in the world, al-Azhar, which opened its doors in the tenth century in Egypt.

Another contributor to the historical documentation of childhood is Cunningham, who presents his findings through religious and prominent philosophical periods in Western history. He begins with an epistemology of Humanism, which at the turn of the fifteenth century was present in Italy, and also in Holland, where a theorist named Desiderius Erasmus emphasized early education through moulding children which, if neglected, would lead to children behaving like animals but, if properly fashioned, would create “godlike creatures” (Cunningham, 1995:44). John Earl, a humanist, rejected the belief of
the church and of Erasmus that children were born with original sin and stated that: "His soul is yet a white paper unscribbled with observations of the world... he knows no evil. Good habits, learned early, would conduce to piety" (Cunningham, 1995:46). This message was also prescribed by Islam, children are born with a clean slate and they go through life gaining good and bad deeds that will be judged in the afterlife (Alim, 1999).  

By the eighteenth century “for many (people) their Christianity narrowed in its range, became less all-embracing as an explanation for natural phenomena and as a guide to action” (Cunningham, 1995:61). Children were to be free to dance to their own music and follow their own natural paths. Children were personified as cherubs rather than as sinful creatures, which had been the notion previously. John Locke was one of the first to introduce the concept that children were each unique, possessing their own individuality, setting the stage for the new era of capitalism. Fathers were beckoned to guide their charges as mothers were not capable of being strict. The Mother, Jean-Jacques Rousseau writes, “wants her child to be happy now. She is right, and if her method is wrong, she must be taught a better” (Cunningham, 1995:66). As nation states began to take a more concrete form, human capital was increasingly valued, “in an age of fierce imperial, political, military and economic national rivalries, in addition to domestic anxieties regarding poverty, class politics, social hygiene and racial efficiency, children were being reconstructed as material investment in national progress” (Hendrick, 1997: 51). Children were at this point separated from adulthood, being defined on polar opposites (Hendrick, 1997).

Romanticism plays a key role in defining the child in the nineteenth and twentieth century. An androgynous attire was adopted in the 1800s for children, “if anything people were more likely to imagine the romantic child as female rather than male, perhaps because boys in the flesh were never sufficiently socialized into acting in harmony with ideas of nature” (Cunningham, 1995:75). Authors such as Louisa May Alcott, in her book Little Women, portrayed this notion of the romantic child that never

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*The Alim CD contains all authenticated translations of the Quran and Hadith, which can be searched using a string of text.*
wants to grow up. This became a time when the modern concept of childhood flourished and children became symbols of hope. Childhood became about nourishing the developmental aspects, creating children who functioned within the family unit in order to create “political stability; the neglected toddler in everyone’s way is the material which becomes the disgruntled agitator, while the happy contented child is the pillar of the state” (Hendrick, 1997: 53).

“The politics of the 1940s brought forth what was conspicuously thought of as a welfare state in which citizens had evidence of their citizenship through their right free social and health services” (Hendrick, 1997: 55) Children were given two identities - those of family members and social/governmental responsibility,

“These identities, insofar as they were new (and both were heavily dependent upon the psychologizing of the child throughout the inter-war period), were rooted in three main sources: wartime experiences, in particular the evacuation process; the theories of maternal deprivation and family cohesion associated with the leading figures in Child Guidance; and the Curtis report on child care in children’s homes, which was followed by the Children Act, 1948 (Hendrick, 1997: 54).

Poor families were termed as problem families, seen by the state as unable to cope with their responsibilities and reliant on the state (Hendrick, 1997). This was based on a domestic ideal “whose late eighteenth early nineteenth-century paternity was now emblazoned with psychoanalytical understanding (Hendrick, 1997:56).

Social contemporary constructions of childhood then become a fabrication of the historical background they were derived from, relating to the pre-industrial and post-industrial eras. The history of childhood in the west becomes a construction based on the wider context of socioeconomic changes through the ages. The same can be said for Muslim, Arab children. Reflecting on children as social actors in the Egyptian setting requires an understanding of their cultural and religious identities, namely Islam and the various societal cultures found in Egypt that embody tradition, politics and the socioeconomic conditions that enforce the construct of childhood. Islam prescribed
certain roles for parents and children to honour, codifying inheritance for both men and women, securing the rights of orphans and the children of slaves. The following sections, will describe children from the cultural and socioeconomic context in which they negotiate their lived realities.

2.4 Muslim Children Described

The practice of Islam is based on a number of rules set forth at the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the word of God, the holy Quran.

Islam has not only set out what its followers must believe but establishes rules according to how they must behave as a community based upon Shari'a (literally, "the road to the watering place"); "the path to be followed"). The primary source of Shari'a is the Qur'an, the divine revelations of God to the Prophet Muhammad (570–632 AD); and as the word of God, any deviation from this core Islamic belief would undoubtedly lead to accusations of heresy. However, because the Qur'an in most cases contains general ethical principles, rather than detailed directions, other sources must be referred to as well. After the Qur'an, the most important source is the Sunna, the practices, sayings (hadith) and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad. In addition to the Qur'an and Sunna, supplementary sources include the ijma, or consensus of scholars of the Muslim community, and qiyas, the juristic reasoning by analogy. Thus, it was by the reasoned interpretation of the sources, ijtihad, that Shari'a took shape during the first three centuries of Islamic history. (Syed, 1998:372)

Since the closure of the doors to ijtihad in the Eleventh Century (Syed, 1998:372-73) there has been no significant change in Islamic doctrine. Syed argues that due to the lack of ijtihad there have been no new interpretations of important socioeconomic and cultural transformations, such as having children out of wedlock (Ibid). The closure of the doors of ijtihad have created a great injustice to Muslim scholars who have been deprived of further investigation and interpretation of the cultural and socioeconomic influences that have become at odds with the Eleventh Century legislation imposed on all Muslims.

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7 When referring to the Prophet Muhammad out of respect PBUH must follow which stands for Blessings and Peace be upon him.

8 The closure of the doors of ijtihad seems to have occurred after the Mongol invasion. There is no documented reason for this occurrence and its actuality has been long debated, Muslims consider the doors to be still open but the scientific community has deemed them shut as little change has occurred in the interpretation of the Quran since the closure.
The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) promoted kindness toward children and is credited for saying that one must speak to children like children, empathizing with them. Childhood in Islam is said to pass through three stages: in the first seven years one is to be kind and play with children; in the second stage, until fourteen years of age, one is to be stern and administer discipline upon them; in the last stage, until twenty-one years of age, one is to be their friend (Alim, 1999). However, according to Sahih al-Bukhari, adulthood begins at fifteen years of age, as this was the time when boys could go to battle (Alim, 1999).

Islam promotes the concept that Muslims are born free of sin. Once they reach puberty, they are responsible for any sin they commit and will be judged on the Day of Judgment for each and every deed. The similarities to Western constructs of childhood can be found in Romanticism, which represents children as innocents (Hendrick, 1997), who should be moulded; as in Islam they should be moulded to be part of a community of God fearing citizens.

Women in Islam are given a great number of rights in order to promote a healthy childhood for their children (UNICEF, 2005). Even after divorce, a husband is required to take care of a nursing mother until children are weaned. Financially, the children are always the responsibility of the husband, even after divorce, unless he dies when the brother, paternal uncle or father is responsible. If this is not feasible then the father, brother, or uncle of the wife is responsible. A wife who chooses to work, gives part of her pay cheque voluntarily. Her dowry remains her own at all times, and if divorce is initiated an allotted settlement is paid based on what was agreed upon in the marriage contract.

Children in Islam are guaranteed the following rights:

A child’s right to health and life.
A child’s right to a family, kindred, name, property and inheritance.

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9 UNICEF Egypt collaborated with al-Azhar University write Children in Islam: Their Care, Development and Protection, which examines the rights of the child in Islam.
10 In Egyptian custom the woman’s dowry goes towards buying the household furnishings.
A child’s right to healthcare and proper nutrition.
A child’s right to education and the acquisition of talents.
A child’s right to live in security and peace, and enjoy human dignity and protection under the responsibility of the parents.
The caring role of society and the state to support all these rights and support families incapable of providing appropriate conditions for their children (UNICEF, 2005).

These rights afforded to them by the Shari'a are very similar to those expressed in the CRC and which will be examined later. Islam also does not permit children to be placed in harms way. “Employing children in hard and dangerous labor falls into the category of inflicting hardship and harm, even done unintentionally or through ignorance. If we say, as explained by Shari'a, that inflicting harm is prohibited, it follows that commissioning children with hard labor is therefore not permitted” (UNICEF, 2005:10).

It seems in theory a construction of childhood in Islam was laid out to preserve the sanctity of the concept, but as all organized religions have diverted in many ways from their original message, so has the implementation of the Islamic tenets. To localise the Egyptian construction of childhood, I shall direct attention to the country and city in which the research was conducted.

2.5 Children in the Egyptian Family Setting

Families in the Muslim world come in all shapes and forms and Egyptian families are no exception. Their roots, cultivated in the deep southern part of the country, have amassed a great history of traditions dating back to Ancient Egypt and these have been exported to the urban centres to the north of the country. Rugh defines the Egyptian family through the following definition:

A person asking about the origins of a village may be told that everyone from the village comes from the same family. Other definitions are evoked in the context of operational, functional, religious, and other frameworks. As a result it is difficult to define what family is to Egyptians, what it is composed of and what its characteristics are, in a way that is both concrete enough to be useful and broad enough to encompass the large variety of its
manifestations. Severely limited definitions such as those characterized by residential factors or blood relationship are useful for certain purposes. Broadly dynamic definitions such as Piaget's "family is a creative tension" alert us to the fragile nature of each manifestation of family, but fail to show us what is lasting in the institution. Both kinds of definitions are important for an understanding of how Egyptians view and manipulate the components of family (Rugh, 1984:54).

The practical shape of the family varies from one area to another, based on socioeconomic means and migration from southern towns. The two main religions that exist in Egypt, Islam and Christianity, play a leading role in the agencies that influence and support families (Saad, 1998). Each locality within the country has different traditions, a different heritage, and even different dialects. One is thus forced to address the issue of family in the Egyptian arena through language. Egyptians cannot simply refer to their families through a contemporary western model of the immediate family structure, mother, father and offspring. Rather they define it as those that are among and with,

The smallest family unit specified by Egyptian terminology is the word *bait* which means literally "house." The meaning includes a strong sense of residential place. It can be used, however, either to specify the place where the family lives or to designate the cluster of people who live most of the time under the same roof. Though the term generally refers, therefore, to the nuclear family unit of husband, wife, and children living together, it may also include children temporarily living away from home, a spinster aunt that lives with the family, a widowed parent, or broadly an extended family group of father, mother, unmarried daughters, and married sons and their families when all those people live under the same roof or in the same general compound (Rugh, 1984: 55).

*bait*, therefore, refers to the household. The word *Ahl* refers to kin, which includes all relations either by blood or marriage, thus extending the families. *Ahl al-Bait* refers to the elders in the house, traditionally male decision makers, who may not necessarily be the main breadwinners. The name the family carries is of great importance as it signifies whether or not it is a ‘good family’. It is common in Egypt, when meeting someone for the first time, for them to ask about your family name. The name presents them with a road map of who you are and whether you are above, below or of the same class as they.
This in turn equips them with power or vice versa. It is also quite common, if the name is unfamiliar or there are many different families with the same surname, to ask what village one originated from. Every Egyptian lays claim to a family farm somewhere in Egypt. Some have lost touch with the village from where their ancestors originated, but the majority will still have close ties and even will visit relatives and return for funerals and marriages.

‘Ila refers to the family; this term is used as the closest interpretation of what a family would mean in a western sense. Nonetheless, it is important to understand that ‘ila does still refer to extended members of the family that are included by financial ties. Thus the grandmother that resides with the family is included, as is the unemployed brother, and other family members residing and dependent in some way or another on the household. In this context we see families constituting “the dominant social institution through which persons and groups inherit their religious, social class, and cultural identities. It also provides security and support in times of individual and societal stress” (Barakat, 1985:28). The concept of sacrifice is emphasized specifically in the older female members of the family who constantly go without in order to give to their children (Barakat, 1985:28).

Egyptian families place a great deal of their fate in the hands of God and thus the importance of following the five pillars of Islam is instrumental. The five pillars include belief in God and his apostle Muhammad, answering the call to prayers five times a day, giving zakat or alms to those less fortunate, fasting during the month of Ramadan and finally performing haj, the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Children are what cement the Egyptian family, and in general the Arab family. Marriage is seen as one of the duties that must be performed by Muslims (Alim, 2001). Couples who get married are expected to produce offspring immediately in order to continue the lineage.
The importance of children is symbolized in the new name that all lower-class and a large number of middle-class parents assume upon the birth of a child. These names are the familiar Abu Foulan and Um Foulan, father and mother of So and So, the name of the child. When a reasonable period of time passes after marriage, couples who do not have children often take on the names of hoped-for children, Abu Ahmad for example if an Ahmad is desired or they may take the name of a relative child for whom they have assumed part-or full-time care. It is not uncommon to find a childless woman referred to as Um Ghaib (mother of the missing one). Since women retain their own names upon marriage this assumption of a child's name brings the father and mother together with a common appellation (Rugh, 1984: 59).

Women who do not produce children also have to contend with their husbands taking another wife or worse divorcing them. A husband who chooses to take on a second wife due to lack of children from the first marriage does so because of the pressure from the family to continue the lineage, coupled with the belief that this is his duty. Due to economic constraints many times the men will have the second wife living in very close proximity if not together, thus creating a larger concept of the family nucleus.

The Egyptian family as such has also been under threat in recent years due to a number of social changes in their environment.

The population explosion, urbanization, internal and external migration, the spread of educational opportunities, and certain economic changes—are so interrelated that their impacts can scarcely be separated. Necessarily these external changes challenge traditional values, strengthening some, allowing others to atrophy, causing the modification of implications of others, sometimes even requiring that people dip down into the recesses of their conceptual frames for an application that has suddenly become appropriate (Rugh, 1984: 235).

The population explosion in Cairo alone has created housing shortages for the poor and middle class and, faced also with rising costs, many newly-weds are forced to remain with their in-laws or parents (University of Texas, 1995, Hoodfar, 1999). Resources are limited and in an increasing population there is less and less to go around, which in turn has created a rift in the traditional way of life and customs.
Internal migration in Egypt has led many people to leave their rural village life for city life in Cairo. They come in search of better opportunities or education. Unfortunately, these migrant communities are not equipped for the competition in a city that houses almost one third of the entire country’s population. The result is that of unskilled, mostly uneducated workers trying to earn a higher income in menial jobs that tend to revolve around construction. (Hoodfar, 1999), as discussed in Chapter One.

Egypt has been prey to economic woes affecting the country’s population in varying degrees. Families are increasingly finding it harder to cope with their lived realities. This in turn affects their way of life – for instance helping the less fortunate in the family or in the sense of kinship itself (Hoodfar, 1999). In turn this affects the children of these impoverished families who must help financially in the household.

While poverty exists in all counties of the world, the networks that exist to cope with families in poverty differ. Families struggle in different ways and take multiple paths to achieve mere sustenance in life and as such children are given different roles as social actors in the agencies which they too must negotiate. Yet, the CRC dictates one universal socioeconomic and cultural context for childhood, which serves as a starting point, but must be further investigated and discussed. Universal rights guarantee children a western ascribed construction of childhood that may or may not fit with their existing generational relations, social agencies, social competencies, cultural and socioeconomic context. The perception of universal needs, which Woodhead, describes as “Conceptualizing childhood in terms of needs reflects the distinctive status accorded to young humanity in twentieth century western societies” (Woodhead, 1997:63). These needs become the basis of any discussion regarding children, specifically those that are agents within the labour market. The following section will concentrate on the evolution of children after the ratification by Member States of the CRC in 1989.
2.6 The Convention on the Rights of the Child

The CRC was the most rapidly ratified convention in history. This allowed for children's rights to be recognized internationally and for legislation to be put in place to protect the family, concentrating specifically on the wellbeing of children. As stated in Chapter 1, by 2005 the CRC had been ratified by 192 Member States of the United Nations (see Annex Three) leaving only the United States and Somalia who have signed but not ratified the Convention. The United States believes that ratifying the CRC would be a threat to parental authority and would also force it to relinquish a part of its sovereignty (Campaign for the U.S. Ratification of the CRC, 2006). Somalia has not ratified because of its lack of a functioning and recognized government. Egypt signed on September 2nd, 1990 with a reservations pertaining to articles 20 and 21 regarding adoption, as Egypt finds that the CRC conflicts with Shari'a law in this matter (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (1997-2003). It should be noted that the Quran prohibits adoption in the Western sense, Surah 33, Verses 4-5, as Muslims who adopt cannot give their surnames to the adopted children or allow them to automatically inherit their estate, and therefore this differs fundamentally from the adoption rights of countries in Europe and of the United States. Adoption in Islam can be translated as fostering a child. Other Arab countries amended the CRC, believing that the Arab-Muslim approach to childhood and family was under threat from the CRC (Sait, 2000). In this respect, the inability of the United States to sign the CRC has a similarity with the amendments made by the Arab countries – they both feel that the CRC is an encroachment on the authority of the family. Yet, as stated earlier the CRC is compatible with the rights afforded by Islam to children, see section on Muslim children.

"Children globally now have rights encoded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child" (James, et al 1998:6). This outlines the growing trend in non-governmental organizations to put children on the agenda and thus has succeeded in protecting children where the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights failed (UN, 2007). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights failed to be taken seriously as a whole; one merely has to consider Amnesty International’s Annual Report 2006 (Amnesty
International, 2007) which lists 149 violating countries. The CRC has been more successful in at least placing the needs of children at the forefront of its convention. The needs of children became the focus of much of the debate around children, which was also outlined in Article 6 of the CRC. Woodhead, states that the statement of need conveys:

> Considerable emotive force, inducing a sense of responsibility, and even feelings of guilt if they are not heeded. This power comes partly from the connotation of helplessness and passivity of any individual who is in need, and partly from the implication that dire consequences will follow if they need is not met through appropriate intervention” (Woodhead, 1997:66).

What this means in practical terms is that “Children that are not given love will grow up emotionally unstable” (Woodhead, 1997:67), which is based on what Hendrick had termed the welfare state (Hendrick, 1997). While the need for love and security perhaps is universal, it is difficult to equate how to comply with those needs for children in the Arab context and for children in the West. Families differ in different parts of the world and subsequently children’s roles within the families also differ.

By contrast in countries, (such as Turkey, the Philippines and Indonesia) where children’s economic contribution is highly valued, parents placed much greater stress on deference to elders and obedience. Presumably parents in the two societies would view their children’s needs quite differently” (Woodhead, 1997:73).

Thus, the needs of children are fulfilled through multiple pathways and agencies.

Children as social actors participating in the world was an emergent idea in sociology at the time the convention was drawn up; James and Prout (1990) is an example of this. “Article 12 (emphasizes) the importance of involving children in all matters that concern them, failed to practice what they preached” (John, 1995:105). The CRC treated children as citizens, yet they are passive participants in their lived realities. Citizenship, as defined by Marshall, is “status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the
status is endowed” (Roche, 1999:480). This definition has never included children, for children are simply not full members of a community; they are members by default through their parents. Children cannot remain within many communities without at least one adult as a parent or a guardian and thus childhood has always been a dependent status. Children are not citizens participating in democracies around the world; they are frequently a disadvantaged minority despite the fact that in many developing countries, they make up half of the population. Children cannot vote in any country under the age of 18, even though the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 21, has declared equal suffrage for all people (UN, 2000-2006). Nonetheless, the CRC can serve as a basis for research on children, allowing for activism and monitoring of children’s lives around the world (Lee, 1999).

The CRC is a “soft law, gaining force as nations draw upon its principles to draft and amend legislations” (Lee, 1999:403). Egypt for its part enacted the 1996 Child Law, in response to the CRC. The legislation explicitly forbade children from working under the age of 16 unless they gained permission from a governor to work in seasonal employment that would not interfere with school or allow children to work in hazardous conditions, at which case the age was lowered to 12 years of age.

It is prohibited for children to work for more than 6 hours a day. One or more breaks totalling at least 1 hour must be included. Children are not to work overtime, during their weekly day off, between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m., or for more than 4 hours continuously (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998)\(^\text{11}\).

Legislation in Egypt is in abundance; unfortunately it is rarely effective or implemented. There have been no studies that reflect positive strides by such legislation; on the contrary all studies conducted on child labour speak of appalling conditions and long working hours. “Theoretically, education in Egypt is compulsory up to the age of 15” (Mekay, 1997). Despite these amendments to the constitution and Egypt’s signing of the

\(^{11}\) The US Congress requested the US Department of Labor’s Bureau of International Labor Affairs to review the “child labor situation in 16 countries where child labor has been identified as a problem and the level and types of action being undertaken to reduce child exploitation in those countries” (US Department of Labor, 1998).
CRC, which states that children should not be employed in hazardous conditions before the age of 16, children as early as 5 years of age do continue to work.

The CRC has been critically condemned for being ineffective yet it has been a starting point from which discussions in each country have been taken place. There are three articles in the CRC - Articles 29, 31 and 32 - that are rather pertinent to any discussion on children. In the following paragraphs I will examine the three articles from the CRC that will further develop the research of this thesis.

The CRC states in Article 29(a) that education should be directed toward: “the development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential” (OHCHR, 1997-2003). This clearly implies that the development of children’s mental prowess is of the highest priority, further implying that schooling is essential to children’s development, which is implied previously in Article 28. The mental development of children is clearly as much a priority as their physical survival and much attention is given to the matter.

The CRC recommends in Article 31 that children have the right “to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts” (OHCHR, 1997-2003). Although, the CRC assumes that children will have the luxury of free time, this once again reinforces the importance of placing as much attention on the mental wellbeing of children as the physical wellbeing. Children must be given the time to play and pursue their artistic talents, quite a difficult task when children must work to provide an income for their family.

Finally, Article 32 addresses child labour. Article 32 states:

States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. (OHCHR, 1997-2003: Article 32)
Article 32 became the basis for prohibiting all child labour in the world. Subsequently, due to serious consequences that will be addressed in Chapter Three, Article 32 was challenged and reduced to the cessation of all hazardous child labour in the International Labour Organization’s Convention Number 138, 1973. The significance, however, of Article 32, is that for the first time child labourers where given a voice and rights that demanded an end to their exploitation. Furthermore, it gave rise to the growing phenomena of child labour and its determinants and the need for solutions in order not to exacerbate the problem further.

Most important to this fuller understanding of child labour has been the adoption and ratification, by virtually all countries, of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. This landmark treaty, which is the pillar of UNICEF’s work, expresses the intertwined and complementary human rights of all children. With the clarity the Convention bestows, child labour can be seen in its broadest and most damaging sense as a human rights violation on many different levels. As such, it can be addressed only through a complementary range of measures, from laws and mechanisms to create and enforce minimum working-age regulations to the multiple protections enumerated in article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These include the child’s right to freedom from “economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.” And in concert with article 32, virtually every other article of the Convention focuses on issues that are in one way or the other related to the effects of work on children, including education, protection, exploitation, health, nutrition, rest and relaxation, play, social security, economic well-being and the responsibilities of parents. A human rights approach to child labour, therefore, permits, and indeed requires, responses that are as multifaceted as the affronts children endure and the conditions that give rise to them. It also permits and requires wide partnerships and alliances to make the responses a reality (UNICEF, 2001b:3-4).

While the CRC has made a number of valuable strides in establishing the rights of children around the world, one of the harshest criticisms is of the unilateral language by which it addresses the world. Jenks stated:
As a post-colonial legacy, variation in the form which childhood might take is denied as through the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the work of charitable agencies and international bodies in the Third World, one particular vision of childhood has been and continues to be exported as correct childhood (Jenks, 1996:122).

The importance of remembering that there is no universal family or child is vital for any research and the research presented for this thesis is no exception. While ultimately there is a universal recognition that children deserve to have their rights legislated there must be also be a recognition that children and families may not always have luxuries that allow them to pursue such rights. Thus, the most intrinsically relevant information to be gathered from the CRC is for the need to listen to what children have to say and to base decisions on what the children need and not on what international civil servants have deemed a necessity for them.

2.7 Toward a Position on Arab Children

In certain cultures, socialisation can be as simple as children acquiring the tools to communicate with others. Although, the socialization of children refers to the process of conforming to social norms (James, et al, 1998:24) there is a tendency to view the conformity as an elongated process that leads children into adulthood. For the purpose of this research, I believe that the agency of a child labourer in Egypt happens in the here and now, evident in how they manage their situations and surroundings. As actively involved in their lived realities, child labourers are quick to learn their way in life in order to survive. It is important to define my use of the term socialization of the child labourers as simply their ability to react to a situation and use the knowledge they have gained to either avoid the situation or to deal with it in an acceptable manner; this in effect is the agency of Arab children. Therefore, more can be learnt by focusing on the agency of Arab children in their everyday lives and seeing them as social actors rather than focusing on their future lives and seeing their present times as only being of concern or interest in terms of the socialization processes. The social actor/agency approach allows for a look at the ‘here and now’ and takes account of the structural and contextual dimensions too.
There is however no universal position on children’s agency, as childhood and children differ from one society to another and come from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Cultural relativism must then be considered as to how children’s lives are lived; there are no universal children nor is there a universal childhood. Children have been traditionally separated in Western societies from adults, partially as Ribbens suggests because “they occupy a less powerful position” (Ribbens, 1994:152). The concept that socialisation is a central process in which the “transition from human becoming to human being” (Lee, 2001:39) and how this is achieved has been the topic of a number of challenging discussions. Morrow has openly challenged the construction of children as dependent, and has argued that: “the way in which sociology represents children as ‘burdens,’ and argues that the social construction of childhood as a period of dependency prevents us from acknowledging the extent to which children may contribute reciprocal care and services within the families” (Morrow, 1996:59). This challenge to the dominant framework on childhood has allowed for a broader understanding of children, one that gives credibility to their abilities, strengths and position as active participants in the society which they inhabit.

Egyptian families produce children that prove to their communities that they are a family. As Hoodfar writes “it is through marriage and having children that adulthood and self-realization are achieved (in Egypt)” (Hoodfar, 1997:52). The Arab sociology of children is very much entwined with the family unit. The family unit in the Arab context is far more extensive than the western perception of the family nucleus. No two children or two families are identical; each is unique and brings a great deal of understanding to Arab sociology of the family and the study of child labourers. Hoodfar speaks of the importance of children to the Egyptian family, “the desire to have children is considered the most important reason for the interdependence of men and women” (Hoodfar, 1999:243). Children legitimize families and in turn families depend on their children for their cohesion as a family and their acceptance in their community. Children without a family are considered a nonentity, hence Egypt’s refusal to accept Article 20 and 21 of the CRC concerning the issue of adoption. As stated earlier, Muslims can only foster children but cannot adopt them due to the need to always preserve the sanctity of the
family. By adopting children, one family will be taking on, for whatever reason, another family’s children and by doing so the family that adopts another family’s child threatens to break the sanctity of the adopting family. This is not to say that Arab children are not independent and active participants in their own realities, which they are, but they also carry considerable responsibility toward their family unit from which they cannot separate themselves. This concept is particularly evident in child labourers in Egypt and will be further explored in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

2.8 Conclusion

As presented in this chapter, in certain areas there have been some major changes in the last decade in the construction of childhood, specifically in the west. The concept that there are active young people negotiating their roles has become widely acceptable. Children are not merely seen as young dependents on the family but rather participants in their family dynamics sometimes even adding to the economic future and sustainability of the family.

To speak of the rights of children and children as independent actors one must address from where children originated - the family. The rights that are given to children do impact on children’s rights within the family unit. The more legislation imposed upon children the less right the family has to make decisions. This argument can be further applied to child labourers’ families who in many instances subsist on the income of their children; therefore, penalising families for sending their children to work is not the answer.

This chapter has aimed to set out an account of the children and childhood as social constructs, and then to consider how the Islamic and Egyptian contexts have an impact on those constructions. To define the Egyptian family and hence the children within it is just as arduous a task as defining childhood. The traditions that influence the behaviour and acclimatization of families in each area forces differences among families, making it impossible to find a unified family. The research I have conducted has focused primarily
on a low-socioeconomic, migrant area, of families originating in the south of Egypt. The families have imported to the urban centre their rural habits and some of these have been adapted to suit the economic hardships faced in the city. One such custom is to send their young children to work outside the home or family business.

A huge difficulty in constructing the sociology of Egyptian children is that very little has been written on the subject. The changes that have occurred within that decade have necessitated a growing need for researchers to document the changes in social patterns seen visibly in the number of different Egyptian families. I have attempted to propose defining childhood as an agency in Arab sociology which is imperative to documenting doing the business of childhood. In the following chapter, I will address the context of child labour in Egypt as set forth by the International Labour Organization’s Convention number 138, and move toward finding child labourers within their agency.
Chapter Three

Construction of Children in the Labour Market
3.1 Introduction

Child labour has received a great deal of notoriety in recent years either through new UN actions involving civil society and governments or through the extensive literature produced on the subject. A great deal of information can be gathered from both the action-oriented projects and the academic research being carried out around the world on child labour. And while most academics, activists and politicians believe that hazardous child labour is harmful to children, child labour continues. Thus, for the purpose of understanding all aspects of child labour, I propose to explore the varying factors that lead families to send their children to the labour market. Poverty alone is not responsible, but a great many of the factors that will be explored throughout this chapter are.

This chapter will therefore continue from where Chapter Two left off, addressing further the rights of children and expanding upon the subject to gain an insight into the nature of child labourers. In revealing the rights of the child labourer, the ILO Convention Number 182 – seen as a more tangible guideline for Member States who choose to ratify – will be discussed. An explanation of child labour has been given to set forth the parameters used in guiding the research for this thesis. A section presenting hazardous labour, its impact on children’s health and the types of hazardous labour involved have been explored. In addition, I will explore the social determinants of child labour and consider families and their children’s lack of access to basic needs as primary factors leading to the increase of child labour in the market place.

I will review the literature on child labour, discussing the differences between marginalized children as agents involved in the labour market. I will consider the larger categories surrounding these children – child labour, child work and street children - in order to establish a context for the marginalized children that I am researching. I will explore how child labour continues to exist and thrive in the Egyptian context and how Egyptian legislation has attempted to curtail its increase. Finally, I will analyse the literature pertaining to listening to children’s voices and outline the demands that these marginalized children are making.
3.2 Understanding and Defining Child Labour

UNICEF has defined the child labourer as “a child denied the liberating benefit of education, one whose health, growth and development are threatened, who risks losing the love, care and protection of family and who cannot enjoy the rest and play that are every child’s right” (UNICEF, 2001b:1-2), also discussed in Chapter One. In other words, children who labour are continually denied their basic rights. They are denied the right to basic education, to protection against occupational injury, to leisure time and to the protection of their families’ from the outside forces to which they are continually subjected. In this respect, all labour is then hazardous to the wellbeing of children.

In a report reviewing child labour for the World Bank, Basu commented that child labourers are those that are economically active: “Governments and international organizations usually treat a person as economically active or "gainfully employed" if the person does work on a regular basis for which he or she is remunerated or which results in output destined for the market” (Basu, 1998:6). Thus, even if children are economically active for short durations they constitute a proportion of the labour force and as such should be afforded certain rights as given to their adult counterparts. Perhaps it is when the law considers children in the labour force an offence that children are further exploited. However, for the purpose of this thesis, Basu’s argument that child labour must be seen as a child’s active participation in and benefit from the market is what will be further explored.

Accordingly, Basu’s argument leads to another definition of child labour proposed by the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) which has been perceived as a multifaceted definition of child labour:

The underlying concept seems to be that all family members are economic providers and that work prepares children for assuming adult roles. In situations where the family acts as an economic unit, the work of children

\[\text{12} \text{ The report by UNICEF was based on a right based approach toward child labour.}\]
is widely accepted and may even be essential, particularly work by older children. But parents also justify child work, saying that it contributes to children’s responsibility, autonomy and strength to support difficulties and sacrifices. Very little value, however, is attached to play and leisure, which are seen by most parents in low-income families as a waste of time. Perceptions of schooling are ambiguous. Parents appreciate the possibility for children to learn how to read and write. Peasants and the rural poor in general often think education is irrelevant; when school and work are in conflict, these parents tend to value work more, since it brings immediate benefits for the subsistence of the family (IPEC, 2004:19).

IPEC provides a definition that does fit with the perception of Arab families that children are part of a unit that is economically viable and in which they must participate to ensure the families’ survival. Families believe that they are doing what is best for their families as a unit. Usage of children’s time must be allotted to school or labour that is paid or non-paid. The first-born child in the family will tend to become active in the labour market while younger siblings may have a chance to go to school. Families as a whole will weigh up what is more beneficial for their here and now, never looking for future outcomes but living to survive in the present. Nevertheless, one cannot negate that in many instances child labour, as stated by UNICEF (2001b), does harm the development and health of children and thus we must consider what the ILO (2004) has further labelled as hazardous child labour.

In general, the literature concerned with children participating in the labour force does not distinguish between child labour, child work, and street children. Child labour and child work are usually intermixed. “Important differences of perspective on child labour begin with defining it, for there is no common concept that unites everyone discussing the problem. As a result the term ‘child labour’ has become severely devalued and problematic” (Myers, 2001:28).

A general distinction would be that child labour refers to labour which is intensive or hazardous in nature to the children employed; child work is adequate work relative to a child’s age, adequately paid and followings legislative guidelines supported by child right conventions and signed treaties. Child labourers or workers may or may not be living on
the street. Street children are typically children who work and live on the streets. The focus of this research is on children that are employed in hazardous conditions but who remain living with their biological families.

In recent years, child labour has slowly gained prominence within the development community and in academic literature, challenging notions originally set. Glauser (1997), who based his studies on Paraguayan street children in Asunción, calls on future research to deconstruct categorizations such as ‘children of the street’ and ‘children on the street’ stating:

The fact that societies have normally found no need to distinguish between different subcategories of street children and are content to use an unclear and ambiguous concept also leads to suspicions that their main concern did not start with the children themselves (Glauser, 1997:153).

I believe that Glauser (1997) is correct in stating that there is an agenda behind societies not categorizing marginalized children. Yet to categorize them into marginalized groups is too simplistic and would take away from the cultural relativity of their lived realities. Glauser (1997) argues that policy makers are more concerned about the perception of street children as a predicament placed upon society rather than focusing on the needs and concerns of the children themselves. Street children are seen by many societies as unproductive urchins disrupting the flow of adult lives and as such should be removed. In this respect, the research for this thesis is concerned with children who are not on the street but who, just like street children, are seen as a burden on society and an embarrassment to the society they live within. Furthermore, I propose to identify different general categories that can be followed, ones that differentiate children by their labour practice and environmental needs.

The term child labour does not encompass all work performed by children under the age of 18. Millions of young people legitimately undertake work, paid or unpaid, that is appropriate for their age and level of maturity. By so doing, they learn to take responsibility, they gain skills and add to their families’ and their own well-being and income, and they contribute to their countries’ economies. Child labour does not include
activities such as helping out, after school is over and schoolwork has been done, with light household or garden chores, childcare or other light work. To claim otherwise only trivializes the genuine deprivation of childhood faced by the millions of children involved in child labour that must be effectively abolished (ILO, 2002:9).

One distinction that must be made is in the use of terminology. I have chosen to explore the world of child labourers; which is very different from child workers. Much of the sociological literature that deals with child labour and child work tends to refer to either phenomenon by using either term interchangeably, which creates confusion for the reader. It is important to draw the distinction between work and labour in considering children’s participation in the labour market in any setting. Labour must also be defined as paid employment outside and inside the family.

In the West, many children work in the service industry to gain spending money but still continue to attend school. “Children are ideally suited to take on part-time employment, particularly Saturday work, because it fits in with their school commitments” (Morrow, 1994:131).\(^{13}\) Economies in the West depend on children to fill the low paying jobs that many adults shun. Ironically, evidence shows that in both Britain and the United States children work illegally and are subject to many health risks as a result of non-legitimate employment (McKechnie, et al, 1998)\(^{14}\).

Working children everywhere, especially those in the developing world, tend to be concentrated in the informal sector of the economy. Their work is not “official” - there is no government employment agency or tax authority that knows the children are working because they are not officially employed. The people they work for are in many cases unregistered as employers. For some work, the children receive no payment, only some food and a place to sleep. Children in informal sector work have no job security, receive no payment if they are injured or become ill, and can seek no protection if they are maltreated by their employer. And many of these children are working even though their country’s child labour laws prohibit them from doing so (IPEC, 2004:23).

\(^{13}\) Based on an empirical research on the prevalence and implication of children working.

\(^{14}\) Based on a review of empirical research done on child labour and health in the United States and in Britain.
Children have been part of the labour market for centuries (Hendrick, 1997) and different countries have had different strategies for eliminating children's involvement in the labour market. For a chronology of conventions and covenants regarding the elimination of children from the labour force see Appendix Three. In 1919, the International Labour Organization (ILO):

Developed the first Minimum Age Convention that regulated the age at which children could work. Then, in 1973, a more comprehensive Minimum Age Convention, Number 138, was adopted, and it remains the fundamental standard. Although not new and always a thorny problem, child labour has now become increasingly complex, assuming new forms as global realities and relations have changed. Among the underlying causes, poverty and economic disparities are, of course, critical factors (UNICEF, 2001b:2).

Child labour has been debated continually and at the same time underscored, for although ILO has attempted to regulate children's inclusion in the labour market since 1919, very few countries have ratified these conventions and treaties; and even if they did they are not enforcing them. The reality of many of these child labourers includes a world that is continually changing and challenging their survival and that of their families. Exploitation of children became a target for notoriety and exclusion, as stated by Article 32 of the CRC. Once again, defining exploitation became an enormous hurdle for the world. Perhaps what placed child labour on the political and academic arena was:

The Child Labor [sic] Deterrence Act, also called the "Harkin bill," was proposed in the US Congress in 1995. In its original version, the bill proposed to ban all imports where the production process involved any kind of work by children. Opponents to the proposal argued that such a ban was a form of hidden protectionism against "social dumping," the idea that social conditions in poorer countries and the use of child labor create an unfair competitive advantage by lowering production costs. A later version of the bill was changed in what economists believed was the right direction. The new version only took action against child labor "under circumstances tantamount to involuntary servitude" or otherwise posing serious health hazards." The legislation opened the debate regarding economic factors determining child labor, the potential effects of the legislation, as well as the acceptability of international labor standards established by a supra-national entity (like the WTO), and prompted an

15 A historical account of the construction British childhood.
enormous amount of written material in academic and political circles (López-Calva, 2001:61-62).\textsuperscript{16}

In 1992 a discussion on the economic exploitation of children took centre stage. What ensued after Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa proposed the Child Deterrrence Act in the United States was an explosion on the rights of the child. The Child Deterrrence Act would have prohibited the importation of products made by child labourers to the United States; in addition it included punitive action against those guilty of violating the act (UNICEF, 1996). Unfortunately, Senator Harkin’s well intentioned efforts were not well studied and as a result the mere threat of losing the US market’s textile factories in Bangladesh laid off numerous children (UNICEF, 1996). The United Nations Children’s Fund’s State of the World’s Children 1997 annual report stated that:

As of September 1996, the (Harkin) Bill had yet to find its way onto the statute books. But the mere threat of such a measure panicked the garment industry of Bangladesh, 60 per cent of whose products — some $900 million in value — were exported to the US in 1994. Child workers, most of them girls, were summarily dismissed from the garment factories. A study sponsored by international organizations took the unusual step of tracing some of these children to see what happened to them after their dismissal. Some were found working in more hazardous situations, in unsafe workshops where they are paid less, or in prostitution (UNICEF, 1996:23).\textsuperscript{17}

The consequences of placing an overnight ban, without sufficient knowledge for the determinants that affect child labour can have detrimental effects (Boyden, 1997). Without sufficient study of each specific country’s circumstances, general bans such as the one proposed by one of the world’s leading economies have adverse effects on the very same people that the ban is meant to protect. It is essential to look at child labour as not simply a problem that can be tackled by legislation but rather a complex matter with many factors that contribute to children’s continuity in the labour market.

\textsuperscript{16} Displacing the myths regarding the reasons for child labour. López-Calva dispels the concept that parents send their children to the labour market because they want to but rather they send them due to an economic need and lack of social services available to them.

\textsuperscript{17} Part of the UNICEF series, the State of the World’s Children, which focused on child labour.
To this I would like to discuss why child labour exists. There are many factors that lead children to the labour market such as economic hardship, political instability, insecurity, large household size, and lack of access to basic (education, health care services, safe water and sanitation). All of these factors contribute and perpetuate children's involvement in the labour force.

There are other factors determining the standard of living and affecting welfare that cannot be readily reduced to a single monetary measure. Examples of such factors are access to education, access to basic health services, and access to safe potable water and basic housing amenities. The basic needs approach becomes particularly suited for measuring poverty in developing countries, since it bases poverty comparisons in the deprivation from certain commodities and resources (both food and non-food) that are deemed essential to afford a minimum level of well-being within a given society. Strictly interpreted, this can mean the inability of individuals to attain adequate or minimum nutrition, clothing, or shelter; or more broadly, it encompasses those factors that enable the command of individuals over resources, such as being healthy and literate (El-Laithy, 2000:5).\(^{18}\)

Poverty is thus not simply a monetary term but a multifaceted issue that cannot be solved by simply increasing household incomes. The household's educational levels and health play key roles in the stability of a household and the perpetuation of child labour. I shall systematically address the determinants of child labour in the following section.

3.3 The Determinants of Child Labour

Determining how many children are currently in the labour force and the reasons behind their involvement is an arduous task. It is also important to remember that the reality for many of these children is that their working is crucial for the survival of their families (Hanson and Vandaele, 2003).\(^{19}\) Very few countries allow surveys to investigate the phenomena fully but rather manipulate questions and the subsequent analysis to suit their interests (Hanson and Vandaele, 2003).

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\(^{19}\) The article examines the way in which international labour law has been concerned with child labourers.
One of the main difficulties in furthering the empirical analysis of the determinants of child labor [sic] is the dearth of national household surveys that include questions on labor market participation addressed at adults and children in the household. Most labor force surveys use a minimum age cut-off of 14 or 15 years, so that, by definition, most official labor force statistics will exclude child labor. This age cut-off is a matter of national practice, and not the result of international guidelines. The latter do indicate that the measurement of the economically active population must use a minimum age limit, but no particular value is specified (Grootaert, 1998:5)\(^{20}\).

Data from national household surveys is hard to come by, as is data on the levels of poverty in a country which is invariably linked to child labour. As poverty continues to increase in all parts of the world so does the numbers of children involved in the labour markets.

The fact that child labour and poverty are inextricably linked is widely acknowledged and undeniable. In countries with an annual per capita income of US$500 or less (at 1987 prices), the labour force participation of children aged 10-14 is 30-60 per cent, compared to only 10-30 per cent in countries with an annual per capita income of US$501-1000. No one would argue with the general proposition that child labour is both a result and a cause of poverty. Household poverty pushes children into the labour market to earn money to supplement family income or even to survive. Evidence is also clear that, by lowering human capital accumulation, child labour perpetuates household poverty across generations and thereby slows national economic growth and social development (ILO, 2002:46-47)

Poverty places child labourers outside the parameters accepted by society and then regards them as menaces infringing upon the wellbeing of society. “Many families do not see themselves as having an alternative, as children’s earnings may be necessary for family survival. The constraint to work is placed on children when the opportunity cost of receiving an education (not working) is extremely high” (Gustafsson-Wright and Pyne, 2002:11)\(^{21}\).

\(^{20}\) Based on the welfare economic analysis of child labour in the Ivory Coast from the living analysis survey over a period of 1985-1988.

\(^{21}\) This is based on research conducted on Brazilian street children.
Poverty, as addressed earlier, is not simply a lack of income but can also be a lack of access. Children who must pay additional school fees for a private tutor because of the poor quality of teaching at the schools, or who live too far from a school, will not be sent to school; instead these children will be sent to the labour market (Gustafsson-Wright and Pyne, 2002).

For much of human history, children have contributed to family welfare in a variety of ways, but intensified urbanization and the breakdown of traditional economic systems have made even basic subsistence more precarious and put children at ever higher risk. The results of a nine-country survey in Latin America, for instance, showed that if teenaged children did not work, poverty rates would increase by 10 to 20 percent (UNICEF, 2001b:2).

Children in non-western countries are expected to contribute to the family’s income (Panter-Brick, 2000:7). Children in low income countries contribute significantly, sometimes exclusively, to the family’s sustenance. “In many places, work for children between the ages of six and twelve plays a major part in their development, being vital to the child’s acquisition of skills, sense of self-worth, and family relationships. It is not play or schoolwork which takes precedence but economically productive labour” (Panter-Brick, 2000:8). Poverty and education are strong determinants of child labour (Burra, 1995), “the strongest result in the empirical literature shows that the poverty status of the household and the education of the household head are the most robust deterrents of child labour” (Lopez-Calva, 2001:59).

An enlarged household operates as a security mechanism for families as children provide families with an increase in their disposable income. Yet, by placing children in the labour force families decrease their children’s chances for future growth and survival. Children tend to work in the informal economy, vulnerable to risk and exploitation. There are no regulatory bodies supervising and monitoring the children’s safety and no unions to safeguard their rights. The informal economy in the developing world is quite pronounced and feeds into the formal economy, both opting for greater profit margins at the expense of labour or quality.
Families place their children within the informal economies believing they have the ability to continue to act as their protectors. Parents decide to place their children in the labour market as they are part of the pool of labour from the family unit. Children who are able to perform tasks are seen by their parents as part of a unit that must assist in the survival of the whole family. In addition, parents, specifically those that were child labourers themselves, believe that the labour market will enhance their development by training them for their future (Gustafsson-Wright and Pyne, 2002).

Economic arguments against child labor are based on the inability of children to accumulate human capital (education), which prevents them from having higher future earnings. Stronger markets for child labor also induce increased incidence of child labor and lower school enrollment rates (Gustafsson-Wright and Pyne, 2002:13).

Labour is seen by many families as a training ground or an informal apprenticeship whereby children working in an industry will acquire knowledge and skills by virtue of simply being present in the industry. It would seem families believe that by creating opportunities for their children they will guarantee that the children accumulate human capital which will assist them as adults to gain an income and thus ensure their future.

For some children there was no option but to work and sustain the survival of the household. For some children going to school was not an option, because schools were not available or not accessible, or because education as a norm had not yet been assimilated in the local culture, as it happened in Burkina Faso. For other children, school attendance was combined with work in the household, leaving little time for other activities (Lieten, 2005:3).

There are many scenarios in which children are involved in the labour market or working in the household, each within their own society setting and socioeconomic strata, which significantly influence the ability of the children to combine work with school, to work full time, or help in the household full time. In all cases Lieten states that they do not have time for other activities, those of being children (Lieten: 2005). Yet, one must

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22 Based on a paper which reviews child labor and the situation of street children in Brazil from a gender perspective, using Brazil's national household survey for 1996.
23 Based on empirical research from 6 countries, using a methodology of listening and observing children in urban and rural areas.
question within each society where other activities or leisure time are actually relevant. In many societies leisure time is seen as an unproductive or wasteful use of time, *Idle hands are the devil's playground*\(^2\). However, "from the perspective of the poor families in the contemporary world, the harm that child labour may do to an individual child has to be weighed against the survival of the household as a whole" (James, et al, 1998:109). When a child becomes the sole source of household income the question must be posed as to what can be done in order to maintain the income and allow the child its natural development.

Poverty, whilst the largest contributing factor to child labour, is not the only reason for the phenomenon. Culture and tradition as well as a lack of access to all basic services plays a leading role in paving an environment for children to enter the labour market. The following sections will investigate the effects of formal education, the household and families within it and gender roles on child labour.

3.3.1 Child Labour versus Formal Education

Case studies of children in the labour market and on the streets are numerous and "only estimates exist, but at least 250 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 work for a living in developing countries, nearly half of them full time. Many millions more are uncounted and uncountable" (UNICEF, 2001b:1). No country, including some in the western world, is immune from the sweatshop mentality. School has increasingly decreased in value for most families and many parents prefer to have their children enter the labour market rather than continue their education.

Child labour and school attendances are often interlinked, but empirical evidence on the scope of this linkage is mixed. While it is true that in some cases work enables children to afford schooling, it is also known that work often negatively affects both school attendance and performance. Yet, little is currently understood about the conditions under which work by children can be detrimental to school attendance and performance. (IPEC, 2005:4)

\(^2\) The proverb is attributed to Puritanical sermons from England.
The majority of children are to be found either in the labour market or in schools, therefore:

The income effect leads to an increase in the demand for child leisure and schooling. Because these are alternative uses of children’s time, they decrease child labor [sic]. This effect may be enhanced if children can substitute for their mother’s time (which has become more valuable, relative to the time of children) in household production (e.g. caring for younger siblings) (Levy, 1985:788)\(^\text{25}\).

Thus, the issue is about the management of time and overall value of each member of the household. Children must spend their time either between the labour market or working in the household, in formal education, or in both formal education and work, with no space for other activities. The argument can be made that the state perpetuates this tension between children’s placement in the labour market or in formal education. Families see an immediate gain when children are placed in the labour market compared to a need to invest in children when they are placed in formal education, with a gain that cannot be determined for years.

Apprentices, children working in factories or in the fields, school children and students all spend a considerable amount of their time restricting non-leisure activities that are socially useful. The difference between studying and working relates to the question whether the activity is immediately useful or in the future, studying being considered as an investment for the future productive work (Hanson and Vandaele, 2003).

“While accessible, good quality educational opportunities can help keep children out of unacceptable forms of work, the absence of public education systems, quality schools and training programmes serves to perpetuate child labour” (ILO, 2002:53). Reduction in social programmes due to ERSAP has an adverse effect on children’s enrolment in primary schools, which in turn will increase the number of children in the labour market (ILO, 2002). In any country, where children’s attendance at school has declined, strengthening the educational system should encourage a marked decrease in children’s involvement in the labour market.

\(^{25}\) Levy did a survey on the effects of modernization of farming techniques on child labour in rural Egypt.
By the early 1900s, the United States had close to two million children working all over the country. Yet, due to an increase in demand for skilled labour by the 1920s there was a significant drop in the number of children labouring.

Most historical interpretations focus on the effect of structural, economic, and technological changes on child labour trends between the 1870s and the 1930s. The success of industrial capitalism is assigned primary responsibility for putting children out of work and into schools to satisfy the growing demand for a skilled, educated labour force. Rising real incomes, on the other hand, explains the reduced need for children's wages. As the standard of living steadily improved between the late nineteenth century and the 1920s, child labour declined simply because families could afford to keep their children in school (Zelizer, 1985:62).

Innovations in technology have resulted in a reduced demand for children in the labour market and families react to this decrease in demand by reducing their household size (Levy, 1985). However, in industries where technology is not relevant, such as picking cotton, children remain a source of cheap labour.

"Child labour exists because education systems and labour markets do not function properly, because poor households cannot insure themselves against income fluctuations, and because perverse incentives exist that create a demand for child labour" (Grootaert, 1999:6). Children are smaller and in some instances are more effective for certain jobs such as weaving, cotton picking, chimney cleaning, and mining. Furthermore, one can argue that: "the jobs are offered to children, because child labourers can be paid less than adults. Employers thus exploit children as a means of increasing their profit" (Gay, 1998:19). Even if parents believed their family unit could gain a return by investing in sending their children to school, the price is sometimes too high.

While particularly in developing countries only a very small percentage of parents can easily afford high-quality schools with amenities ranging from state of the art computers to fully equipped laboratories, and even extracurricular activities like art, music or riding, for millions of families around the world even the state-sponsored schools are out of reach. These so-called "free schools" have hidden costs which make them unaffordable
for many people. Even though there is no charge for tuition itself, there are often charges for school supplies and materials, uniforms, transportation and extra-curricular activities. Many families have to survive on only US$1 per day, and these costs are simply beyond their means (IPEC, 2004:113-114).

The education system has become the fall back of many researchers and activists to solve the child labour problem, “but ask the millions of unemployed young graduates in the developing world what education did for them” (Seabrook, 2000b:80). Thus, the argument becomes circular; should children from poverty stricken households be allowed to work or should they participate in formal education as prescribed by legislation? And on what level should this decision be taken - international, state, municipal, family or by the children who will be working? These children “want to be respected, get a decent wage, have work breaks, and access to education and health care. What they do not want is to find in their district some ill-thought-out project from a rich country which is going to lose them their job” (Boukhari, 1999:37)\(^{26}\). Many of these families send their children to the labour force for survival. Children are not resentful of the choice their families make for them or view them as a sacrifice; rather many of these children state their only concern is that they would like to be treated with dignity and respect.

Many of the families of child labourers have little or no education, and although they believe that education is important and would like to see their children attain an education, they feel that they must also sustain themselves. In Latin America:

> The wages of the children do not seem to affect child labor [sic] decision margin, which means that child labor supply cannot be modeled [sic] as a traditional individual supply model. Given the fact that parents are poor, they may send their children to work regardless of the wage level for children (López-Calva, 2001:66).

It does not matter to families that their children may make as little as $2 per week; every small contribution helps to sustain the family as a unit. When families believe that sending their children to school will not give them a better standard, they will probably

\(^{26}\) An article reviewing the movement that has come out of South America calling for children and adolescents to be allowed to work in better conditions.
be more likely to keep their children at home, either to help or so that they can bring home a small amount of money from work outside the home” (Grimsrud and Stokke, 1997:28).

Sometimes the immediate gains are not seen as important when sending children to the labour force, but rather the future potential gains, which may simply mean higher wages as the children get older. Yet depriving children of schooling perpetuates the cycle of poverty. A generation of uneducated and unskilled labour is created and the country remains within the development trend (Post, 2001).

3.3.2 Families, Households and Child Labour

There are numerous internal and external forces behind the families’ decisions to send their children to the labour market. Internal forces that plague families such as contracting a communicable disease or suffering a work injury will send a family further into poverty. External factors include those shaped by the labour market and the social exclusion of poor children from access to quality schools and other social services (IPEC, 2004) will have the same effect. External factors also include new globalization policies which have not affected low income countries equitably. The majority of these populations are forced to work for low wages and rely on the informal sector for employment.

Households whose survival is at issue - those whose poverty is so extreme that basic needs may not be met - will likely devote all available resources to production. Indeed, the lower the earnings children receive, the more work they will do, since it takes more work to provide for the necessities of life. Thus, one way to differentiate the child labour of the very poor and the less- or non-poor is by their responses to the demand side of the market. It is evident that the poorest households may be caught in what we might call a survival trap: as employment options deteriorate, they offer ever more child labour to meet their needs, but the simultaneous decision

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27 The report examines the intuitional differences in Egypt and Zimbabwe and these intuitions affect the increase in child labour.
28 The research for David Post’s book was based on empirical studies from Chile, Peru and Mexico, analyzing children’s activities.
throughout a community can flood the labour market, leading to even lower earnings and more children offering their work (IPEC, 2004:86).

While access to basic needs is seen as an external factor, internal factors include the number of children a family chooses to have. The fertility of the family is analysed in correlation with child labour and as such: “it is hypothesized that children are economic assets of rural families in developing countries” (Bando, et al, 2005:3)\textsuperscript{29}. Another internal factor is the education level of the parents, which has a direct correlation on the children, either negatively or positively:

The household decision making process regarding child labour is greatly influenced by the parents’ education and their participation in the labour force...However, it is also true that more educated women have a greater potential for high earnings by working outside the home, and when mothers work outside the home, girls are often pulled out of school to take care of siblings and do domestic work (Grootaert and Patrinos, 1999:5)\textsuperscript{30}.

The education status of the mother and father has a direct correlation on the rearing of their children. The increase in population has had adverse effects on the economy and on the educational system. “The impact of a reduction in child labour on fertility decisions crucially depends on the former’s impact on parental income (such as a rise on parental wages)” (Baland, 2000:663)\textsuperscript{31}. Households’ socioeconomic status and their access to quality basic services all affect and increase children’s involvement in the labour force. “Parents are obviously not autonomous in deciding which activities are desirable for their children, the sets of options from which (sic) the poor parents can make choices in the allocation of work being limited” (Nieuwenhuys, 1994:17). Finally, parents’ age also influences sending children to the labour market; “younger parents are likely to be at a more resource-constrained point in their lifecycle and may have less ability to pay

\textsuperscript{29} Based on a study using data for Mexico from 1997 to 1999 to test the indigenous status of the household against children’s probability of working. The study looks in 1997 before a conditional cash transfer program is instituted and the impact after it is instituted in 1999.

\textsuperscript{30} The book looks at four cases using national-level data sets to analyse policies designed eventually to reduce child labour. Thus, the objective of the book is to design interventions.

\textsuperscript{31} The study develops a model to test the inefficiency of child labour against the household, fertility and a complete ban on child labour.
school-related fees, as well as a greater need for their children's labor [sic]” (Assaad, et al, 2001:16).\(^{32}\)

The household's educational and socioeconomic status also affects how gender roles develop. Girls and boys are given different roles and responsibilities within the household and within the labour market. These gender roles work as both internal and external factors affecting how girls and boys will negotiate within the agency of childhood to the path to adulthood.

3.3.3 Gender roles and Child Labour

Gender roles exist in all societies in the world; these are ascribed roles given to boys and girls at birth and perpetuated throughout their lives. The assigned roles allow boys and girls to “experience different perspectives of life” (IPEC, 2004:142) as a result of their sex. Such roles also affect boys and girls that participate in the labour market, as well as excluding or granting access to social structures present in societies.

The gender gap between girls who work and boys is also quite relevant. “In Guatemala, for instance, working girls spend an average of 21 hours a week on household duties on top of a 40 hour working week outside” (WIN News, 1997).\(^{33}\) The denial of girls their fundamental right to even primary education is evident in most of the developing world. Girls who have not entered puberty are seen as socially acceptable for work as they do not need an education, since they will only get married, while boys need to have an education in order to support their future families. “Young girls often begin work at an early age. They stitch, spin, and weave and are usually deprived of an education. The money they earn is used to pay their dowries when they get married, which often occurs at the age of 14 or 15” (Parker, 1999).\(^{34}\) While this example is from Indonesia, where young girls work in the carpet weaving industry, the relevancy is quite evident to the

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\(^{32}\) The authors reviewed existing literature and data from the Egypt Labor Market Survey (ELMS-1998) to what extent work influences children’s school attendance.

\(^{33}\) Based on the call for a global march against child labour.

\(^{34}\) Based on his book Stolen Dreams which focuses on case studies from all over the world, using photographs to illustrate the review of the hazards of child labour around the world.
Arab countries and dynamic in the household. ILO states that girls are the most at risk of:

Exclusion from school and comprise around 60 per cent of the children worldwide who do not attend primary school. Parents may prefer to invest in their sons’ education and keep their daughters at home to contribute to the household economy. Cultural traditions may prevent girls from attending co-educational classes, or schools may be so far from home and constitute such an unsafe environment that girls are effectively excluded by concerns for their protection (ILO, 2002:54).

Girls’ education has become a priority in all development programmes sponsored by the United Nations as they are at risk in all countries from exclusion from schools and other social programmes. “Girls’ education is threatened in many countries by the frequent preference for educating sons, by early marriage, and by inheritance and social security laws that disadvantage women” (IPEC, 2004:153). Statistics in the Arab world continually show a lower rate of literacy in women compared with men.

The value of girls’ work and the high opportunity cost of foregoing it, poor opportunities for skilled employment after obtaining an education, and the prescribed role of girls who are expected anyway to have a life of domesticity and subservience are all confounding factors. Their education appears as a poor investment for many parents. Often, when faced with limited resources and many financial demands, parents prefer to invest in the education of their sons and not lose their daughters’ critical contribution to the household economy (IPEC, 2004:153)

Thus, girls who do not go to school are either sent to work outside the household or inside it. Eventually, these same girls get married, have children and perpetuate the same cycle.

This division of labor [sic] in part reflects gender roles and expectations. Engagement of girls in domestic service sector is shaped by the role of girls/women positioned in the biological and social reproductive spheres (maintaining a household, whether it is her own or that of others), and the role of boys engaged in the productive realm. In addition, girls tend to primarily occupy the private sphere, while boys, the public (Gustafsson-Wright and Pyne, 2002: 12).
This is particularly true in Arab countries after puberty when girls must return to the household and are not accepted in the labour market. Families perceive the dangers of placing pubescent young girls in the labour market and prefer to shield them from the perceived harm. “Although they are exposed to many similar types of labour as boys, girls often endure additional hardships and are more susceptible to exploitation, sometimes as a result of their society’s view of the role women and girls should play” (IPEC, 2004:142).

The age of the children has a role to play as well. Younger children are given more menial tasks such as carrying items back and forth, but as they get older they may be given more strenuous tasks (Levy, 1985). Although, “the incidence of child labor [sic] is higher for the older children than for the younger” (Assaad, et al, 2001:22). Gender and age influence families’ decisions about their children’s education and labour (Assaad, et al, 2001).

3.4 Children’s Involvement in the Labour Force

As stated before, not all labour in which children participate is hazardous to their development or health, but a great deal is, however “the total economically active child population 5-17 years old is estimated at 352 million children” (IPEC, 2002:15). This includes children who worked in hazardous labour. “It was estimated that nearly 171 million children were working in hazardous situations or conditions that qualify as worst forms of child labour, and 8.4 million were in unconditional worst forms of child labour” (IPEC, 2005:3). The International Labour Organization created IPEC to focus on the labour that was hazardous to children.

Central in these efforts is the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), an ILO programme inspired by child labour concerns raised at the 1990 World Summit for Children. It now works with governments and other partners in 99 countries to initiate policies, set standards, promote advocacy and manage activities to combat child labour. Child labour is one of the core issues and priorities for review at the UN Special Session on Children in September 2001. Heads of State
and Government and an array of individuals and organizations committed to protecting children's rights and improving their lives will meet to review and reflect on progress made—and opportunities lost—for children over the past decade since the World Summit for Children (UNICEF, 2001b:5).

However, not all countries subscribed to ILO’s vision. Only 57 countries have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) within the organization’s programme and a further 30 are associated (ILO: 2005). Egypt has signed an MOU and has continued to participate in all IPEC’s programmes including Supporting Children’s Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media (SCREAM) which has become famous for the Red Card campaign, utilizing football to mobilize public opinion against child labour (ILO, 2006) and on the 19th of January, 2006 the campaign was launched officially in Egypt during the African Cup. What IPEC has done in recent years is work with countries to try and understand the phenomena of child labour and to create alternatives to hazardous child labour.

Not all work done by children should be classified as child labour that is to be targeted for elimination. Children’s or adolescents’ participation in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling, is generally regarded as being something positive. This includes activities such as helping their parents around the home, assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays. These kinds of activities contribute to children’s development and to the welfare of their families; they provide them with skills and experience, and help to prepare them to be productive members of society during their adult life (IPEC, 2004:16).

As stated previously, not all child labour is hazardous. However, the focus of this research is on children who are deprived of education, working in an industry where their physical wellbeing is continually challenged. IPEC has chosen to promote the abolishment of child labour by utilizing Articles 28 and 32 of the CRC as the basis for developing a guideline for the types of labour deemed hazardous for children to be actively involved in.

The term “child labour” is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to
physical and mental development. It refers to work that: is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and interferes with their schooling: y depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; by obliging them to leave school prematurely; or by requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work (IPEC, 2004:16).

Nonetheless, I hesitate to seal the fate of child labourers even through the wide and general definition that IPEC has given us. IPEC continued its definition, possibly motivated by politics, to the following:

Whether or not particular forms of "work" can be called "child labour" depends on the child’s age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is performed and the objectives pursued by individual countries. The answer varies from country to country, as well as among sectors within countries (IPEC, 2004:16).

Furthermore it has become difficult to draw the line between what is labour and the many activities that should constitute work but are unpaid due to a child working for their parents or relatives (McKechnie and Hobbs, 2001:11). The use of the term ‘hazardous’ has also created some discussion as to what is intended by it. Children who are subject to psychological harm such as daily insults and blackmail are not included in hazardous labour. Thus, the question is: “at what point does a child’s job life change from being useful, early formative experience to one of gross exploitation, suffering and subsequent impediment?” (Eaton and Da Silva, 1998:326). Exploitation becomes the distinction between child labour and child work. Where working children receive adequate pay for services rendered, work in safe environments and for short hours with sufficient breaks falls under child work; when conditions prove contrary to this description, exploitation of the child subsequently ensues.

The following three categories of child labour have been slated by ILO for elimination:

1. Labour that is performed by a child who is under the minimum age specified for that kind of work (as defined by national legislation, in

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35 A chapter focusing on child employment and schooling as two different agencies which are important for the preparation of children to enter adulthood.
36 A study looking at child labour in Portugal. The study tries to examine the role of child labour in the development process of Portugal.
accordance with accepted international standards), and that is thus likely to impede the child’s education and full development.

(2) Labour that jeopardizes the physical, mental or moral well-being of a child, either because of its nature or because of the conditions in which it is carried out, known as hazardous work.

(3) The unconditional worst forms of child labour, which are internationally defined as slavery, trafficking, debt bondage and other forms of forced labour, forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict, prostitution and pornography, and illicit activities (ILO, 2002:9).

Unfortunately, even if the international community decides to adopt a universal definition of child labour there is still the matter of under reporting due the illegality of the issue. This research has found that few Arab countries are reporting child labour, which has become a serious concern. Without reliable data it is impossible to know how to combat the phenomena.

Even after the definitions are sorted out (to the extent that they can be) official data on child labor [sic] tends to be deficient because of the likelihood of under-reporting. In most countries there are laws which place restrictions on child labor, ranging from an outright ban (as in most industrialized countries) to other kinds of limitations such as an outright ban on child labor for very small children, and for all children in hazardous industries (as, for instance, in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan). Thus it is natural for guardians and employers to hide the information of 'illegal' work by children (Basu, 1998:6-7).

Hiding child labour from the government, apart from the inability of countries to realise how critical the situation is and to find ways to deal with the situation, there is also a concern as to whether children who labour will have access to health care services. The adverse and latent effect of hazardous labour on children’s health has become central to the abolishment of child labour. Children who are actively involved in hazardous child labour grow up to be less active participating adults in the labour market.

3.4.1 The Effects of Hazardous Labour on Health

Much of the research into child labour has focused on issues such as health and rights; I would like to focus this section on labour and health. The importance of discussing this issue is that it again tends to locate children as ‘the future’ and frame them developmentally.
Child labour today represents the largest single cause of child abuse across the globe (Scanlon, et al, 2002:401)^37. Graitec, who conducted a global study on the health impacts of child labour, states: “A child’s metabolic, neurological, and orthopaedic [sic] systems are still growing, and their development may be particularly sensitive to hazardous exposures, producing diseases and conditions seen much later in life” (Graitec and Lerer, 2000:82).

The children’s inadequate clothing exposes them to wounds from the cane leaves and to skin irritations from the down released by the plants. Given that many children do not wear shoes, they risk stepping on splinters on the ground, or on glass or tin cans, which can cause infections or tetanus. Scars from wounds caused by tools, as well as blisters and calluses were noted on the boys. Other dangers to which children are exposed include: harmful sun rays, since the children do not use any form of protection; dust and ash produced by the burning cane, which can cause respiratory problems and allergies; and, a large number of insects that bother the children at work when their bodies become covered with molasses (IPEC, 2004:73).

The latency of certain diseases such as cancer, emphysema and silicosis makes it even more difficult to determine their point of origin. “The problem may be even greater for young workers with a past history of child labour, and high mobility between occupations and therefore exposures” (Forastieri, 1997:107)^38. According to IPEC studies based on household survey data, “each additional weekly hour of work adds to the probability of sustaining work-related ill-health or injury” (IPEC, 2005:4). There is no way to estimate accurately the number of children currently at risk of injuries and diseases as most of the studies carried out on child labourers are on a small scale and even then many employers will not readily reveal their illegal employees (Scanlon, et al, 2002).

Therefore, campaigning for what can only be described as child survival in such harsh environments is a key part of the move towards abolishing children’s participation in hazardous labour. In addition, children who do participate in hazardous labour are not

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^37 A review of child labour which is seen as the source of most of the world’s abuse against children.

^38 Based on a discussion to develop a strategy to combat child labour from a health perspective.
guaranteed their wages and often receive quite minimal pay (IPEC, 2004). It should be noted that it has been empirically established that children who start working at a young age attain a lower level of education, which has an obvious impact on the child’s future welfare and ability to generate income” (López-Calva, 2001:60).

3.4.2 Forms of Labour in which Children are Employed

Hazardous labour comes in many forms, even in areas which are not usually associated with harmful or damaging work. Work that takes place within the confines of the family sphere is usually associated with unpaid labour but can be just as detrimental to a child’s development. Children employed in their families’ fields are continuously exposed to pesticides and other dangers from the labour they endure for no monetary compensation.

The kinds of hazardous work in question can be either an occupation as such or specific tasks. The latter tend to be easier to deal with in that it is often specific tasks and working conditions that make the work hazardous, e.g. operation of power-driven machinery, the presence or use of dangerous chemicals, work at night or work in isolation, and these can sometimes be changed. Some situations are hazardous wherever they occur, but each country needs to determine what children under 18 should be prohibited from doing in relation to conditions in this particular country, economic sector, and so on. But in short, hazardous work is something that children should never be permitted to do (IPEC, 2004:47).

There is a variety of hazardous labour that children are employed within. I shall explore the areas where children are found labouring in this section. It should be noted that although most of these categories of hazardous child labour exist in Egypt, for the purpose of this study, I shall be looking at child labourers employed in the pottery industry. Graiteer and Lerer conducted a review of the impact of hazardous labour on children’s health. Table 3.1 shows the different industries and their impact on children’s health.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector Industry</th>
<th>Categories of Child Labor [sic]</th>
<th>Hazard</th>
<th>Injury/Disease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manufacturing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>Garment-making, button making</td>
<td>Solvents, machinery, poor ergonomic design, emissions, noise</td>
<td>Trauma, repetitive strain injuries, deformities, occupational lung diseases, cancers, skin conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron and steel, metal work</td>
<td>Welding, soldering, plating</td>
<td>emissions, machinery, heavy metals, radiation, noise</td>
<td>Trauma, occupational lung diseases, cancers, neurological impairment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass and ceramics</td>
<td>Cutting, drawing and carrying molten glass, glazing and firing ceramics</td>
<td>Dangerous machinery, hot kilns, fires, dust and chemicals, lead exposure</td>
<td>Trauma, poisoning, occupational lung diseases, heat stress, cataracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather, tanning and footwear</td>
<td>Cutting, hammering, trimming, dyeing, stitching</td>
<td>Dangerous machinery, noise, exposure to chemicals and solvents, fire risk, sharp instruments</td>
<td>Trauma, communicable diseases, occupational lung diseases, chemical poisonings, repetitive strain conditions, cancers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals</td>
<td>Matchstick and firework making, grinding and mixing chemicals</td>
<td>Explosions, fires, emissions, hazardous chemicals, gases</td>
<td>Trauma, burns, occupational lung diseases, poisoning, neurological impairment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food processing</td>
<td>Slaughtering, cutting carcasses, cleaning, separating animal parts</td>
<td>Dangerous machinery, unsanitary conditions, liquid and solid waste exposure</td>
<td>Trauma, infections diseases, occupational lung diseases, repetitive strain conditions, deformities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles and weaving</td>
<td>Spinning, weaving, knitting, trimming, finishing, dyeing, washing</td>
<td>Dangerous machinery, noise, dusts and chemicals, poor lighting, fire risk, high temperatures</td>
<td>Trauma, deformities, repetitive strain injuries, hearing loss, burns, chemical poisoning, fatigue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and quarrying, stone and green processing</td>
<td>Extraction of mineral products, carrying heavy weights, polishing slate and other minerals, gem polishing, stone carving</td>
<td>Emissions, dusts, dangerous machinery, explosions, fires, heavy metals, radiation, noise</td>
<td>Trauma, falls, drowning, occupational lung diseases, repetitive strain disorders, dermatitis, eye conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Preparing and handling food, stoking, cleaning, selling</td>
<td>Dangerous machinery, high temperatures, unsafe ladders, high shelving, fork-lifts, dangerous chemicals and cleaning solvents, long-hours, dangerous neighborhoods [sic]</td>
<td>Trauma, repetitive strain injuries, communicable diseases, violence, stress and social alienation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Driving, carrying goods, gas-station work, stevedore work</td>
<td>Dangerous machinery, fatiguemg conditions, short deadlines, benzene exposure, exhaust emissions</td>
<td>Trauma, poisoning, neurological impairment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 Health Impacts of Child Labour Stratified by Industry Sector
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Construction</strong></th>
<th><strong>Building and brick making</strong></th>
<th>Carrying heavy weights, digging, quarrying, working on high structures</th>
<th>Unsafe, high structures, dusts, chemicals, lead exposure, falling objects</th>
<th>Trauma, occupational lung diseases, falls, burns, poisoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agriculture</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dangerous machinery, unsafe transportation, unsafe structures, pesticides, chemicals, long working hours, heavy loads</td>
<td>Trauma, repetitive strain conditions, deformities, occupational lung diseases, parasitic and other infectious diseases, dermatitis, chemical and pesticide poisoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farming</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>General farm work and care of animals, processing agricultural products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fishing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Land and sea based fishing, diving, marine product processing</td>
<td>Dangerous machinery,</td>
<td>Trauma, hypoxic conditions, communicable diseases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household Work</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exposure to fires and toxic fumes, dangerous solvents, poor working conditions, fatiguing conditions, physical and sexual abuse, malnutrition, social isolation</td>
<td>Trauma, respiratory conditions, HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, chemical poisoning, psychological impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex Work</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dangerous environments, drugs, physical abuse, rape, long-hours</td>
<td>Trauma, fatigue, communicable diseases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informal Work</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unsanitary conditions especially on garbage heaps, exposure to violence and traffic accidents, legal sanctions</td>
<td>Trauma, malnutrition, communicable disease, psychologically impacts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Graitcer and Lerer, 2000:6-7).
The latent effects of labour in these industries depend on the types of exposure, the duration and the age of the children. As the children enter adulthood they are faced with the reality that they should technically be paid adult wages. But having worked as menial labourers they possess neither the skills nor the education to warrant an increase, and are unable to compete. In addition to being poorly equipped for the labour force as these children enter adulthood they are also faced with latent effects of their labour. At this point they have already begun families of their own and thus the cycle is perpetuated as their children are sent to earn an income (Burra, 1995).

Children of all ages can be found in most parts of the labour market. There are certain dangers that are posed by specific industries to children who labour within such industries. The tanning industry, for example, is one of the most dangerous for anyone involved in it, especially young children.

In the United States the leather tanning and finishing industry has the highest incidence (21.2 per 1000 cases) of skin disease, other occupational illnesses and injuries. Hexavalent chromium is known to cause a perforation of the nasal septum of in-plant workers and neighbourhood residents, severe wheezing, pain, fever, loss of weight, and skin corrosion. Several years’ exposure to chromium salts may cause lung cancer, conjunctivitis, asthma, and ulcers. Formaldehyde and lime concentrates applied in the finishing work may cause gastroenteritis and eye irritation. The flayers and tanners also suffer anthrax (inflammation of skin lesions), a disease of sheep and cattle transmitted to man by infected wool and bristles (Wadehra and Chakraborty, 1993:254).

In Egypt, an estimated 25 percent of all working children were employed in the tanning industry according to Abdalla, who conducted some of the first empirical research on child labour in the 1980s (Abdalla, 1988). Children work in all the varying processes of the industry and as such are exposed to all its dangers. Unlike the United States, the Egyptian government does not check the environmental impact the industry has on the surrounding area or the occupational dangers to which its employees are exposed.

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39 The study investigates the effects of the leather tanning affects women, children and the environment in India.
40 The tanning industry has since then begun to scale back their production and many of the tanneries are being relocated to a different area.
only intervention that the government has tried to implement on the industry is to remove it from Old Cairo to the outskirts of the city, but to no avail as it still remains where it has been for over a century. “The tanning industry and other operations associated with producing textiles, clothing and footwear are found in many countries, including Colombia, Bangladesh and Egypt” (IPEC, 2004:30).

The pottery industry has been considered a hazardous industry for children due to the amount of dust that is inhaled in the factories. Exposure to this type of dust for prolonged periods of time can sometimes lead to a disintegration of the lungs known as silicosis. A number of studies have been carried out on children who have been exposed to such conditions:

> Without long-term exposure data on child labourers, it is possible to develop disease models that examine the impact of latency on the early development of disease. A child who begins work at a young age has more years to develop a disease than an adult with a similar exposure. In India, silicosis and tuberculosis are common in industries with a large proportion of child labourers. Among stone cutters and slate workers, the rate of silicosis is 35% and 55%, respectively, and in potteries, about 15% of workers are affected, although in some places the rate is as high as 34%. The overall rate of tuberculosis in pottery-related industries is about ten times higher than that for the general population. The mean duration of exposure before a diagnosis of silicosis for an Indian pottery worker may be only 20 years, compared with over 30 years for an iron moulder. Children who work in brick factories and granite quarries are also at increased risk of developing silicosis: the rate among granite-crushing workers is about 75%. Because of high levels of dust exposure, these workers may have a mean latency of less than 10 years before the onset of silicosis (Parker, 1997b:2)

The textile and carpet industry has traditionally employed children for their nimble fingers and their resource as a form of cheap labour. The textile, carpet and agriculture industries all rely heavily on cheap and available labour and require a great deal of it.

> Often, working at home, children are employed to assemble finished garments or shoes under subcontracting arrangements. In India, children weave carpets in isolated or concealed loom sheds. In Pakistan, children

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41 Based on Dr David Parker’s, an occupation health physician, study of Child Labour around the world.
endure similar conditions stitching leather footballs. If they work at home, they are outside the reach of labour inspectors and trade unions, and abuses are frequent even in countries where the larger manufacturers have now been made to follow laws and regulations and even cease hiring children altogether (IPEC, 2004:30).

The agricultural industry has traditionally utilized children in the work force all over the world. For example in Denmark and Iceland every year, even today, children are excused from school for the potato picking season. The Egyptian cotton industry employs 1.2 million people (Time International, 2001:1). Children pick cotton all day under the beating sun with no breaks, a strenuous task for an adult but even tougher on a child of 7 years of age. Legislation is no comfort for any of these children.

In Egypt, many children are regularly employed picking jasmine. Between July and October, recruiters take children from villages in the Nile Delta to gather the flowers in the middle of the night, when the essence is purest. Recruiters prefer small children, because their small hands better enable them to pick delicate single flowers. The children work barefoot in the mud and must rely on their sense of touch as there is no light. The children work 9-hour shifts without eating or stopping until the morning sun grows too strong. The children are paid 3 Egyptian pounds (US $0.5) per day. If the children stop work for any reason (to avoid swarms of mosquitoes) they may be caned by the recruiter (IPEC, 2004:58)

Children are routinely exposed to dangerous pesticides, tractor accidents, constant dermatological conditions, beatings by employers, and insults (UNICEF, 2002)42. The agricultural industry has been the largest employer of children in the past (UNICEF, 2002). Traditionally, children are expected to help in the fields and so are not seen as out of place when they are helping their families in the fields. It is however, their exposure to injury and their withdrawal from schools that has caused researchers and activists to react and place children working in agriculture into the category of hazardous labour on most international agendas. The largest number of child labourers is in India, with anywhere from 44-100 million working in all industries (Gay, 1998:16)43. Children in India mostly work in agriculture, the rest find employment in manufacturing, repairs,

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42 This is based on a right-based study analyzing the situation of Egyptian children and women. The study was conducted by the Social Research Centre in Cairo for UNICEF Egypt.  
43 Kathryn Gay explores child labour globally.
transport, construction, household industries and sweatshops (Weiner, 1991:22). Statistics on child labour in India, as in all parts of the world, are hard to come by, with each report stating a different estimate. The reality is quite different as there is no accurate way to measure the number of children in the workforce or performing arduous tasks.

Domestic servitude is yet another form of labour to which children, specifically young girls are exposed. Children work continuously for their employers, again without breaks, and tend to sleep at their employer’s home, rarely visiting their own families. Very little research has been done in this area in the Arab world, although a lot of anecdotal evidence is available. Enter any middle to upper class house in Arab world and a servant is bound to greet you, and sometimes that servant is a young child. “It is very common for poor families in many developing countries as well as in Egypt to send their young children, particularly girls, to work as domestic servants in the household of the well off. Parents send their children away to gain extra income or with the hope that they will receive better nourishment” (El-Sayed, 2001). While the trend in the past was to employ young girls who would grow up in the house learning to cook and clean, then leaving once they were married, this no longer is the case. Rarely do these children remain in one household and while in the past many of their employers would see that they were well clothed and fed as well as literate, this is not the case today.

Today, most houses have many of the electronic gadgets needed to simplify tasks in the household and thus there is no need to employ a large staff of servants. With the introduction of technology, this was also the case in agricultural industry. One servant is usually sufficient for most households and therefore the necessity for that person to be skilled is vital. While the issue of bonded labour is quite relevant in the Arab world, I have not seen the issue addressed in any literature on child labour in Egypt. The children in this study are in fact employed, living at home and in this respect free rather than

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44 Myron Weiner explores India’s child labour and its educational system.
45 This is based on a research conducted as part of a Masters thesis submitted by Mirette Moustafa El-Sayed. The research looked at the literate relating to child labour in Egypt gender, legislation, and geographical distribution. The data for the research was collected primarily from CAPMAS surveys conducted in the 1980s.
bonded. They are able to earn money in order to meet the most basic of necessities as they live within families where there is collective provision to which they make an essential contribution. In areas such as domestic servitude, children can very easily be bonded into employment. “While some enslaved or bonded child workers are visible to investigators, million of children around the world work unseen in domestic service – given or sold at a very early age to another family” (Gay, 1998:40). In this regard, more research is needed in Arab countries concerning bonded servitude, where anecdotal evidence shows a rise in cases where children were enslaved in homes and tried to escape.

There is no doubt that the children are in the labour force because of the need to sustain themselves and their families. It is how they are treated, and the deprivation of the rights to which they are entitled, which is a concern. Families try to cope with their lot in life by making the best of what they have; thus, it is important to understand where these families come from, how they live and finally the laws that govern these families. I would like to focus now on the specific geographical context of my research, namely Egypt.

3.5 Child Labour in Egypt

In Egypt, children work largely because of poverty. “Over half of employed children sought work to increase the household income or to support family enterprises and that the wages of working children represented almost one-quarter of total household income” (UNICEF, 2002:62-63). Yet it is impossible, as stated previously, to determine just how many children are employed in Egypt today. Household fertility rate is based on infant mortality in Egypt and where the “economic contribution of children have high values, family size is also high” (Levy, 1985:785).

Regrettably, child labour perpetuates a cycle of poverty, “Children who work become sickly adults, and a drain on national economies. With little if any education, they are
less productive workers as adults" (Weissman, 1997). Abu-Lughud describes how families feel about education and the tension that is caused trying to find ways to allow the children to become, at the very least, literate.

Is it really worth it, given how understaffed and under-financed the schools are and how few children can actually succeed in such schools? Even if the family has sacrificed to send them to an institute or college, they will most likely remain unemployed, especially now that the government has ended its policy of guaranteed employment for graduates. No one asks. They see no other way, given how little land there is. Those lucky families who have any land, find it split more and more ways with each generation. They say that even the most basic jobs now require a diploma. And they have been taught, by television, that to be a hero, one must be educated, and so they want the social capital that education provides in the local community and marriage market (Abu-Lughod, 1998:155).

The pressure on families today in Egypt to educate their children has become unreasonable. The underlying cost of education is a large sum to pay for families who are surviving on $2 a day.

School teachers are so badly paid, a teacher at the start of his or her career earns $35 a month, that most of them have come to treat the school day as little more than an enrolment period for their private tutoring. It is made clear to parents that their child has no chance of passing the crucial exam that could lead to further education unless he or she gets private lessons. Most parents obediently sign up, but often they are able to pay for one or two, so they have to make a choice (Economist, 1999:10).

In Egypt, from an early age, children are expected to take private lessons from their teachers after school. While in school they learn close to nothing in order for the teacher to ensure a supplementary salary of $6.96 per child, per lesson. Very little thought is given to discipline or analytical reasoning, but rather the focus is on memorization. This could possibly be to ensure that no child grows up to question the system that has been forced upon them and to blindly accept the status quo of unemployment and abject

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46 A review of the debate on child labour.
47 Based on a study conducted in Upper Egypt on focusing on the media and education in rural Egypt.
48 Anecdotal evidence from parents who pay for private lessons for their children.
poverty (Starrett, 1998). According to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 40% of the population spend one-sixth of their income on private lesson, but one quarter still drops out before fifth grade (Economist, 1999:10). These hidden costs of education are a burden and when future gains are not guaranteed they become less justifiable. According to one published study, 18% of Egypt’s employees are between the ages of 10 and 14 (World Bank, 2002b); this does not take into account those that are younger and those that sell and beg on the streets. The ratio of teacher to pupil is 50:1, which explains the overcrowding in the classrooms and the inability of children to learn and teachers to teach (NHASD, 2006).

A study carried out on educated and non-educated mothers in Giza, Egypt, found that: “uneducated mothers sought, above all, to instil in their children a sense of loyalty to family. The children of educated mothers, by contrast, were socialized to be self-motivated achievers” (UNICEF, 2002:41). In Egypt, the literacy rate for women is 43.6 percent compared with 67.2 percent for men (UNDP, 2005:301) and the female adult economic activity as a percent of the male rate is 46 percent (UNDP, 2005:313). These statistics indicate that, due to tradition and culture, girls are still being excluded from participating in formal education. Family traditions and the elders within the family can influence whether or not a child goes to school and remains within the system.

Families in Egypt are not merely nuclear families, but are made up of uncles, aunts, grandfathers, grandmothers, and up to four wives, as discussed in Chapter Two. Each member, according to seniority and sex has a status within the hierarchy of the family. “The structure of the family consists of positions, or roles, within the family, and the patterned interactions between them” (Cheal, 2002:7). Thus, immediate or nuclear families are a construction that does not necessarily apply in the Egyptian context. The role of the head of the household is often held by the grandfather, even though the sons may be earning their own living and even supporting their father.

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49 A study on the history of mass education in Egypt and its effect Muslim culture.
50 The book explores the sociology of families and family life.
The family environment in Egypt is the most intricate and it is this which moulds children. In a UNICEF study in Egypt, the family was quoted as: “traditionally [been] at the very centre of life for children and young people – their primary source of socialization, education, and security” (UNICEF, 2002: 40). The socio-economic status of the family is then called into question as is the influence that families have over their children.

Most children work as a result of conscious decisions. Parental choice models, based on the notion that parents or other adults choose to send children to work rather than to school, assume that adults decide according to rational economic criteria, for selfish reasons or out of ignorance. But children, at least those of a certain age and maturity, may also decide to work for a variety of reasons: to contribute to family survival or to ensure their own survival as orphans or street children, because they dislike school or are being abused there, to escape an untenable family situation, for cash to purchase anything from school books to designer clothes to drugs, to feel independent, or even simply to avoid boredom in the absence of other things to do, school included. Whereas parental choice mechanisms have been extensively studied, little is known about how children make decisions. Parental attitudes, reflecting cultural norms, nonetheless play a major role in sending a child to work or to school. Parents’ expectations that children will provide for them in their old age may lead to their having larger numbers of children and, where household incomes are limited, there may be a lower level of investment in each child, including in education. Parents may genuinely believe that they are doing the best for their children by allowing or encouraging them to work, not realizing the hazards that the work might entail. In some cases, they and their children may well not be at all aware of the reality of the situation that lies in store (ILO, 2002:49-50).

The household of the child plays a pivotal part in that child’s socialization. The parents tend to have migrated from rural centres, as discussed in Chapter One, “unable to produce their own food as they used to back on the land, urbanized labourers need to acquire money in the shape of wages” (Meillassoux, 2000:43)\textsuperscript{51}. One of the ongoing threats to Egyptian families is the decrease in land and the lack of alternative employment. “This surplus labour, together with lower prices paid to farmers for producing food, would help keep real urban wages low and industry more profitable. The transitional costs of higher

\textsuperscript{51} An overview of the economy and its reflection on child labour.
unemployment, falling real wages, and increased economic insecurity were now revealed as a long term goal of the reforms" (Mitchell, 1998:32)  

The migrant families bring with them customs and traditions not necessarily easily adaptable to an urban environment and this can cause a further decline into poverty. One such tradition that has been detrimental to Cairo's ever expanding population is the custom of having large families. Relying on divine help, this migrant population believes that children are a blessing and if God gives such a blessing, God will also take care of them.

Working children's families tend to be larger families — larger than the average for the area where they live - and the child who most often goes out to work is the oldest, or the second oldest. It is quite common for the economic burdens of the family to fall on the oldest children first. Apparently, this is not only due to traditional values but also to the fact that as younger children grow up and start doing some of the household work, the older children can be sent out to earn wages. Sometimes, this means migrating to urban centres to work, even at a young age, and sending remittances (earned money) back to the family (IPEC, 2004:83).

As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, most of my family sample originally came from rural towns. The increase in migratory patterns in Egyptian cities has been on the rise since the 1940s. “Migration from rural areas has been chiefly responsible for Egypt's soaring rate of urbanization” (Abu-Lughod, 1998:22). Cairo, in 1961, made up one third of Egypt's population as it does now; then the population of Cairo was three and half million, today it is twenty million. As in many large cities in the world, “one major factor is the greater availability of children who need to work, because of the swelling of urban populations as people migrate to the towns and cities from the rural areas. The result is frequently urban poverty, and many of these working children live in unhealthy slum areas and work in poor surroundings” (IPEC, 2004:24).

52 Timothy Mitchell explores capitalism and its effects on rural Egypt.
53 See Chapter One.
Abu Lughod (1998) argues that assimilation of the rural migrant to city life is simply a myth. The rural migrant does not shed his clothing, lifestyle, and traditions for those found in the city. She argues that the migrants are made up of two types, those that are academically superior and those that have very little in their villages and who leave to search for a better life in the city. The latter groups make up the majority of the migrating population and she describes them as: “With lower capability for assimilation, they tend to build for themselves within the city a replica of the culture they left behind (Abu-Lughod, 1998:23).

Household size is an important determinant of child labour. Egyptian low-income families tend to be large. This in turn creates more mouths to feed in the household and as such older children (6 years of age and above) are sent to work in order to help sustain the growing family. “At the level of the household the most obvious determinant of child labour is the household size: all other things being the same, the larger the household, the greater is the potential labour supply of the household, including that of children” (Grootaert and Patrinos, 1999:4). While from today’s perspective the act of employing a child under the age of 16 in Egypt is unlawful, a century ago this was not the case. For centuries, Egypt had institutionalised child work as highly organised apprenticeship programmes led by outstanding craftsmen and artisans who produced masterpieces, but this apprenticeship system began to disappear slowly to be replaced by child labourers who were never really taught any skills.

Some children in the West enjoy the luxury of working to gain extra cash; they can leave that work at any time as neither their survival nor that of their families is dependent upon it. This is not the case in Egypt. Because of a wealth of college graduates even McDonald’s only hires college graduates. Children from middle and high class families are expected to study all year round for exams and in summer breaks are expected to
accompanied their families to the coast or to travel. Seasonal employment is simply not an
accepted mode for earning money in middle or high income families. In Egypt, children
work to survive, and help to their families to survive as well. Egyptian legislation does
not address domestic service or family business (UNICEF, 2002:63); thus, children can
further be exploited with no legal ramifications. Interestingly enough, the reason why
domestic servitude is not addressed in legislation can very easily be due to the type of
work. Domestic labour is work in the home and as such not considered harmful.
Children in Egypt, for the majority, work informally but by doing so they are
continuously subject to dangerous elements.

A 1999 survey conducted in Greater Cairo found that both male and
female child workers worked an average of more than nine hours per day,
and more than six days per week, both exceeding the work times of adults
included in the same sample. Almost all the working children were found
to work informally, without identity cards or health certificates, meaning
they were not protected by the labour law. A large proportion (around
one-third) complained of bad treatment from their employers (UNICEF,
2002:61).

In September 1999, Egypt ratified the International Labour Organization’s (ILO)
Convention Number 138. This lowered the minimum age for children to join the labour
force to 14 years of age, contradicting Egyptian legislation that stated the minimum
working age was 16. However, Article 3 of the Convention stated that: “the minimum
age for admission to any type of employment or work which by its nature or the
circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to jeopardise the health, safety or morals
of young persons shall not be less than 18 years” (ILO, 2006: no page). Therefore, any
child involved in what has been deemed by the Convention as hazardous labour under the
age of 18 must be excluded from such employment. The ILO Convention Number 138
was a cornerstone in prohibiting hazardous labour while at the same time recognizing the
importance of children working and contributing to their families’ income.

Despite Egypt having been a party to all conventions regarding the rights of children and
the abolishment of child labour, child labour exists and is on the rise; therefore it is not
simply about legislation. The determinants that create an environment for child labour to
flourish cannot disappear because a country has signed a convention; one has to review what occurred after the US Child Deterrence Act was first proposed, as discussed in Chapter Two. There are many mitigating circumstances that place children in the labour force, some created internally through the household and others externally due to external poverty traps.

3.6 Listening to Children’s Voices

One of the limitations of the studies I have reviewed has been the lack of perspective given by the children researched. Much of the research places children into developmental and socialization categories rather than widening the scope of the research to consider children as social actors. Many academics recently have begun to find ways to listen to children and now the United Nations, governments, NGOs, their communities and finally their own families must also listen to what children have to say. Children are capable of making decisions and are well aware of their needs and capabilities. “Parents were often surprised to know that their children had opinions about issues and that they could express them logically. Children, if listened to patiently, often expressed personal needs and needs of the community, and raised issues ignored or overlooked by adults” (Lieten, 2005:5).

Munoz, a Columbian advocate of children as agents, argues against protecting the child from labour and promotes the ideology that children can be agents of change. Post argues that in Latin America, “there are signs that working children, from very young ages, know precisely what they are up against” (Post, 2001:49). These children know what it means to be hungry and see their family members suffer. They choose to change their situation by entering the labour force in an attempt to sustain them. Education and a better life of luxuries may be what they dream of, but their lived realities are what they manipulate in order to gain the best advantage. Yet there is also the lived reality that the child labourers exhibit when they flow from working children who must survive in an adult world to nurtured children at home, being taken care of by their parents.
Lieten states that children have two main requirements: “in the children’s own opinion, it is undoubtedly education that is the first and foremost requirement they desire to have met. A second requirement on which children were unequivocally clear was the need for a harmonious and protective family life” (Lieten, 2005:6). Children want to acquire knowledge and believe that being literate is something to be proud of. They feel inadequate compared with other children who can read and write and, when given the opportunity, make an effort to combine literacy courses with their work. Child labourers tend to exhibit pride when they produce something, as do adults; however, societies have marginalized and sometimes ostracized children who have taken a different path in life due mainly to poverty. Lieten wrote: “A child-centred approach stands to benefit from a child's vision of the world and the first step is to carefully listen to the needs and requirements of children (Lieten, 2005:5). The research carried out for this thesis attempts to listen to children's voices and reveal their lived realities. “Children talk about feeling proud of what they do, and they talk about feeling ashamed by the treatment of others” (Woodhead, 1999:24)\(^5\). When and if the family unit is broken, children lose their sense of duty and responsibility toward it and then are more likely to be active participants in the labour market as a means of escaping the family.

3.7 Conclusion

Poverty, although not merely the lack of income but a lack of access to basic is the leading contributor to child labour. Yet, as stated within this chapter culture and tradition, supported by the family unit also allow children easier access to the labour market. While the educational system also played a large role in dissuading children from attending school, due to over crowding and hidden costs, families placed different values on children’s education versus their involvement in the labour market. Large households and gender differences also dictated which children would enter the labour market.

\(^5\) An exploration of children’s needs based on child psychology, education and social welfare of children under 5.
The impact on the health of child labourers has been well documented as has the latent effects that it has on children as they grow into adulthood. Most forms of child labour, be it agriculture, masonry, tanning or pottery all involve degrees of hazardous labour and impact children's development in a negative manner and thus are deemed by most international conventions as unacceptable. Within the Egyptian context, child labour has increased due to the socioeconomic situation within the country. Poorer families live from one day to the next and must survive on all the resources available to them, which includes their children.

I have attempted to describe and define child labour and the dangers that are posed by children actively participating in the labour market. The socioeconomic determinants that catapult children into the labour market were investigated and shown to stem from internal and external factors that govern their economic activity. Yet all this stems from activists and researchers, who are made up of adults making decisions based on what they believe is fair and just for children. The CRC Article 12 and 13 states that children should be given the right to expression. So what happened to what children had to say? Where are their voices and who is listening to them?

The lived realities of child labourers are long hours, without any protection from the law, and very little free time. The CRC can be criticized as not adequately addressing the growing problem of poverty and the daily struggle for survival that these children face. Research on child labour has constantly addressed the child as a passive, dependent being rather than an active, participating member of society. Yet, children socialized in marginalized societies tend to possess the knowledge to direct their lives; they have the ability to know what is in their best interest and what can cause harm to them. What this thesis aims to address is child labourers as active participants and examine how they negotiate their space and power within the family unit and the labour market.

The constant tug-of-war that occurs between these child labourers and their adult environment has been addressed somewhat by Alanen and Mayall (2001); yet, there is much room for further investigation. The perception that child labourers during their
day-to-day activities flow from adult behaviour, possessing knowledge and wisdom, to transform once more into childlike behaviour, seeking dependency and nurture, are themes that need further consideration.

The argument which is presented throughout this thesis is based on the child labourer’s active participation in their agencies and social networks. The focus of this Chapter is to expand on the construction of active children participating and making decisions in their daily lives and as well as to examine the families and households of child labourers’ relationships with the children who contribute to the family’s survival. Egyptian parents view their children as continuums of themselves, one unit unable to survive without the other. Families do what they must for subsistence, governed by the market, thus if the market dictates that the patriarch of the family cannot gain employment the next in line will recognize their duty toward the family.

The family or household plays a determining role in the wellbeing of a child, and the Egyptian family model has been examined, considering whether gender plays a role in allowing children in the labour market. Finally, exploring the voice of the child labourer as an agent of change has been expanded upon. For the purpose of this study I have chosen to focus my research on child labourers who are paid, work outside the household, and return once more to the household.
Chapter Four

Research Design and Methodologies Used
4.1 Introduction

The research design of the thesis comprised a number of stages and methodologies, with the majority of the key data generated through ethnographic approaches. National and international statistics were used to complement the data collected in the field and to compare with data gathered from the field. This chapter discusses the methodology used in the research design to explore child labourers’ lived realities.

As the research for this thesis was conducted with children as the subject, it was very important to adhere to ethical practices, which will be discussed. In addition, in order to gain the most insight into these child labourers’ lives, and to ensure that what they had to say was heard, a number of research methodologies were utilized. Structured interviews were administered on both the children and the parents in order to gain an overall understanding of the study. A visual methodology was then used to gain a deeper inside knowledge of the children’s lives and see what the children saw. Finally, case studies were used to research how the child labourers negotiated their lived realities. I shall begin by describing the design of the thesis.

4.2 Designing Research into the Lives of Children

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between child labourers as social agents and the domains that they occupy and move between (Alanen and Mayall, 2001), and link that to their role within the Arab family unit. The epistemology of the research relies heavily on a supposition that children’s lives are not solely characterised by dependency, which presumes children are incapable of responsibility and dependent on adults, but rather that children are active participants “active in the structuring of their lives” (Mayall, 2002:138). I have approached my research from the position of the child labourer, relying on the stance that Mayall describes as ‘looking up’ rather than down (Mayall, 2002). However, within this construction of children as active participants there is an added element of the place of the child in the Arab family unit, which includes their role in sustaining the family unit. Finding a methodology that would suit such a research
was a challenge, and it became apparent that the design could not be confined to one single method. There was a tendency to emphasise the use of participatory methods in research with children; however, in my own work I decided to adopt a ‘participation by proxy’ approach. The usage of a ‘participation by proxy’ approach was to account for the children’s lives in the most comprehensive manner. I chose various methods for collecting data - interviews, the use of cameras and shadowing the children.

It is researchers who, for the most part have made the decisions as to which are the most appropriate methods by which the children are to be included in the research. One interpretation of the data collection phase of the research could be that this is participation by proxy (Pole, et al, 1999:48).

I insisted that the children participate in the interpretation of the photographs that they took, through photo-elicitation. However, in the final analysis of the research it was I, as the researcher and author, who determined what to include and what not to include within the confines of this thesis. I agree with what Pole et al describe as “where the research masquerades under an attempt to recognize children’s agency by putting in place methods whereby children can portray personal accounts interpretations of their own lives, but at the same time denying them real choice over the way in which this might be achieved” (Pole, et al, 1999:49). This is a limitation in all research conducted on children. Even if one places a video camera in front of children and asks them to reflect on what it means to be a child labourer or what their family unit represents to them, the questions would have still been chosen, the analysis made and the research presented by the author, who at the end of the day made decisions in which the children did not participate.

What we are saying, however, is that it is important for the sociologist of childhood to contextualize agency, to recognize its limits and to acknowledge the constraints under which it is realized. In this way we feel that social constructionist and structural explanations and interpretations of aspects of childhood can co-exist, avoiding a rush towards relativism, and at the same time recognizing the important role that researchers have in facilitating the means by which the voice of the child can be heard (Pole et al, 1999:52)

This does not, therefore, deny that the data collected on the children and the lives of their families are not beneficial. I am merely pointing out why I had to use various methods.
In addition, although this is meant to be a study of child labourers’ voices being heard, I am the one that is telling their story.

I also identify with what Punch notes as “children are used to having much of their lives dominated by adults, they tend to expect adults’ power over them and they are not used to being treated as equals by adults” (Punch, 2002:324). By using ethnographic methods with the children I tried to continually maintain and include the voices of children who labour in the market but, at the same time, “children are not used to expressing their views freely or being taken seriously by adults because of their position in adult-dominated society” (Punch, 2002:325). One consequence of this was that the research for this thesis took a considerable amount of time to complete. There were other practical consequences which are discussed in later in the chapter.

The use of a multi-method approach is valuable for investigating as thoroughly as possible the lived realities of children. This design aimed to avoid the situation whereby “treating children and childhood as a vehicle for educational or psychological inquiry much of the richness and the detail of childhood has either been overlooked or ‘tribalized’ where an anthropological approach to the child has been taken” (Pole et al, 1999:40-41). The research design tries not merely to observe the children but to focus on their interactions through a multi-dimensional investigation of their lives, using both quantitative and qualitative data. Although observations of the children were used, structured interviews, visual methodologies, and case studies were the main sources for the data used in this thesis.

I chose to take into account the child labourer’s perspective through a number of methodological considerations. The importance of listening to children describing accounts of their lived realities was my main intention; however, I felt that listening to their parents as well would enhance the research in terms of their perspectives on the child or children being involved in the labour market.
Punch poignantly asks whether methods utilized to research adults can be used on children (Punch, 2002). She explains that certain methodologies such as diaries, photographs and drawings were an important medium for allowing children to express their thoughts and feelings:

One of the main advantages of using visual and written methods is that it may lessen the problems of an unequal power relationship between the adult researcher and the child participant, where the child may feel under pressure to respond relatively quickly in the 'correct' manner. With the task-based methods, the interaction is between the children and the paper, or the children and the camera, which allows for familiarity with the researcher to be built up over time (Punch, 2002:336).

Unfortunately, as none of the children in my sample could read or write, many of the methods available for schoolchildren could not be used with this sample. The methods that were available to me were structured interviews, visual methods such as photography, drawings and observations. In addition, I carried out in-depth case studies of five children, shadowing them for a week each. It was important to continually use different methods to observe and communicate with the children as no one perfect method of research has been used to date (Punch, 2002:337).

Some children were not as forthcoming with information in one method, but became quite forthcoming through another method. “The choice of methods not only depends on the age, competence, experience, preference and social status of the research subjects but also on the cultural environment and the physical setting, as well as the research questions and the competencies of the researcher” (Punch, 2002:338). Most of the children came from the same class, culture, religion, economic background so this was not an issue, but age was. Younger children had trouble expressing themselves, yet utilizing cameras and giving the younger children the opportunity to describe the pictures enabled me to gain an insight into the children’s lives. Another problem encountered with young children was their attention span. It was rather difficult to keep the younger children interested in my questions, a problem noted by others:
Children can tend to get bored during interviews, or might talk about things the interviewer does not need to know about, while being reluctant to talk about their work. It is sometimes easier if the interviewer or researcher “breaks the ice” first by showing friendliness, perhaps by playing games, showing an interest in their music or their pastimes, and so on. Drawing, painting, acting out, story telling and sometimes participating in free time activities with them are useful methods of eliciting information and gaining their confidence, especially in cultural settings where people are not used to interviewers coming around asking questions (IPEC, 2004:177-178).

This meant that I had to find creative ways to keep the children that I interviewed focused on what I was asking. Fortunately, the electronic palm pilot which I used to record their answers, and which will be discussed later, was a source of intrigue for the children that I willingly shared with them. I began each interview by introducing myself, explaining my research and why I wanted to speak to them. On a few occasions, a child would want to know where I was from, why I was in Egypt, if I was married, and various other questions, and I willingly obliged their curiosity. This gave the children a sense of ease with me.

The structured interviews conducted were utilized to establish baseline data to build the study upon and to establish some standardised personal information about the children and their families (Morrow 2001). While the quantification process was essential in answering a number of key elements regarding child labourers, it was limited in that I was unable to draw a complete picture. The life stories and shared realities were later gathered from the pictures the children took of their environments and from the case studies of the five child labourers. Thus, the study itself is essentially qualitatively driven as it relies on an ongoing, developing process that is: “grounded in practice, process and context of the research itself” (Mason, 2002:24). This has meant that the research has been a constant, developing process that has required varying methods in order to allow it to progress into an in-depth analysis of child labour.
4.2.1 Research Time Line

I spent three months looking for an area I could use as a sample and another three months getting to know the children at the NGO Centre and conducting structured interviews with them. I then spent about three months conducting the structured interviews with the families of the children from the NGO Centre and subsequently a further three months on structured interviews with a sample of children drawn directly from the pottery factories. Utilizing a visual methodology took the longest period of time, approximately one year, as this included the children taking the pictures. The cameras were then collected and pictures were produced and the children then made commentaries on each picture. After six months the pictures were revisited for a second interview. The final method - the case studies - took approximately two months to complete. The total amount of time spent in the field was two years and two months, see Table 4.1; however, I have been privy to the area and the children working and living there for the past four years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Spent</th>
<th>Method Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>Introduction to children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>Structured interviews with the children from the NGO Centre, N24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>Structured interviews with the families of the children from the NGO Centre, N17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>Structured interviews with the children from the pottery factories, N25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>Visual methods, N24 children given cameras, N24 initial interviews, N14 subsequent interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>Case studies, N5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 months</td>
<td>Total time spent collecting data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Gaining Access

Gaining access into a community can prove difficult. The first problem that arises for any researcher in Egypt is whether or not they choose to access the field participants through the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Higher Education. Traditionally, any foreign researcher is subject to this criterion and must gain access through this channel. Unfortunately, this allows for censorship of the type of research
applicable in Egypt. Those that hold Egyptian national status, as I do, fall under a different legislation: while the research may not have to be approved any survey, interviewing, photography of areas and participants, must be approved by the Ministry of Social Affairs (Mortada and CSPAD, 2002).

The Egyptian government has been highly sensitive about social topics, coined as "forbidden research terrains" (Lee, 1993:21), which have been seen as anything pertaining to the breaking of international covenants. Consequently, the research that I have chosen to pursue is of a sensitive nature since: "there are potentials or implications for the participants in the research or for the class of individuals represented by the research" (Lee, 1993:3). The Egyptian government has tended to dissuade researchers from investigating topics that it feels may reveal hidden social, educational, health, services, or municipal problems (Lee, 1993:7).

Under these closed access circumstances, research in Egypt must be conducted with special precautions. I had chosen Old Cairo as it was in an urban area with high levels of abject poverty. There were also many industries in the area using child labour such as tanneries, carpet weaving, auto repair shops, potteries and other small business enterprises. This research focused on children working in pottery, as access was easier through CSPAD’s NGO Centre.

4.3.1 Sample Site

The sample site was the entire area of Fawakhir and a section of Batn al-Baqurah where the pottery factories where located, the NGO Centre on the other side of the street (Kum Ghurab) and finally the families’ dwellings in Fawakhir and Batn al-Baqurah. There was one family that also lived across the street near Gamia’ Amr within the cemetery, see Illustration 4.1.
It is very difficult to describe the area, as it is not simply the poverty that is all encompassing, the mountain of garbage being compiled daily, or the dark smoke that rises from the kilns and engulfs the area. These are all images that I was able to capture and will subsequently describe, but rather it was also the heat and heavy pollutants that stifled one's ability to manoeuvre, the flies that followed me in all directions, and the emotions of witnessing an entire community victimized by a society that had abandoned them. These images were very difficult to capture.

As one walks into the pottery area of Fawakhir, one is greeted by the harshness of the terrain. Illustrations 4.2 to 4.4 show a glimpse of what the area is like.
The pottery factories were on the street and extend deep into the area with some residential dwellings around. In Illustrations 4.5 to 4.12, the conditions of the factories are shown. All people depicted in the images have either been removed completely or have been distorted. Unfortunately, within the pottery factories, it was almost impossible to capture an image without a person being included. The same could be said for the NGO Centre, which will be shown later.
Illustration 4.5, clay well.

Illustration 4.6, clay ready to be moulded into usable amounts to be used for pottery.

Illustration 4.7, removing the clay from the storage area to be placed outside ready to be used.
Illustration 4.8, clay ready to be used.

Illustration 4.9, a pottery factory from the outside, with shingles drying in the sun.

Illustration 4.10, making tea inside the pottery factories.
Illustration 4.11, a frontal view of the kiln, the wood surrounding the kiln is scarps from the wood factories, which will be used to fire up the kiln.

Illustration 4.12, the final product that is produced by the pottery factories, displayed at the beginning of the main road.

The housing areas in around Batn al-Baqrarah and Fawakhir were also in a very poor state. Illustrations 4.13 to 4.17 depict the dwellings from the outside or the alleyways.
Illustration 4.13, dwellings next to pottery factories.

Illustration 4.14, the narrow streets next to the dwellings.

Illustration 4.15, inside the alleyways leading to each dwelling.
Illustration 4.16, main water pipe for families to collect water for the household.

The final illustration is of the NGO Centre. In Illustration 4.17, the main room at the NGO Centre is depicted. This is where the children would do both their literacy and art classes.

Illustration 4.17, NGO Centre.

4.3.2 Managing my Identity in the Study

Although I have a dual nationality, both American and Egyptian, I am constantly mistaken as a khawagaya or foreigner. Arabic is my second language and although I am almost fluent, I do have a strong American accent. I tend to wear baggy clothes in order
not to look conspicuous. Unfortunately, because I am not veiled and I tend to wear trousers, unlike the women in the community, this all added to my khawagaya persona. I wore trousers because it was easier when I had to sit on the floor and because I was always carrying a palm pilot, camera and tape recorder which could all be slipped into my pockets when I was walking in the area.

I also had to continuously resolve the issue with both myself and the families I was working with regarding my status among them. As I was a volunteer at CSPAD they saw me as simply another teacher from the NGO Centre there to help their children. On the other hand, I had the more difficult task of not losing sight of the fact that this was my research for my PhD and that it was not my place to change or promise any changes for the families that I was studying. On a number of occasions this line was blurred and I did find myself trying to make a difference to these families' lives, which I finally did accomplish by making a case on behalf of the families to the World Health Organization.

My identity was always an issue with the factory owners. Many of the factory owners questioned my nationality. Even though I speak Arabic almost fluently, I do have an accent, so the question was constantly posed “where are you really from?” I would reply that I was half American and half Egyptian. They would then ask if my father was Egyptian, in order to guarantee my Egyptian nationality. I would reply that both my parents were Egyptian and that they also had American nationality. I would then elaborate further that my grandfather, my mother and I all returned to Egypt in order to work on development issues. This usually seemed to satisfy the factory owners and assure them that my only aim was to conduct my research.

4.3.3 NGO and Sponsors

I had two options for gaining access to the sample of child labourers for my research. The first was to use an existing NGO and work within their parameters and the second was to contact factory owners and ask them to provide children for my research sample, a
request they may have found threatening because of my appearance and accent which tended to give me away as a foreigner, as explained earlier.

I chose the first option of using an existing NGO, who were willing to assist me in my work. CSPAD, unlike other NGOs who sometimes were fearful of outsiders, welcomed my participation at the NGO Centre. The organization tended to recruit volunteers to assist in the day-to-day activities of the NGO Centre, a rather unusual task in Egypt as neither the culture nor the economy support volunteerism on the whole. CSPAD had been working to enhance the lives of child labourers through life skill training and education. After presenting my credentials, I was admitted into the organization under provisional terms. Besides being a researcher, I also became one of the CSPAD volunteers through the course of my research work. This meant that I occasionally volunteered my services to the NGO in terms of fundraising and that all my research would be shared with them. CSPAD’s objectives were as follows:

- To train 25 children per year (girls and boys) on techniques in pottery.
- To limit the hazards the children are exposed to within their work environment.
- To guarantee a minimum wage and an increase in their economic capacity.
- To provide social, physical exercise, psychological, and health care for the targeted child population.
- To eliminate illiteracy within the targeted child population.
- To discover and develop the talents of the targeted child population under a suitable atmosphere and under the supervision of technical specialist in the set fields.
- To raise the awareness of the families and factory owners of the targeted child population on the rights of the child and their environment.

It should be noted that although CSPAD had initially stated that they would be training 25 children, this number continuously fluctuated due to the irregular attendance of many of the children. Their criteria for choosing children was identical to that of the research conducted for this thesis, which was that the child must be under 16 years of age and working; however, a number of the children were older than 16 and one child did not work.

55 Approximately, 3 boys who were the brothers of some of the children who were attending the NGO Centre; however, they were not regular in their attendance. Initially, the NGO Centre tried to present them
Once I established my usefulness, by providing my initial findings to CSPAD, I was admitted as an insider and given much more access into the children’s lives. Later, in the research process I also approached factory owners directly to involve children in the study who did not normally attend the NGO Centre. This became feasible once I had established myself within the community and was a successful development in the research.

The importance of sponsors in this research was crucial as they facilitated, translated in some instances, and secured my presence within the community. In total, I used four sponsors. Mr. S, a social worker from the area, who remained with me throughout all the family interviews and some of the interviews conducted with the children from the pottery factories. The second, Mr. A, a psychologist and the third, Mr. M, a lawyer, who remained with me during most of the children’s interviews at the NGO Centre. The final sponsor became my constant shadow in the community, Mr Z, a local pottery factory owner. He used to meet me at my car every time I visited the area and escorted me to wherever I needed to go in the community.

Although I was accepted after about a year of working in the community, on several occasions I had difficulties leaving the area, these instances will be discussed later and there was a need for someone to always accompany me. The children viewed Mr. Z and Mr S as a friend and teacher who helped them out any time they could. They trusted them both and spoke highly of them. In fact, when Mr. S left the country the children continually asked about him, specifically when they would see him again or if I had heard from him. The other members of the NGO Centre were not always seen in a positive light as they sometimes had to discipline the children, which caused some problems. In addition, when the NGO Centre closed, the children seemed upset at Mr M.

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56 The sister of Hasan4 and Uthman4 was a regular at the NGO Centre. She had never attended school so the NGO Centre allowed her to attend even though she did not work.
57 All names have been changed to preserve the identity of those involved in the study.
58 The NGO Centre closed down after 2 years of operation due to lack of funding.
As well as the structured interviews conducted with the 24 children who attended the NGO Centre’s activities, I also chose to familiarize myself with the children within the confines of the NGO’s Centre. The initial 24 children chosen for this research, attended the NGO Centre took literacy classes three times a week and learnt how to mould and create pottery pieces along with other artistic projects. There were 4 other children that attended the NGO centre, one young girl who was the sister of two of the boys sampled and 3 boys over the age of 16. Although the NGO Centre was viewed by the children as a type of club for having fun, it was also an informal schooling of sorts and the children did change their behaviour within this environment, becoming more relaxed than at work, but not as relaxed as when I would see them at home. The NGO Centre had rules such as punctuality, listening to the instructors, and not disrupting classes. The children’s behaviour differed a great deal within the different agencies through which they flowed in and out.

There are two points that were the focus of developing the empirical enquiry of this thesis. One of these concerned the children’s constant adaptation of roles in their different domains; and the other is regarding the quality and ethics of data elicitation. As Punch has noted “the implications of the research setting need to be considered with particular care, awareness and sensitivity in research with children (Punch, 2002:328). However, in the case of my thesis, this sensitivity to setting goes beyond thinking about the impact on the data generated to consider these different settings as different contexts and domains in which the children live and with which they engage as social actors.

I chose to utilize the NGO Centre to conduct the children’s structured interviews for the purpose of getting to know them and to gain some insight into their lives. There was no other structured environment in which to discuss the children’s photographs with them, so again the NGO Centre needed to be utilized. The children nevertheless did appear to remain more relaxed at the NGO Centre than at their place of employment. Accessing the children after work in their households would have been another alternative but there would have been too many distractions with siblings, parents, grandparents, uncles and
aunts. When it came to the case studies, all the children had known me for two years and were more relaxed around me than in the beginning. I also had Mr Z who, although he was a teacher at the NGO Centre, was not seen as a teacher as he did not discipline the children in any way but rather encouraged them to stop by his pottery factory and practice on pieces. This allowed the children to express their thoughts and feeling much more freely than before.

4.4 The Research Process

The children sampled came from very similar backgrounds, many of them related to each other in some way, and all had either stopped attending school or had never attended at all. The research focused primarily on children under 16 years of age left out of the formal, structured domain of the educational system and who entered into the adult world of income generation, see Diagram 4.1.

Diagram 4.1, Research Design
4.4.1 The Sampling Strategy and Sample Criteria

From the NGO Centre a sample of 24 children were used. The children sampled for the study were chosen based on their involvement in the labour market and that they were under the age of 16, as stated previously. However, there were other children who attended the NGO Centre who did not meet the criteria set for the research and as such were not chosen. An additional 25 children from the factories who did not attend the NGO Centre's activities were randomly selected from the factories to further ensure an unbiased set that had not been affected by the NGO Centre. Therefore, there were 24 child labourers who attended the NGO Centre's activities and 25\(^{59}\) additional child labourers who did not attend the NGO Centre's activities, creating a total of 49 child labourers working in the pottery factories that were sampled, which will be later compared and analyzed in Chapters Five, Six and Seven (see Diagram 4.2). Thus, the completed sample interviewed constituted almost all the children working in the pottery factories\(^{60}\).

There were 67 pottery factories and all were used to gather a sample for this study. Not all factory owners responded positively and in many cases my sample from the factories was based on children's availability and employers willing to release the children for 20 minutes.

\(^{59}\) I was not able to find more than the additional 25 children.

\(^{60}\) There were sixty-seven pottery factories in the Fawakhir area, surveyed in 2004, by the World Health Organization which found a total of 50 children working in the pottery factories and a total of 222 children working servicing the pottery industry (WHO:2004:4).
Diagram 4.2, Families and their Child Labourer's used for the Study

Red represents families
Blue represents children sampled from the NGO Centre
Green represents children sampled from the Pottery Factories
Purple represents the child that did not return his camera

Families
N=18

Children from the NGO Centre
N=24

Children from the factories
N=25
4.4.2 Participants Sampled for the Research

Table 4.1 shows the different methods used and the participants sampled. All children’s names were changed to pseudonyms and families were assigned numbers in order to preserve anonymity. The families, whose children were interviewed at the NGO Centre and were subsequently interviewed at their homes, were given a number from 1 to 18, which reflected the number of families interviewed and a letter from A to R. The children from the pottery factories’ 22 families were not interviewed. Twenty-four cameras were given to the 24 children attending the NGO Centre but one child, Khalid did not return his camera. Of those that did return their cameras, all 23 were interviewed initially about the pictures. Regrettably, as the second set of interviews was done a year later only 14 children were interviewed. Finally, five children were chosen for case studies - Hodal, Uthman4, Hasan4, Hisham8 and Zeinab6.

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61 Seventeen families were interviewed out of the 18 families who sent their children to the NGO Centre. The M11 family at the time of interviewing was unavailable and thus were never included in the data.
Table 4.2 Data Sample\(^2\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family identity number</th>
<th>Name of child</th>
<th>Sex of child</th>
<th>Age of child</th>
<th>Where child was interviewed</th>
<th>Child’s family interviewed</th>
<th>Child submitted a camera/photos</th>
<th>Child interviewed about their photos</th>
<th>Child selected for case studies</th>
<th>Family identity number</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Amina</td>
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\(^2\) See Diagram 4.2 for legend explaining colour scheme.
4.4.3 The Research Instruments

The questions were formulated to gain as much insight as possible from the families and the children. The questions were orientated to the aspect of my thesis which pertained to the investigation of child labourers' lived realities within the labour market and the Arab family unit. I consulted a number of social researchers who had conducted household surveys used by the United Nations organization in Egypt. The WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean has been involved in conducting baseline surveys for the past 20 years (WHO, 2003) and while these surveys tend to focus on the health of the communities that they survey, public health issues take into account socioeconomic and environmental issues (WHO, 2003). The IPEC A Textbook for University Students also served as a guide for the questions used in the structured interviews. All structured interviews were piloted on two children and two families.

After the pilots had been carried out a review of the data was conducted. For the structured interviews no changes were made to the questions themselves, but how they were translated was adjusted since, in translation, some of the questions were misunderstood and required a revision of the colloquial Arabic used. The clarity of the language, specifically when translated to Arabic was particularly essential for the children's structured interviews.

In assessing the level of poverty that families lived within, I chose to use the basic needs approach to poverty proposed in Chapter Three. In both the families' and the children's structured interviews I utilized repetition and indirect questions to investigate how the families' and children's lives were lived as well as their socioeconomic status. This was important in order to establish whether there was a link between poverty and child labour, and the nature of that link from the perspective of the parents.

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63 Dr S. Galal, a WHO consultant and Professor of Medical Sociologist at Al Azhar University, Dr S. Arnaout, Regional Advisor Health of Special Groups WHO, and Mr M. Abd al-Azeem, Lecturer at Cairo University and CSPAD volunteer.
4.4.4 Structured Interviews

My primary goal at the onset of this study was to understand the lived realities of child labourers. Unfortunately very little research had been conducted recently that gives accurate estimates of the situation. The use of statistical materials from the United Nations and other government organizations was useful in order to gain a perspective concerning the issue at hand on a larger scale, but did not extend to the specific areas or industries in which child labour is found. Structured interviews provided a baseline about the children and gathered additional information useful in understanding the various interactions and relations the children have. The children’s structured interviews yielded data pertaining to the number of siblings, who they lived with, the amount of space in the household, their role models, whether they attended school, the parents’ socioeconomic status, the environment in which they work, and if they have any spare time. The family structured interviews concentrated on the socioeconomic status of the family which included how much they earned, the size of the household, the space that they lived within, as well as their feelings concerning their children’s working conditions and their future prospects. These topics were used to map out the lives of the children enabling me to focus on specific aspects analytically in the visual methods and the case studies.

The area focused upon spans a 2-3 square kilometre radius and houses approximately 7,500 inhabitants, all of whom are seen by the government as squatters. Most of the families live next to the pottery factories in the midst of the garbage dumped daily from all over Cairo, and the smoke from the kilns.

As mentioned earlier, the sample size initially was 24 children from the NGO Centre, but a number of children stopped attending the NGO Centre over the two years that it was operational and the research for this study progressed. Although the sample of children taking part in the qualitative research was small, rich data was generated by taking

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64 Based on a socioeconomic and health survey administered on 1500 families for the World Health Organization by the Ministry of Health and Population in 2006.
65 The garbage dump which begun to be used in 2000 and by the time of its removal in 2006 had reached 1 kilometer squared.
children as the units of research and focusing the study directly on children and their life conditions, activities, relationships, knowledges and experiences” (Alanen, 2001:12).

The structured interviews conducted with the children from the NGO Centre were administered to 11 girls and 13 boys, and cameras were given to those same children. I conducted 25 structured interviews with children working directly in the pottery factories. These children did not attend the NGO Centre but rather were sourced directly from the pottery factories and did not participate in either the case studies or the visual aspects of the study. Only three girls were included in the following structured interviews on the children from the factories simply because I could not find any more girls to interview.

The NGO Centre’s children were chosen by CSPAD. They based their criteria for choosing these children on age, poverty level, employment and literacy. Children chosen for the samples, from both the NGO Centre and the factory settings, were all under the age of 16, did not attend school and worked in the pottery factories full time. It was important that the children were under the age of 16 as this was the legal age for children to work. As for not currently attending school, this was used as a criteria as well as it was a violation of the CRC. Finally, insisting that the children sampled worked at the pottery factories was due to the need to locate the research within hazardous labour.

The interviews conducted on the children from the factories were in most instances the result of a snowball sample, as many children or factory owners would get more children for me to interview (Arber, 1993). I was accompanied by a sponsor from the NGO Centre each time but conducted each interview myself in Arabic and recorded the results on the Palm Pilot in English. The structured interviews were designed to gain a perspective on the economic, social and environmental lives of the children in order to contextualise the relationships they maintain.

The questions were worded in colloquial Arabic in a manner that could be understood by the subjects. As the majority of the subjects were illiterate care was taken that questions were simple and readily understood without the need for written prompts or answer
choices. Some questions were repeated in order to create an accuracy check, and indeed on some occasions discrepancies did occur. For example, question 7 in the family structured interview, asked: How many girls and how many boys does the family have? This was compared with question 2 in the children's individual interviews. When there was a discrepancy I noted this and then in the family structured interviews checked the discrepancy with the parents so as to gain the most accurate answer (See Appendix one and two).

To avoid any conflicts with local bureaucrats I recorded all structured interviews with a Palm Pilot that had been configured with the interview questions in advance. I did not, therefore, technically violate existing Egyptian laws which ban paper, but not electronic, surveys. The children's interview took 20 minutes.

The 24 sampled children from the NGO Centre lived with 18 families. The families tended also to be related and further entwined with each other. I focused many of the interview questions on the families' social and economic dynamics and bonds with each other. By having data from children and parents about features of their lives such as number of siblings and who lived in the household, I was able to build a picture of their networks, their circumstances and also point up any discrepancies in answers to 'factual' questions. This allowed for more accurate data to be gained than if I had interviewed only the children or only the parents. This method was utilized to check factual data rather than opinion or experience data which of course differs by respondent, and for the purpose of validation.

4.4.5 Visual Methods

Visual ethnography was another qualitative method used to gain insight into the lives of these child labourers that could only be otherwise achieved by living among them. The camera's capturing of an image was invaluable for studying culture and people, as the images are moments in time that paper and pen or even a recorder cannot capture to the same extent (Ball and Smith, 1992). The use of a visual methodology was one of the
means of allowing the children in my sample to have a voice. “Within sociology and social research the separation of talk or text and visual image remains striking” (Bolton et al, 2001:504). Based on that perspective, I decided to make use of the photographs the children would take of their environment and surroundings to help to answer the research questions of this thesis.

The discipline of sociology has used pictorial representations in research since the 19th century, seldom analyzing the content but rather using the visual images as tools to explain graphically a situation or theory. Anthropology on the other hand has been more inclined to capture and try to explain the content of photographs and has influenced sociologists in their quest to understand pictorial representation. The American Journal of Sociology employed photographs as illustrations from 1896 until 1916, after which in most journals photography simply disappeared (Ball and Smith, 1992).

Boaz was a pioneer in utilizing ethnographic photography to discover the customs of indigenous cultures; however, his photographs were merely staged in order to represent the point of view he was trying to make. Advances in technology gave rise to the use of photography as a tool for social scientists. The ethnographic photo differs from visual representations as it represents a moment in time rather than an interpretation of that moment, which is then subject to interpretation (Ball and Smith, 1992).

A number of sociological studies have been carried out through the use of visual methodology (Alexander et al, 2005, Morrow, 2001, Bolton et al; 2001 and Punch, 2002) visual methodology is particularly useful in “participants detailing their own lives are records of culture. Therefore much of what is presented as visual sociology becomes a record about culture” (Bolton et al; 2001:506). Thus, by allowing participants to create a record of their culture:

The fact that they were behind the lens becomes at least as significant, if not more significant, as what is in front of it. Their choice of what to include in the frame and what to leave out provides us as the researchers not merely with data as illustration, but with a form of data which has
been selected and subject to a process of analysis for its significance to the
culture of the research participants" (Bolton et al; 2001:506-7).

What the children chose to photograph, how they shot the picture, the angle from which
they took the shot, whether they captured the picture without giving instructions to those
involved, or even if there was a shot that they could have taken and wanted to save the
picture for something else are all important points that were taken into consideration
when analysing the children’s photographs. I also wanted a medium that the children
would enjoy discovering and playing with to some extent.

The main benefit of using the photographic method was that the children
enjoyed taking the photographs and learning how to use a camera; most of
them had never held one before. It was something novel and different for
them to do, so was a fun way for them to express themselves. The
photographic technique did not depend on the children’s ability, or their
perceived ability, to depict an image. Most of the children quickly learnt
how to take a picture, and an average of four out of their six photographs
came out how they intended (Punch, 2002:333)

From the initial 24 cameras given to the child labourers at the NGO Centre, 23 cameras
were returned by the children. Of those 23 child labourers that returned their cameras, I
was able to interview initially 23 children. I subsequently, tried to interview those same
23 children three to four months later but could only speak to 14 children, as two girls
had dropped and others had simply refused to comply or attend the NGO Centre. The
total number of pictures produced by the 23 children was 478 photographs. The idea was
developed and 24 children, 13 males and 11 females, were told that they should capture
subjects that were truly of importance to them. The cameras were released to about five
children at a time, beginning at the end of May and continuing until the end of June,
2002. The ethnographic technique was simple in that each child was to capture a week in
their lives and then return the cameras containing the 27 pictures to me. Unfortunately,
instructions at the NGO Centre were not followed precisely and some unnecessary

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66 One boy allowed his older brother to use his camera and the older brother took pictures of his girlfriend
that he did not want produced. The older brother then kept the camera and has refused to allow his younger
sibling access to it.  
67 Upon reaching puberty a number of parents refused to allow their young girls to go to either work or to
attend the NGO Center, I was then unable to sit with those two young girls.
additional information was given to the children that skewed their freedom in taking completely original pictures. Children were told by the NGO Centre to focus on areas of their lives, such as work. The NGO Centre did so as a reaction when many children focused solely on the home environment and their friends. The children chose elements in their lives not necessarily of importance to them but what they may have felt was socially construed as important (Alexander, et al., 2005).

While the exercise was a collaboration between each child and myself, the intention was to capture their shared realities and thus I had passed on the ethnographic traits of the research to the informants transforming them into ethnographers. The children were given simple instructions allowing them to remain as amateurs capturing the images through the innocence of a child. “The photographs were, therefore, composed and selected by the young workers as research participants rather than research objects. They are their interpretation of what is significant to our research focus and in this sense represent initial data analysis” (Bolton et al; 2001:513) Instructions included: how to use the camera, how to focus on their subject, to keep their hands steady while shooting a picture, take photos either inside or outside their homes, and ask for permission from their parents to take pictures inside their homes, and try to capture free moments without notifying their siblings or friends until afterwards that they are taking pictures of them. As such: “photography as a medium is not about photography per se but about its potential to question, arouse curiosity, tell in different voices or see through different eyes” (Edwards, 1997:54).

The pictures produced then became an exercise in ethno-methodology. This relates to what Sarah Pink argues as: “no image or photographic practice is essentially ethnographic by nature, but the ethno-graphicness of photography is determined by discourse and content” (Pink, 2001). “The pictures convey the reality of the culture of young people’s work in a way which the children’s written and spoken words do not. They are representations of their work culture, rather than an external researcher or photographers’ representation about their culture” (Bolton et al, 2001:512).
Analyzing the pictures without interviewing the children would have treated the photographs merely as content analysis. "The meanings of photographs are arbitrary and subjective; they depend on who is looking" (Pink, 2001:51). As the researcher I would have had to determine what the abundance of images signified, completely relying on my own understanding of the children's cultural norms and attitudes toward their subjects. Thus, I chose to conduct separate interviews with each of the children and discuss with them the story behind each picture they had taken. "Images can be as valuable as words or numbers in exploring people's organizational constructs" (Stiles, 1998:190). In addition, child labourers have an easier time communicating through art:

All the indications are that the 'phenomenon' of child employment makes more sense when explored with children within a socio-economic context, taking account of the materialist conditions which shape their lives. In this sense, we would argue that the photographs, which they produced, and the Visual Sociology which they have facilitated have resulted in accounts of rather than merely about their working lives (Bolton et al; 2001:517).

The images that the children produced gave me an insight into their realities in ways that the interviews never could.

I conducted two sets of in-depth focused interviews with the 24 children that had used the cameras given to them few weeks before.

On the surface, photo-elicitation is a straightforward method to understand and to utilize. It involves using photographs to invoke comments, memory and discussion in the course of a semi-structured interview. Specific examples of social relations or cultural form depicted in the photographs can become the basis for a discussion of broader abstractions and generalities; conversely, vague memories can be given sharpness and focus, unleashing a flood of detail" (Banks, 2001:87-88)

The first set of interviews revolved around the theme of why the children had taken the image. The question was simply posed to them in that manner, and their answers were recorded on my laptop. If the children photographed individuals, their names and relationship were recorded, as well as who had taken the photograph. The second set of interviews addressed the children's thoughts toward the images conjured up for them
through photo-elicitation (Alexander, et al., 2005). Unfortunately, in this set I was only able to interview 14 children as the remaining seven had ceased to attend the NGO Centre. This setback was due to a number of children having dropped out of the NGO Centre because they had reached puberty. The results that I was able to gather from the children did support the original set of questions asked to achieve the quantifiable data gathered (see Appendix one).

4.4.6 Case Studies on Five Child Labourers

The final data collection involved five case studies. Five children were chosen as a reasonable number that would generate a reasonable amount of research and at the same time allow for a deeper understanding of how the child labourers negotiated their lived realities. Two girls and three boys were chosen in order to look at the gender differences. Two older boys (above 12) were chosen, but unfortunately by this point in the research I was unable to choose an older girl as they had all dropped out of the NGO Centre and two younger girls (12 and under) and one younger boy were also chosen. I chose to utilize this explorative method in order to fully understand the complexity of the children’s lives. “There is an emotional response evoked by such data which fosters an understanding of what it means to be a child in that situation – understanding which cannot be derived from quantitative data alone” (Grover, 2004:82-86). While I do not propose that the results yielded from this method will be the general norm for all child labourers, it will perhaps explore further the lives of five children marginalized by their society (Gomm et al, 2000). The case study “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1994).

The use of an in-depth qualitative approach was useful when the research began to investigate the five children’s life histories. The life histories approach “provides a fundamental source of knowledge about how people experience and make sense of themselves and their environments, thus allowing the actors to speak for themselves” (Symon and Cassell, 1998). Such an approach documents the child labourers’ lives
through their words and actions. Each child was observed and asked to talk with me about their life during the course of a week. These conversations were taped using an audio recorder, and then analyzed. I solicited permission to tape-record from each child and their parents and the audio tapes were later typed as field notes. Unfortunately, due to the quality of the recordings the tapes were not as helpful as I had hoped but did assist in recollecting the conversations I had with the children, families and employees.

The use of ethnographic research proved vital to this study, as it allowed me the researcher to study the children’s “behaviour in natural settings” (Gilbert, 1993) as opposed to accessing it only through their verbal and visual accounts. The study of the relationships that the child labourers initiated and maintained was richly available through interactions and observations of the children in their locale. Such a qualitative approach allows for an in depth analysis of the situation (Patton, 1987). The ethnographic tradition finds itself in “the purpose is detailed description of patterns of cultural life through the eyes of participants in that culture, and is valuable for the role that it plays in debunking ethnocentric myths that researchers and their audiences may hold” (Henwood and Pidgeon, 1993:18).

The criteria for choosing each child was based on poverty, children who had attended school versus those that had not, dependency of family on child for income, and one or both parents absent in the child’s life. The case studies were carried out through daily participatory observations with each child and interviews with the families and the children. The interviews consisted of open questions merely to allow the families and children a chance to speak about their lives in their own words. The children that were not chosen were all connected to those that were and were included in many of the discussions in order to allow as little disruption as possible to the children who were chosen. In addition, due to the inter-connections of all the families, focusing on one child meant that I would speak to a number of families and children just by being around that child. See Diagram 4.3-4.7, which portrays the relationships between each child and the rest of the children.
Diagram 4.5, Hoda

Hoda
Age 10
Female

- Amal (sister)
- Bakr2 (neighbour & friend)
- Heba7 (neighbour & friend)
- Malu7 (neighbour & friend)
- Zeinab6 (neighbour & friend)
- Mona2 (neighbour & friend)
- Eman11 (neighbour & friend)
- Dina12 (neighbour & friend)
- Nadia10 (neighbour & friend)
- Mariam17 (neighbour & friend)

Diagram 4.6, Hasan

Hasan
Age 14
Male

- Hakim9 (neighbour & friend)
- Gamal18 (co-worker)
- Adel13 (neighbour & friend)
- Yihya5 (neighbour & friend)
- Uthman4 (brother & co-worker)
- Bakr2 (friend)
- Ayman3 (friend)
- Salah5 (neighbour & friend)
- Anf14 (neighbour & friend)
- Azzalb (neighbour)

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I began my case study research in the spring of 2003. I chose five children from the 24 children that attended the NGO Centre. I chose each child for a particular feature of their lives. The first child, HishamS, see Diagram 4.3., was chosen because he had left his family at the age of eight to come and live with his sister in Cairo and work in his brother-in-laws factory. The second child, Zeinab6, see Diagram 4.4, was chosen for two reasons one was that she had never been to school and the other was because she was the only person in her family that worked. The third child was Hodal, see Diagram 4.5, she was chosen for her young age, she was 10 years old, and because she and her sister were the sole supporters of the family. The last two children were from the same family, Hasan4, see Diagram 4.6and Uthman4, see Diagram 4.7. These two were chosen as brothers who worked together, came from a large family and had never been sent to school. All the children chosen came from rather harsh economic environments and also because through them I was able to look at the other children from the NGO Centre. I was able to look at other families as they were related like in the case of Zeinab6, who was related to Maha7 and Heba7, see Diagram 4.4.

Although many of the children knew me for at least one year and a half some remained
extremely shy around me, specifically the boys. This was not due to a lack of familiarity, but rather to culture. I was a teacher but also a woman and therefore it was more difficult for the boys to converse easily with me. The girls on the other hand chatted endlessly about anything, sometimes I tried to steer the conversation but many times I was more interested in simply listening to their conversations with one another and with myself.

I had met the families of the five children chosen for the case studies a few times before and I had already interviewed many of them, so the structured interviews tended to be much easier this time. I did continue to take with me a sponsor on most visits; however, my old sponsor had left Egypt so CSPAD assigned a new sponsor by the name of Mr Z. At first Mr Z., a local pottery factory owner, did not quite understand his role but slowly he became more helpful and more insightful than any sponsor I had used before. All the families knew him quite well and when any of them told me something that was not quite the honest he always allowed them to speak and when we had concluded the interview and left the household, he told me the other side of the story. This was helpful for fact checking, although I still kept the original data that the families had reported for my research.

During the interviews with the families it was very difficult to steer the conversation around the children. Most of the discussions were about the families, specifically the parents, and how they were suffering on the various levels. Health, economic, and social problems all arose; as a result of these hardships the children I was focusing on became marginalized.

I spoke to all the children’s employers extensively as I was quite interested in the process of what they produced. The employers in many cases told me what they thought I wanted to hear; therefore it took more discussions with them to gain a true perspective of what they expected of the children and what the children actually did.
4.5 Practical Experiences Gained from Field Research

Conducting field work in Old Cairo dictated new field practices that were essential to the study. Most of the research methods used are based on western research norms; yet some do not translate ideally to Arab societies. Thus, the practical experiences gained from this study are worth noting. A number of insights were also gained throughout the study.

One of the most important key practices gained was conducting the study at the onset from within the confines of an established NGO. This allowed the research greater freedom without arousing fear from the community. An established NGO lends credibility to the researcher, who in the beginning is viewed as an outsider in the local community. At a national level, the NGO extends its protective status to the researcher, whose affiliation with a foreign university could cause the Egyptian government to become suspicious.

4.5.1 Listening to Children

The practicalities of gaining the children’s own perspective on their lives required considerable effort particularly with those under 12 years of age. I began the research by asking children from the NGO Centre to come and speak to me and to answer some questions. The children were at first sceptical and shy, especially since on more than one occasion employees from the NGO Centre would join the interviews, sometimes even answering questions on behalf of the children. I asked them on several occasions not to answer for the children, but rather allow the children to answer, even if they thought the answers were incorrect. Unfortunately, my request was continuously ignored. The children did not always know their ages, where they lived or how many siblings they had. The NGO Centre had collected all this information, so each time I would take a child aside they would gather their records and insist on imparting their knowledge to me. I expressed my dissatisfaction on a few occasions and reassured the NGO Centre’s staff that it was perfectly acceptable if the children did give me the information that the NGO...
Centre knew was incorrect as my intention was not to gather information. Rather I was after what the children perceived as their lived reality, so that if a child said that they were 10 years old and they were 11, I felt that was unimportant. I could easily discover their correct ages when I interviewed their parents or I could look at the NGO Centre’s records at later date. Finally, after a few discussions, the children and I were left in peace to conduct the structured interviews.

Accessing girls, as mentioned earlier, was difficult. The total number of children from both the NGO Centre and the factory sample consisted of 14 girls and 35 boys. I was able access the majority of the girls in the NGO Centre, which consisted of 11 out of a sample of 24. I did not encounter other female children during my year long visits to the factories; however, I did find a considerable number of girls the following year when I returned to do case studies. This may have been due to the more extended periods I spent among the child labourers and in the factories. In this study, the youngest children were 9 and the oldest were 15 years of age. There were 24 children that were 12 years and under, and 25 children were 13 years of age and above.

4.5.2 Conducting Interviews with Children

The children from the NGO Centre tended to be much easier to interview for a number of reasons. The biggest distraction for the pottery factory children was other children and, on a few occasions, passers-by who asked what I was doing. They tended to make very negative comments such as: “Why are you wasting your time, these are street urchins, they will never amount to anything, etc…” I would always reply with a standard answer that each child was precious and that their life accounted for something, which they would respond to by either laughing or by telling me again not to waste my time.

I always waited for an opportunity to present itself in order not to interrupt the children’s daily activities, whether at the factories or at the NGO Centre. At the NGO Centre, I was respectful to my sponsors and waited for them to decide when I could speak to the children. Usually, this was done between their art class and lunch. Those who had
finished their art project early would come and speak to me, or if one of the children was going have the weekly rotation of serving lunch, they would instead come and speak to me. This of course meant that I would spend a long time waiting to speak to the children, which was an opportunity for me to observe what the children and adults were doing at the NGO Centre and also allow them to see me as less of a stranger.

During my visits to the pottery factories I always introduced myself to the owner and explained the type of research I was doing. I respectfully asked permission to interview the children that were working in the factories and waited for the owner to allow me to speak to them. Again during these periods of waiting I would take the opportunity to familiarize myself with the pottery industry and take pictures. Anytime I took a photograph I asked permission and this was always granted. My pictures became sought-after by factory owners who wanted to document their pottery pieces and I happily provided them with copies. This helped to give back what perhaps I was taking out in pursuit of my research.

4.5.3 Listening to Children’s Visual Representations

Children experienced and viewed images from different angles and lenses, capturing shots that were natural and not posed, but which had a great deal of ethnographic value to a researcher. In many instances the children did not have the words to express what they wanted to convey. The cameras proved to be a valuable tool in this respect and many children showed a talent, capturing subjects from angles from which most would never think to shoot. The themes produced from the interviews with the children were the emotions that the children felt toward their environment and the actors within it. The children’s positive and negative reactions toward work, their strong attachments to their families and friends were highlighted in much of the data.

For the interviews, the pictures were divided into three categories: family; friends; and work. The children looked at the pictures that were placed in the three categories and was asked to comment on what the picture signified to them. In order to generate the
interview data pertaining to the pictures, the children were simply asked to comment on the pictures; however, when they fell silent I would ask them open questions in order to entice them to speak further on the image. Sometimes it was impossible to get them to say anything further at which point the interview was concluded. Others took this opportunity to tell me new insights into their lived realities.

The children did negotiate, for the most part, with their parents to capture their images on camera. The parents were not always keen to be photographed possibly due to either fear as to the use of the picture (evil eye), or pride. Many times the families or the children would ask me what it was I was going to do with the pictures. I would always reply that the pictures were for research purposes only and that they would never be published. This was understood by them as I explained that the pictures were for me only and that no one else would see or have a copy of them apart from my teachers and the NGO Centre. As described earlier, the children had to contend with a number of cultural and traditional practices governing their ability to capture all that they chose to picture. Yet, despite those constraints or boundaries, the children managed to produce a remarkable insight into their lives. In parallel I have had to contend with the constraints of ethical practice in respect of which pictures I can produce in my thesis.

The pictures worked as a documentary about the lives of the children through their own eyes, in addition to an external narrative explaining why the picture had been taken in such a manner. The children represented themselves through a visual technique which contributed to descriptions of their lives. The photos and structured interviews allowed insights into their negotiated realities by focusing on the various actors in their lives, and on the roles that the children adopted.

Questions were repeated or rephrased whenever I felt that there was more to be said about any question asked in my interviews. I had applied this method when asking the children about the photos they had taken. On numerous occasions, I would get more information from the child when the question was repeated or rephrased. I would ask the child after repeating the answer more than twice whether they were sure or could they
have meant something else. Sometimes the child reflected and returned with a more specific answer, but on a number of occasions the child insisted that “the camera took all the pictures”, or “that they did not know”, or that they simply “wanted the memory”. This particular point caused many of the children to become frustrated as they simply had no answer as to why the picture was there. I concluded that it may have been that the children had simply forgotten why they had chosen to capture a particular set of images, or that they did not take the pictures, which in many occasions was the case. Or simply that the image that the children had taken was worth more than a thousand words.

Two sets of interviews pertaining to the children’s photographs were conducted. It was important to note that the second set of in-depth interviews was during Ramadan which made the children additionally tired when I sat with them, nonetheless a few did manage to describe vivid emotions concerning their environment and the actors living within it. Ramadan played a very significant role as a backdrop to the open questions, such as: ‘how do you feel about the pictures related to work, family and friends?’ that I posed to the children, as it reflected upon their lives. Ramadan in Islam is a time for reflection and sacrifices. Families tend to come closer together and breaking one’s fast is done with the community, as all Muslims break their fast at Sunset each day for 30 days.

The children’s description of the pictures had been translated literally from Arabic. Each child’s responses were recorded by tape, and then translated into English using as close a translation as possible in order to preserve their voice.

4.5.4 Generating Data on Children’s Time and Space

Younger children had very little concept of space and time, they simply would break things up in categories of “a while” or “currently”, a question such as “how long have you been coming to the NGO Centre?” was answered in current time, such as “I have been coming for while.” This meant anywhere from a month to two as the NGO Centre had only been open for two months at the time. To questions such as “how long have you been working?” the answer was always “a long time.”
The concept of space was also a problem for many of the children of all ages. Their concept of where they resided was “here,” meaning in the area or they would give me the name of the entire area, some using the generic name of Old Cairo. All the children knew exactly where their homes were and went to work and to the NGO Centre every day without the help from anyone. Yet giving me a specific address posed a problem\(^6\). This may have been because they did not want me to know where they lived precisely, since I did not know them then well enough at the time. Although when I ended the interview with “can I visit you at home,” they all agreed without exception. The children from the factories also responded in the same way, which again led me to believe that this may have been their understanding of the question asked. When the children responded here, they meant exactly that, they were part of the community and they lived there within the community. As addressed earlier in Chapter Two and will be further elaborated on in Chapter Seven, families included not only the parents but uncle, aunts, cousins and grandparents. When children referred to where they lived, they lived among their families which were scattered inside this small community in Batn al-Baqarah and Fawakhir. Thus, the question originally used to address the location of the child’s home ultimately leads to a question addressing the sociology of the Arab family.

Descriptions of the children’s homes were also problematic. Many of the younger children did not know how many rooms they lived in, or how many brothers and sisters they had. Gathering this data became a question of piecing together a jigsaw puzzle of information. For example when I met with the children from the NGO Centre’s families, I might find that they had one or more siblings, or had counted one less or one more room. In answering questions on siblings, I could see that the children had sometimes simply forgotten and counted those that they liked on this day, or those that they felt closest too. When counting rooms, children who counted one less room may have felt cramped or that they were always in one room and had dismissed the other room. The children were for the most part very transparent about their lives, especially as I

\(^6\) Even though the area was built in a random manner, there were street names to most of what could be considered main streets, such as Shariah al Nur (light street) because it had some shops that kept it light, or shariah al-Gamia’ (Mosque street) because it had a Mosque on it.
continued the structured interviews and they began to relax a bit more as they began to spend more time with me at the NGO Centre. This also helped when I went to interview the children working in the factories. All the children working in the pottery factories knew each other, so those that were from the NGO Centre had spoken to them about me which helped put the children from the factories at ease when it came time to administer their structured interviews.

4.5.5 Structured Interviews with the Families

I tried during the family interviews to address both parents when available, but unfortunately this proved difficult. Both parents were rarely available at the same time, and if they were the father for the most part answered my questions. The family interviews took approximately 45 minutes. I had to deal with a number of distractions within the family interviews such as family members entering the interview, a child crying and the interviewee comforting it in the course of the interview which is partly why they took longer than those with the children despite covering the same ground.

The structured interviews were divided into four sections, demographics, economic status, educational attainment, and the social aspects of the environment in which the child and family live (see Appendices 1 and 2). In addition parents were asked about their aspirations for their children, and their anxieties (see Appendix two). These questions were designed to gain an insight into the family’s attitude and the environment that governs child labourers.

4.5.6 Listening to the Child Labourers Families

The majority of the interviews were conducted with the mothers. They allowed my sponsor at the time, Mr S., and me into their homes, and insisted that we drank something and made ourselves comfortable. In some houses we shared the cot, which the entire family slept on, with the mother and father if they were present. Birds would perch above us and their droppings would land upon us as we sat huddled in the tiny spaces
listening and recording what these families told us about their lives.

I remember I was so nervous during the first interview with Dina12's parents that I could not even remember what to say in Arabic. My sponsor managed to save the day as he had the list of questions that I was asking translated in Arabic. The parents of Dina12 were better off than the other parents I later interviewed, but at the time I had no idea how far the depth of poverty could reach. Comparatively and in hindsight, Dina12's parents were part of a higher echelon of poor. They were poor but could afford many things such as more room to live in, electrical appliances, furniture, etc... Other families I later interviewed had considerably less, and others had almost nothing.

Before, when I worked in similar conditions, I was working as an aid to a donor agency; thus, offering hope. As a researcher all I could do was ask them to tell me their story. My sponsor and I agreed after our initial interview that he would ask the questions while I recorded the answers. I would only direct questions to the family when I needed additional clarification or elaboration on an issue. During that first interview we also asked the family if we could take pictures of the family or video tape the session, but they seemed to dislike the idea. The father said that he preferred not to be photographed and the mother did not look too pleased at our suggestion, so we abandoned the idea.

Ethically I felt responsible for many of these families, especially after listening to their stories and spending years observing and speaking to them. I would always take some time before the structured interviews to converse with the families and tell them why I was interested in their lives. On many occasions, one of the parents would take the opportunity to speak to me about their health conditions and other problems in their lives. The mothers spoke of complications arising after giving birth to their children; while fathers talked about occupational accidents and diseases that they could not afford to treat due to lack of resources. The fathers complained that there were no jobs, and some complained about the health and the educational system that could not incorporate their children.
I began the interview by asking the names of the father and mother. Although I had a number of relatives in the list of families I was to interview, I had no idea who was related to who at the time. I had interviewed the children and, based on that, was using the fathers name to locate the family. However, each child tended to give a list of last names that did not always coincide with any other child on the list. In Egypt, names are given as follows: children’s first name is given; then the children’s father’s first name as a middle name; and finally the last name of the father as the surname. In some instances, they added the grandfather’s name after the middle name or removed the last name and simply used the child’s given name, the father’s first name then the grandfather’s first name. This stems partly from the fact that many of the children and their parents did not have identity cards. According to Islam, the lineage of a child must be closely guarded, and therefore, no one could change a child’s name even if they were adopted.

The mothers did not fall into the lineage issue, but when asked about their names, I received different answers. What was intriguing was that two of them gave me their names as Um ... (Mother of ...); while one did not give me her last name at all. The fear of the evil eye is quite alive among Egyptians, more so in the lower socio-economic groups. They believed by giving their names, a stranger could use that to cast an evil spell on them (see Chapter One).

4.6 Data Analysis

I approached the data collected in this thesis through a thematic analysis, which was grounded in the data. This was done to maximise the experiences and views of the children studied, as well as to try to understand it from the children’s perspective. Finally, this approach was used to further develop a basis within the context of other approaches to the study of child labour, including those more deductively driven by the children’s rights agenda.

Initial analysis of the data gained from all the methods led me to focus further analysis on three key aspects of the children’s lives: children in the labour market; children in
between the labour market and the household; and finally, families and the household. As these three issues were the most important in the children’s lives. The children in the labour market were an obvious focus given my initial research questions; however, the Arab family unit emerged as a strong and important domain in the lives of the child labourers. Furthermore, a third domain emerged which presented itself between the market and the household: friendships and playtime. The significance of this has been noted before for children in the UK (Morrow, 2001:260) but it is an overlooked area in studies of child labourers in Arab countries.

During the initial analysis of the pictures taken by the children it was evident that some of the children used the cameras to capture relevant and important issues in their lives, specifically the boys who focused attention on their work. There was some evidence that this reflected other goals on the part of the photographers, such as those identified by Punch:

> The children might have been more tempted to take pictures of what they wanted to keep as a photograph afterwards. Alternatively, they may have taken pictures of what they considered makes a ‘good’ photograph. Such issues were important to bear in mind during the analysis stage, and highlight the importance of children describing their own reasons for taking the photographs (Punch, 2002:333).

The children were given opportunities to describe their reasons for taking their pictures as a number of them did stray from the initial instructions.

The analysis of the data gathered from the children’s and families’ structured interviews has been analysed for its value leading to insights surrounding the relationships that the children have with their work and families. “The task of analysis is therefore to come to a measured opinion about the appropriate role for work in promoting healthy psychosocial development” (Mizen et al, 2001:2).

The styles of the photographs demonstrated the children’s ability to mould the images they chose to capture. The children chose to capture some pictures vertically and
horizontally. Other pictures were staged versus some that were more ‘natural’. The question that must be posed concerning the pictures was, did the children manage to utilize the camera to capture an image in a certain way or were all the pictures shot at random? These issues proved important as they expressed the child’s ability to use the camera as a tool for expression rather than just take pictures blindly. While most of the pictures were staged, there was an element of imagination in order to gain that particular focus or setting. The ability to choose to have the photo at a specific location rather than at another was the child determining an image that they wanted to portray. The choice of subject and angle of the shot confirmed the children’s strong sense of imagination and artistic talent. For example, Azzal6 chose to capture the image of her sister from a side angle, instead of a direct shot of the child. The child was framed amidst two walls sitting on the sleeping mats that were piled up during the day. The photograph was taken while the child was eating, which I had been told by the children on other occasions was not proper to do. Azzal6 either chose to defy her cultural traditions and photograph her sister in the act of eating a sandwich, or she truly believed that the camera was not real; thus, the picture would not turn out. In that case, the picture seemed natural, the child simply climbed up upon the sleeping mats to eat her sandwich, and according to Azzal6, asked to be photographed. Azzal6 on her part angled the camera and shot the picture without any direction to the subject. She stated that her sister wanted her picture taken so she took it.

All observations were recorded upon return to my home. There was never a good place to write at either the NGO centre, in the pottery factories or in the families’ homes, so in order not to disrupt the flow of the research I preferred to wait until I reached home to write up any events that were not recorded through the palm pilot (used for the structured interviews). Field notes, with the exception of those taken during the case studies were of events, reactions, observations, and other occurrences that were not included within the structured interviews or in the description of the pictures. I also took photographs while I was with the children in order to help me remember events. In addition, I carried a digital tape recorder with me when I conducted the case studies and on a number of occasions at the NGO Centre to help me with writing up my notes. These taped
conversations were all in Arabic, so I had to simultaneously translate and transcribe them. Unfortunately, due to the continuous noise that surrounded the children either at the NGO Centre, at the pottery factories and at their homes, there was great deal of distractions; however, I managed to retain and transcribe almost 60 percent of all the data recorded. All quoted material taken from the children was directly transcribed during sessions with the children and are the direct words of the respondents.

Initially, all the pictures that the children took were organized into two albums, which were placed on a table for each child to glance through as they were asked about their photographs. Each child was then given the opportunity to look through their pictures before a session began. This caused a few difficulties, because the child would begin looking at their friends' pictures and calling them over. This method was quickly abandoned after sitting down with two children and realising that a better method was to transfer all the pictures into electronic form. Then I placed each child's pictures into an Excel workbook, and one by one the child was shown on a laptop each picture and I recorded their responses directly on the same excel sheet.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

As my study concerns a marginalized faction of society that also includes children, the stakes are considerably higher in making sure that the subjects are not harmed in any way. “In order to prevent harm being caused, a researcher needs a good understanding of local notions of harm and anxiety, how these may be experienced and how they relate to images” (Pink, 2001:42) A verbal consent for each phase of the research was sought and granted from the children and their families (Oakley, 1999). “In taking responsibility to protect their informants, researchers should be sensitive to the visual culture and experience of individuals with whom they are working” (Pink, 2001:42). At all times the interest of the child has continued to come first before that of the research (Woodhead and Faulkner, 1999). No child or family was forced or coerced into any interview, and any concerns the parents or children voiced were heeded and addressed (ILO, 2004). As discussed earlier, written consent was not appropriate.
Any subject matter that concerns children raises an ethical question as to how to protect the child’s work and privacy. “While it is vital to recognize that children are potentially more vulnerable to unequal power relationships between adult researcher and child participant, ethics can dominate debates about methodological concerns” (Punch, 2002:323). The 18 sets of parents and the 24 children were informed of the research conducted at the NGO Centre and all gave their verbal consent. The children that were given cameras understood that when they were given the camera they were entitled to a set of photographs and a prize was given a few months later for following the instructions. The agreement that was negotiated with the children and parents was informal as there was no formal manner to acquiring permissions, especially given the low literacy levels.

I tried to position myself as a non-authority figure but this was impossible for the children to comprehend as I was related to the NGO Centre, I was a foreigner, as well as being considerably senior to them. All these factors placed me in a position that, although I wielded no power over them and asked on each occasion for them to speak their minds freely, still placed burden on the children’s responses. This was one of the reasons why I chose to give the children cameras in order to resolve some of the unequal power relationship that existed between the children and myself. The 25 children from the pottery factories were also asked for their consent as were their employers; however, it was impossible to gain consent from their families as both myself and my sponsors were not familiar with their families and could not impose on them for a visit. It should be noted that the additional 25 children were only utilized to extend the scope of the study.

I chose to utilize Pink’s concept of giving something back. “The idea of giving something back implies that the ethnographer extracts something (usually the data) and then makes a gift of something else to the people from whom he or she got the information” (Pink, 2001:44). Based on this premise, I gave each child their developed pictures back. This was not always the gift I imagined it to be - upon viewing the pictures, one parent hit his
daughter as he was not impressed by her images because they were a little distorted and the subject did not appeal to him.

Based on the children’s beliefs and further discussions with my thesis advisors, none of the pictures that were taken by the children were used in this thesis. Another ethical consideration that Punch points out in her own research with children was what happened when the research was over and I had taught these children how to utilize a camera? They had enjoyed the experience, and would perhaps wanted to recreate it.

There was a particular ethical problem of employing the visual photographic technique with children who usually do not have an opportunity to take photographs, since it briefly introduced them to a modern technology which they will be unlikely to experience again because of the financial cost involved. It may have left some children feeling disappointed afterwards at being unable to practise their newly learnt skill. It also caused some resentment from other community members for encouraging children to use such an expensive technique, and instilling unrealistic ideas into their heads about wanting to be photographers (Punch, 2002:333-334).

I do not have an answer for this dilemma. As a researcher I know that my motives are not altruistic. Although I did want to help these children, I was also collecting information from them in order to build a theory based upon their lives. I always wanted to find a way to give something back to these children and their families. On a number of occasions, mothers questioned what I could offer their children; my response was always to promote the services the NGO Centre was providing, and to encourage them to make use of those services. I did share my findings with the members of CSPAD and WHO, and WHO has begun a project in the area to reduce poverty and create health and socioeconomic projects for sustainable development.

Another concern the research yielded is that once the research was completed, what would happen to the data collected? The research placed the factory owners at risk for employing children, but the government has been aware of the use of child labour in the pottery factories and has not implemented any sanctions upon them. In addition, WHO
has entered into an agreement with the Ministry of Health, the Municipality of Old Cairo and a local Rotary Chapter to ensure that all factory owners will be trained in occupational health and be committed to better business practices.

I also chose to change the names of the 49 children in this study as well as the 18 family names. The children were assigned numbers and pseudonyms. Nonetheless, I continued to maintain the integrity of the research and the children by gaining informed consent from each child’s family. With any structured interview I conducted, I informed the children and the families of my intentions, presented them with a brief introduction to myself and finally asked if they were willing to be interviewed.

Research participants at one level own their data in the same way that we own all our information. It should be appreciated further that to have some control over how one is portrayed in the world by others is related to issues of human dignity. As a result then, it is argued, the research participant an inherent right, especially when social research has significant policy implications, to: (1) contribute their unique perspective about matters such as the formulation of the research problem and their experience of the research process and (2) challenge perceived misrepresentations arising out of data interpretations that they feel do not accurately reflect their own experience or understanding of who they are or how they function. In this regard, note that it has indeed been recognized that how one is reported about in the world can profoundly affect one’s human rights. Thus, for example, the United Nations adopted in 1962 a Convention on the International Right of Correction. Yet, children effectively have no ‘right of correction’ when it comes to the stereotypes and negative images of the young and classes of the young that often emerge from social research. They are reliant rather on those few researchers who might challenge common stereotypes such as the erroneous notion that street children are universally uninterested in education or the possibility of having a future (Grover, 2004:82-83).

I have tried to maintain the dignity of the children and their families at all costs. My sole purpose in portraying these children and families was to demonstrate that child labourers are not helpless children who are forced to work, but rather they are children who are part of a family unit that is in need of their participation in the labour market. Furthermore, emphasis must be placed on the children’s acceptance of their role within their family unit and their willingness to partake in any service that would maintain their family unit.
4.8 Problems and limitations in the Field

I encountered a number of setbacks in the fieldwork which I had to resolve. As a result of the interventions of my sponsors some results became biased. In the initial phase of interviewing the children from the NGO Centre, the sponsors constantly fed answers to the children. This compromised measurement of the child's ability to understand the question, respond to it, maintain or comprehend time, and be able to estimate or measure distances. On a number of occasions I asked CSPAD not to do so but it was a constant struggle, as they felt that I should get the most accurate information, even though the data was verified as stated earlier.

The lack of any fixed setting in which to conduct the interviews also created quite a complex problem. Each time, upon entering a factory, the owners would spend a great deal of effort trying to make me feel comfortable and would scramble around trying to find for me something to sit on and offer me a soda. On each occasion I would ask them not to disturb their work and to carry on as if I was not there; unfortunately this was never heeded\(^69\). Egyptian custom does not allow any visitor to visit an establishment, home, or any place without the host offering hospitality in some way. Although I did not want to offend anyone I also did not want them to go to any unnecessary expense of sending a boy to fetch me a soda. I devised an excuse that I would use upon entering any factory that did actually help in the end. I would tell them that I had a problem with sugar so I could not drink any soda, a few times they still insisted on getting a soda and I would give my excuses again and give the soda to one of the children I was interviewing. There was never a good place to take the children aside in the factories or outside. I sat on crates, rocks and old boxes and that was only when I was able to find a seat for the child being interviewed. There were many occasions were I conducted the structured interviews with both of us standing up.

\(^{69}\) On many occasions the children were in the midst of their work day. I always tried to go past 4pm so that most of their day was almost over, but this was not always the case.
Another concern that was raised by the children was their disbelief that anyone would actually give them a real camera. On many occasions when I spoke to the children they expressed their scepticism and snapped the button on the camera thinking that no picture could possibly be created. This did cause a problem when I was interviewing the children as they would state they had not taken the picture but rather the camera had.

Photography was limited to the NGO Centre and the children’s willingness to photograph their lives. The photographs that the children took also posed an unforeseen threat, even though consent was given by the parents for the exercise and the children were the ones taking the pictures. Unfortunately, upon viewing the reality of the exercise, two parents and two children objected to the portrayal of their lives. The images of their homes portrayed an image that the families did not want to convey, which constituted a setback to my research. Another motive for not wanting their images to appear could be attributed to the evil eye and evil spells. Both beliefs are widely held by people in the area and in Egypt in general (see Chapter One for a more detailed discussion of this).

The third setback and the most strenuous task was the problem of maintaining contact with the original 24 children. This caused a considerable amount of difficulty for the continuity of my research as all the phases required the child to remain available for interviewing and observing. The drop-out rate had affected males and females, a rather surprising result that has only recently surfaced. In the beginning only the girls seemed to stop attending the NGO Centre, this was done in a very dramatic way, where four girls out of eleven girls simply stopped attending all days. The boys were different; they slowly stopped attending, first by skipping a day here and there, then a week, and then finally over a few months stopped attending. Measures were taken to try to bring the children back, but it seems that, at the age of puberty these children, for different reasons, take on additional roles that force them to focus on their employment or on getting married.

The areas of Fawakhir and Batn al-Baqarah contained a number of negative elements that on one occasion posed a threat to me. To be accepted within the community as a
researcher was not difficult when I was constantly seen with a sponsor from CSPAD; however, when I attempted to conduct interviews alone, some teenage boys from the area, curious as to my status as an unaccompanied female harassed and tried to grab at me. After this I made sure that I was accompanied at all times with someone from the area.

4.9 Conclusion

This Chapter describes the overall methods that I planned to utilize in my investigation of the relationship between child labourers and the actors within their environment and how the children interact and conduct themselves within those environments. I have explained the situation that I am investigating through the research design that I have presented and the theories proposed. The sampling techniques and the qualitative approaches used were also explained in order to present an informed view of the thesis. The difficulties of gaining access and problems that I have encountered during the research have been considered in order to document the setbacks involved in the research. Finally, I hoped to be able to take all that is learned from the research and literature and contextualize it into an original document to be presented in the field of childhood sociology.

Research methods in social science have emerged out of a western context. Thus, the importance of the practical side of implementing these methods in the setting of Old Cairo needs to be considered. Researching children takes a great deal of patience and dedication to allow the children to become comfortable with the methods utilized by the researcher. Once the girls became familiar with me, they were willing to share a great deal of information, whereas this was less the case with the boys I interviewed. In most cases, the boys tended to be much more reserved and less likely to supply any additional information beyond the yes and no format. The family structured interviews seemed to flow more smoothly; however, the majority of the interviews were conducted with the mothers. The inaccuracy of information supplied by the families was not due to dishonesty, but rather due to several constraints that limited the accuracy of information,
the lived experience versus truth. The major obstacle in supplying accurate information was due to the health and economic problems the parents were going through which, coupled with a lack of documentation, made parents forget certain details about their children including their age, medical history, or literacy level or if they had ever been to school.

The use of a number of methodologies was imperative for a study that focused on how children, in their own voice, negotiated their lived realities. Structured interviews gave an overview of the situation, visual methods gave me insight into the children’s lives, but focusing on the five case studies really allowed for in-depth information from the children. Observing child labourers in their daily activities and recording their interactions with others generated a great deal of qualitative information that allowed for an understanding of children’s labour, their families and their spare time.

The following three chapters analyse the data gathered from the study. The data was gathered, analysed, and then divided into three main chapters: Child Labourers lived Realities; In between the Labour Market and the Household; Families and the Household. The chapters focus on four main themes: responsibility; pride; nurturing; and security, which allow the families to maintain their structure in order to survive.
Chapter Five

Analysis: Child LABOURERS' lived Realities
5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the relationship the children have with their labour environment and the reasons why they remain at work. It will show that children work in the labour force to fulfil their responsibility to their parents as contributors to their family’s sustenance, and how poverty dictates the children’s appearance in the labour market. Children within these impoverished families grow up with a sense of their responsibility toward their families and an understanding of their role in bringing home an income for their families. However, I also show that, despite the hardships, the family gave the children a sense of nurturing and security which enables them to feel happy and appreciated. Many of the girls spoke lovingly of their mothers, describing the love and security that they felt when they were with them but for the most part spoke negatively about their work environment. The work environment was difficult and left the children with little time to spend with their families and friends. Many of the children did not mind working, but rather took issue with what they did and where they did it. Thus, the importance of this Chapter is to establish the environment that dictates a large portion of the child labourers’ days and in many ways is what will be the basis of their future endeavours.

The following analysis was developed out of the four data sets. The pictures the children took revealed a considerable amount about their own perception of the pottery industry and their role within it. The structured interviews with both parents and children served as a basis of the research. Finally, the case studies gave a much deeper insight into how they felt about working within the pottery industry.

5.2 Children in the Labour Market

All the children in this study worked six days a week and collected their money at the end of the week. There were differences between the children in terms of the number of hours that they worked and their earnings. There was no real gender discrimination in
earnings but there was in age. Children that were older earned considerably more than younger children. The children reported that they earned on average $4.35 per week.

The difference in wages by age was quite striking. I analysed the data from the children in age groups 9 to 12 years and 13 to 15 years of age. The younger children made $3.04 on average per week, almost half the amount of the older children who made $5.29 on average per week. The younger children worked 9.3 hours per day on average while the older children worked slightly longer, 11.4 hours per day on average (see Table 5.1). The significance in wage was important. As children matured in age, they could carry more and do more tasks in and around the factory and as a result become more useful. Unfortunately, it was hard to say if the trend in pay increase continued as I did not follow the children past their 15th birthday.

Table 5.1, Average Working Hours and Salaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Average Daily Working Hours</th>
<th>Average Weekly Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>$3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>$5.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.1 What Children did in the Labour Market

As the study pertains to children working in the pottery factories, only work which is related to such employment will be considered. The children’s work was for the most part labour intensive, with very little skill enhancement involved. Based on observations, children were very rarely taken in as apprentices but rather as cheap labour. The younger children were observed doing similar tasks to the slightly older children, see Table 5.2. The older children to some extent were given more advanced tasks such as carving and moulding of pottery, but this was always additional to the other menial tasks. It also should be noted that girls were never given any of the skilled tasks.

The practice of apprenticeships did occur in Egypt among artisans; however, none of the children in this study were working in such a capacity.
Table 5.2 What Children Did in the Pottery Factories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Task performed</th>
<th>Level of skill required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>Treading barefoot in the mud to knead it</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Getting inside the well of clay and sieving out the clay</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carrying equipment for safekeeping at home</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sanding and colouring roof tiles</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carrying roof tiles to dry in sun</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carrying roof tiles and pottery pieces to and from the kiln</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Running errands</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Getting breakfast, lunch, tea, coffee, etc... for workers in factory</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-16</td>
<td>Using a mould to make roof tiles</td>
<td>some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moving clay and other heavy objects</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carving designs</td>
<td>required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making pottery pieces from moulds</td>
<td>required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sanding and colouring roof tiles</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carrying roof tiles to dry in mud</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carrying roof tiles and pottery pieces to and from the kiln</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loading trucks with pottery</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Running errands</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.2 Children’s Attitudes toward Working

Descriptions concerning the children’s feelings toward work varied by age and gender. The same girls as they grew older expressed outright hatred for their jobs, preferring to stay at home. This was a theme that presented itself halfway through the research as both the boys and girls had previously stated that they had enjoyed their work and were proud of their accomplishments and had taken a great number of pictures at work. This may have been due to the month of Ramadan and the toll that this took on the girls who were fasting during the hours of daylight, or because many of the girls had become more comfortable around me and had already begun to share much more with me than before.
However, they also reported that on a number of occasions their employer had forced them to work seven days and stay late. Their resentment came through during one of the sessions I had with the children at the NGO Centre. Mariam17 expressed her distaste toward her employer as she described the abuses she had endured:

I empty the oven and I place the pieces in it, I was electrocuted once, my employer let me stay at home for three days. ‘Am M. and ‘Am S. are the ones that own the factory, but I don’t like ‘Am M. -- he says a lot of things, he gossips when people never did anything to him. ‘Am S. is very sweet I like him. The wheel, when I am on it, ‘Am G. one of the artists, lets me work on it; he says that I am not to ruin anything and to leave everything as is. I would have taken the other oven, the wood one, when we place the pieces of shingles, Olas, and pottery. Tomorrow, ‘Am M. is going to make me clean the pottery when I have a ton of work to do, so now I am going to have to work on Friday.

A number of issues were raised in this passage, the most vivid being exploitation and abuse. She spoke of being electrocuted by the oven and forced by her employer ‘Am M., to do additional work despite having much to do already. Some of the employers did try and teach the children skills, but many felt that to do so would only force their wages higher. The owner exploited Mariam17 by expecting her to work on her only day off for no extra pay. If she did not comply with his wishes he would simply find another child that would.

The passage speaks volumes about Mariam17 and her sense of responsibility towards her work and her need to finish in order to have her day off. By adding more labour to her day she would be unable to complete her tasks and thus gain the one day off that in which she could see her friends at the NGO Centre and learn pottery techniques. Mariam17, as she told me her story, still remained cheerful and willing to accept that life was not as unfair as ‘Am M. might make her believe. She saw that there was good out there in ‘Am S. and ‘Am G. who were willing to help her learn a craft and at the same time treated her fairly. Mariam17 tended to be the first girl at the NGO Centre to volunteer for anything new and was always willing to talk to me, unlike many of the other girls who were very shy.
Maha7 was one of the shy girls; however once she got accustomed and more comfortable with me became very talkative and quite informative. During one of the picture sessions, she too began telling me how much she hated to work, “I work on everything, on the wheel, in the clay, etc... I work on shingles, its ok to work on it. My boss is ok with us. I hate work, its tiring. I rather stay at home.” A number of the girls overheard this and echoed Maha7 in expressing the same dislike of their work. They seemed to have been embarrassed to convey their displeasure at being sent to work as they knew that their families relied on whatever income they brought home. Yet they simply did not enjoy it like the boys did; they preferred to stay at home with their mothers and do housework. The boys on the other hand were very clear about their feelings, expressing their enthusiasm for working through the photographs of their work and through their words.

The D4 family had three children that went to the NGO Centre. I focused on the two boys as part of my case studies and as such I was able to examine the family as well. Hasan4 was 15 years old and Uthman4 was 11 years old, and they had both been working since they were each 8 years of age and had never attended school. The boys were very different from one other. Hasan4 was more of an extrovert always surrounded by friends. Uthman4 was an introverted, shy little boy, who did not allow many people close. I was never able to sit down with Uthman4 while he was at work, as he was always running errands, although I managed to follow him around and gain a few nods as answers to my questions. Hasan4 was usually working on carving designs into small vases so it was easier to chat with him. He always worked rather fast, seldom looking up and when he did it was mostly to answer my questions. The D4 family also had a young girl of 12 years of age, who had also never attended school or worked formally, rather she served the family needs. She too attended the centre but was not included in my analysis as she did not work in the pottery factories.

71 Ages of the children change during the different methods used. When I first stated interviewing Hasan4 he was 14 years old and Uthman4 was 10. When I began focusing on the boys as case studies they had grown by one year. This should explain any age differences thereby within this thesis.
I asked Hasan4 about his work and whether he enjoyed it. He told me that now he was able to do much more, like drawing and carving designs on to the vases that were created by the other factory workers. He also created some of the vases and soon he would be like the other employees. It was difficult to get Hasan4 to discuss anything as he answered all my questions in a yes and no format. At this point, I was absolutely terrified to start my interview with Uthman4 as I knew it would probably be even more limited. I simply observed him as he sat on the wheel carving the designs. In another session with Hasan4 we reviewed the pictures that he took.

"Me, Khalid5 took picture, I wanted a picture with this piece because it’s beautiful [holds up a mask]... The oven [kiln], they had just emptied it... Mr Y., I worked with him, makes barrels like these so that we can sand them and put them into the oven, the white is what he has finished and besides it is the work that is still in progress...Khalid5 [sitting on the wheel] working, because he was working on a dish... Two old pottery pieces, I used to play around this area and I love the pieces, there is also great art on the walls [vases drawn on the wall]... I did the colouring for these pieces, I was very happy with the work so I wanted a picture... Old faces -- sun and a man, we did them for an order, but I wanted to take a picture because they were beautiful... The oven with the pottery, I was working there at the time... Work that is hard to come by, I like this work and the colours and I did a few pieces... (points to himself in the picture) Me, because I like myself...”

Another child from the NGO Centre joined us. Gamal18 was a 12 year old boy who was hearing impaired. His parents had not sent him to school as they thought it would be useless due to his hearing impairment. Gamal18 had another brother who worked with him; he was sent to school until he failed and was subsequently dismissed from school when he was 8 years old, since then he had been working in the pottery industry. The family lived in the city of the dead, among the dead behind the oldest Mosque in Cairo, Gamia Umr. Their dwellings were scattered on a plot that was used for a family’s burial. Many of the family plots had been taken over by families like Gamal18’s. They had managed to connect electricity but could not get any other services. Among the beautiful, ornate catacombs that made up one-third of the old city of Cairo, many of the poor in Cairo had taken up residence.
I tried to get Gamall18 and Hasan4 into a conversation about what they would like to do when they grew up, and they both shrugged their shoulders. I asked them directly if they would remain in the pottery industry and they told me that they most probably would. Hasan4’s father was a skilled pottery worker; he was one of the last remaining artisans who made the *Ola*, a clay urn for keeping water cold. It was hard for his father to find employment because the once-used *Ola* has been replaced by bottles of water in the fridge. I met him on one occasion when he had found employment at one of the local factories. I admired the *Olas* that he had created and asked to purchase one but they had not been burnt in the kiln. A month later his daughter handed two to *Olas* to me; it was the most amazing gift I had received. The father had remembered and had put two aside for me.

I did return to the factory to speak to Uthman4, hoping that he would answer me even within a yes or no format. The gopher at the factory - along with Gamall18, both boys due to their age had been given all the menial tasks - Uthman4 rarely spoke to me. Even when I had asked him to describe the pictures he had taken, he would simply nod to all my questions.

During the month of *Ramadan*, Muslims must fast in order to feel the suffering of those less fortunate and to cleanse their bodies, then at its conclusion the feast is declared and one is allowed to begin anew. Throughout the interviews many of the girls stated that after *Ramadan* they would be allowed to stay home as they did not like the physical hardship of their labour and that their parents had agreed to keep them home, supporting the theme of *Ramadan*, yet at the end of the month all the girls remained in the same jobs. This is an excerpt from an interview at the NGO Centre with Zeinab6, which also drew in Maha7, Heba7 and Mariam17:

Researcher: Do you like working in Mr. M’s factory?  
Zeinab6: (shrugging her shoulder) it’s OK.  
Researcher: Is there somewhere else you would like prefer to work?  
Zeinab6: Maybe… (silence) selling something.  
Researcher: What would you sell?  
Zeinab6: Tea and sugar.
Researcher: Then why aren’t you doing that instead?
Zeinab: My Dad says no. He says it’s too dangerous because I have to cross the street.
(The other girls start to take an interest in the conversation and begin to join in)
Maha7: It doesn’t matter because our Dad says we will not work after Eid (fixes her veil as it has begun to fall).
Researcher: (to Maha7) What will you do if you don’t work?
Maha7: Stay home with my Mom.
Researcher: (to Maha7) How do you like working for Mr. I?
Maha7: I don’t like it, he always tells stories about me and my sister. He told my Mom that I was flirting with Hisham8 just because he walked all of us home. He doesn’t like us going to the NGO Centre so he is always making stories. Now my Mom doesn’t like us coming here, can you talk to her?
Researcher: (to Maha7) Of course. Do all you girls feel the same way about work?
Girls: (nod).
Researcher: What if you did something you like at work, would you want to continue?
Girls: (look puzzled, silence).
Researcher: What if you worked on the wheel and created pottery pieces?
Mariam17: Yes, I would like that.
Researcher: What about the rest of you?
Girls: (nod).

Once the girls were more comfortable around me they began to confide in me about their dislike of their employers. They felt they were being taken advantage of and spoke of their parents’ promises of releasing them from their obligations.

5.2.3 Children’s Pride in their Work

The theme of pride in one’s labour was quite dominant among the boys in the group. Ayman3, who had been working since he was 5 years old, stated sentiments shared by many of the boys:

I took pictures of the work because I wanted to duplicate it. I also wanted to show my friends what I work on and what I produce, it’s like an exhibit to show people your work. I also wanted to have a memory of the place I work in, the people I work with, and the work itself; in case I leave, or one of my colleagues leaves. Work to me is something new, I learn things like
at school, and when I grow up I can be a skilled worker. We can also use the pictures to make some of the work if one of the artists leaves. Of course I love my work; I have been working for ten years.

The children had begun to feel proud of the work that they produced. Ayman3 was always keen to show me what he had created, as did many other boys from the centre. The boys would always urge me to come and visit them in the factories in which they worked in to see what they had created and photograph their pieces. They had a lot of pride in their work and were very happy to show it off to me. The girls were always looking for me on the road so that I would also go into their factories. But the girls were more interested in chatting. They loved to pose for pictures during work, possibly as means of distraction from their gruelling days. Almost all the hazardous work in the shingle industry was done by young children, which was understandably quite tiring and monotonous. The boys always continued doing whatever task was at hand as they spoke to me. If they were busy, they basically looked up and mumbled their answers in a yes or no format; even when I pressed them using open ended questions. The boys as they got older tended to create pieces, which captured their attention and imagination, but the girls sadly remained in their menial labour.

A number of pictures centred on the pottery factories. One child, Atif14, took pictures of every facet of the process of creating a piece of pottery. He had also decided to show me what his current role was and what he planned to do once he gained the experience and knowledge to do it. Atif14 began his pictorial story with pictures that showed how the clay was moulded until the final process of placing the finished pieces in the Kiln. Although Atif14 had been to school, he was unable to read or write and thus joined the NGO Centre. His pictures, out of those of the 22 children, were the most thought out and planned. His best friend Hakim9 also attended school and had the same difficulties with reading and writing, yet, his pictures were randomly chosen and rarely staged. Atif14 listened to the instructions that I had given to all the children and really tried to produce a solid piece of work that would describe what was truly of importance in his life.
Atif14 was the son of a child labourer. His father, in turn, had sent all his sons to the labour market. One son began working at the early age of 8 to support the family as the father at around 50 lost his eyesight. Atif14 would have liked to become a police officer, but that took a high average at university and at 15 years of age he had a lot to catch up with in order to qualify for entry. There was also the added difficulty of knowing someone well connected, which his family did not. He realized that entering the police academy was a dream and focused his efforts on what could earn him a realistic income, so he trained himself in all facets of the art of pottery.

Atif14: *Abia* come and see my work today.  
Researcher: Ok (go into the factory).  
Atif14: (pointing to the pottery pieces of small fruits, bowls, and boxes were piled on the floor neatly) I made these.  
Researcher: That's wonderful, did you use a form or did you create this on the wheel?  
Atif14: I used a form that I made and then I began making all the pieces.  
Researcher: This is great. Are you still going to school?  
Atif14: I've been studying for exams, but I have to work now.  
Researcher: Do you still want to be a police officer?  
Atif14: I don't know.  
Researcher: Do you want to continue in the pottery industry?  
Atif14: Yeah, I like it.  
Researcher: That's great Atif14. Are you learning new techniques?  
Atif14: Yes, I learnt how to create these forms, I drew the concept then made a mould, then placed the clay in it, then coloured them and now they are drying.

Boys spoke of their passions, citing soccer and the great importance that they placed on creating pottery pieces. Hisham8, a 15 year old boy who lived with his sister and her husband who employed him, was a quiet boy who loved football and creating pottery. He would have loved to be educated but this was not on the cards for him. When I first met this young boy he was small and skinny but a year-and-half later he had begun to fill out and was starting to show his full growth. When I asked him a question he always pondered his answers, as if everything he told me was calculated. On one occasion, Hisham8 opened up to me.

Researcher: Are you happy living in Cairo?
Hisham8: (Shrugged his shoulders).
Researcher: Would you rather be living in Suhag with your parents or in Cairo with your sister?
Hisham8: (looking up at me) Yes, I want to live with my family; I miss my sisters... my parents. It's something I want more than anything else. When I grow up I want to return to Suhag and be with my family.
Researcher: What would you do in your village?
Hisham8: I want to be a cop.
Researcher: How often do you see your family?
Hisham8: Once every year.
Researcher: For how long?
Hisham8: (thinking) 2 weeks, I go in the summer.
Researcher: Do you consider your sister and her husband family?
Hisham8: No.

Hisham8 had been living and working for his brother-in-law in Cairo since he was 8 years old. He was now 14 years old and he still wanted to go back to his village and live with his family. He loved working in the pottery industry and creating pieces, but when he grew up wanted to be a police officer. Atif114 had also expressed an interest in becoming a police officer yet he too loved working in the pottery industry. It is important to note that the boys always spoke of their work in the pottery industry as what they did in the here and now, but when they thought of what they wanted to do in the future, five boys cited other occupations.

Hisham8 seemed quite determined to learn the craft of pottery; he had even begun to create his own designs on the vases that they produced. He started work every morning at 8am and sometimes finished as late as 7pm if they had an order that needed to be completed. He had breakfast then went to work, returning for lunch around 2pm, went back to the factory around 3pm for a few more hours. During my interviews with Mr. I., I tried to include Hisham8 in my discussions, asking him questions directly; sometimes his brother-in-law would answer for him, which I sanctioned in order not to create any further distractions.

Hisham8, a quite a reserved boy, worked diligently on his craft. I observed him with the girls outside polishing the shingles. The girls teased one another about their work ability and Hisham8 just smiled and continued with his work. They laughed like little girls
playing with their dolls, and yet they were covered in mud working at their job. I asked
the girls about what they did and if they liked it and they told me that it was all right.
Maha7 stated: “today we were working on making the shingles smooth and shiny. After
the shingles are left to dry, they are put in the oven. I don’t like that part; you know I got
burnt before doing this.” The young children did most of the hazardous work (see
Chapter One) in the shingle industry beginning by scraping the clay from within the
moulds. They then carried the hundreds of shingles outside to dry in the sun. After a
couple of days these were brought in for colouring and the rough edges were smoothed,
they were then carried them to the kiln, and finally after two days in the kiln they were
brought to the waiting customer (see Table 5.2).

5.3 The Determinants of Child Labour in Egypt

As described in Chapter Three, children work for a number of complex reasons. Mostly
it is the parents of a child who will make the choice between the sending their children to
school or to work. For the day to day survival of the family, the choice is usually work.
It is these choices and the families’ sentiment regarding the impact of their decision that
will be explored within this section.

5.3.1 Families’ Socioeconomic Status

Traditionally, in Egyptian societies, the role of the father was as provider and patriarch.
Inhorn defines patriarchy in the family as: “women’s subordination is first experienced –
sometimes subtly, sometimes profoundly – within the family, which serves as a template
for the reproduction of patriarchal relations in other realms of social life” (Inhorn:
1996:4). Yet, when the role of provider was compromised it did not affect the father’s
role as patriarch. However, such a role was harder to sustain when the wife or children
were supporting the family. Through months of observation of the families and children
in Batn al-Baqara and Fawakhir, I realized that the father’s lack of employment status
had no significance to the families’ pride. Any income from the family members,
regardless of who earned it, was seen as a source of pride for the father. The only
restriction was that the wife or post-pubescent girls would never be seen working outside the home. Children, as a rule, in the community were needed to work and contribute to the household. The children’s roles in the family were traditionally to obey and care for the parents, although the parents also were obligated to maintain the household and care for the children.

Fathers on many occasions were not necessarily worried that they did not have steady employment, but were more concerned about how their family’s image was portrayed to the community. One father beat his son upon discovering that he had spent a few Egyptian pounds on some treats from the $8.70 given to him by his employer to get supplies, and then ran away for almost half a day. Some people from the NGO Centre went to inquire about the child’s whereabouts and found him tied to a bed. They asked his father why he had done this, he simply responded: “what would people say if I did not discipline my son?”

The children expressed both negative and positive opinions about their employment. It was hard to assess how the mothers felt about their children working, as they seemed to feel guilty but were helpless to change the children’s lives due to their circumstances. It was hard to assess how the fathers felt as I only spoke to a handful of them. Many of the fathers were unavailable for the structured interviews. As I would walk to the families’ houses, I would see many of the fathers at the local cafés sitting sipping tea and smoking shishas. Work was hard to find, as the pottery industry was shrinking and the economy remained in crisis, but the fathers seemed disinclined to take just any job if available or offered. The mothers, on the other hand, seemed much more willing to compromise when their family’s livelihood was on the line.

Half of the fathers were employed; the remainder were either unemployed, unable to work, or were flexibly employed. All the mothers said they did not work. Yet, in one of

72 Shisha is a water pipe that one smokes tobacco from.
the pictures that a child took, Azzal673, her mother was seen sorting through recycling papers. This will be further elaborated upon in Chapter Seven. Some mothers worked from their homes folding and arranging paper and boxes for recycling and selling it after they accumulated a certain amount. Another girl, Nada10, once mentioned to me that her mother used to sell bread74 and that she helped her. Another mother (Maha7 and Heba7’s mother) was hit by a car while she was selling something, most likely bread, on the side of the road. In the community, women working outside the home were considered an embarrassment. It was seen by the community as evidence that her husband could not fulfil part of his marital duties. To send young girls to work would be seen as acceptable by the community until they reached puberty, at which point it would become unacceptable for them to work.

The mothers interviewed were accordingly mostly housewives, although the majority said that they would work but their husbands did not allow them. Throughout my observations, I would say that half of the women that I interviewed probably did have some sort of income from something they produced or simply sold. Many of these women were doing the best they could to make ends meet and seemed much more concerned about the wellbeing of their children than upholding their traditions or customs.

The employed fathers worked in many areas, many of which did not require much skill. Half of the fathers that worked in construction needed no specific skills as they simply carried materials at building sites. Those that had skills such as the three pottery makers, the barber, the driver, and painter were all employed. Five of the fathers did not work for health reasons, two did not work because they simply did not want to, and the others blamed the lack of employment and opportunities as the problem.

73 All names have been changed to pseudonyms and reflect the code that they were given, please see Chapter Four, Diagram 4.2.
74 Bread is subsidized by the government and costs 4¢ a loaf, many of the women then buy the bread and sell it in their areas for 6¢.
Establishing a poverty level was necessary to understanding the factors that led children to the labour market; however, it should be noted that there is no accurate way to measure poverty. I had a hard time asking families what their income was. Asking the question directly never resulted in an answer, so I asked the question in various ways. Even when I asked the children they either did not know or were not forthcoming with answers. I would then ask how much they spent per week on food, which they answered on average to be $11.83. I then asked the families if they had certain appliances in the home and they would answer as to what they had. This allowed me to look at them in three categorizations: the first being better off than most which included five families; the second categorization was poor which included eight families; and finally the third categorization was the poorest of the poor which included four families. This categorization will be discussed later in Chapter Seven.

5.3.2 Why Children Work

Work for the children was their source of life. The money they brought home catered to their families and their subsistence. Many of the children were the sole providers of the families’ livelihood, placing a great burden on the children’s daily lives. The boys particularly seemed to be more aware of their roles, specifically the older ones.

Many of the boys from the centre, by the age of 15, due to some of the training they had received from the NGO Centre had begun to take a keen interest in their work and were involved in more skilled productions. The girls, perhaps because many of them were young, did not speak of the importance of their work, but they were not in the same calibre as Atif14 or other boys like him, who had learnt how to use the wheel and create pieces at the NGO Centre. However, the factory owners did not give them the chance to move on to more skilled work.

The pictures the children took of their work were mostly in order to show me what they had created or what the factories that employed them produced, although a number of the boys used the cameras to create portfolios of their work. Many of the boys felt proud of
their work. One child, Hisham8, pointed to the mud that surrounded him and said: “this is what feeds me”. In that same picture, Hisham8 could be seen in a large hole filled with the clay used by the pottery workers to create vases. Hisham8 worked for his brother-in-law and one of his tasks was to get the clay from the hole and bring it to the pottery workers.

A number of children captured their employers, sometimes working, other times sitting smoking a shisha, again capturing from within the organizational structures in which the children worked. Some of the children called their employers’ Ma’lim, which could be translated as leader, teacher, and trainer of his trade. With the title Ma’lim came power and a certain degree of respect. They were seen as the leaders of the community and responsible for the livelihood of the people within that area. Thus, people respected and feared them a great deal more than the ordinary Usta who was simply a tradesman or craftsman.

Work for the girls was something they had to perform in order to aid their parents and to sustain their families. Many of the girls expressed their distaste for work and stated on many occasions that they would prefer to be home. The girls took every opportunity to escape from work and their employers constantly pointed this out as the reason for not releasing them earlier to go to their literacy classes. Menial tasks were given to the girls and small boys, yet girls were never encouraged to create pottery pieces. The girls and little boys were always left to move pottery pieces or colour shingles and nothing more.

The boys on the other hand were given more encouragement and thus they took their jobs more seriously, especially as they got older. They were given the chance to work on the pottery wheel, cut designs in the pottery, or paint pieces. Unlike the girls, the boys enjoyed their work and tended to speak of it and show me their creations.

5.3.3 Work versus Education

One of the most pivotal questions in the structured interviews, directed at the parents
was: "why are your children working?" To which the majority of the parents replied: "because we are poor." It was hard to find a unique answer as to whether conceiving many children only dug the family deeper into the poverty pit forcing them to send their children to work as child labourers and leave school. Nine families had six children or more, the other seven families had five children or less. Three families said that their children worked due to failing at school. In the case of the children who had failed at school, the families simply felt that the children were not fit for school. All the families agreed that education was important, yet two families never sent their children to school. The rest only sent some of their children to school. Families chose to some extent which children went to school and which went to the labour market.

Two patterns emerged concerning parents sending their children to school. The first pattern was of parents initially sending their children to school, but when the children began to fail they were pulled out and sent to work. Siblings that were born later were also pulled out, or never sent to school, as the parents felt it was a waste of time. The second pattern was of parents not sending their children to school initially but rather to work. However, as they became more financially secure, they began sending the younger siblings to school. There were also the families that simply did not believe in educating their daughters, so the boys went to school, and the girls went to work.

A number of parents had chosen not to send their children to school. When speaking about their children, the parents did not discriminate between their male and female children when it concerned their education but sometimes did when it came to their employment. Most of the parents had not received an education and so had suffered many difficulties in their lives, such as not being able to read the numbers on the bus to take them to a better job, or simply that they felt inferior to those with an education. They expressed the importance of their children attaining an education when I interviewed them for the family surveys; yet the data from the surveys indicated that their children had either not attended school or had been allowed to drop-out. Parents rationalized their decision to not pursue their children's education based on the fact that
they themselves had no education and had survived. The other option was that, coming from an academic agency, they felt this is what I wanted to hear.

The value of education was questioned by the parents as it had no short term monetary value. Even if they felt that education was a good thing for their children, they may not have necessarily felt it was the best thing for their family. Much of the literature on development states that there is a direct correlation between poverty and parents having many children, as the families felt the children acted as security for the parents (see also Chapter Three).

Poor women therefore may choose to have large families not for the reasons of ignorance or lack of other recreational activities, but for rational economic reasons based on their own specific realities. In situations of poverty, children may represent potential wealth in form of labour, social security in old age, regeneration of the household, and hope of an escape from poverty, or at least, a break in the cycle of poverty for the next generation. (Steady: 1993:31)

While perhaps not intentional, I believe that the case could be made here that the children were security for the adults. If children at 8 years of age can only earn $3-5 per week, would it not be advisable to keep children in school? Yet if children continued in school there was no guarantee that they would gain employment or the kind of wages would they earn when they did. However, if children began their menial career, the family believed that as children got older, children were bound to pick up a skill and gain more money. One of the fathers, who had ten children, sent four of his boys to Cairo, when they turned eight, to stay with his son-in-law and work in his factory, and he only sent three of his children to school; his reason for having so many children could only be for security. Now the children all work and all send money to support him, even though he is a barber. In another case, the father, who married two wives and had 14 children, sent a few to school but all of them, including the girls, worked at his factory.

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75 A medical resident receives a salary of $22.61 per month, a teacher earns $20.87 per month and a minister earns $347.83 per month. These are a few examples of the level of wages earned in the public sector.
Subsequently, if poverty is the reason for these children working, then logically all the earnings of the children went directly to the family and it was therefore in the families’ economic interest to keep producing more children. To a family struggling for survival, children were seen as a commodity - their value was translated into earning power. Education was seen as a long-term investment, and as such, a luxury they could not afford. As mentioned in previous chapters, the NGO Centre was established to teach literacy and skills to children so it was no great surprise that all the children were illiterate. Sadly, these same children that were in the NGO Centre, said the reason they utilized the NGO Centre that they wanted to learn to read and write. The children were keen to learn but had been denied, for predominantly economic reasons, the right to an education.

Almost all the children who said they had never attended school had at least one sibling who had. In the case of the children who had attended school, only six remained in school. The average age of the children who had attended school and dropped out was 9. The reasons for dropping out were either that the teacher was cruel or that the children simply failed. The children cited the teachers’ cruelty when they could not afford lessons, clothes and books and stated that the teachers would mock them until they felt they did not want to return to school. Seven girls attended school out of 14, and 19 boys attended school out of 35. The percentage of boys was a little higher due most probably to the Egyptian, southern traditions which hold that education is not necessary for girls.

The social class of the fathers and mothers was questioned vis-a-vis the education of their offspring. There was no real connection between skilled parents and their offspring being sent to school. There was a great discrepancy between the 17 mothers and fathers who had some degree of skill; it seemed that the mothers lacked the skills which the fathers had. The parents’ skills had no impact on the children’s school attendance as, of the children who attended school, an even number of parents had skills or were unskilled.

Many of the mothers encouraged their children to go to the NGO Centre as they knew they were learning how to read and write there. Education was seen as a luxury that they
simply could not afford. Many of the parents felt that their children would go much further in life if they received some form of education. Yet many felt that the formal educational system was unable to guarantee an actual education or a future, and to some degree had failed them. Nadal0’s father, in the family structured interview, told me that he had tried to protest about the methods of teaching to which his children were subjected. He spoke to the headmaster about the teachers insisting on charging his children for after-school private lessons, but his complaints fell on deaf ears. He then took up the matter with the head of education at the municipality level and still nothing could be done. So Nadal0’s father accepted defeat and was forced to remove his children one by one from school and place them in the labour market.

5.3.4 Child Labour and Gender Roles

In the same factory that employed Hasan4 and Uthman4 a young woman, who had contracted polio as a child which had left her slightly paralysed, was working. She was very talkative and kept referring to me as Miss, unlike all the others I had met in the area who referred to me as Abla, or teacher. She told me that she wanted to go to college and was exploring ways and means to do so. I was very curious as to how her parents had allowed her to work, so I asked her if she had any other sisters she said yes. I asked her if they worked and she told me no, even though she had a sister that was very close to her age. I wondered if, due to her handicap76, that the family realized that it would be difficult marry her off, so they allowed her to fend for herself. In this case, this young woman was allowed to remain in the labour force long after puberty, which was very unusual.

As the children grew older and reached puberty the lives of the girls and boys diverged greatly. The older boys were given more responsibilities, more skilled tasks and had to work longer hours. This came with an increase in salary which the boys were happy to receive. The older girls, for the most part, did not have any changes made in the menial tasks they were assigned. They did have an increase in salary and tended to have to work

76 She depended on the use of crutches to move and had a severe limp.
a little longer, but they understood that this was a temporary situation and in many ways seemed thankful for that. They then exited this labour market at the onset of puberty.

5.4 The Factory Owners and the Child Labourers

During all my case studies I made it a point to interview all the children’s employers. This gave a great deal of insight into the environment and attitudes that the children were subject to for an average of 11 hours a day. All the factory owners were quite accommodating and sympathised with the children stating that they welcomed to the concept of the NGO Centre. Yet their actions tended to paint a very different picture.

I went to where I knew Hisham8 was working to speak to his brother-in-law, an illiterate factory owner. Mr I. appeared to be in his forties, he was married to the sister of Hisham8, and had children of his own. He greeted me smoking a shisha and drinking his tea. He offered me a drink and I accepted after a great deal of persuasion. Everyone was joking, the little girls, Heba7, Maha7 and AM77 kept talking to me, and Mr. I. laughed and pointed to Heba7 and said he would marry her some day; Heba7 in turn shot him a distasteful look. I began asking him about his factory, as I observed the conditions in the factory were damp and dark, making it an ideal climate for the clay, but not for the humans.

Mr. I. proceeded to tell me about what the Ministry of Environment had done for them. He complained that the Ministry of the Environment told people that they would get plots in another area called Sha el-Ta’ban. Some took the offer and moved to Sha el-Ta’ban and they used the spaces freed up by the factories to move a garbage dump into the space. I asked him why he chose to stay and he explained that no one else would employ these children who needed a source of income for their families to survive. The children would not be able to travel to the new area. Mr. I. mentioned only the children and their families as his main reason for staying in the area, but other factory owners told me that this area was more profitable. The area to which the government wanted to move them

77 A child labourer from the pottery factory sample.
was not well known by their customers and was difficult to gain access to; therefore, it was not in anyone’s best interest to move.

I also had to weigh what Mr. I. told me with my observations of his actions toward the children’s families that he employed. During one of my visits to the area, Maha7 and Heba7 asked a group of us from the NGO Centre to speak to their mother who had forbidden them to go to the NGO Centre after a fight with Mr. I., who claimed that he had seen the girls flirting with the boys from the NGO Centre. It was not until a couple of people from the NGO Centre went to the mother and told her that the girls were not flirting with the boys, but rather that the NGO Centre encouraged the boys to take them home so that no harm could come to them that their mother agreed to allow the girls to return to the NGO centre. In addition, Mr. I. had also deducted $3.48 from Maha7’s weekly pay ($6.09 weekly salary) for missing a day of work, which was another cause for concern of the mother.

The incident revealed the fragile relationship between the factory owners and the child labourers on the one hand the factory owners and the families of the child labourers on the other. Although it seemed that when the factory owners complained to the families, the family would demonstrate genuine concern regarding their children’s bad behaviour and would then take action by reprimanding the child, at the same time what appeared to be transpiring was a loss of trust between the families and the factory owners who employed their children. The families understood that the children were subject to harm at their place of employment, but perhaps as nothing serious (even electrocutions were not seen as debilitating) had happened as yet, they were willing to turn a blind eye and allow their children to continue for what they felt was the overall survival of the family. When speaking to all the families the subject of the harsh treatment that the children received at work was raised through the questionnaire (see Annex 2), yet, the families felt that they were powerless to do anything about it. In the case of the child labourers, complaints by the factory owners were usually made when a child labourer acted in a way that would affect the production or the business.
I began to question Mr. I. about Hisham, his young brother-in-law. Mr. I. told me that Hisham was eight years of age when he left school in Suhag because his father was unable to afford his expenses. Mr. I. brought him to Cairo, as he had done previously with two of Hisham’s older brothers, to work and learn the pottery trade. In the last six years Hisham had been working with Mr. I. at his factory, doing mostly menial labour, but recently he had begun to carve patterns in the pieces alongside his other, menial duties. Mr. I. took credit for this sudden shift in labour roles, although Hisham also received artistic skills training at the NGO Centre and from a UNESCO scheme. Hisham took these opportunities to learn a skill which he then practised at his brother-in-law’s factory. Mr. I. did not mind as long as the work was done and it was cheaper to employ Hisham to do this job than an unrelated adult. I asked if Hisham’s other two brothers had any skills in pottery and he told me they did not because they were not interested. Neither of the older brothers had continued to work for Mr. I. or remained in the pottery industry. Mr. I. blamed the brothers’ lack of interest in pottery on laziness and disinterest on the part of the young boys.

Hasan’s factory owner ordered tea and shisha’s all day for all the adults as they worked creating vases for hotels and restaurants in Egypt. He boasted that he had made a great deal of the pottery that was used in all the five star hotels in Egypt and that he had orders from all over the world. I pressed him for more details and was told that the Hilton had taken a few pieces and a German man took a crate load. I did not doubt that he had supplied a number of establishments as the factory was quite large and he employed a number of people.

I spoke to Zeinab’s employer, Mr. A., who was much more talkative than Mr. I., chatting away about the children and how many he employed. He told me that the industry had suffered a great deal since 2000, due to a lack of large orders, an increase in competition, and the lack of a regulatory body to check quality. He used to produce 1500 shingles per week and now he only produced 500 shingles. He employed eight people, four under the age of 16. I asked about the competition from abroad and he told me that Cypriot shingles were flooding the Egyptian market, as their quality was better, and they
lasted forever. I asked him if it was possible to make a product like the Cypriot shingles but he replied that it would be very difficult as the Cypriot shingles were factory cut and were baked in an electric kiln unlike those found in his area that used splinter wood and refuse, including trace elements of asbestos. What he proposed for the time being was capping the price of the shingles and enforcing quality control so that no other factory could undercut prices. At the same time, all the factories would produce the same quality shingles.

On another occasion, I went to speak to Hodal’s employer, Mr. A., who was very welcoming and allowed me to speak to him while he worked at his craft. I asked him about the factory and the children he employed; he told me he only employed Hodal. I said nothing about the two boys that I had photographed the previous day working at the factory. He told me that he did not allow Hodal to carry heavy objects and only used her for errands. I was a bit surprised as to why he was telling me that. He knew that I had seen what Hodal did at the factory, but perhaps he did not think what she carried was strenuous for her.

5.5 Labour and its Effect on the Child Labourers’ Development

The environment that the children worked in seemed hazardous and unacceptable to an outsider (see Chapter Three). Yet, knowing how the community operated and their feelings toward the area, one understood why the environment remained as hazardous as it did. One of the first observations was the large garbage dump which could be smelt and seen from almost a kilometre away. The children passed by the dump daily, and some had even found employment recycling garbage alongside the adults. The road to the factories had become littered with all types of biological hazards. On one occasion, for example, we found an empty blood transfusion pack and PCB (plastic bags used to collect trash made out of petrochemicals) bags that were being set on fire for warmth in the winter. The children however did not see the garbage dump in the area as any

78 Unlike the furnace operated kilns in the area where temperature cannot be regulated.
79 The large garbage dump was finally removed in January 2006 to make way for the new construction of pottery factories.
outsider would. Rather they saw it as a place to play in front of their work area. The large garbage dump was an interesting source of new toys to investigate and discover.

The factories themselves were cooler in the summer than the outside area, but were rather damp and cold in the winter. The children and adults were exposed to dust particles, which could be seen in the light, for ten or twelve hours daily. Dust particles at such high magnitude, when inhaled by the children and adults alike, would begin slowly to disintegrate their lungs. The impact on the lungs based on the amount of dust particles in the air would take a long time to cause silicosis, a non-curable disease of the lungs; however, as children's lungs are less formed than those of adults, any hazardous condition could affect children much seriously than adults. The condition would not manifest itself until the child became an adult. The children also had their hands in clay all day which had caused them to have dry, flaky skin that sometimes broke into open sores.

Life in the pottery factories was not easy. The conditions were harsh, the children worked long hours, and in some factories there was only one child that worked leaving little opportunity for these children to interact and socialize with other children.

The children were tired after work. The NGO Centre was constantly trying to negotiate the children's release from work at an earlier time but failed with each attempt. When I questioned Mr. I. about his reasons for keeping the children past sunset, he complained that the children's education at the NGO Centre had been less than adequate and he did not see any point in sending them there. I asked him how he had reached such a conclusion, he replied by asking me to test one of the children. I asked Hisham8 how much 12 plus 15 was, but the other children got involved tossing out numbers; finally, Hisham8 got the right answer. Later I asked each of the children to read a couple of sentences from a school book I had found. None of the girls could, but Hisham8 was able to get by. Mr. I. had been correct, but this presented a much graver issue. The children had been going to the NGO Centre for two years primarily to learn how to read

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80 Dr Gihad Said, Cairo University, Occupational Health Department.
and write, but if their employer and the NGO Centre did not worked together to, what other chance would these children have? I observed that, after a hectic 11 hour working day in the dark, humid pottery factory, the children found it very difficult to concentrate on their lessons. Yet Fridays, their only day off, was also a problem because although they were more refreshed and absorbed their lessons far quicker than on the weekdays, they also wanted to play with their friends.

Twelve parents felt the children worked long days, and had been subjected to severe injuries at work. All these families recognized that their children were hit, insulted, and sometimes electrocuted or burnt in the course of their work, but felt that there was no course of action for them to take. Fourteen families did say that if their children were sick, they would first take them to the polyclinic to see what was ailing them and then do what was necessary to heal their children. This also applied to when their children were injured at work. However, many of the factory owners deducted money from the children’s weekly wages if they were absent, specifically when they were sick.

I found Zeinab6 and her brother\footnote{Zainab6's brother IA6 had begun working for a few months earlier when he had turned 8 years old.} who were both working outside placing shingles to dry. I began conversing with her about her job,

Researcher: Zeinab6 would you prefer to work elsewhere
Zeinab6: Yes, selling tea.
Researcher: Then why don’t you change jobs and sell tea?
Zeinab6: My father thinks it would be too dangerous because I would have to cross the main street\footnote{Zainab6’s aunt, Maha7 and Heba7’s mother were hit by a car sitting by the main road selling sidewalk items.}
Researcher: How much do you make per week here?
Zeinab6: $6.09 per week and my brother makes $1.74 per week.
Researcher: Why don’t you like working in pottery?
Zeinab6: It’s tiring, my stomach and head hurt constantly.

As we were leaving the factory, I noticed that she was taking the mould that they used to make the shingles in, she had to take it home every night and return it in the morning for
safe keeping. I tried to hold the mould but regretfully found it too heavy to carry in my arms. She quickly placed the mould on her head, as if second nature and we left for her home. I could understand why she suffered from chronic headaches and back pain after trying to carry her load myself.

5.6 The Future of these Child Labourers

One of the first questions that is asked around the world to children is ‘what will you be when you grow up?’ For boys the answer was police officer, teacher, soccer player but never pottery worker. For the girls it was always married. As much as the children enjoyed creating pieces of pottery, specifically the boys, they never seemed to see a future for themselves in the factories.

Zeinab6 was a 12 year old that I had been observing for two years. Her cousins were Maha7 and Heba7, and like them she worked in the factory. She produced shingles just like her cousins did. A shy young child with a sweet demeanour, who had to negotiate her rights in her work environment every day as the only female within a male dominated industry. She had been the sole provider of the family for the last two years since her father had been diagnosed with cancer and had part of his stomach removed. Before entering the factory, I always chatted with the girls who usually spotted me walking into the area and ran up to walk with me. On this particular occasion, I gave them some pictures that I had taken previously. I had managed to capture the girls, who had snuck out of their factories to pose for me. They had began to look forward and enjoy me taking their pictures and were running around and playing with the mountain of sand used for the clay. I began to ask the girls about work after they were married,

Researcher: If you learnt how to be very good at the pottery wheel would you still like to continue working?

Girls: Yes (giggles).

Researcher: So even when you got married, you would continue to work?

Girls: (look at each, and then begin to giggle).

Maha7: Of course not, why should we work?
Researcher: but after learning a skill would you not want to use it to gain an income for yourselves and your family?
Maha7: But that is was what our husbands would guarantee for us.

A couple of months later I ran into Hodal and she told me that Mr. A. had fired her and hired a young boy. I asked why he had done that as I knew he was a family friend; she shrugged her shoulders and continued her story. She told me that the boy disappeared after a few days and they asked her to return. She refused even though she had not at the time found alternative employment. She asked me to come with her to see her new employer for whom she had just begun to work. I told her I would on another occasion but asked her if she was happier with this new employer and she nodded her head. Hodal had become empowered enough to stand up to her employer and refused to be treated in a derogatory manner. Her decision not to return to Mr. A. was probably backed by her family, as the family usually would back their children in similar situations.

As discussed earlier, the girls tended to leave the labour market once they reached puberty in order to safeguard their chastity for marriage. The Egyptian government conscripts boys at the age of 18 into military service for two to three years. Upon their return they may or may not choose to remain in the pottery industry. Most of the girls in this research have, by now, actually left the labour force and are at home helping their mothers and waiting to get married. Yet, there was Laila4, the sister of Uthman4 and Hasan4, who never had worked in the labour market but had served her brothers and family for as long as she could remember and would soon be getting ready to leave her home for her husband’s home. She in turn, like the other little girls in the community would not continue to work and may put her own children to work.

5.7 Conclusion

The children in this study worked because of lack of access to education, low socioeconomic status and tradition. Families believed they were creating opportunities for their children by sending them to work. In so doing, they were also ensuring the survival of the family as a unit. Children felt that they were fulfilling their obligations to
the family by working. Yet there are few arenas where children could be, they had to either go to school or go to work and when there is no and when there was no adequate educational infrastructure to support them then the labour market took them in.

In Egyptian societies, fathers were traditionally providers and patriarchs of their families. However, in Old Cairo, children had to work to provide or help to provide for the family. Due to the ill health and the lack opportunities afforded to the fathers in the area, providing for their families was less likely to be something they were capable of doing. Thus, the fathers were left with only the family pride to secure.

The children and families in the community expressed a number of themes concerning the children’s employment. The mothers generally expressed helplessness and guilt in regard to their children’s employment. The children understood their responsibility toward their families and continued to work. Finally, there was the belief that working was better at this point in time than gaining an education, as it guaranteed the child a skill as well as an income.

The environment in which the children worked and lived in was very unsafe and was undoubtedly detrimental to these children’s health. There was a large garbage dump that the children passed by daily with various hazards in them that many of the children did in fact come into contact with. The factories they worked in had very perilous conditions that were likely to take a permanent toll on the children’s respiratory health. The children’s skin was already suffering from the clay that they had their hands in all day.

The parents’ employment status was always an issue as it made very little sense when both parents were unemployed and their children were in employment. But these were the realities. Some fathers could not find jobs (because they would be paid more) or they were too sickly to work. It was not culturally accepted for mothers to work, thus their children were their only means of survival. The children’s wellbeing, however, did come before traditions and customs for their mothers. Parents tried to fulfil their duties as
nurturers and provided security for their children; thus, if a child was sick or hurt they did take care of them promptly.

The income the children brought in, although quite small, was vital in many ways to the household. The parents felt that although initially when they sent their children to work they earned very little as they grew older their earning potential increased. Furthermore, it was not simply about income but about placing the child in one agency or another - school versus the labour market. Families had in many instances lost hope in the educational system and believed that they were giving their children a chance to gain a skill that would help them in the future.

All the children worked six days a week, and received their earnings weekly. Some children worked more hours than others, and older children received more earnings than younger ones. Therefore, child labour was constantly justified by the parents’ claim that the children were learning a skill. The irony in the matter was that not many children reached that level of skill to warrant such an increase in pay. The children's families depended on their incomes, and this placed a great burden on the children. The older boys seemed fully aware of their responsibility, much more than the other children.

Gender differences were found in where the children found their sense of pride. Boys focused their sense of pride on their creations and the products of the factories they worked in. More of the boys were prouder of their work than the girls. Many of the girls referred to their jobs as distasteful and tiring and said they would rather stay at home. The boys tended to create pieces, which captured their attention and imagination, compared with the girls who remained in their menial labour. In comparison, the girls did not have any pieces to show off as they were not given the opportunity to produce any pottery pieces. They did not like working in the pottery industry and preferred to work in other fields. This may have been due to the fact that they were always given menial jobs to do in the factories as the factory owners believed that teaching them any skills would be wasted. The girls found their pride in their homes with their families, they were part of something they believed nurtured them and made them happy.
The children during their time at work tried to make the most of it. Their long days at work were spent mostly among adults with whom they did not communicate very much. They tried to joke and tease one another, always maintaining a smile in my presence. I cannot imagine that a child would smile if they were not happy from within, yet it is hard to imagine living day to day in such conditions. I found solace in their smiles and a determination to share their stories of valour. As the children grew older, their ability to negotiate their roles became much better. They flowed from one agency to another, learning to stand up for themselves when they needed to, and then reverting to being a child needing care at home.

In the following chapter the children's leisure time will be explored in order to show their further reliance on kinship and the need for strong bonds in their lives.
Chapter Six

Analysis: In between the Labour Market and the Household
6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe what the children did when they had time to spare. This is a subject that is often overlooked in studies regarding child labour. Leisure time was defined as any time a child had to do anything unconcerned with work or chores in the home. Leisure time was sparse and was mostly spent with friends from the area and siblings, remaining mostly in the confines of their area. This chapter will show another dimension of the child labourers’ lives which is in the context of this thesis as it portrays the full extent of the lived realities of the children sampled. It will attempt to address what the children did during these sparse bouts of leisure time afforded to them. In addition, one of the most important reasons for including this chapter is that a large portion of my interviews and observations with the children were carried in their leisure time. This was because the great majority of my interviews and observations (not including my five case studies) were done at the NGO Centre or when the children were returning home to their families. Much of the analysis for this Chapter came from my case studies and the visual methodology used to gather information from the children on their lived realities. The children’s photographs, specifically those of the girls which focused more on the household, gave me a great deal of insight into their day to day activities.

As all the children worked between 60-66 hours per week, leisure time was scarce. The children relied heavily on neighbourhood friends and siblings in the home as playmates. Leisure time involved playtime but was also an opportunity for the children to spend time being nurtured by their parents and siblings. They also relied on siblings to support the parents. The children looked to their siblings for a sense of nurturing and security when parents did not fulfil their expected responsibilities. Many of the female siblings, who tended not to be involved in the labour market, took on the role of nurturer sometimes in lieu of the parents. The children were resourceful in meeting their needs. When parents were busy they turned to their siblings and when they were unavailable they found their friends.
The children, when in the presence of their friends and sibling at home, remained innocent constantly joking and playful with one another. In the work environment, among their friends and siblings, they interchanged back and forth, like a pendulum. Even at work sometimes they were serious, concentrating on their work and on other occasions they joked and teased one another, playing with the innocence we attribute to childhood. Parents felt that if their child was actively staying productive that was fine, but playing as such was not acceptable and seen as a waste of time. The children therefore were forced not only to catch moments where they could play, but also to convince their parents that what they were doing was acceptable by their standards. In this regard the NGO Centre was a gift to the children as it fulfilled precisely this object. To the parents it was a place for them to read and write and to the children it was a place for them to play and congregate with all their friends.

6.2 What is the in between time?

The children had very little free time or facilities to play in comparison with children just a few kilometres away. When they were not working the older girls and some of the older boys were expected to do things around the home, especially on Fridays. More evidence of this will be presented in Chapter Seven.

Children who worked 11 hours, returning home around 7pm had only two or three hours before they had to go to sleep. They came home, showered and ate something. Then they played either with their friends or siblings, watched television or did a chore for their parents. The children who were the focus of this research had one other alternative for their leisure time and that was to go to the NGO Centre.

6.2.1 The NGO Centre as a Place for Leisure Time

The NGO Centre operated twice on the weekdays, Monday and Wednesday and on Friday the children’s only day off. The children were expected to come after work around 7pm and attend math and reading classes on the two designated weekdays.
Fridays were more fun, with the morning being spent playing in the park next door. On a few occasions I became a participant observer at the NGO Centre as I was asked to fill in for teachers that were late at the weekday sessions. The difference between the children’s attention span and ability to focus on subjects on weekdays and Fridays was quite significant. As I tried to teach them simple tasks such as telling time or counting from 1 to 12, I could detect on weekdays that the children were unable to comprehend or retain any new information. Although the NGO Centre’s sole purpose was a place for the children to learn, it was referred to by the children as the nadi or club. They viewed the NGO Centre as an escape, a chance to be with their friends while their parents thought they were being productive by learning something.

Fridays, brought refreshed and absorbent children who picked up lessons at a much faster pace. The children simply were drained after a long working day and, as any adult would be after a long working day, and were not capable of doing any mentally stretching activity. During a weekday, I spent two hours teaching them how to tell time; but at the end of the session, only one of the children had mastered this. I cannot deny that my teaching abilities may have been lacking; however, other teachers complained of the same problems.

On Fridays, many children (those that did not attend the NGO Centre as well as those that did) were expected to help around the household. Some of the older girls tried to impose their right to some leisure time on their parents; a few, however, met with some resistance. Mariam17, one Friday came crying to the NGO Centre because her mother made her go and get Falafil\(^\text{83}\), when she was running for her session at the NGO Centre. She said that she complied with her mother’s wishes and returned with the Falafil as soon as she could, but that did not satisfy her mother who demanded that Mariam17 should have bought the smaller version of the Falafil and slapped her. Mariam17, who did not understand why her other siblings, including an older sister, who did not work or attend the NGO Centre, could not have bought the Falafil, wept in front of us as she recounted

\(^{83}\) *Falafil* are a paste made of beans and herbs that is fried in oil. It is known to be one of the most common and cheapest fast food in Egypt
the story to us at the NGO Centre. One of the teachers later confronted the mother concerning the incident and the mother defended herself by saying that Mariam17 was constantly defying her and she was simply disciplining her. Mariam17’s mother, before being confronted, had expressed her joy that Mariam17 was attending literacy classes and was making considerable progress. Mariam17’s mother herself was illiterate as was her father. Her mother had married at the age of 15, and even though she had been the only parent in my survey that had waited for three years to have children, she now had seven children, the oldest being Mariam17 who was 14 years old. Mariam17’s family was considerably better off than that of most of her friends, yet she and three of her younger siblings had never attended school, but the other four did. Her mother, was simply trying to instil discipline in her children. By sending her daughter on an errand she was simply fulfilling her duty as a member of the family unit, even though it cut into her leisure time.

6.3 In Between Parents and Employers are Siblings and Friends

The children had strong emotional relationships with their friends. Friends were there whenever they were needed. The children stated that they sought out their friends for comfort when their parents did not understand what they were going through, a peer group support put into effect. Children sought out their friends for simple amusement and escape from their lived realities. The children also sought out their friends to console them and remind them that they were neither alone in their emotions nor in the problems they faced.

Leisure time was thus a limited commodity for the children even though many employers and families complained that the children, specifically the boys, preferred to play all the time. The children stole moments to relax by the television or chat with their friends and siblings. In the community, I observed most families owned one television and that they gathered in front of it, deciding as a family what to watch every night. So even though Hisham8 could not remember one series he had watched, he still stayed among his.
sister’s family. He did remember all the soccer games between the Ahly and Zamalik teams.

Friends played a strong role in the children’s lives; seven children spoke strongly of their bond with their friends. When asked why they had photographed pictures of friends, they would say because “they played with them,” “they were like their brothers and sisters,” or “their friends would do anything for them.” The images were quite moving, expressing unspoken mutual love and loyalty. In a picture taken by Salah5, seven friends were depicted together and Salah5 remarked that these were his friends. One friend in the picture held up a drawing of a yellow heart to celebrate and attest to their friendship. The children in the picture, although they had obviously posed for the photograph, were laughing heartily. One child hugged another, while a third bit into a fruit. All of them seemed happy to pose for Salah5 who considered them not only his friends but his family:

I did not take my brothers pictures because they were not around. I am closer to my friends because I never see them (brothers), my mother, since she moved here I feel closer to her, but now she will travel again. I am not close to my father, and I was told he was sick.

Salah5 told me that the heart symbolized the group of friends’ sense of friendship. He was quite proud as he showed me this particular picture and described the friends that he had photographed. Salah5 found no security in his home after his parents had left him to live with his three brothers and he relied heavily on his friends. The first time I met Salah5 he opened up to me right away and told me his story. It was during Ramadan and at the end of our conversation I asked him if he was going to celebrate Eid with his brothers and he replied that most likely he would spend it with friends but that he would have to buy his clothes for the Eid which he had been saving up to do (see 6.7 Field Notes December 14, 2001).

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\(^{54}\) Ahly and Zamalik are the biggest soccer clubs in Egypt. As a national pastime, each person has a favourite club that they are committed following. Both children and adults, depending on their favourite club will wear their colours on the days that they play, either white (Zamalik) or red (Ahly).
In another picture taken by Hasan4, Salah5 is seen in a bright yellow jumpsuit holding the fodder for a goat who is trying to eat the feed from high above the boy. The picture although staged is captivating, a shadow plays on one side of the goat, while the goat tries to reach the feed strung playfully around Salah5’s neck. The reason for capturing this moment was that Hasan4 wanted a souvenir of his two most cherished friends, Salah5 and their goat. The boys were simply having fun and enjoying themselves which is strongly reflected in the picture.

Friendship was seen equally as important as family bonds and many of the children commented on their friends being there for them. Laila4, Hasan4’s sister, stated: “I like my friends; my friends are closer to me than my bothers and sisters. I go to my friends with my problems. I sometimes play with my friends when I am free, but I am always taking care of my mother and my sister.” Hasan4 and Uthman4 relied on their sister for their daily meals, which she brought to their work on any day in which they had too much work to come home. Although she was in younger than Hasan4, she filled in for their mother, who was always worn out from all their younger siblings.

Hakim9, although he affirmed the strong bond between himself and his family, felt that his friends had equal importance. “We grew up together and live together, they are the same as my family. I am happy when I think of them, we all grew up together. We meet all the time together.” Hakim9’s best friend was Atif14 and for as long as I visited and observed the area I always saw the two boys together. Recently, as Hakim9 continued to attend school and work, while Atif14 began to seriously pursue a career in the pottery industry they began to drift apart. This was obvious as on many occasions Atif14 was not sure where Hakim9 was, or they were not to be seen together as often as before.

Salah5 viewed his friends as family, “when I was burnt my friends used to skip school and come and visit me. I am very close to them they are like my relatives.” Salah5 was severely burnt when a butane gas container exploded, injuring his face and parts of his body. Although the burns healed, Salah5 still carries the physical and emotional scars, as well as suffering from respiratory problems. His friends never teased him about his scars.
but rather looked out for him.

Friends were seen as a source of leisure and escape, people with whom they could play and forget their responsibilities; they also fulfilled the role of nurturer and comforter. Mariam17 described her family and friends through the pictures she took and later described, as we looked through the pictures together:

“She [my cousin] feeds me when I go over to her place... when I tell her [Mariam17's older sister] that I am sick she doesn’t send me to work... She [Mariam17's other sister] tells me stories... They [Mariam17's younger brothers and sisters] always want to do something... She [friend/neighbor] always takes me wherever she goes... I like walking in their [friends] area because I feel safe, safer than in our area... They [friends] are always with me”.

Mariam17 counted Hoda1, Laila4, Hakim9, Zeinab6, Maha7, Nada10 and Dina12 as her friends. Children drew on their friendships for comfort when this was unavailable or unattainable in the home environment. In some instances, parents did not understand, so the children felt they could only confide and solicit advice from their friends. In Salah5’s case he and his three brothers had been abandoned first by their father and then their mother who had remarried and moved away. Salah5 always referred to his friends as his source of comfort, “they were always there for me especially when I was hurt.”

Atif14 took a picture for Salah5 of Hasan4 and Salah5 with his house in the background along with the wood used to fuel the outdoor kiln. In the picture, Hasan4 is pointing to Salah5’s head as if to say this was his camera and Salah5 was holding the soccer ball over a pottery vase. Children playing among their working environment, the soccer overruling the pottery, the image was a contradiction in terms. Atif14’s house was in the background, alongside the wood that fed the flames of the kiln. The boys showed off their two interests the pottery that fed them and the soccer ball that gave them such pleasure. Hasan4 expressed his perception of friendship as:

If I make a mistake while playing with my friends, they won’t be upset... so, if I accidentally hurt one of them, they would not get mad at me.
Whenever we have a disagreement, my friends would try to find a quick solution without hurting my feelings nor my pride. Most of the day I am at work, but when done, I usually play with my friends, so I see them more than my family. When playing with my friends, my brother would come and join us.

Others like Maha7 expressed regret about not spending more time with her friends, “I like my friends, and I like spending time and playing with them, just like with my sister. I don't have much time to play with them but I wish I had.” Maha7 and Heba7 tended to be closer to their family. In their free time they played with their cousins who were also their friends and their next-door neighbours. Girls like Maha7 and Heba7, had chores when they returned back to their homes, so for the most time ‘playing’ was not seen as productive by the mothers but for the children it was a cherished time.

The greatest number of pictures taken was of the family, and they mostly were of the children’s siblings, as in many instances the children viewed them as their best friends. The children spent most of their days at work and had very little spare time. The free time that they did have they spent at the NGO Centre mostly learning; hence, their only friends were those from their immediate family or children around them that they would bring to the NGO Centre in order to spend more time with them.

Heba7 considered her sister Maha7 her best friend and when asked how she felt about the pictures she took of her friends, she said: “I did take pictures of my friends but with my family. I am closer to my brothers and sisters”. In one particular picture, which was taken by Heba7’s brother right after work, Heba7 is still muddy from work. In the picture, Heba7’s sister Maha7 seemed to be saying something to her brother, possibly directions on how to use the camera and Azzal6 is seen listening to her intently. This was Heba7’s home, part of the two bedroom apartment they lived in. The picture appeared to be taken in her parent’s room, where the family gathered. The bed was to the left (not seen in the picture) and on the right was the dresser that housed a large television (not seen in picture). Maha7 and Heba7 had two bedrooms, a luxury not common in their neighbourhood, so they slept in another bedroom and their parents slept in the room that was photographed. This was not the case with twelve of the families included in the
research, who all shared a one room dwelling.

Mariam17 expressed her closeness with her sister that she photographed a number of times. In all the instances, Mariam17's sister was well dressed and fully made up, which may have meant that the sister had an ulterior motive for having her photograph taken such as giving it to an admirer. Mariam17 stated that: "My sister makes me feel that there are no problems." She acted as her protector and nurturer securing the family bond. In one picture, Mariam17 stated her reliance on her siblings for food and clothing, again stressing the family bond that she had with them. Mariam17 was the only child in her family who worked.

6.3.1 And Pets

Animals were seen as a source of comfort for the children. Pigeons were found in almost every household and viewed as pets. The children raised them and, on occasion, profited from them. They played with the animals and depicted them in their pictures. Goats, sheep, ducks and chickens were also found in every household and viewed as pets and as a source of livelihood. The animals lived among the families, taking their place in the close quarters of their dwellings. A few pictures taken by the children depicted their proximity to the animals and some of the children even expressed their devotion to their animals.

Many of the pictures inside the home included animals cohabiting in the same spaces. In a photograph taken by Bakr2 in his home, he managed to capture his most prized possession. The pigeons were included in his pictorial description of his family, which he described as:

The pigeons are mine, I brought them as one pair, they produced a dozen offspring that I sold but I always kept the original pair. I took this picture as a memory because I sold them after because this pottery house that I had made for them broke and I got them another house, but they refused to reproduce in it.
Bakr2 described the pigeons as a means to earn money and also as his companions. His need to capture their image as a memory was evidence of that. He managed to raise the pigeons and then sell them, proving that he was a capable entrepreneur. He differentiated between the pigeons that belonged to him and those that he sold by their colour, stating that the white collared pigeons were his and the black collared pigeons were their offspring that were sold.

Animals lived among the people of this area as a source of available food and also as a source of income. The families were attached to the animals, but also saw the need to utilize them. The birds tended to live with the families inside their dwellings but the larger animals stayed in the corridors and alleys between the dwellings. The proximity of the animals to the families was normal, as many of those families came from rural environments, bringing their rural practices to the urban centre.

6.4 Gender Differences and in the in Between Time

The differences by gender were evident in terms of the children's household chores, play time, and type of work at the factory. All the younger boys, except one, had leisure time to play, while only two out of seven girls did. As the boys got older they reported having less leisure time, and this was echoed in the results of the girls as they too became older. In the older children, the number of boys who had leisure time decreased from 20 boys to 15, while amongst the girls it increased to four out of eight. Eight girls in both age categories had chores when they returned home. The families may have felt that the children worked long hours at work, so after returning home, they allowed them to relax. Most of the children indicated that they came home, had a bath and either watched television with the family or played and then went to bed. However, the younger boys with the exception of one boy (not the same one who did not have free time) did not do chores. As they got older the number increased to seven older boys who had household chores. There was definitely a gender bias towards girls helping in the household over boys due to tradition, which is reflected elsewhere in the literature (see Chapter Three).
Children expressed their interests in many ways. Girls liked to converse with one another and dream of their future husbands and homes. They teased each other and wondered how their husbands would be. The boys tended to play soccer and exchange a few words concerning their work and the objects they had created. The girls played dress up and teased one another while the boys spoke of adventures they would like to go on. The boys tended to seek each others' friendships while girls were content to simply be at home. The pictures that the children took showed a great deal of differences too. The girls took pictures mostly in and around their dwellings while the boys tended to take more pictures of the outside world that included their work and employment.

The girls, due to their confinement to the internal settings of work and home, tended to find friendships within their family. Many of the girls stated that their sisters were their best friends. The boys differed in that respect, as they had more freedom to play outdoors, so they had the ability to seek friends from outside their family. There was a sense that the girls were part of the inner sphere and the boys were part of the outer sphere. The girls were more prone to huddle around their families even when they had free time while the boys escaped and went to play soccer or on outings outside the confines of their area.

The boys interviewed tended not to view their siblings as best friends; but rather justify taking their siblings' pictures for love and memory. This may be due to the freedom that boys had to play outdoors; while the girls remained within the confines of their homes. Girls emphasized the necessity to play more with siblings and neighbours.

6.5 A Day in the Life of a Child Labourer: Catching Moments of Leisure

The children spent a great deal of their waking day working in the pottery factories. Some factories employed other children, while a few factories had only one child from the neighbourhood. Children, especially the younger ones, liked to sneak off and meet or just see their neighbourhood friends in the other factories. While the children worked really hard, sometimes they joked and teased one another to pass the time, sneaking their
leisure any time they could. Whenever I came to the area, the children used my presence as an excuse to run off and play with me. This was the case with Hodal, who always used my presence in the area to leave work and hang out with me. I became part of her leisure time, as I allowed her by my presence to escape from work. Her boss preferred that I view him as a benevolent man that was taking care of Hodal and had her best interests at heart; so he never raised his voice at her or said anything that may have been construed as derogatory in front of me, or in fact penalized her for sneaking off.

Hodal and her sister worked for two different pottery factory owners. Hodal usually finished first and ran over to where her sister worked to walk home with her. Hodal worked for a family friend, but Amall, her sister, worked for their brother-in-law. Their older sister (married to the man who employed her sister Amall) was the only one who was literate and had asked several times to teach literacy to kids in the community, after she had seen the positive impact of the NGO Centre on the children. Hodal and Amall both went to school but both dropped out because they were teased by the kids and teachers. They were very close to each other, and Hodal was very social, running around and playing with all the girls in the community, sometimes at the expense of her work.

Hodal always ran out of the factory to greet me each time I walked into the area, always asking me if the pictures I took of her were ready.

Researcher: Hi Hodal, how are you today?
Hodal: Abla, do you have pictures?
Researcher: Yes, (handing over the pictures to her) but you need to share them with the rest of the factory workers...
Hodal: (going through the pictures) They don't want them.
Researcher: Are you sure? They keep asking for them.
Hodal: Yes, they don't want them, these are my pictures.
Researcher: Ok but if they ask I am going to say I gave them to you.
Hodal: Ok.
Researcher: So you didn't tell me, how are you today?
Hodal: (nods)
Researcher: What have you done all day at work?
Hodal: (points to the shingles baking in the sun)
Researcher: (looking at over 500 shingles that are neatly laid out) How many do you think you carried?
Hodal: *(shrugs her shoulder and runs over to the man with a sweet drink in a large glass container that he poured out into small bags).*

Man with sweet drink: Would you like one?

Researcher: No thank you, I am Ok.

It was 4:30pm and Hodal had been working since 8am, she was still bubbly and excited but her face looked tired. Her big brown eyes danced as she told me that she wanted a watch like the one I gave one of the girls at the NGO Centre as a prize for getting the time right. I told her if she learned how to tell time, as there would be no point in her owning a watch that she could not use; I would get her a watch. She told me she would learn. She asked me if I was coming back with her to see her family. I replied that I would if she was almost finished. She looked at the shelves filled with the wet shingles, freshly moulded and told me she had to finish taking the shingles out. I told her I would help her. Hodal picked up three shingles placing them on her arms. I tried to do the same and fell back from the weight of two, I could not handle three. The whole factory was watching me, a few were sniggering, and I got the distinct impression that no outsider had ever done what I was doing. The two of us continued to take the shingles out until we had finished the whole shelf. She was so excited that I had stayed with her at work because I had made it fun for her, especially when everyone thought it was amusing that I was helping her. I had combined her work day with leisure, helping her carry 16 shingles out of 500 plus out to dry in the sun. The experience cemented our friendship, as she saw me after as her friend who had helped her out at work.

We started walking toward Hodal’s home but first we stopped at Amall’s work to see if she would come back with us. Mr U, her employer and brother-in-law refused to let her leave, and told her she had to stay for another hour and a half; and it was 5:30pm. We started moving toward their home, Maha7 and Heba7 joined us but Hisham8 had to work late too. We got to Hodal’s home, where she went straight for her shower. I started to chat with her family. Her mother and father were present, along with her older sister. I asked them about how things were going in their lives, they replied as best as could be expected. Hodal’s older sister started asking me if there was any opportunity for her to gain employment at the NGO Centre teaching literacy to the children. I told her she
should come and inquire herself and that way she could see the activities at the Centre for herself. The mother chimed in that she also wanted to learn how to read and write. I told her that I believed the NGO Centre was planning on focusing their attention in the second stage on the families as well. The family was enthusiastic about their daughters' involvement at the NGO Centre but were worried about how late they were sent home. I tried to reassure them that the NGO Centre always sent them home with one of the older boys who secured their passage across the street and to their homes.

Maha7, Heba7 and Zeinab6 had come over to Hoda1’s house and were beginning to chat with me when Hoda1 appeared showered and ready to head over to the NGO Centre for her lesson. We began to make our way to my car so that I could give them a lift to the NGO Centre. The girls were talking about their days, making fun of one of the workers at Mr I’s factory. They climbed into the car and began opening the windows. Two more children from the NGO Centre appeared, Azzal6 and Mariam17, and jumped in the back seat along with the other girls. Heba7 had sat in the passenger seat next to me had begun examining the contents of my glove compartment. My car had been turned into a school bus and the girls were having the time of their lives; I on the other had was fearful of being responsible for six little girls. We finally arrived on the other side of the road and I locked up the car and walked the girls up to the NGO Centre where they all began fighting over the pottery wheel. As I watched the girls fight over the wheel, two sitting on the chair at the same time insisting that each was there first, it was hard to imagine that they had just come from a long day of moving shingles, mud, and pottery items in the beating hot sun. The boys began to arrive, it was now 7pm. One teacher showed up but couldn’t get the children to listen to him so he gave up and went into the other room. By about 8pm, the girls began getting ready to leave. Hisham8 and Atif14 also got their things together to accompany the girls back home.

6.6 Parents and their Children’s Usage of their in Between Time

Parents and guardians responsible for the children felt that the children had to be continually accounted for and somewhat productive toward the household. When the
children "goofed off" the parents and guardians felt that they were abandoning their responsibility to the family. I had the chance to witness a child’s negotiation with the parent figure when I spoke to Hisham8.

I went to visit Hisham8’s sister one day after he finished work. It was a 20 minute walk from where Hisham8 worked to where he lived. One needed to climb the hill behind the pottery area and then go down on the other side to where a group of buildings had been constructed. When we finally arrived at their apartment, I was greeted by a lower-middle class, adequately furnished and clean flat. There was a living room with a television set and a more formal salon used for guests. The sister showed us into the formal salon where she offered us tea. The apartment was cozy and felt warm; it did not resemble any of the other dwellings I had been to before - it was well furnished and organized.

Hisham8’s sister greeted us. I saw her children playing, and one girl was hiding in her mother’s skirt. The sister had three children of her own. She was illiterate like her brother, but her children were all attending school. The oldest was in 5th grade and she expected them all to stay in school and not work.

Researcher: How did Hisham8 ended up working for your husband and not continuing with school?
Sister: He has to help his father. His father is too old and cannot work and he and his brothers must help. Besides, this one (pointing to Hisham8) is not smart enough to continue in school, he even does not know how to read.
Researcher: Have you asked Hisham8 to read something and he couldn’t? I think you will find that he can read and is on the contrary quite intelligent based on his work at the NGO Centre and his selection from over 50 children to be included in the UNESCO project.
Sister: Well my husband says that Hisham8 wants to play all day and never does his work. He thinks he’s not going to amount to much.
Researcher: I have seen Hisham8 at the Mr I’s factory and he was always working...
Sister: (interrupts) But he is always running off to play soccer...
Researcher: I think you will find he is playing soccer after work...
Sister: (interrupts) Well shouldn’t he be home helping us or his brother-in-law who has to stay late to finish things at the factory?
I had forced an issue that perhaps was out of my domain of simply researching the lives of child labourers. Yet, the sister’s attitude toward her brother was not uncommon. The children at the NGO Centre continually complained of their parents not giving them the space that they wanted. I tried to explain to Hisham8’s sister that like other children in the neighbourhood, Hisham8 had the right to play in his leisure time, children were supposed to play and still get an education either through working or going to school. The sister saw things very differently; she attributed Hisham8’s desire to play with his friends as laziness and stupidity on his part. She agreed with her husband that he would not amount to anything. She felt resentful that Hisham8 preferred to stay with his friends rather than coming home and spending time with them, his family.

I asked if she wanted to see Hisham8 educated and she told me that’s why she sent him to the NGO Centre every week so that he would receive an education. The sister had found herself in the role of the parent and as an Arab parent she did not see why her brother should waste his time playing. She felt that he should either be working or at home with his family, there was no time for Hisham8 to do what he wanted. To have time for leisure, in her eyes, meant that Hisham8 was spoilt. Yet, Hisham8 found ways of escaping with his friends rather than facing his sister’s disposition.

I asked his sister if she had ever tried to go to literacy classes herself. She said she had, but when her husband found out about it, he stopped her from continuing with the classes. She explained that it was not proper for her to leave her home for too long, but that she really would like to be educated in order to understand what her children did in school. The sister had abided by the traditional rules of listening to the wishes of her husband. She would not defy him, in fact she believed him over her brother. Her leisure time was not her own to do as she pleased, which explained why she felt ownership over Hisham8’s time.

The sibling relationship had changed in the case of Hisham8, as the sibling had taken on the role of parent. Hisham8 never seemed to fit in with them and was always spending more time outside their home. The sister did not believe in Hisham8 and found him to be
an agitator; yet she allowed him to board with them and share her home with her own children, who could be influenced by him. This perhaps was because her children were quite young and Hisham would remain in her household for less than another two years; also, her husband was profiting off her brother.

6.7 Field Notes

The following are excerpts from the field notes collected in the field. I have chosen those that were memorable or had an impact on the research. These notes were taken during the children's leisure time, either at the NGO Centre or in-between times when they were on their way home or to the NGO Centre.

December 14, 2001 (structured interviews with children at NGO Centre)

Today, I had two interviews with young boys. The staff at the NGO Centre kept pulling out data to prove that they had the correct answer. I tried to tell them I was not interested in what they thought was the correct answer but what the children believed... Hopefully, they understood this time.

One of my interviews today, Salah, almost had me in tears. It was truly brutal. This little boy, who was partly deformed from a butane accident, was telling me that he has no one to buy him his Eid clothes this year, so he was going to buy them for himself. At first I thought he might have been playing on my sympathies, but the way in which he said it, so matter of fact seemed to be genuine. He told me that he lived his brothers in one room that their uncle had built for them. It had no electricity, running water or sanitation. His father had divorced his mother and she had remarried and moved away with her new husband and children. His father had simply abandoned them. I asked Mr M, at the NGO Centre, if I can buy him clothes for Eid but he said no because it would not be fair to the other children.

February, 15, 2002 (NGO Centre)

I walked into the centre and a fight was taking place between one of the boys and a teacher. I am not sure what happened, something about the child being punished for being tardy and not being allowed to go with the group to the park. I think the child decided to go anyways. I didn't want to ask what happened because I didn't want to get involved. I am starting to have emotions for these children; I am remembering their names and their bothers and sisters... I feel helpless a great deal of the time because I
feel I should be doing something to help these children... not sure what.
The NGO centre seems to be a step in the right direction...

The atmosphere for the rest of the day was a bit tense among the children
and the teachers... decided not to interview any children and left early.

April 5, 2002 (Protest)

Today the interviews were good. I met with some of the older girls today,
Dina12, Eman11 and Nada10. Great girls, they were all 14 years old.
The girls managed to answer for themselves so there were no
interruptions from the centre. It's getting hot at the centre; I have no idea
what they will do in the summer.

I came out of the interviews to see that the centre had helped the children
write up signs for a protest against what was happening in Palestine. I
am not sure if this is their role but the children seem to be enjoying it.
They wanted me to take their picture of them holding up their signs. I
asked them what they thought about the children of Palestine and some of
the boys said it was wrong and that someone should stop them.

April 15, 2002 (Masks)

The children today had made masks before I arrived. They all look the
same white paper with blue paint to mark the facial expressions. The kids
asked to have their picture taken when I arrived with their new masks. I
think they made them all, either way they were having a blast.

May 31, 2002: Visit to Opera

Today, I helped the NGO Centre organize a field trip to the opera house to
see an exhibit of one of the leading pottery artists in the world and a
member of the NGO that was running the centre. The artist was being
honoured for his work. The centre thought it would be a good idea to see
how one child labourer grew up to be one of the world's leading pottery
artists. So we went to the opera and asked the manager what time they
opened in the afternoon so we could bring the children. He said 5pm.
The children were so excited that they had dressed up for the occasion.

At 5pm we arrived. I had come earlier by car with Mr M, only to discover
the door to the gallery was locked. The children took the metro as they
said it was easier and more convenient since there were 30 children with
us. They were accompanied by 4 adults from the NGO Centre. Mr M and
I began asking when the gallery would open and they said they did not
know because the person who had the key still had not returned. I asked
whether they had a spare key but they said no. At 5:15pm the children
arrived and we asked them to sit in the garden, but it was really hot and I couldn’t find any place to get them refreshments. At 5:30 I began to get impatient, I mean lets face it I can leave but these poor kids were really looking forward to this. I decided to go shake some feathers at the tourist police office. I told the officer in charge of our situation flashed my US passport and all of a sudden the children were immaterial, they had a tourist that was unhappy... Amazing how in a flash they can spring into action... he asked me if I wanted to write an official report and I said yes, but I told him to open the gallery first. They began hunting apparently for a spare key as another began writing our story. Finally they managed to open the gallery but they couldn’t turn off the security system so there was no air-conditioning and dim light. By the time we reached the third floor the children were wilting.

I decide to go hunt down some water for everyone so by the time they left I could have it ready for them. I was stopped on my way out by someone working at the opera pleading with me not to allow the report to go through as the person in charge would lose his job. I replied that maybe he should be taught a lesson, but Mr M said that I should withdraw the report since at least we got in. So I agreed. The cafeteria finally was opened and I was able to get bottles of water, they only had 1.5 litre bottles and plastic glasses in that was the size of a shot glass... So I went outside and began filling the shot glasses with water in anticipation of the children’s arrival. The children descended on the water, 30 children who had been cooped up for an hour inside a stuffy gallery and all I had to offer them was shot glasses of water... But the children took it all in stride and seemed to be having a blast. They looked so cute in their outfits.

August 2, 2002

I gave back the last of the pictures to the children. One of the girls, Nada10, told me her father hit her when he saw the pictures. I feel really bad, but the children seemed to have enjoyed the pictures that they received. They were even asking for more cameras, but I told them that I couldn’t afford it, I am not sure they understood what I meant though...

I sat down with a two girls, Azza16 and Mariam 17, asking them why they took the pictures they gave me. Azza16, was frightful, she just kept saying the camera took the picture... see descriptions in excel sheets... I just couldn’t get her to say anything else. Mariam17 was my saviour; she responded to all the pictures, she seems very close to her older sister, there were lots of pictures of her... some she seems to have been dressing up and putting makeup on, maybe to impress someone, I didn’t want to ask Mariam17 because I know that if she is, if I ask her I may offend her. She didn’t say anything, just that she loved her sister.
It's been almost a year since I have been coming to the NGO centre and meeting with the children and I think finally I am becoming more accepted... I can see that at least they are not referring to me as the foreigner but as Abla (teacher)... Tonia never caught on, I think it's too difficult to pronounce or they feel they have to address me with a title... The NGO Centre teachers let me do my own thing, thank God no more interruptions. They definitely did tell the children though what to take pictures of, but I think many of them ignored their suggestions... at least it seems like that... all the girls mostly focused on their homes and families and the boys focused more on their work.

August 16, 2002 (Karim writing in hallway)

As we left the centre, I glanced over to see a figure in the dim light of the corridor. Salah5 was writing something, I asked what he was doing and he said he was finishing his homework. I stupidly asked him why he was doing it in the corridor and he replied because he had no electricity at home. I had forgotten that Salah5 and his brothers lived on their own and had no electricity, water or sanitation in their one room dwelling.

October 18, 2002 (Maureen visits the NGO Centre)

I brought a friend with me to the centre today. I began interviewing some of the children. Once again there were a number of interruptions. I interviewed some of the younger boys; one in particular everyone calls him Barkuka his real name is Uthman4. Great smile, but had a great deal of trouble getting him to answer my questions. I interviewed a boy, but half way through my interview I discovered that the centre had sent me another boy that did not meet my criteria. He was 19 years old, looked like he was under 16, so it was only when I asked him how long he had been working did things not add up.

I came out of the room I was interviewing to see that my friend had taught the children a new trick. They were all laughing and holding spoons with their tongues. They asked to take pictures, it was really funny. Then Hakim9, who was helping to serve lunch, every time he went to the kitchen would shout ‘Abla take my picture…’ He had us laughing too. He must have screamed this out a dozen times...

May 24, 2002 (Visit of Canadian Minister)

I had to help the NGO present their programme today to the Canadian Foreign Minister. He had brought his entire family to see the project. He seemed nice enough, was very interested in my findings. The children showed his son how to use the wheel. Then he decided to say something which the translator from CIDA relayed to Atif4.. The children seemed
uninterested in him, but out of the blue Atif14 asked to say something and blurted out “please Mr Minister, don’t bomb the children of Iraq.” It was shocking; no one knew what to say. The focal person translated what Atif14 said and the Minister responded by saying that he was not really involved and that they were trying diplomacy. He then took the opportunity to hand out some presents he had bought the children. One of the gifts was a pin with the Canadian maple leaf on it. The children began taking them out and asking what they were. Someone from the NGO Centre said that it was the Canadian flag and the children began discarding them. Azzal6 said ‘it’s not an Egyptian flag so why should I wear it’. The Minister and his family began to say their goodbyes. After, I chatted with the NGO Centre’s teachers about Atif14’s statement and they said they couldn’t believe he had said that. No one had even mentioned the impending war in Iraq; he had totally picked up on it on his own.

May 14, 2003 (case studies)

It always gets me the amount of heat and dust that people in this community must endure. Today, the smell from the garbage dump was even more distasteful. I saw Salah5 on my way to community, he asked to borrow money. He has never done that before, so I didn’t know what to do. The centre had strict instructions not to give the children money, but I figured if I give him a dollar there is very little he could do with it.

June, 10, 2003 (case studies)

Hodal kept asking to have her picture taken, she loves getting her pictures back and even that of others when I am allowed to take their picture, but she is extremely photogenic. It’s hot again; I don’t know how we are all going to make it through another summer with this heat. The garbage dump is getting bigger and today I found children playing in it. They were burning a PCB bag again. I spoke to Mr Z about the pollution and he said what doesn’t kill us makes stronger... it seems to be the motto in Egypt.

6.8 Conclusion

Leisure time is something that for many is taken for granted, yet this was not the case for the children in this study. Free time for these children meant time doing what they wanted and not what they were obliged to do, it was their time. Much of the observations and information gathered on the issue of children’s leisure time was derived from simply addressing how the child labourers negotiated their lived realities. Children moved from the work environment to the family environment relatively smoothly but in between they
had moments that did not fit in with either arena.

The children did not have much free time to play; but they tried to make the time despite their hectic daily schedules. Catching moments at work to see their friends even if it was just to enjoy a moment of laughter together was all they had time for. The girls found more friendships within their families than the boys. This was due mainly to the boys’ accepted freedom to play outdoors. The children expressed their interests in various ways. They relaxed by watching television and chatting with their friends and siblings, as well as playing with pets that they raised sometimes for profit.

Friends played a strong role in the children’s lives. The children explained their photographs of their friends as individuals who played with them, were like their siblings, or would do anything for them. In many instances, friends were seen as being closer than immediate family. Children found solace with their friends, who comforted them and understood them. Friends became an escape from reality, yet the children they did not perceive them as an escape and never expressed resentment concerning their roles within their families. In fact, their only complaint was that they had no free time to spend with friends. Friends were often confided in because parents were seen as unable to comprehend their ambitions and dreams, not an uncommon belief within most children. More than once the children gave friends equal, if not more, importance than family.

The children tried to balance their time with their friends, family, and work so as to enjoy their free time. They cherished those moments where they could flow into a more relaxed, playful manner and went out of their way to have more moments with their friends. In those instances the innocence and curiosity of a child could be seen in their eyes.

Moreover, there were moments in leisure where the children expressed their beliefs and concerns’, standing up for what they believed was important. The relevance of such an outburst, such as that of Atif’s, on the children’s daily lives was significant as it translated into a stand against abusive employers. Child labours were not passive
children, but rather did have opinions which they expressed.

This chapter focused on a time for children to be who they wanted to be and do what they wanted to do. It was a time that this research did not intentionally focus on it but became a dominant theme nonetheless as the analysis of the data took place. The significance of this chapter, however, is the importance of looking at children as actors that may not always play the same part or an expected part. In the following chapter, the children's families will be discussed in order to describe how the children negotiated within their home environment.
Chapter Seven

Analysis: Families in Households
7.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the relationship between child labourers and their parents. The parents play a pivotal role in adapting their children to face the environment in which they lived. They were also responsible for the children’s development and their engagement with the school system and the labour market. I chose to explore the roles of the parents and their children within the confines of their family structures. A key finding was the way children moved between adult behaviour and responsibilities at work and back to childlike patterns of behaviour with their friends, neighbours, and family. Thus, this chapter will show the children returning from work to be, as described in Chapter Five, nurtured within the home environment.

The last of these analytical chapters will reflect on how the family plays a role in the child labourer’s life and how the child labourer reacts and acts in the locale of the family. This chapter will explore the relationship between the children and their families as observed and recorded through the different methodologies used. The children and families maintained a relationship based on pride, responsibility, security and nurturing. The families were responsible for providing a nurturing environment that allowed their children to feel secure. In turn, the children fulfilled their responsibility by providing an income for the household to survive. Family pride was constantly maintained by all members of the family at all costs.

7.2 Family Structure

The children at the NGO Centre tended to be from a few clusters of relations. Within the 18 families, many were related to each other. In Egypt, if a family member from any rural village goes to Cairo, that family member tends to send for others from their village to join him. As a result, there are many family clusters or people from the same village in one area. One effect of this is that the community maintains its rural traditions and also creates a cohesive family network which will provide support when someone is in need of help. This phenomenon is found amongst immigrants in many parts of the world. The
community in which the families lived was a squatter community threatened with removal by the Egyptian government. It had sprung up around the pottery and other factories. Where there was need for cheap labour there was immigration into the locality.

The families all came from towns on the Nile, south of Cairo. Five families came from as close as Fayum and as far as from Qena, see Illustration 7.1. Most of the parents had come from southern Egypt when they were children with their families to work. Three sets of parents had come to Cairo when they got married to start their new life in the big city in search of better opportunities. Those fathers that had been brought up in Cairo went back to their villages and brought back wives from their villages. From the 17 families interviewed, only one father said that he was born in Cairo. The importance of understanding the families’ background is that it has a direct impact on how the families chose to raise their children. The poor, rural, southern traditions differ from those of the urban poor, and thus it is important to make the distinction that two thirds of the families were not born in Cairo.

Illustration 7.1, Map of Egypt (National Geographic)
As these families migrated to the urban centre they brought with them the traditions of their villages. Although early marriage is illegal in Egypt (see Chapter 1), it is still practiced in the rural centres and among those that migrate to the big cities. The average age of marriage for the families was 16 for the mothers, although there were four mothers who had married as early as 14 years of age. The average age for the fathers to marry was 23. Again, the relevance of this is to understand how the family structure is composed. Teenage mothers had little experience in handing infants and subsequently this had an impact on their children.

The average family in my sample consisted of the parents, and a range of children starting with the largest - 14 in one family - to the smallest – four children in one family. However, most families had between five and eight children. All the families, with the exception of two, lost their firstborn child. Out of the 17 families interviewed, only one family had not had their first child after approximately one year of marriage. Most of the women said that they were either not told how to care for their newly-born infant, so the baby came home from the hospital sickly and then died, or the infant had died at birth. They faulted no one and placed all their children's lives in the hands of God. I asked the mothers if it was difficult having so many children, to which they all replied “yes” so I asked why they had chosen to have as many as they had. Many of the mothers referred to religious and traditional beliefs and others pointed out that they had tried to stop having children but their mode of birth control failed them. Six of the families had other members of their families residing with them. Dwellings were overcrowded and children had little space to play or to be out of the way of adults.

7.2.1 Children’s’ Roles in the Family Structure

There was a sense from the interviews that the families stayed together as a unit; they had meals together and when they vacationed, although this was not often, they did that together too. Children came home from work, as did the fathers, to have lunch, if they were working in the area. Perhaps this was for economic purposes but, regardless of the reason, at the end of the day they spent time together, which gave them a great sense of
security. The bond that the mothers and children had with one another was remarkable. As a result of this bond, with very few exceptions, the children interviewed were attached to, and very confident around, their families. The children felt very close to their families and did not hesitate when answering the question, stating that they felt loved and secure within their families, see Appendix One, question 5a.

The children showed no signs of resentment toward their parents for sending them to work or for making them do chores. The family, as represented within the pictures, was almost never together in photographs. The family unit was comprised of the nuclear family; however, the father and mother were for the most part always missing. The mothers did not like to be photographed. I had a very difficult time taking pictures of any mothers as I always asked before taking a photograph and they always declined. The parents did not mind their children being photographed, but they felt that it was not appropriate for me to have a picture of the mothers; or that I could, with a photograph, rob them of their soul. The fathers were much easier to photograph but were rarely around to be photographed. Hakim9, in trying to focus the camera on his mother, who was the only subject that was posing, severed his father’s head and captured his neighbour doing her homework. She appears deep in thought chewing on her pen. Hakim9 seemed to have caught the family in some sort of lesson, as they were all holding notes and textbooks. He stated that: “We are one family,” yet a neighbour was included and his own two brothers were not there. To Hakim9 the family was not only his parents, but also his community. These were people that he had known all his life simply because they lived in the area or who, for the most part, were inter-related through marriage.

The family as an entity was represented three times in all the pictures taken by the children. The idea of family, as expressed by the children, was of great importance and conjured a great deal of emotion. Maha7 expressed her perception of her family as: “I like spending time with my Mom, all the time not just a little. I like my Dad too. I like

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85 Whenever I took pictures of a family, or of a mother with her children, the mother always preferred not to be photographed. I did not specifically want to photograph the mothers especially when I realized that it made them uncomfortable. I thought it was important to recall this detail because it reflected on the families traditions and beliefs that were passed on to their daughters.
spending time with my brothers and sisters”. Time, for many of the children interviewed, meant very little. Many of the children did not know their ages, could not tell time and had very little perception of time as measurement. When I asked any of the children, specifically those under 15, when they went to work they simply answered “in the morning”. Thus the statement by Maha7 and the other girls concerning time spent with parents was against time spent at work. Work was always seen as time away from the families which was viewed negatively. This is how the children, specifically the girls, contrasted time.

In general, the pictures of the family were always fragmented; one picture may contain the mother with all the daughters or younger children. Another picture would be taken with the father and yet another sibling, and yet another with one more member of the family. Ironically, the families did enjoy a great deal of time together and lived in a confined space yet it seemed impossible for the children to capture the entire family in one shot. I had to wonder if the children saw their families in such a fragmented state.

Children’s responses to the pictures concerning the family were mostly positive. The children tended to reiterate the strong bond that each of them felt toward their families and their deep-rooted sense of loyalty. The family was described as a place where the children felt security and warmth. The children felt that they were loved by their parents and constantly reminded me that they had photographed family members in order to keep their memory. The following were extracts from the in-depth interviews on the children:

Bakr2: The picture of my Mom and sisters and brothers is so I can remember them. I prefer being among them and with them. If anything happened to my Dad, I have the memory, but when I see the picture I am happy.

Mona2: I am happy when I see these pictures; I am close to my family.

These short descriptions in the children’s own words gave the researcher a sense of the children’s attachment and the security they felt being among their parents. It was important to remember these feelings when looking at why the children continued to live
with their families when they could easily live on the street. Had there not been this close tie between the children and their families, many of the children would have simply left.

The child labourers' sisters and brothers played significant roles in their lives. Many of the older brothers either worked or had been conscripted into the army. The sisters of the child labourers, on the other hand, were either young women who had reached puberty and had been removed from the labour market due to tradition, had always remained in the household to help the mother with housework, or had gone to school and either completed their education or dropped out. All these young women were waiting to get married just under different circumstances. Thus, these young women who remained in the household were responsible for the family by nurturing their younger working siblings emotionally. The role of these older, female siblings was to play with the children and also help out with the household chores, as assistants to their mother. It is important to consider the relevance of these older siblings to these child labourers. The older siblings helped a great deal with the household, performing many of the chores that the child labourers would have had to do if they had not been around, specifically in the case of the girls. This is in turn created an opportunity for the child labourers to have some free time to play with their friends and other siblings when they returned home from work. Sometimes though the older sisters were busy or they do not have older sisters and the child labourers, specifically the girls were forced to do chores around the house.

7.3 The Reason Families sent their Children to Work

Children laboured in the work force to assist in the families’ subsistence and survival. The children felt a sense of responsibility toward their families and, if one of the parents was absent or ill, they became the sole providers. There were also families that employed their children because the father simply could not find work or chose not to find work, yet this did not diminish the sense of responsibility the children felt toward their families.

Heba7 and her sister were the sole providers for the family. The father seldom worked,
preferring to spend his days at the local café; the older brother did not work either. Neither of the girls was sent to school, as the father did not feel that school was a place for females and in addition there was the economic burden of sending girls to school.\textsuperscript{86} Both worked from 8.00 a.m. until sunset, six days a week, like many other girls and boys in the area, but they laughed and played like little girls. The mother asked the older brother to work, but found him unreliable. The younger brother was recently taken out of school and had begun work with the girls.

The two girls both described their work environment as harsh and would much rather have stayed at home, but they understood that they had a duty toward the family. The girls' negative attitude toward work was constantly contrasted against their positive feeling regarding their home and their mother. They were constantly hoping that they could be left to play and enjoy their time rather than work gruelling hours, but they had accepted that they were the sole providers for the family. They constantly spoke of promises made by their parents to allow them to stay at home.

7.3.1 Depth of Poverty

Families in the area had very little to subsist on and most families in the community lived each day trying to make ends meet. Some of the families were a little better off than others; they had a bit more space to live in, a fridge and a toilet. Five of the homes had the bare necessities consisting of a cot, a butane gas container, sometimes a sink, a TV, and possibly a chair. The rest of the homes contained another room that would have a couch and a table, sometimes a fridge, a radio, and a stove. Nine families had a separate area for the kitchen or toilet. The toilet could be as simple as a bucket in some of these homes. Three of the families lived in a one room dwelling; all the other families had at least two rooms. The rooms were sometimes quite small and the entire family tended to sleep in one room and use the other room in which to congregate. Twelve families stated

\textsuperscript{86} The cost on average for a child to attend school (not including private lessons after school) is $19 per annual school year. This includes school fees for $6, a uniform for $8.7, and a school bag and supplies for $4.3. This is based on a survey conducted in August 2006, by New Horizon Association for Social Development in order to raise funds for girls' education in Old Cairo.
that they had no running water but six of the twelve had electricity. Running water had to be brought in through pipes so it was much more difficult to sanction off the main pipes, while electricity was easily spliced from anyone in the area. Ten families also owned their houses. Unfortunately, this only meant that they did not pay rent as the entire area was considered a squatter area, as described in Chapter Four. Those that did pay rent tended to be latecomers to the area or had little or no family support in the area in which they lived.

The families’ economic status was reflected in the way they and their children lived. The children of the poorest families had relatively little space and had to leave their homes to use the toilet or take a shower. They were subjected to the entire family sleeping in the same cot. The children who were relatively better off had conveniences that were not afforded to the other children such as a fridge, a toilet, and a bed that only had to be shared by a few family members rather than the entire family.

7.3.2 Health of the Parents

The health of the fathers and mothers was always an issue when I went to speak to them. It was one of the reasons they gave for not working and requiring their children to work. Zeinab6’s father in particular was a case in point. Zeinab6 lived in the same house that Maha7 and Heba7 lived in, deep inside the area of Batn al-Baqarah. When I went to visit her family, we sat down in the outdoor hallway between the two apartments, along with the little ducks that were playing in a corner. The hallway, where they entertained, had no roof which allowed a nice breeze to cool the little seating area that they had devised.

Zeinab6's father was 27 years old and suffered from cancer of the stomach. The family had five children; Zeinab6 was the oldest at 12 years old. Her Mother was 25 years old; she had never worked and was illiterate. The father once owned a truck that he used for transport but had to sell it when he needed an operation. Unfortunately, the operation took all the money he had and he was unable to do the follow up treatments of
chemotherapy. He remained at home, collecting $12.17 from the government each month and unable to perform any tasks or have any permanent employment.

Researcher: Hello
Zeinab6’s Mother and Father: Hello, how are you?
Researcher: Good, thank you. Please stay (to Mother), How are you?
Zeinab6’s Mother: I will be back (goes to help clean Zeinab6)
Father: Good.
Researcher: How is your health now?
Zeinab6’s Father: The same. I did an operation. They said they needed to investigate, and then they found something bad so they removed it. The doctor said I could not work.
Researcher: What did you use to do?
Zeinab6’s Father: I used to have a truck and I used to collect garbage. I had to sell the truck when I had the operation because I went to a private hospital. I am from Beni Suev, so I had it done there.
Researcher: Have you had any follow up?
Zeinab6’s Father: No, I was supposed to take medication but we did not have the money.
Researcher: So you have not had any follow up?
Zeinab6’s Father: No, we cannot afford it. Before I got sick my children all went to school, Zeinab6 and her brother went to school. But now they have to work. I wanted them to be better than me. I wanted my son to have a better life, and now he won’t.

Zeinab6’s mother looked haggard from taking care of the younger children and her husband. She once told me that they tried to make her husband happy by using part of their food allowance to buy him cigarettes. Ironically, when I questioned the father further about his condition, he was unaware that he had Saratan - cancer - referring to it as a lump that they had removed. Zeinab6’s father, as many others in the community, had become disillusioned by the public health care system, and had opted to pay for better care hoping this would cure him. The father had sold his truck (his only means of a livelihood) to pay for his operation and was now unable to work doing any type of manual labour, which was all that was available to him.

Researcher: Shouldn’t your wife work, maybe she can help out?
Zeinab6’s Father: No we cannot not do that, it is not our custom.
Researcher: Can she at least be allowed her to attend literacy classes
Zeinab6’s Father: Absolutely no, her place is in the home, who will take
Researcher: Classes are always scheduled around the women’s time, besides you are allowing Zeinab6 to work and attend literacy classes...
Zeinab6’s Father: (interrupts) She will stop soon, in a few months she must stay home.
Researcher: How will you all survive without Zeinab’s income?
Zeinab6’s Father: Rabina Kibir (God is generous, by his will)

At this point the conversation became quite tense as the father realized that I knew perhaps more about his illness than he did and possibly the outcome as I was asking questions about his family’s wellbeing in his absence. So I then switched my attention to his brother’s wife, Maha7 and Heba7’s mother, who still had her arm in a cast. She complained that her operation required her to pay a quarter of the fees, $173.91, even though it was performed at Cairo’s university hospital\(^\text{87}\). I asked if she was feeling better, she said yes but that she required a great deal of physiotherapy. The doctor prescribed for her antibiotics but she did not have any more money to buy the medicine, so she never took them. I asked her if she would go to literacy classes if they were made available. She told me she would. So I pushed further, and asked her if she would take her sister-in-law and she said why not. Zeinab6’s father smiled, knowing full well that there was little he could do to stop the women.

7.3.3 Fathers Working Away from Home

Sometimes when there was no work in the area, fathers found work elsewhere. Two fathers, the A1 and D4 fathers found work in Fayum and only returned every Thursday night to see their families. This meant that the oldest son or brother-in-law would have to become the protector of the family.

I went to see Hodal’s family on one occasion as I had heard her father had found a job and her older sister had moved out. I asked the family how they were doing and they told me they were happy that their oldest daughter had now joined Mr. U (the employer of Amal1, their other daughter) her husband, in his house. The father was able to leave his

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\(^{87}\) Asr el-Elmi is part of the Egyptian free health care system that is available for the poor.
other children (there were no older boys in the family) now that they had the son-in-law and found work in Fayum, a city approximately one hour outside of Cairo, carrying cement. He came home to the family on Thursday evening and left on Friday nights.

He complained that his back ached constantly. I asked him if he had seen a physician, he told me that they all gave him pain killers and told him that he could not keep carrying heavy sacks on his back. He told me: “how could I support my family if I stopped working? I have no skills and I’m illiterate, I have faith that God will help my family in case I am unable to work; but until then, I will keep on working.”

I looked at the father and mother and realized that they did not look their age. The father looked like he was in his sixties and the mother looked just as old. Later, when I returned home I checked my files and discovered that the father was 48 and the mother was 35. I suspected as much, as their oldest child was 18 years old, the mother was married at the age of 14 and lost her first child at 15. The parents then went on to have three children. She was able to stop after that by using birth control but after eight years she became pregnant with their youngest son. She told me of the pure agony that she went through in the delivery and how until now she still suffered. I told her that I will pray that God would always help her.

I had also heard that D4 had found employment and asked his wife about him. She replied that he had found employment also in Fayum and returned to them on Thursday evenings and spent approximately 24 hours with his family each week going back to Fayum on Friday evenings. She told me things were better. I wanted to know how she felt about her children working all the time, she laughed and said what else were the boys to do. Laila4 helped her in the household because her mother could not cope with all the children. I asked her what she hoped for them in life, she replied that she hoped for God would guide them to have a better life.

Uthman4 and Hasan4’s mother had married at the age of 16. She had borne seven children, had witnessed the death of two and was now only 30 years old. She was
younger than me and in her eyes one could see the despair that her life had cast upon her. She was a frail woman, who sat holding her remaining twin as she spoke to us, not flinching at the mention of the infant that had passed away only months ago. To her the child who passed away was in a better place with God.

The stress of their lives was taking a toll on their health. While the fathers were able to find employment elsewhere the stress on the mothers was never relieved and their faces reflected their worries and fears.

7.4 Family Dynamics

The family bond itself was a source of protection for the children from the outside world which also allowed them to feel a sense of nurturing. In the harsh, labour intensive environment that these children worked in, going home to a parent who could comfort them was of great importance. Yet the family was the reason why the children found themselves in such a harsh, work environment. Surprisingly, with the exception of one child (Salah5) whose father had abandoned the entire family, none of the children ever expressed resentment. This could be attributed again to the family bond that directed the child to feel a responsibility toward the family unit. Therefore, from the analysis of the data, one could gather three main sub-themes: responsibility, pride, nurture and security.

The bond within these families was quite close. The appearance of the family to any outsider was that there was a close-knit family bond. The family was very protective of their lives and how they were portrayed, see 6.7 Field Notes, August 2, 2002. The parents reaction to viewing their children’s photographs was a clear example of the pride those families held at any cost.

The family dynamics were influenced by internal and external factors that changed their course of action. The children were influenced by celebrities but also by educated family members. When the children were asked if they had any role models in their lives most said yes, either a family member or a celebrity. This question was posed to measure if
the children had future aspirations and goals.

This question proved difficult for most of the children and further explanation was needed. I would explain to them that this meant: did they look up to anyone, for example a movie star, sports figure, singer, etc... Then the children would answer yes or no and I would ask who to make sure there was an actual someone. Twenty-nine of the children did have role models, the 19 boys mostly had soccer players and the 10 girls picked actresses and singers. There was no relationship between school attendance and having a role model. It was interesting that a larger percentage of girls had role models than had boys; this may have been due to girls fantasizing more about their lives or that they tended to be more open in interviews than boys. I further looked at whether age played a significant role in having a role model. The older the children, the more likely they were to state that they had a role model. The frequency rose significantly in both boys and girls in the children over 12 years of age.

The children were also asked if they had a member of the family that they looked up to. The results were somewhat surprising. The number dropped to 20 out of the 50 saying they had a role model in the family, compared with the 28 that said yes to a role model outside the family. I found this surprising, as many of the children seemed close to their families making them ideal as role models. Only six of the children who said they did not have a role model outside of the family, had a family member as a role model. Six girls said that they had a family member as a role model, and only one had said that she did not have an outside role model but had a family member as one. Almost all the children picked family members that were educated, stating that they chose them because of their education. Twenty children responded negatively to the question as they did not see any relevance to their lives in the question. However, no significant pattern could be established. The strong bond between the children and their families was evident. When they spoke about their families, twelve children said that they felt love toward and a strong bond with their families. The children's relationship with their parents could also be observed in a number of photographs as.
A picture taken by Maha7 of her sister, Heba7, while she was having her hair brushed by her mother showed the close bond the girls had with their mother. This was an act between a mother and her child, placing Heba7 in the role of a child; yet that same child had just worked for nine hours transporting tea and shingles from one end of the area to another. She was also the same child who earlier had acted as an adult when she stood up to her employer, demanding to be let out at a reasonable hour in order to attend a literacy class at the NGO Centre. Based on the interviews with the families and child labourers, the ability of these children to move from one assigned or negotiated agency to another had become a natural occurrence. Many of the acts that the children and their families performed with one another were ordinary acts, performed around the world by parents with their children. It is the union of these acts with the children’s labour where the research delves into another realm of the family dynamic. The children’s lives are categorically compared against their shared realities (see Diagram 7.2).

In Diagram 7.2, the flexibility the children have in moving between the three dimensions that govern their lived realities is portrayed. The child wakes up, goes to work, comes home from work, spends time with family and friends and then goes to sleep in order to resume the cycle the following day. During the day the children move in and out of behavioural roles to suit the environment they find themselves in. As the children get older the patterns of behaviour becomes easier to move in and out of, and the children are able to become even more flexible in their ability to manipulate their environment.
The parents themselves view their children as continuations of the family unit, with responsibilities equal to those of their fathers and mothers. And while the parents understand that without their children they are not a family in the Arab tradition, children also understand that without their parents they would be further marginalized by the society in which they live. This is not to say that the parents and children do not value each other or are not emotionally attached to one another; they are most emphatically, but there is also a symbiotic relationship that exists in Arab families that is not present in other cultures. Yet this relationship does explain why the children remain in the family. It also explains why a father of five will abide by what his father decides.

7.4.1 Pride and the Family

The pride of the family remained a pivotal concern. This was seen as the family jewels and was to be treasured at any cost; if taken away, it would be the greatest loss for a family, surpassing by far the loss of any of their beloved ones. The children and their families made a great deal of effort to preserve their honour and pride. Mothers and girls were guarded at all costs as they represented the honour of the family; their mistreatment by strangers or misbehaviour against known traditions would bring dishonour to their families.

Pictures of the mother alone or accompanied by children almost doubled that of the fathers alone or with children; rarely was a mother unaccompanied by a child. Ironically,
it was very difficult to get mothers in photographs as they tended to think of themselves as dishevelled and thus hated to have their pictures taken when they were not ready for it. One mother expressed her feelings as: “if I’m not ready and appear with my casual clothes, I would feel that I harmed my family’s pride.” Azzalô was troubled after seeing a picture of her mother and told me that she: “Wants to tear the picture of [her] mother – [her] father would get mad if he saw it.” Azzalô photographed her mother hard at work; she was recycling paper to be sold for packing. The stacks of paper could be seen by her side, piled high. She worked from their home, and therefore may have seen her job as part of her housework.

Azzalô’s mother did not want her picture taken, but Azzalô convinced her that the camera was not real. When she was given her set of photographs the mother was angry at being portrayed in such a manner. The pride of the family was an issue. Although the families had accepted that I gave the children cameras, seeing their images documented in a photograph and returned to them caused a number of problems for the children. Among the lower socio-economic classes it was seen as point of contention for a wife to work. The father, according to tradition and Islamic teachings, is the sole provider for the household. Based on Islamic rules, independent income that belonged to the wife was hers, she need not even mention its amount to her husband, and was under no obligation to help out in the household. Ironically, according to the mothers’ accounts, many women ended up supporting the households with their own income. In some cases, the husbands even used their wives’ incomes to buy cigarettes and sit at the local cafés. Azzalô’s mother told me in an earlier interview that she did not work. She stated, as many of the mothers before her said: “how can I work when I have to take care of all these young children.”

The significance of the mothers posing for photographs was quite important as it either meant that the mother had taken the trouble to dress, was coerced by her child into posing for a photograph, or that she simply thought the camera was not real. In Azzalô’s case the picture was that of her mother working, which was considered inappropriate in the community and Azzalô explained that no one in her family thought the camera was real.
When I asked Mariam17, why she had very few photographs of her family, specifically her parents, she replied that:

My dad was at work and my mother refused to be photographed. I wanted to take a picture of her but we had a fight with my uncle and my Mother said hide the camera and take it later, but then I took pictures of my sisters and there was one picture left and my brother took a picture of my father. I wanted to take my father, my older brother Ramadan, and his wife, and their daughter, but I ran out of film.

Mariam17 made excuses as to why she could not get a picture of both her parents, preferring not to tell me that her parents simply did not want to be photographed. Capturing the mother with her children was one of the most natural states and could account for the reason as to why there were very few pictures of the mother alone as she was always with her children.

When I began interviewing the parents, many of the mothers refused to give me their first names and preferred to refer to themselves as the “mother of (the oldest son).” Although this is a tradition throughout the Muslim world, in Egypt in the lower socio-economic classes it could be attributed to the evil eye (see Chapter One), as in many cases when they were pressed to give a name they simply give a false one. I understood their concerns regarding outsiders seeing how they lived because the area was under threat of eviction. The family had a strong sense of pride about their home and appearances.

7.4.2 Gender roles and the Family

Gender roles are defined in such societies from birth. The ability to challenge such roles and allow for change was important to many women in the community and their young daughters. This is relevant to the study of female child labourers, as the girls saw what their mothers did and emulated them. At the same time their roles were being challenged by the economic hardship faced by their community. There was a sense that many of the women felt traditions and customs had to adapt to their needs if they were to survive.
Women felt that their economic situation was the largest obstacle in their lives. The lack of stable employment for their husbands or fathers was one of the factors that women gave for their lack of development. Their employment or leading contribution to the production cycle was not necessarily at the top of their argument, yet when pushed, younger, unmarried women did voice interest in joining the labour force, which was seen by many adults as a way to negotiate a better role and life for themselves and their families.

Uthman and Hasan took a picture of their mother and their newly-born twin sisters. The mother looked worn out in the picture, as so many of the mothers did in the area. She was smiling; her daughter Laila and her niece were standing above and the twins. Hassan’s pigeons could be seen in the background as well as the condition of the room. During one of the sessions at the NGO Centre, I had showed the picture to the boys and their sister Laila, and I commented to Laila that the picture of her mother holding two babies must be her new twin sisters, she replied they were, but that one had died. I asked her for their names. At first she could only remember the name of the twin that had passed away, but subsequently remembered that of the twin that was alive. She spoke directly to me, constantly keeping eye contact while speaking about her dead sister, never flinching or showing any emotions. My reaction after seeing the twins and learning that one of them had passed on took me by surprise and my face must have expressed emotions of sadness, but Laila continued with her story. Laila, described her family as:

I love my mother, she cares for me. My father is also caring, but yells a lot when I misbehave, and when he hits me, my mother stops him. I like spending time with my brothers and sisters, playing and teasing them. I don't get to spend so much time with them because when I do my mother always calls for me to come to help her. I had twin sisters, one died and when I think of her I feel sad, the other is very sick and I feel bad for her. My aunt died and left all my cousins without a mother, my grandmother takes care of them but they are very difficult to handle.

A number of issues were raised in Laila’s account of her family. Fierce loyalty and a sense of responsibility to the family were evident in her statement concerning her
cousins’ loss of their mother, and how her grandmother had to take care of them. Her
sense of responsibility toward her mother meant that although she would rather play with
her siblings, she understood that her mother needed her help. Laila4 herself was a frail
little girl who, like her siblings, had never attended school; but unlike her siblings, she
did not participate in paid employment as her family chose to keep her home to take care
of the family’s needs. Laila4’s mother was a delicate woman who had borne seven
children, including the latest addition of twins. Death was seen as the will of God, those
that died were intended for a better place. The belief in a Divine presence which was
pivotal to the lives of this community was important to note. References were constantly
being made to God for almost everything, perhaps as a mechanism to endure some of
their tragedies and allow a smile to constantly lighten their faces. Yet, in this instance,
Lalia4 seemed happy for the child that had died and remembered her name. This was
very different from her recollection of the child that had survived whose name she could
not remember, as this meant another child she became responsible for.

Besides Laila4, no other child managed to capture so many different emotions and
reactions to work and leisure. The children interviewed tended simply to describe their
love for their family and why the parents were missing. In Laila4’s case, I believe it was
seeing the dead twin that triggered a wave of emotions, which she chose to reveal to me.
She had been attending the NGO Centre because her brothers had brought her along with
her friends Heba7, Maha7, Zeinab6, Mariam17 and Azzal6. By speaking to Laila4 I
managed to gain more insight into the lives of her brothers, Uthman4 and Hasan4’s.

Traditionally, the role of the father was that of a patriarch. He was the sole decision
maker, negating the identity of any one else in his home-domain. Slowly, the mother,
who was asserting her identity, challenged the father’s role. The mother did make
decisions, such as working or taking a literacy class, and all this was done without
initially gaining permission from the husband. The children quite often stated that they
participated in decisions concerning their lives. I found little evidence of this in my
observations. The children appeared to follow the will of their parents while showing
some assertiveness toward their employers.
The children placed the decisions governing the household in the hands of both their mother and their fathers. Decisions concerning spending, children's chores in and around the household and their attendance in school or dropping out, were for the most part discussed as a family. Children were asked first whether the father was the decision-maker, then they were asked if the mother was, regardless of the answer to the first question. The children were told that the decision-maker meant a person to whom they went to ask for anything. If the children answered that their mother was the decision-maker to the first question, the children were then asked did your mother ask your father, to which 23 replied yes. This meant that the child believed that the mother took the decisions; yet the mother discussed her decisions with the father, and thus it was something of a joint decision. There were nine children who said that the mother took the sole responsibility for the decision making process in the household. The girls, with the exception of one, all attributed the decision process either to both parents or solely to the mother. This was significant because when the female children become adults and are responsible for their own households, they will in all probability do the same.

There was no comparison between poverty and the father's authority. The children who lived in extreme poverty had the decision to work taken either by the mother or the father, or it was their own choice. In only half the instances was the decision left to the father. In the remaining instances it was the children, the mother, the mother and father or the uncles who decided to send the children to work. Paradoxically, when asked who the decision maker in the home was, the majority of the families responded that the father was. Yet, the decision to send the children to the NGO Centre was mostly the mothers'.

7.4.3 Division of Labour and Chores in the Household

The Family unit, for the most part, consisted of a father, a mother and their children. The structure of the family was critical to how the children viewed themselves and defined their roles in both their society and in their homes. Girls in particular were always at a disadvantage as they were expected to work in the home without pay and in the labour
market gaining an income for their family. Upon reaching puberty, the girls were removed from the labour market and isolated in the home environment performing daily chores. Consequently, there was a categorical division between what was deemed paid labour, where income was gained, versus unpaid labour carried out in the home environment and where no income was retrieved.

Inside the household, there appeared to be a clear cut division of labour. Mothers and girls assumed all household chores although boys, on occasion, would help to carry water and do some errands while the fathers, for the most part, did very little in the household. Thirteen fathers remained inactive in the economic arena. Most could be spotted at the local cafés as they smoked their Shisha, drank their tea or Turkish coffee and watched football games or talk-shows. The needs of the father were always met regardless of their economic contribution to the household.

The boys had more free time, as they were not expected to help around the home as much. After work, the girls came home and carried out a number of chores, mostly light ones as many of them lacked the energy to do anything strenuous. The children were asked if, when they returned from work, they did any chores around the house, to which only 16 out of 50 answered that they did have light chores around the house. This seemed rather low as in other countries this has been identified as a problem, especially for girls (see Chapter Three). In the sample used 6 out of the 15 girls helped in the household. Long hours at work then returning to take care of household chores were the burdens of all women and young girls over 11 years in the sample studied.

While observing Uthman4 and Hasan4 for their case studies, I had the chance to speak with their father about his reasons for sending his children to work rather than school, and specifically about the female roles in his household.

Researcher: Good afternoon, how are you today?
D4 (father): (nods)
Researcher: What are you making today? (pointing at the clay that is being moulded on the wheel).
D4 (father): *Olas*
Researcher: That’s great; I didn’t think anyone made these anymore.
D4 (father): We are trying to start making them again in Cairo.
Researcher: My nnele loves *Olas*, but we could not find any to get him, now I know where to come. Mr. D4, can I ask you some questions about your children?
D4 (father): Of course, we are very happy with their progress at the NGO Centre.
Researcher: Thank you and this is good that you brought up the NGO Centre because I was wondering if there was something specific that made it difficult for your children to go to school?
D4 (father): There was never any money.
Researcher: So if you had more money, would you send your younger children to school or work?
D4 (father): But where will this money come from?
Researcher: Have you considered letting your wife work?
D4 (father): She can’t, she has a great deal to do at home, its not easy raising eight children.
Researcher: But I can see that Laila4 has been responsible for a great deal of the housework…
D4 (father): *(interrupts)* Laila4 cannot handle all our families’ needs; my wife needs to be home.
Researcher: I just spoke to your wife and she told me about the twins, congratulations. Can I ask you, did you always want to have a big family?
D4 (father): This is our fate, God gave us this.
Researcher: May God preserve them for you. Well thank you again, I don’t want to take up more of your time.

The father of Uthman4 and Hasan4 was a traditional patriarch who did not allow his wife to work, and Laila4 in turn was only permitted to work in her own household. Laila4 was the oldest daughter and was expected to help around the house. The mother herself had been married at 16 years of age and had been weakened from the eight children that she had delivered, of which she had lost two. The mother was suffering from anaemia and did in fact rely heavily on Laila4 to run the household as she simply had no energy.

The role of the older, female siblings was to play with the children and also help out with the household chores, as assistants to their mother. It is important to consider the importance of these older siblings to these child labourers. The older siblings helped a great deal with the household, performing many of the chores that the child labourers would have had to do if they had not been around, specifically in the case of the girls.
This is in turn created an opportunity for the child labourers to have some free time to play with their friends and other siblings when they returned home from work. Sometimes though the older sisters were busy, or the children do not have older sisters and the child labourers, specifically the girls, were forced to do chores around the house.

7.5 Conclusion

Family structure had an impact of the fertility rate of a family, and increased the occurrence of child labour in families. It also influenced the role that children played within their families. Children were very close to their families and felt obliged to the family unit to perform their part in ensuring the survival of their family unit. Thus, although poverty and lack of access to basic needs was the reason for families sending their children to the labour market, the children chose to remain there mainly from a sense of obligation to their family unit, specifically in the younger boys and all girls. While obligation may seem to signify that children were not willing in a sense to work for the wellbeing of their family, this is not the case. Obligation is simply why they worked, but they did so without any visible resentment toward their families, on the contrary the children in this study continually tried their best at whatever task they were given.

The tension between educating their children and sending them to the labour market was continually present in the families dialogue with me. Education was viewed as a long-term investment, but was a luxury they could not afford. There were two views on the concept of education. The first view was that some parents felt that if their children received an education, they would go much further in life. The second view was that formal education would not guarantee anyone a future. And so it was the latter view that governed the parents’ train of thought and guided them in their decision to send their children to work.

Parents started to question the value of education since it brought no additional monetary value. The parents in this community viewed their children as a security for themselves
and the rest of their family. They believed that as their children matured in age, they would pick up a skill and gain additional income. As such, if the children continued in the school system, there was no guarantee that they would gain employment; while if the child entered the labour market, there was a chance that they could sustain long-term employment.

The family bond was viewed by the children as a source of protection from the outside world and nurture for their hearts and minds. None of the children ever expressed resentment toward their families, although the family was the reason for the children finding themselves in the harsh environment of the labour market. From the analysis of the data, the children expressed four main themes relating to their families: responsibility, pride, nurture, and security. The children had a deep sense of responsibility toward their families which they fulfilled by providing the family with an income. The children in return expected to be nurtured and given security from the harsh world. The families also produced a large number of children for their own preservation and security. When families did not satisfy the nurturing and protection aspect of their relationship the children looked to siblings or friends to fulfil that role. Boys in particular, took pride in their achievements and as such their families took pride in them too.

The difference by gender in the child labourers was mainly the amount of playtime, number of household, and the type of work assigned to them at their workplaces based on their skills and abilities. The boys had more free time to play and the girls had more chores. This could be attributed to the traditional gender bias of girls helping out in the household more than boys. Almost all mothers in the Egyptian society from all classes would not trust their boys to do household chores. Also, mothers allowed for additional freedom to their boys to spend time outdoors, vis-à-vis girls.

In the last three chapters, I have analyzed all the empirical data that I had collected. The data once analyzed painted a picture of child labourers who, for the most part, worked to support their families because they felt a bond and responsibility toward them. The children stayed with their families even as they got older because the bond between them
was secure. The children learned to negotiate their roles in the labour market in order to gain an income and, as far as possible, to avoid exploitation.
Chapter Eight

Conclusion
8.1 Introduction

I have tried to look at children through rights, their ability to negotiate within the agencies that they are part of and finally their leisure time, their time to do what they want. The latter was quite by chance that I was able to observe children's leisure time outside the labour market and the household. However, within this leisure a great deal of insight on the child labourers lives was uncovered. In addition, a number of insights on into how families made decisions and their aptitude for survival were also unravelled. Perhaps, it is the construction of Arab and Egyptian families and how they function as a unit that is the most significant discovery within this thesis.

I embarked on this research to gain an insight into the lives of child labourers in Old Cairo four years ago. I observed the fundamentals of families striving to sustain themselves, yet maintaining the family bond at all times. In analysing the data it became evident that these families were doing what they perceived to be best for their children. The poverty that surrounded and governed their lives told a tragic story for the families, but one of hope for their children. The children that I found working in the pottery industry moved from one avenue of participation to another, changing their roles to suit the environment in which they functioned. I set out to investigate how the child labourers in Old Cairo negotiate their place within their surroundings, but I ended up with a much greater insight into how the Arab families' lives were lived and constructed.

Utilizing a number of methodologies to study child labour in Egypt also allowed for greater in-depth research to be conducted. The structured interviews provided a baseline from which to begin. The photographs allowed for more personable interactions with the children and finally the case studies allowed for greater interaction with the children, their families and their employers.

As families all over Egypt were learning to deal with the economic realities governing their lives, social factors were also changing for them. Many families moved to Cairo in search of a better life, but found instead a harsh reality that left them unable to educate
and support their families. Poverty was everywhere. The parents that I surveyed found it harder and harder to survive. The cost of staples such as oil, sugar, and rice all doubled within the period of this study, while incomes were being frozen and jobs were being cut. The pottery industry also suffered a major setback, due to the slowdown in many housing developments that were utilizing the shingles produced by them. The pottery industry was also constantly in danger of being removed due to its inability to purchase the land it has been constructed upon.

Gathering and reviewing literature pertaining to children and the labour market presented a great number of paths for me to follow. The literature available was quite overwhelming as I was looking at labour, the market, children, families, Islam, Arab societies, and Egyptian culture. Thus, as the theories and literature overflowed, I was forced to begin an elimination process. A great deal of what was examined in the literature did pertain to the findings of the research; however, some new insights were discovered as a result of the research. Using the CRC to guide the research allowed me to focus on listening to the voices of the child labourers. Their words and images were used to unravel their lives, which were very much dependent on their families. Financially the children were for the most part able to become self-sufficient as they were the sole providers of income for the household, yet the children depended a great deal on the families. The parents in turn also relied heavily on their children, not only for income but to confirm their status as a family.

What became evident as the research progressed is that in the Arab world, married couples who do not have children are not a family and are looked down upon, while children without families are not considered children, but seen as a shameful presence in the society in which they live. Child labourers worked as part of a unit, each member making a contribution to the family as a whole. Thus, to investigate the lived realities of child labourers, it was important to understand what the children did in the labour market, why they were in the labour market and what made them continue. In addition, in between being in the labour market and being with the family, there was leisure time. Perhaps, this in between time or leisure time was the only occasion during which the
children were completely in their space and element.

This chapter will attempt to provide a link between what was discovered within the literature available and what was discovered throughout the research. Finally, the contribution that this thesis will make to the field of empirical sociological research will be raised.

8.2 Children and the Labour Market

Children were placed into the labour market due to poverty and their families’ lack of access to basic services. The children studied did, for the most part, fit the description stated by UNICEF (2002), ILO (2004 and 2005) and other bodies of literature. There was a constant struggle between what the literature stated and the families’ actions concerning the children’s placement either within the formal school system or the informal labour market. Grootaert (1998) writes that the determinants of child labour exist when the educational and economic systems have stopped working, which to a large extent is the situation of the child labourers studied for this thesis. Children were found participating in the labour market for a number of reasons; the most poignant was that the school system had rejected them due to their inability to contribute financially towards teachers’ salaries. Of course, there were children who had simply never been sent to school. The families’ explanation for this was the need for the children to assist in the financial support of the family. The significance of such social and economic inequalities on the lives of these children could clearly be seen in their families who at an early age had become tired and ill.

The parents could not contribute to their families’ financial well-being so the children were given this responsibility and, as stated in IPEC (2002) literature, in turn the cycle continues. According to López-Calva (2001), the reason for sending children to gain an income was not simply about monetary compensation. Perhaps then, what Abu-Lughod (1998) states is a lack of confidence in what the educational system can provide for the families in the future, is what influenced the parents to send their children to the labour
market, in order to benefit in the here and now.

Finding a place for the Arab child labourers in the literature was rather an arduous task. As in Arab countries children are always dependent on their families. Even into their adult lives they remain subservient to the patriarch, or in some cases, the matriarch of the family. The children were working because of their responsibility toward their parents, and were part of a family which nurtured and cared for them. As the children grew older they were capable of leaving but they did not, instead the boys thought of how to strengthen their skills in order to guarantee and secure their employments. This was due to the complex mutual bond that developed and was nurtured between the children and their families. The parents were dependent on the children for financial means; likewise, the children were dependent on their parents for emotional support. Thus, the children worked and found ways to pride themselves in their work as part of their responsibility to their families. As the children gained more experience in the labour market they learnt to negotiate their rights of employment. They learnt to leave jobs when they felt exploited and negotiate better salaries with new employers. They learnt how to make their voices heard. They learnt to function in an adult world and to be independent in their efforts to maintain their rights, but recognized their role in their families as emotionally dependent children, a role that they will forever carry, even into adulthood. Perhaps, it is the significance of the children's emotional ties that allowed them to continue functioning despite the harsh realities that surrounded them.

The long hours that the children worked, the gruelling working conditions that they endured for an average of 11 hours each day did not come without its burdens. Yet the family supported the children as they endured and mothers and sisters were constantly on hand, serving meals and brushing hair. The child labourers on the other hand never complained, at least not concerning the work they did, but rather about the exploitation they tolerated. The children understood that they had certain responsibilities to carry out each day. It was the added tasks that they were forced to perform without compensation, or the verbal and physical abuse that they also endured, that made them speak out. This, however, did not stop them from taking pride in their work. The boys in particular were
always eager to show off their creations either through their photographs or by simply asking me to look at what they had done. This showed the importance once again of listening to children’s voices as, by dismissing child labour as simply exploitative, one would not have listened to the children placing a great deal of importance on what they did. To these child labourers what they did in the pottery factories was more than just a means of feeding their families and allowing them to survive, it meant that was their own to be proud of.

The children showed a great deal of responsibility, loyalty, and pride towards their work. Although pottery products are highly fragile, breakage of any item is seldom noticed in any of the pottery factories, and employers even highly commended the children for being careful despite the heavy weight of some of the pottery products. The older boys systematically and methodically went about picking up the vases and carving designs into them then placing them to dry. They sometimes helped out the other children in placing the pieces in to the kiln. The boys showed a great deal of talent and to some degree received encouragement from their employers and other factory owners. The structure of the agency that the children operated within was rigid and did not allow for easy access of the male child labourers to skills acquisition in their trade. Thus, the male children had to defy the structure of the agencies they worked within in order to improve their socio-economic status. The girls on the other hand were not given the chance to show off their talents and were never encouraged to try. To a great degree this lack of encouragement did not faze the girls, as they did not see themselves working in the future in the pottery industry. They saw themselves married and responsible for a family of their own, financially dependant on their future husbands. There was a certain amount of irony in this belief as their own fathers had not been financially providing for their families.

The factory owners ran a business with profit as their main focus; thus honing the skills of the children they employed as child labourers was not seen as a priority. Consequently the children, in their negotiations in the labour market, learnt how to manoeuvre around this agency and attempted to gain opportunities to better themselves or to suit them. As the children grew older and more experienced they used their wisdom to stand up for
their demands and to gain the attention of others that might aid them in their efforts. In the end, the child labourers stayed in the factories because they wanted to, and learnt to challenge the roles they had been given, and to maintain their family pride at all cost. The boys’ loyalty was more toward their work than toward their employer, which was evident from their pictures and their descriptions of work. Moreover, the boys used the pottery they created as evidence of their skills and both boys and girls used their voices as a way to avoid exploitation. What was less evident was the ability of the girls to negotiate practically their conditions within the work environment, rather than simply remaining passive, which is how they are depicted in much of the literature.

The health risks associated with child labour were a significant issue to both the families and the children, and are well described in the literature (Graitcer and Lerer, 2000; IPEC, 2004; Forastieri, 1997; Scanlon, et al, 2002). The literature alluded to the fact that child labour made up the largest abuse of children (Scanlon, et al, 2002), the families understood the impact of the type of work the children did on their children’s health. The children complained of headaches, skin rashes from the clay and electrocutions from the new kilns. This leads once again to the central issue that listening to the children is fundamental to gaining a perspective on child labour and their rights. It is not simply about enacting conventions and banning children (Burra, 1995) but rather about working with child labourers to find solutions.

8.3 The Child Labourer and Leisure Time

Although the time the children spent in leisure was limited, it was important to discuss its relevance. In addition, most of the time I spent with the children was during their leisure time so I had actual first hand observations to analyze and recount. There was a great deal to observe during this in between time, an area which the literature had not fully explored. Lieten (2005) alludes to the fact that children did not have time to be children. Yet, based on my observations, the child labourers sampled did do many of the things other children did. The only difference between the child labourers and children that attended school in Batn al-Baqarah and Fawakhir was in what they spent their mornings
and afternoons doing. Children, who attended school, went to school and came home to be pampered by their families. The children who laboured went to the pottery factories and came home to many of the same families as the children who attended school to be pampered as well. As for time, the child labourers made time, stealing moments at work or on their way home or to the NGO Centre to laugh and tell their secrets. In leisure time the children were free to explore their true identities, laughing, bickering and teasing one another.

The domains in which boys and girls enjoyed their leisure time differed. A theme that continuously presented itself from my observations, the case studies and the photographs, was the gender roles used to determine the children's play areas. Girls tended to stay within the internal domain of the home, even when they had some leisure time. The boys by contrast were always found in and around the external domains such as work or playing with their friends outside. The defined gender roles were very much a theme throughout the children's negotiation of every facet of their lives. Nevertheless, this was expected as bodies of literature, such as the work from IPEC (2002), spoke of the differences.

Being with friends was a time for the children to be themselves and not worry about any work or family constraints. That was their time, not be judged, but to feel and express themselves. Their brothers and sisters were also included in their leisure time, as friends and nurturers and the older siblings accommodated, shared and played with their younger siblings. Yet it was difficult for the children to balance their free time between the NGO Centre and just having truly leisure time with their friends and siblings. At the NGO Centre, even though it was a source of amusement for the children, there were elements of restriction such as discipline and expected performance. The children had to behave, work on projects, and listen to lessons. Yet they still appreciated their time at the NGO Centre as they felt it was their reward. All the children were eager to learn how to use the pottery wheel, to draw, to have lunch and play sports together, learn how to read and write. To them going to the NGO Centre was still a time of leisure and in many ways was their reward for being part of the labour market and contributing to their families’
survival.

The importance of the children’s friendships with either siblings or friends was the bond that kept them all together. They found comfort with one another and, when a parent was not available for one of the children, either a sibling or a friend stepped in and filled their place. This allowed the children to feel a sense of belonging, that someone cared and that they were understood. This feeling is significant because the children expressed its importance repeatedly. To them being part of something was an important aspect of their lives, and being part of a family and a circle of friends was crucial.

8.4 Child Labourers and their Families’ Dynamics

Children were their parents’ pride, but they were also their security. The sex and age of the children affected their emotions concerning their relationship and the role they had within the agencies and their social networks. It also affected how they were treated within their families.

Male children remained a source of prosperity for the family, and as such they got better food, education, and other advantages within the household. There has been a great deal of difference between the way girls and boys were raised all through the development processes. The children played their roles, yet they had the propensity to understand that those roles could be changed. They welcomed change, more so the boys who had more room to manoeuvre in their roles always looking for new opportunities to explore; however, the girls did show instances of defiance by standing up to their employers and sometimes even to their mothers.

The generational approach (Mayall, 2002) allowed for the children to flow smoothly from adult-like roles to childlike roles. The children in the research flowed quite easily from their labour environment, to their home environment, and to their leisure time. Boys and girls were to a great degree independent in their thoughts, but did fall back on their families for nurturing support. The parents were traditionally the caregivers,
although they relied on their children for financial security. Many girls performed the role of sole provider for the family, yet came home to be bathed and to have their hair combed by their mothers. There were no observations of any children reacting negatively to mothers performing such acts, but rather the acts were always welcomed. This is significant as it showed how much the children appreciated and looked forward to being pampered by their families.

Families in Egypt are central to the children’s lives, providing them with education, security and a social life. Due to the majority of families having migrated from an agrarian life in rural Egypt, families needed to adapt to the urban centre. They were unable to grow their own food and relied on employment for survival; yet as the research delved deeper into the families’ intricate webs, the data revealed that many of the families migrated bringing others with them for security. The families helped each other out and provided for one another when times were hard. They created a cohesive, almost tribal, network to rely on for support and when times were hard.

The child labourers’ families were the bedrock from which they derived their endurance to weather the environments they flowed in and out of. Child labour is seen in much of the literature as robbing children of their childhood (IPEC 2004, UNICEF 2002); yet, the empirical data that was compiled for this research painted a different story. Investigating the child labourers in Old Cairo presented a challenge. The children were in fact dependent on their families, not for financial means as many of them were the sole breadwinners for their family, but rather for emotional comfort. This led me to explore the emotional bond that the children had with their families, on whom they were dependent for a sense of nurturing and security. This bond kept the children at home, because the children understood that without their families they would be marginalised by society, as would their families in their absence.

The families’ social construct of reality consciously affirmed that sending the children to school rather than to work was a luxury they simply could not afford. The parents had been raised in the same manner. Very few of them had been to school and most of the
fathers had worked from an early age. Thus, a cultural tradition had been set permitting the parents to state that despite the value of an education, the circumstances obliged them not to offer it to their children. Similarly, this notion can be found in the work of López-Calva (2001).

The bonds that existed within the families was what kept them all together, secure in their world. Poverty bred a bond that did not exist in other socio-economic strata. The families had very few life-chances for social and economic mobility extracting a great deal of self-reliance on one another. There were no examples of independence between families as all members were constantly dependent on each other. Thus, to look at children in terms of a dependency theory would negate the cultural role within which the children thrived. No parent was independent, a higher patriarch was always present to help and provide security for members of the family. Poverty in Egypt, although dire in many areas, has always been shielded by the kinship system and social networks.

The girls valued their times at home; they stated on many occasions that they would prefer to be with their parents rather than at work. Yet, they also understood the need to work for their family to sustain themselves in the network of dependency. The girls believed that one day they would not have to work once the parents were able to get on without their income. As the children got older more of them also had to help around the house after they returned from work. The older girls were taught more tasks at home to give them the experience they would need to run their own homes in the future. The girls also were expected to take care of other siblings that worked. The boys were given lesser tasks, more to do with outdoor activities. There was a segregation by sex on activities, placing girls in the internal domain of the household and the boys in the external domain of the labour market.

A large number of parents were disabled by their poor health. Health was always the central part of any conversation with the parents. The productivity levels of the parents declined with each year as their health declined, the cost of living increased and their ability to hold down a job became harder and harder. Poverty surrounded these families
and the only comfort the family found was in the hands of God. One day their children, the parents believed, would be better off than them and would take care of them. As much as the children needed to feel a sense of nurturing and security among their families, the parents also needed to believe that their children would be their security as well.

The child labourers viewed their families as their structure or social cohesion that infused them with a sense of nurturing to feel that they belonged to someone. The children interviewed never showed signs of despair as the parents did, but rather generated a sense of optimism for the future. They saw bright futures ahead of them and a way out of their current difficulties either through marriage, for the girls, or by enhancing and refining their skills in the labour market in the case of the boys. The children, though unique in their identities, possessed a number of common qualities. All the child labourers believed that their lives would become better, some by the grace of God, while others coupled that grace with their own hard work. They carried on the family pride, believing in their traditions and cultures that stated their parents were their responsibility.

The bond that existed within the nuclear family of the child labourer increased as the child matured. The boys thought of ways to increase their profitability at work while the girls spent more time helping their mothers. The children also demonstrated fluidity between their employment, home, and leisure spheres. The children worked in the factories as adults and returned home as children without any hesitation or time for acclimatization. At work the children became more calculating and decisive concerning their rights. They had realized that as they became more skilled they were able to market themselves better and thus could choose for whom to work. The girls were at less of an advantage as few of them had mastered any skills; nevertheless, they became relentless at guaranteeing that no one took advantage of them. Conversely, upon returning to their homes, the children would become reliant on their mothers for everything.
8.5 Final Observations

During the four years of observations and interviews with the children it was clear from my sample of child labourers that families were the cornerstone of these children's lives. The children worked hard to support their families and knew this was essential to their survival. The family dynamics played a central role in the lives of the child labourers; however, their ability to flow in and out of agencies became central to my investigation of their lives. The child labourers gained most of their experiences, interactions and ability to negotiate in the labour market where they spent most of their days, but it was the family that structured their existence and gave them the cultural parameters within which to navigate.

The patterns in the children's behaviour, which I studied, from the empirical data, showed the children's resilience and ability to absorb knowledge and skills easily. Their opportunities in life had been limited, yet this did not delineate their ability to look outside the parameters that were defined for them by their socioeconomic status. In many instances, the children did stand up to their employers and authority figures and express their opinions, fully comprehending what repercussions could befall them. Perhaps this is an area that needs further research, but in the limited capacity of this research the children standing up for their rights showed a great deal of courage, which further emphasises the need to listen to what they have to say.

The children in this study showed very little passivity; rather they showed a great deal of pride in who they were and what they were capable of achieving. The children and their families were proud, and that pride was preserved at all cost. It was the one thing no one could take away from them. Perhaps mixed with that pride was also a reliance on faith, that God would always do what was best for them as a family. Such a deep-rooted faith gave them a great deal of strength to endure their harsh environment, but never at the cost of their pride.

Although, the families did lay their lives in the hands of God, there was an additional
element of customary law, which by all observations seems to have been more continual than legislation. The families and their children believed in the customary laws which governed their everyday life and which they attributed to being derived from God. It is this customary law or tradition that placed girls within the internal domain and boys in the external domain. It is also what kept mothers quiet about their financial contribution toward their families. More importantly, it is what will always allow child labour to continue.

Egypt and other Arab countries continually pass legislation, yet many of these laws are ignored or simply not applied, specifically those related to children’s involvement in the labour market. This is due to the considerable weight of customs and traditions in the Arab family. It is not left to the government or to the United Nations (specifically the CRC) to decide how families conduct their daily lives, but rather it is the patriarch and customary laws that dictate daily conduct. It is for this purpose that more discussion at the family level is needed regarding child labour and the rights afforded to children in the Arab world.

Listening to children is also essential in any study on children. Whether or not they are dependent or independent, children have opinions, beliefs and preferences. It is these voices that should determine whether children should be active participants in any agency that they are involved in, including formal schooling. Some of the children sampled in this study were mistreated by the school system and thus opted not to attend; they preferred to go to work. Yet when the NGO offered a place that made them feel welcome they gladly gave up their one free day a week to come and learn. The children did not want to change their way of life or in actuality never paused to think of doing so; but rather just wanted their demands to be heard.

Having stressed the importance of listening to what children have to say, it is equally important to listen to what Arab families have to say on the matter. Understanding how families in the Arab world exist and function is relevant to understanding how they make collective decisions. The Arab family, although similar in many ways to other non-
western families around the world, has its own unique customs that are carried with them around the world. Many of these customs are derived from Islam but many others, particularly in the context of Egypt, date as far back to the pharaohs. Such customs and traditions are not easily changed, as they are embedded in the identity and pride of these families.

More emphasis in future research needs to be given to studying Arab families and in particular how children and child labourers negotiate their roles within such a structure. While children in the Arab context must be studied within the confines of a family it is still imperative for future sociological research to attain a standpoint on the sociology of Arab children.
Appendices
Appendix One

Children's Structured Interview

Name:

Area where you last lived:

1. How many individuals live in your household?

2. Circle appropriate family members and how many of each is living within the household:

   Mother   Father   Brother( )/Sister( ) Other

3. Circle the amount of rooms (including sleeping and other rooms) in your living space:

   1   2   3   4   5

4a. Do you sleep at home?

   Yes/No

4b. If no, where do you sleep?

5a. Do you feel close to your immediate family?

   Yes/No

5b. If no, do you feel close to anyone?
Friend   Grandparents   Uncle/Aunt   Teacher   Employer
Other, describe-----------------------------

6a. Who do you look up to (mentor/idol)?

   b. Do you have a male role model within your family?

      Father   Grandfather   Uncle   Other, describe -------------

6c. Do you have a female role model within your family?

      Mother   Grandmother   Aunt   Other, describe -------------

7a. Have you ever attended school? (If the answer is no, then skip to question 8)

   Yes/No

7b. If yes to question 4, then are you still attending? (If the answer is yes, then skip to question 8)

   Yes/No

   c. If no to question 5, then at what age and grade did you stop attending?

      8  9  10  11  12  13 and above

7d. What was your reason for not attending school?

      Lack of funds   Lack of funds/private lessons   Unable to keep up

      Needed to support family   Too distant   Responsibilities at home
Other, describe-----------------------------

8a. Do any of your siblings attend school?
   Yes/No

8b. Are they still attending?
   Yes/No

9a. Is your father working?
   Yes/No

9b. What is your father's social class?

9c. How much does he earn per week?

9d. Does he spend on the household?
   Yes/No

9e. Does he make decisions in the household?
   Yes/No

10a. Is your mother working?
   Yes/No
10b. What is your mother's social class?

10c. How much does she earn?

10d. Does she spend on the household?

Yes/No

10e. If father is present, does he know that mother is working?

Yes/No

10f. If yes, does he object?

Yes/No

10g. Does she make decisions in the household?

Yes/No

11a. Are you working?

Yes/No

11b. How much do you earn?

11c. Do you contribute on the household?

Yes/No
11d. How many days a week do you work?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

11e. How many hours a day do you work?

1-3  4-7  8-11  more than 12

11f. Do you have chores/responsibilities within the household?

Yes/No

11g. What are your responsibilities?

12a. Are any of your siblings working?

Yes/No

12b. How much do they earn?

12c. Do they spend on the household?

Yes/No

12d. How many days do they work?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

12e. How many hours a day do they work?

1-3  4-7  8-11  more than 12

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12f. Do they have chores/responsibilities within the household?
Yes/No

If Yes, Describe

13a. Do you have spare time?
Yes/No

13b. If yes, where do you spend your free time?

14. How long have you been using project?

15. How often do you frequent the project?

16. What do you use the project for?

16. Do your parents know that you use the centre?
Yes/No

17. Has the centre tried to counsel your parents?
Yes/No

18. Can I speak to your parents?
Yes/No
Appendix Two

Family’s Structured Interview

Father’s Name:

Mother’s Name:

Street Name:

Date:

Time of Day:

Initial Observations of Family Home (to be answered by surveyor):

Family Present:

Family Appearances:

Cleanliness:

Furnished:

Crowding:

Separate Spaces for Sleeping/Kitchen/Bathrooms:

Demographics of the family:
1a. Where are parents from?

Cairo    Beni Suav    Suhag    Asyut    Fayum    Other

1b. If not from Cairo, then how many years ago did the family move?

Less than 1 yr    2-5   6-10    11-15    16-20    21-25

1c. Why did family move?

Family    Work    Escape (problems in village)    Other

2. What are the ages of the parents?

3. Age they were wed?

4. Age first child was born? (How long after they were wed did they have their first child?)

5. How many girls and how many boys does the family have?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
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6. If more than three children, why did you have so many children?

Birth control failed ( )
Religion ( )
Not too many ( )
A lot of children are good ( )
Other ( )

7. Are there any relatives that reside with you?

Yes  No

Economics of the Family:

8a. Is father employed?

Yes  No

8b. If yes, what is father’s employment?

8c. Does father work regularly?

Regularly  Often  Seldom  Other

8d. If no, why not?

No work ( )
Health ( )
Fired ( )
Does not want to work ( )
Other ( )

9a. Is mother employed?

Yes  No
9b. If yes, what is mother’s employment?

9c. Does mother work regularly?

Regularly Often Seldom Other

9d. If no, why not?

Housewife ( )
Man spends on household ( )
Wants to but does not have training ( )
Husband refuses ( )
Other ( )

10a. How much does family spend per day?

11. Does family:

Rent ( )
Own house (squatter) ( )
Own land in village ( )
Other ( )

12. How many rooms is family home?

1 2 3 4 5

13. Does family have running water in home?

Yes No
14. Does family have electricity in the home?
   Yes  No

15. Does family have a toilet in home?
   Yes  No

16a. How many meals does the family eat per day?
   1  2  3  4

16b. Ordinarily what does the family’s lunch consist of in a given week?
   Vegetables  Meats  Starches  Beans  Other

17. How many kids are working?

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<th>Boys</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
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</table>

17a. Why are children working?

Poverty ( )
Did not make it in school ( )
Likes to work ( )
Does not want to go to school ( )
Other ( )
18. Whose decision was it for the child to work?

Mother       Father       Uncle       Other

19a. Does family feel that the work day is too long for their children?

Yes       No

19b. Does is it concern the family that their children are exposed to severe conditions?

Yes       No

19c. Has any of the following incidents occurred?

- Hitting ( )
- Insults ( )
- Burn ( )
- Cuts ( )
- Breakage ( )
- Suffocation ( )
- Injury to eye ( )
- Skin abrasions ( )

20. What happens when child is sick?

- Stays home ( )
- Goes to work ( )
- Goes to poly clinic ( )
- Nothing happens ( )
- Goes to work and asks for time off ( )
21. What do children do with their income?

Give earnings to family ( )
Gives partial earnings to parents and keeps some ( )
Keeps all earnings ( )
Other ( )

22. Does family have any other source of incomes?

Yes    No

23. Does family own any of the following?

Fridge ( )
Stove ( )
Washing machine ( )
Fan ( )
Mobile ( )
Television ( )
Video ( )
Tape-recorder ( )
Radio ( )
Water Heater ( )
Heater ( )
Sewing machine ( )
Car ( )
Education of the family:

24. Is Father:
Illiterate ( )
Literate ( )
Grade school level ( )
Prep school level ( )
High school ( )
Other ( )

25. Is Mother:
Illiterate ( )
Literate ( )
Grade school level ( )
Prep school level ( )
High school ( )
Other ( )

26a. Is it important for family that children are educated?
Yes     No

26b. How many children did the family send to school?

| In school | | | |
| Left school | | | |
| Never went to school | | | |

261
Social aspects of the family:

27. What would the family need in order for their children not to work?

Aid ( )
Secure employment for father ( )
Employment for mother ( )
Other ( )

28. What are their aspirations for their children?

Better than parents ( )
Educated ( )
Better employment ( )
Marriage ( )
Help parents in old age ( )
Elevate quality of life for whole family ( )
Other ( )

29. What are the family’s anxieties for their children?

Accident ( )
Unemployment ( )
Don’t get married ( )
Drug addiction ( )
Felon ( )
Other ( )
30. Does family go together on vacations?

Yes   No

31. How many meals does family eat together?

1  2  3  4

32. When family takes decisions?

Sit together as a family (  )
Mother and father sit together (  )
Father alone (  )
Mother alone (  )
Other (  )

33a. Whose decision was it to send child/children to the centre?

Mother   Father   Uncle   Other

33b. Do you see any progress being made with your child at the centre?

Yes   No

33c. What can be presented in addition at the centre for the children?

33d. What can be presented at the centre for the mother?

Tell family about cameras for the children.
Post Observations (to be answered by surveyor):

i. Who answered the majority of the survey questions?

ii. Were there any problems conducting the survey?

iii. Did any family members enter into the interview while the survey was progressing? If yes, were they absorbed easily?

iv. Did all initial family members present remain for the entire interview? If no, then who left, why did they leave?
Appendix Three

Chronology of United Nations Conventions and Covenants to Eliminate Children from the Labour Market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Convention/covenant/treaty</th>
<th>Member States that have ratified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Minimum Age (Industry) Convention Number 5</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>ILO Forced Labour Convention Number 29</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>ILO Minimum Age Convention Number 138 &amp; Appendix Minimum Age Recommendation Number 146</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention Number 182</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(UNICEF, 1987:19)
(UNDP, 2005:320-23)
Appendix Four

Children's Photographs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Unit</th>
<th>Work &amp; Environment Surrounding it</th>
<th>Friends</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>250</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>43+102</td>
<td>478**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Numbers will not make up the total of 478 pictures as in all categories there is overlapping pictures.
Bibliography


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UN (2007) Universal Declaration of Human Rights


