研究論文

Men's Perception of Gender Roles in the Siwa Oasis, Egypt: Tradition and Gender Relation

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Abstract：

This study investigated the impact of tourism development on a rural minority community, with a specific focus on gender relations. The study was conducted with the Siwan community, an ethnic minority group native to Siwa Oasis in the western desert of Egypt, where the inhabitants belong to Berbers, an ethnic minority indigenous to North Africa. The study sought to understand the impact of the government-initiated rural tourism development that aimed to bring economic and social benefits to the rural community by "opening to and interacting with the world". Gender relations and dynamics are major elements that regulate the community's social engagement. While gender in tourism is a major research agenda, the majority of studies so far have focused on women's perspectives. In the context of rural MENA, social engagement is largely determined by men. Therefore, it was deemed necessary to uncover men's perspectives to understand gender dynamics as a determining factor of social engagement within the community. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews and participant observations with 18 male participants in Siwa Oasis during 2019. Analysis of data showed that tourism development in the Siwa Oasis has resulted some opportunities for both men and women to work and earn money for the community. Despite these changes, the men demonstrated a desire to protect fundamental features of traditional gender roles including, men being the primary income provider and the guardian of the family. The findings show a perceived shift in gender roles; however, such changes are limited due to the nature of public and private spaces in the community and Islamic tradition. The study suggests that for tourism to benefit the communities, policymakers and planners and developers should form an approach appropriate to the communities themselves.

Ⅰ．Introduction

Tourism has played a significant role in the global economy (Lew, 2011); although, recently COVID-19 has made a serious impact and brought the sector to a near standstill (Brouder, 2020). Tourism can create employment opportunities for local and regional development (Tsung-Pao & Hung-Che, 2016), as has been the case for the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA)[1]. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) reports that the MENA region was the world's fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019, growing at almost double the global average (+8%); in particular, Egypt has shown significant growth (21%) in its tourism sector (UNWTO, 2020). MENA countries, including oil-rich Oman and Qatar, have invested in tourism as a new source of economy to reduce their reliance on oil-based income (Henderson, 2014).

Since early 2000s, the governments in the MENA region have recognised the importance of promoting tourism as a tool for economic development, following the example of neighbouring major destinations, such as Dubai. In 2018, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia started a new visa for tourists and in 2019 allowed unmarried foreign couples to rent hotel rooms (BBC News, 2019). Iran has also promoted tourism since 2015 after the government sought to resolve Iran's nuclear dispute by improving relations with the West (Sayah, 2013).

The region has, however, faced many challenges such as the war and terrorist attacks, which inevitably hinder the region's tourism development. Another challenge for developing tourism in the region is a balance between the needs of the Muslim and non-Muslim tourists (Henderson, 2015). Since most of the MENA countries use Islam as a political, cultural, and societal ideology, defining acceptable values and behaviour for tourism has proven difficult (Gadami, 2012).

Despite these difficulties, tourism can provide positive opportunities for rural communities through creating employ-

ment, income, and social engagement, especially for women (UNWTO, 2010). Indeed, tourism has been proven to provide pathways to empowerment and gender equality (UNWTO, 2019). In Egypt, the concept of rural tourism had not been included in tourism development strategies until the government launched the *Rural Development Policy in Egypt Toward 2025* (Kruseman & Vullings, 2007). A few studies have investigated the potential of tourism development in rural areas of Egypt such as the Fayoum governorate (Eraqi, 2010). An example from the Tunis village shows that the residents utilised pottery handcrafts as a tourist attraction and succeeded in attracting more than 120,000 tourists each year. However, the study also revealed a gap between male and female income due to conservative lifestyle, with 92.5% of craft makers being male and 7.5% female (Refaat & Mohamed, 2019). This is the case in the Egyptian context where cultural norms enable men to act on the basis of gendered privilege (Al-Hibri, 2000; Gadami, 2012) resulting in an assumed gender inequality where women are less valued (Goldschmidt, 2004).

In 2019, the Ministry of Tourism in Egypt launched the Gender Equality Seal Program in cooperation with the National Council for Women and the United Nations, becoming the first county in MENA aiming to encourage equal opportunity in tourism (Egypt Independent, 2019). In 2019, the world's average female labour participation rate was 47.1%; however, MENA countries' averages were much lower, for example Tunisia (24%), Saudi Arabia (22%) and Egypt (18%) (World Bank, n.d.). Reasons commonly given for such low female labour participation in the MENA include the influence of Islam and cultural traditions (Afifi & Al-Sherif, 2014), which defines the female role in domestic sphere and restricts social engagement, including labour outside home (Hayo & Caris, 2013).

Changes in gender relations through tourism development have been extensively studied, most of which focus on women's income and empowerment (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2015; Malema & Naidoo, 2017; Mkono et al., 2021; Scheyvens, 2000). Gender (in)equality is primarily studied as a women's issue (Subašić et al., 2018); however, men's understanding and engagement in the promotion of the gender equality agenda is essential to achieve gender equality in the long term (Connell, 2005), which will lay a necessary foundation for social change (Subašić et al., 2018).

Little research has been done investigating men's voices regarding gender relations and gender roles, especially in the MENA and tourism context. The current study aimed to explore the impact of tourism development on men's perception

of gender roles. Doing so would reveal the complexities and nuanced understandings of the shifting gender roles through tourism. Offering such understandings can ultimately contribute to an approach to tourism that facilitates better social engagement for both men and women in Egypt, MENA, and globally. It is necessary to understand how inequality, as the most debated gender relation issue, is discussed in the tourism context.

Ⅱ. Gender Relations and Tourism Development

Gender is a system of cultural identities, social constructions, and relationships between females and males, often negotiated in a field of unequal power (Swain, 1995). Gender equality and economic empowerment are political goals; yet, the oversimplification of women's empowerment in economic power ignores the effects of social norms, local values, and social class (Chant & Sweetman, 2012). Women experience discrimination in the labour market and tend to be placed in unskilled or semiskilled work in the most vulnerable circumstance, for example working with poor working conditions, violence, stress, and sexual harassment (Baum, 2013). Gender equality is a human right and a fundamental basis for Sustainable Development Goals, whose mandate is "leave no one behind" (Stevens, 2010).

According to the UNWTO (2010), tourism can empower women through the provision of jobs and income-generating opportunities in small and larger-scale tourism and hospitality-related enterprises. In providing women with opportunities to participate in economic activities and access to resources, the tourism sector plays a vital role in reducing gender inequality. Encouraging women to participate in economic activities opens further opportunity to resources (UNWTO, 2010). However, Ferguson (2011) has criticised the notion of women's economic empowerment in most tourism policies arguing that simply focusing on economic empowerment may result in further labour exploitation, incorporating women into the labour force as cheap employees. Research into the gender divide in tourism workplace shows that the majority of women's work is concentrated in seasonal, part-time, and low-paid activities such as retail, hospitality, and cleaning (Chant, 1997; Sinclair, 1997). As Cole (2018) writes, "Earning money does not necessarily lead to increased equality or overcoming injustice" (p. 4). Men are the disproportionate holders of power in the status quo; thus, engaging them in discussions of gender equality and development will be an important indicator of the gender equality agenda's success (Hendra et al., 2013).

Several studies have investigated the relationship

between gender identities, gender roles, and tourism development policies (Ferguson, 2011; Gentry, 2007; Kinnaird & Hall, 1996; Swain, 1995). In some studies, tourism has aided female agency and opportunity (Duffy et al., 2015; Moswete & Lacey, 2015), enabling women to adopt new roles in paid employment in the public sphere (Tucker, 2007). However, in other cases, the income earned by women was abused by men in their families who spent the extra income on alcohol and narcotics, which also leads to community dissolution (Ishii, 2012). Therefore, it is important to contextualise the changing gender norms and gendered division of labour with the particular historical and sociocultural factors in a given locality. Further, evaluation of women's role and status change needs to be situated in the interactive relations between women and men, a major discussion point within the gender relation (Feng, 2013). Specific realities of gender relations within the research context are reviewed next.

Ⅲ. Gender Relations in MENA

Gender roles comprise "normative expectations about the division of labour between the sexes and to gender-related rules about social interactions that exist within a particular cultural-historical context" (Spence et al., 1985, p. 150). The effects of culture on behaviours, such as employment and educational opportunities for men and women within a community, are based on deeply rooted historical and religious belief systems. At the societal level, beliefs are changeable and transform over time and space depending on current socio-economic and political contexts (Aslam, 2012). In MENA, 93% of the population is Muslim (DeSilver & Masci, 2020). Muslim culture is considered essential in sustaining and strengthening the community's fundamental order through Mosques and religious organisations (Sun et al., 2019).

For instance, before Islam, Christianity established the idea of the equal spiritual worth of all people regardless of gender or social status; however, there was a gap between women's and men's education level during this era (Ahmed, 2021). In the Qur'an, women and men are considered two distinct categories of human species but are given the same consideration and potential (Wadud, 1999). They are both referred to using the gender-neutral term "*nafs*," meaning soul. As described in the Qur'an (2:286), translated by Sahih International (2020), "Allah does not charge a soul except its capacity. It will have [the consequence of] what [good] it has gained, and it will bear [the consequence of] what [evil] it has earned." The Qur'an does not define men and women in terms of binary oppositions nor does it associate sex with gender,

a specific division of labour, or with masculine-feminine attributes, a point exemplified through the gender-neutral word 'nafs' (Barlas, 2016; Wadud, 1999).

During the time of Prophet Muhammad, women were active participants in public and social affairs, including politics (Nadia, 2017); and included spiritual leaders, such as Aisha, the wife of Muhammad and daughter of the first Caliph Abu Bakr; and Islamic warriors, such as Khawlah bint al-Azwar (Bjørgum, 2016). Islamic feminists believe that to recover women's voice is no more than the recovery of Islam itself (Lovat, 2012). Historically, Islamic nations promoted women's rights and introduced inheritance and property law as early as the 7th century (Bishin & Cherif, 2017).

Many Islamic feminists argue gender inequality came later in Islam when the male elite controlled everything using false Hadith[2] to promote their agenda. This changed happened while Islam spread and interacted with other patriarchal cultures (Ahmed, 2021; Arat & Hasan, 2018; Wadud, 1999). However, in many cultures and traditions, including Islam, women have been discriminated; an act commonly justified using biological reasons that positions men above women in a highly gendered hierarchy (Cohen, 2009; Shalala, 1998). In Islam, there are many interpretations of the Qur'an regarding this point (Abukari, 2014; Ghafournia, 2017; Venkatraman, 2007). Muslim exegetes and philosophers used the Qur'an to justify their belief in male superiority; interpreting the Qur'an as based on the local culture and beliefs of the surrounding tribes, favouring the patriarchal system (Anwar, 2009). Men's superiority was a sociological tradition, and "the sociological often became theological and was defended as such even when the sociological conditions changed" (Engineer, 2008, p. 6). Thus, distinction between genders came from a social system that creates differences between men and women and was, in turn, blamed on the traditional interpretation of the Qur'an, which was exclusively done by men.

In Muslim societies, men and women agencies are shaped by religious texts. For example, women cannot access men's space without a mahram. Mahram refers to a specific category of people with whom marriage is explicitly prohibited, including blood relatives and in-laws. It also refers to the qualification for males who are mahram to escort women while travelling (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2001). Mahram has been usually associated with the restrictions of women travelling alone, without accompanying mahram. Mahram is part of a guardianship practice in Muslim societies, which is patriarchal and considered to be one of the reasons limiting women's agency and employment opportunities (Al-Asfour

et al., 2017). Mahram is similar to that described by Tucker (2007) in Turkish village society where it is shameful for a woman to walk in public because that might put her in a position where she may come into contact with men other than those belonging to her household. Importantly, these mahram restrictions are not found in the Qur'an, rather it is mentioned in the Hadith literature (Mustaqim, 2010).

In MENA societies, males are authoritarian in their relations with women, upholding the segregation of gender roles, taking control of fertility decisions, and maintaining an emotional distance from wives and children (Kandiyoti, 1994). Women are expected to be obedient to their men and their roles are limited, by social norms, to within the family. In Egypt, the majority of the population agrees that the wife must have her husband's permission before deciding to act (Mensch et al., 2003). This strict patriarchy affects the nature of employment in Egypt, playing an influential role in the gendered labour market. The main industry in Egypt, including oil, tourism, and construction, do not encourage women to join the labour market. Others have noted that most women in MENA have to quit work when they get married, largely justified by the idea of male dignity (MacKenzie & Foster, 2017). It is in this social and historical context that contemporary Egypt finds itself caught between change and tradition.

Ⅳ．Tourism Development in Siwa Oasis

The Siwa Oasis is in Marsa Matrouh Governorate, western Egypt. Considered one of the oldest oases in Egypt, the Siwa Oasis people (Siwan) rely on date and olive production as their main source of income. The Siwan are a Muslim, non-Arab minority in Egypt and North Africa. Their language, Siwi, is one of the non-Arabic minority languages of Egypt (Serreli, 2018). Recently, some families have started engaging with the tourism economy as a source of income.

The Siwa Oasis was opened for tourism development with the introduction of the development policy *Infitāḥ*, meaning "openness" in the early 1970s (Wahab, 1996). Large zones next to the Western Oasis, including Siwa Oasis, were declared for use as tourism sites. Investors in this area were given tax exemption for at least 10 years (Richter & Steiner, 2008). At this time, the local government of Marsa Matrouh Governorate started cooperating with the Egyptian Tourism Development Authority to promote the Siwa area as a tourist destination. The development plan included the construction of a factory for packing dates and olives and a handicraft centre to facilitate local industry development (Amara, 2010). During the researcher's first visit in 2010, there were only a few

hotels in two categories, tourist eco-lodge hotels for inbound tourists and hotels for domestic workers and service providers (e.g., tourist bus drivers). Five years later, the number of accommodation facilities had increased significantly.

Since the late 1990s, the Siwan have enjoyed the benefits of tourism, including increased employment in hotels and shops, and additional income from handmade crafts (Vale, 2015). At the same time, many problems from tourism development have been identified, such as the degradation of natural and cultural resources (Amara, 2010). Other problems include the loss of biodiversity, whether locally caused, like the environmental consequences of farmers commercialising agricultural processes or resulting from tourism (Tawfik, 2016). Siwan women are still largely prevented from interacting with outside visitors (Kamal, 2019). The rigidity of the patriarchy and kinship relations within the Siwan is reflected in the majority of businesses being family-owned (Fakhry, 2005). Among Siwan, tourism was perceived to be an easy source of income, in some cases leading to overexploitation of the Siwa Oasis recourses.

Ⅴ．Data Collection and Analysis

A qualitative approach (Jennings, 2016) was employed to explore the impact of tourism development among the community, specifically men's perceptions. The approach was suited to asking participants about their everyday experiences and obtaining insights into their understanding of certain situations (Aitchison, 2016).

The researcher's previous experiences as a tour leader at the study site between 2010 and 2014 enabled him to access participants who were introduced to him by his Siwan contacts. Data were collected in November 2019 using a combination of observation and semi-structured interviews with 17 Siwan and one non-Siwan living in the Oasis. Participants were aged between 20 and 80 years, and eleven men were directly involved in tourism such as hotels, restaurants, transport, and tour guide (see Table 1 for participant details). The interview aimed to capture the participants' opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and practices related to gender equality and women's rights.

Participants were interviewed in their workplaces; and observations were conducted in two areas, the centre of the Oasis where the main mosque and market are located, and the areas around tourist destinations located on the outskirts of Siwa Oasis. During the observations, women were only located twice. First, at the local market, a non-Siwan woman was recognised through her dialect; and second, when a group of four Siwan women riding a donkey cart (usually used by Siwan

for transportation) were escorted by a little boy. During the interviews, participants' actions and behaviours were observed, adding to the richness of the empirical material collected (Jennings, 2014).

Table 1. Interview Codes

NO	Origin	Age	Occupation
1	Siwa	42	Hotel owner
2	Siwa	28	Car repair shop owner
3	Siwa	30	Safari driver
4	Siwa	40	Coffee shop owner
5	Siwa	37	Temple ticket seller
6	Delta	34	Police officer
7	Siwa	50	Hotel manager
8	Siwa	70	Gas cylinder change shop
9	Siwa	32	Electrical technician
10	Siwa	52	Farmer near Temple of the Oracle of Amun
11	Siwa	58	Tourist information office manager
12	Siwa	28	Restaurant owner
13	Siwa	47	Bazar shop owner
14	Siwa	53	Local restaurant worker
15	Siwa	23	Hotel receptionist
16	Siwa	33	Shali town caretaker
17	Siwa	82	Farmer
18	Siwa	27	Farmer and mobile shop owner

The interview questions were developed based on fieldwork in 2016 and 2017. In 2016 the researcher visited the Oasis to do a pilot study about Date Palm Festival, an initiative festival was held at Siwa Oasis to promote its main products of dates products. The main fieldwork was done in 2017 to investigate how Intangible cultural heritage which has a strong connection to date palm trees can be a tool for community empowerment (Kamal, 2019). In 2019 the interviews focused on the roles of women and men in Siwan society, tourism, women's rights, practices in families, and urbanisation. The interviews comprised 17 questions concerning tourism development and the participant's relation to tourism, the general condition of the Siwan family and how or if it has changed, and any changes in women and men's roles in the Siwa culture. The interview questions are attached in Appendix 1. Given that the study contained sensitive topics related to gender relations and family life, the researcher began the interview by asking broad questions about tourism and family, from which questions regarding gender relations and gender role followed.

Informed consent was obtained before the interview from each participant. Each interview duration was approximately 1 hour. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed first in Arabic (the original language), then the data analysis was done in Arabic, and the selected quotes for this research were translated into English by the researcher.

Content analysis was conducted to "provide[s] knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study" (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992, p. 314), which is the impact of tourism on gender roles in Siwa Oasis. Data analysis commenced by reading and coding the transcripts. Coding involved dividing the data into descriptive, interpretive, and pattern codes to identify themes and relationships among themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher read through the transcribed text to obtain a sense of the whole scene. Each identified meaning unit that has a relation to the context is labelled with a code. Each code is then checked for its relation to the aim of the study. Next, identified phrases, sentences, or whole paragraphs connected to a specific topic were categorised. Three major themes were identified: Tourism impacts on men's perception on traditional gender role; Gender roles and space; and Women's role from Siwan men perspective. Each theme is described in the following section.

Appendix 1

Semi-structured interview
Conversation guideline

Tourism impact
1. What does tourism mean to you?
2. Tourism in Egypt always goes up and down; how does that affect your life?
3. How has tourism changed your life or life in Siwa Oasis?
4. In your opinion, who can work in tourism?
5. What are the differences between working in tourism and working on the farm?
6. How has tourism changed your life?
7. Who helps you when you are busy during high season?

Questions about the general state of the Siwan family
1. How do you spend your free time?
2. How do Siwan women help their families? Do they go to the farm? With whom do they go? What do they do there?
3. What are the conditions under which you are happy for your wife, sister, or daughter to work?
4. If women work, does it make a difference to anything?
5. What do you think about educated women?

Questions investigating changes in male and female roles
1. What kind of housework do you do?
2. You cook for tourists during safari tours, and clean tourists' rooms, but do you do the same at home, or does your wife or mother do it?
3. Do you talk to your family members about what happened to you while you were at work?
4. How does your wife help you?
5. If you have a financial crisis, who in your family will help you?

Ⅵ．Findings

The findings from the collected data are summarized under the three major areas and discussed in this section.

Tourism impacts on men's perception on traditional gender role

Tourism development in the Oasis brought opportunities for Siwan to work in the industry, as well as urbanisation and modernisation. The men reported it was common for Siwan to quit date farming for employment in the larger factories and public sector jobs which is considered easier work. A 52-year-old farmer, who used to work daily from 5 am to 7 pm, now works at the hotel part-time during the high season, claiming that "growing date is a waste of time because of its low price" (P10). He stated that most young Siwan do not want to work at the farm, preferring the comforts of a modern job.

An 82-year-old farmer who used to make handicrafts and furniture from palm tree leaves mentioned:

> In the Siwan tradition, the real Siwan man should be able to climb a palm tree and be able to cut off a tree by himself because on the seventh day of his marriage he should cut a palm tree and take off the heart of the palm tree "Al-Gomar" and give it to his wife's family as a gift. But men nowadays are not real men, they cannot climb a tree and they like to be in shade. (P17)

There is a notable change in Siwan men's traditional gender roles. Male Siwan youth are no longer interested in traditional Siwan jobs (i.e., growing dates). For the older generation, this shift in employment brought about by tourism, affects their understanding of what it means to be masculine in contemporary Siwa.

Siwan men are navigating job positions toward tourism-related business but still maintain connection with their traditions. A participant who owns a palm tree garden, started a mobile shop business to secure his family income as relying solely on dates was deemed too risky.

Some participants agreed that Siwan men should work at the farm and protect their inheritance of land and the traditional way of growing dates. All participants held the belief that it is the men who should be earning money to support their families. As a 32-year-old man who works as an electrical technician explained, "Being a man means you have to work for your family whatever the work type" (P9).

A 42-year-old hotel owner, who has a palm tree garden, noted that it is increasingly hard to find young Siwan men who would like to work in farming. However, upon starting his hotel, many youths came seeking a job. He continued,

> The entire world is changing too fast now, and we also have to follow the other. Sometimes we have to sacrifice something from our tradition, but it is all for a better life. (P1)

Tourism and tourism-related migrant mobilities has encouraged Siwan men to reflect on what is important for them, what traditions to keep and those they can leave behind. A 50-year- hotel manager mentioned:

> Before I got this job, I used to work in growing date and olive. My wife used to do Siwan handcraft for years. But now my income is better than before, so I asked her to quit it, as we are not in need of money now. (P7)

Tourism has made them understand the importance of certain cultural elements while at the same time having to adapt to the new lifestyle tourism development has brought to the Oasis. The way men value their culture has changed, reflective of a rapidly shifting Siwan life. While men are taking on productive responsibilities, women are also assuming responsibilities in addition to their household work.

Gender roles and space

Siwan society is similar to many Muslim societies where the conceptualisation of public and private spaces is based on traditional interpretations of the Qur'an and Hadith. A police officer from a rural area near the Nile Delta, who has been serving in the Oasis for 7 years, mentioned:

> Soon after I arrived at the Oasis, I asked a woman to give me a plastic bag because my bag was torn. Believe me that was a big mistake as I came close to being hit by her husband. Since that time, I learned that Siwa Oasis is different from my hometown. (P6)

It seems that Siwan community is more conservative compared to other rural areas in Egypt. It is also a highly male-dominated society. A 28-year-old man car repair shop owner mentioned:

> Women are not allowed to travel or to be with strangers alone, and I justified this opinion through a Hadith about women who are not allowed to travel for pilgrimage by themselves without a mahram. This is not only for travelling, but even inside the Oasis, women cannot walk alone and must be escorted by a mahram. (P2)

During fieldwork, the researcher observed that Siwan women were always escorted by young males. Being alone

with a stranger is unacceptable; therefore, Siwan women work from home. A bazaar shop owner commented:

> Most of the Siwan women do handicrafts at home and my wife helps me in collecting the good pieces from them. Home is the place where she can do her main job, taking care of her family and protecting the Siwan identity through teaching her children the Siwan language and Siwan tradition. (P13)

Another participant, a caretaker of the old town Shali, explained that Siwan society is conservative:

> The early Siwan who lived at Shali, women used to work at the farm due to the lack of labour at that time ··· It was not appropriate for women to pass in front of men. Instead, they opened a new door for women to enter and exit without passing in front of the men. (P16)

While gender roles in public and private spaces are controlled by Siwan tradition, gender relations are maintained by two factors—local tradition and religious beliefs. A coffee shop owner started his business 10 years ago because he loves cooking. While "most of the Siwan men can cook, but at home, cooking is one of the women's tasks" (P4).

A 30-year-old safari driver, when asked if he can accept his wife working with tourists or teaching tourists how Siwan handicrafts are made, stated:

> Tourism is not a clean place (proper place) for women, I meet tourists from all over the world, they have unfamiliar cultures and manners, also some of them drink, some of them kiss each other in public, how can I let my wife be in these places? (P3)

Although Siwan tradition dictates that a man should be able to take care of his garden and feed his family, nowadays, the new lifestyle brought about by tourism necessitates Siwan men reassess these traditional men's roles, even if ever so slightly. While most participants accepted the idea of women earning money, they were strict about where and with whom women work. Additionally, culturally unacceptable practices from some tourists made Siwan more conservative about women's direct engagement in tourism. The Siwan men were, in a sense, trying to protect traditional gender roles within their families against the rapid change brought by tourism.

Women's role from Siwan men perspective

Belief in the practice of women working outside the home varies and affects gender roles within the families. A 23-year-old participant who worked as a hotel receptionist mentioned that "tourism-based businesses such as handcrafts and internet services strengthen the women network" (P15). Tourism development has brought internet service to the Oasis which breaks geographic barriers caused by limited women's agency and access to public spaces.

Although Siwa Oasis is far from the Nile valley, it receives domestic migrant workers as tourism brings to the Oasis people from different destinations within Egypt. Thus, Siwan have started interacting with people from the Nile valley, including the Delta and North Coast regions, where life is more urbanised and women enjoy relatively more freedom compared to Siwan women. A 70-year-old participant who owns a gas cylinder shop stated:

> My wife asked me to go by herself to the market for shopping, however, the Siwan tradition prevents women to go to the market, and men (husband/father) used to buy all his home needs. ···I was shocked when my wife asked me to do that, and when I asked her why you are asking for that, she answered me that her Egyptian friend (non-Siwan) told her that men are not good at shopping and women are better in negotiation than men. (P8)

The shock this man experiences reflects how Siwan women are responding to domestic tourism working mobilities.

A 37-year-old participant who works as a temple ticket seller mentioned that tourism has a great benefit for the Oasis through the many job opportunities being created for Siwan. When he was asked about what kind of opportunity tourism has offered to his family. He explained:

> Siwan handcraft became a fashion in Egypt (Cairo), a lady from Cairo used to come to the Oasis and collect the Siwan handcrafted embroidery to sell it at her shop in Cairo. My wife used to make Siwan handcrafts with our neighbours and sell them to that lady. But I asked her to quit because she (the lady) was buying the products at an extremely low price. I was worried about my wife's eyes; her vision keeps getting worse because Siwan embroidery takes time and too much effort to finish one item. (P5)

Another participant, a 40-year-old Siwan man who has a restaurant and bazaar hoped his wife would work but explained, "She likes to be a queen in her home" (P4).

In Siwa, women have the responsibility for housework, cooking, and cleaning. Nowadays, most Siwan men have

started to work in hotels or restaurants cleaning rooms and cooking Siwan traditional dishes. However, where, and why they use these skills—cleaning and cooking—are governed by an understanding of what is characterised as masculine space.

> As it might be harsh for women to give birth and take care of kids, it is also harsh for men to make life easier and more convenient for his family. This is gender equality in Islam. (P8)

A 58-year-old participant, working at the tourist information office, mentioned:

> Most Siwan women work from home especially married ones. The majority of Siwan men still prefer their wives and daughters not to be in public space. Young girls are free to work, but a married woman can work from home, so she can take care of her family. (P11)

A 30-year-old safari driver stated that he appreciates his wife because she takes care of the kids and his mother, explaining that family in Siwa Oasis does not only mean two parents and their children, but includes grandparents, brothers and sisters. A 53-year- old man who works at a restaurant mentioned:

> To increase my income, I work on my day off with a safari driver in preparing food for his tourists at the campsite in the desert. It is a chance to earn more money for my family and my kids··· my wife takes care of our kids; this is her role. Also, she is not alone we live near my parents. (P14)

Most of the participants recognised the economic benefits of tourism and how it has generated additional income that can be saved for their children's future. However, the positive impacts of income generation and employment opportunities for men have negatively affected women's engagement in paid employment as men still believe a woman's role is to take care of the family.

Ⅶ. Discussion

This article sought to explore the impact of tourism development on gender dynamic as one of the strong social determining factors, focusing on men's perceptions of gender roles in rural Egypt, pointing to the Islamic conceptualisation of society and gender roles. From the literature, (Swain,1995; Chant & Sweeetman,2012; Ferguson, 2011; Feng, 2013) evaluation of gender roles should not be limited to economic power and should be discussed through cultural identities, social construc-

tions, and relationships between females and males.

The findings show that the Siwan lifestyle is affected by tourism development and accompanying urbanisation. The first theme revealed changes in traditional men's gender roles due to new job opportunities. Siwan youth were more interested in the urban lifestyle, altering the traditional men's gender role of Siwan that had been characterised by farming labour. Despite these changes, men believed that they must be the breadwinner for their families, who have the obligation to the community-based identity.

The second theme revealed how tourism impacted the lives of Siwan women who started negotiating to gain more agency. Notably, although some Siwan men accepted unmarried women working and earning money, married women could only work from home as men believed that women should maintain the traditional family role. The findings also showed that gender relations in Siwa Oasis are determined by space (public space and private space), although women were negotiating to gain more freedom.

The third theme revealed that men have gained skills in cooking, cleaning, and arranging beds while working in tourism, but they do not do these tasks at home as they believe these domestic duties are a woman's task. As job opportunities for women were limited to homemade handcrafts, tourism allowed men to earn more money while relying on women to take care of their parents and keep kinship strong.

Overall, findings indicate that Siwa Oasis shares similarities with most rural communities in Egypt—a community trying to protect its tradition and identity (Zuhur, 2014) as tourism development has brought about multiple changes to their lifestyle. Tourism development in the Siwa Oasis has not significantly affected men's perception of gender roles. However, due to domestic tourism working mobilities, Siwan women were negotiating for more agency, which aligns with previous research concerning gender relations in rural tourism destinations (Duffy et al., 2015; Tucker, 2007). While Siwan women are considered the guardians of Siwan cultural heritage (Fakhry, 2005), the men were keen to protect basic features of traditional gender roles such as being the primary breadwinner and the guardian of their family. Undoubtedly, men's roles itself are changing, as Siwan male youth shift away from the traditional definition of gender roles. It shows that men are eager to gain their living from tourism rather than farming which might make it more challenging for women to have the same opportunities as men. As Tucker suggests tourism development does not necessarily boost the position of rural women (2003, p.101).

Ⅷ. Conclusion

Research has identified tourism as a tool for women's empowerment (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2015; Malema & Naidoo, 2017; Mkono et al., 2021; Scheyvens, 2000), and shifting gender roles related to tourism development (Ferguson, 2011; Gentry, 2007; Kinnaird & Hall, 1996; Swain, 1995). However, with the exception of Tucker (2007), whose research is based in Turkey, most of these studies have been undertaken in Western communities. The MENA region has not yet been investigated sufficiently.

This research aimed to explore the impact of tourism development among the community, specifically men's perceptions of gender roles. Based on the data, it can be concluded that tourism was introduced to Siwan as a new means for employment and income, although the community's participation was limited to a few opportunities such as safari drivers, hotels, and souvenir shops. At the same time, the opportunities made the community, especially men, fear losing their identity as they were forced to conform their culture to tourist preferences (Asham et al., 2022). Although tourism development should open more opportunities for men and women to participate in decision-making and empower the whole community (Kamal, 2019), this study has identified that tourism development is a more complex issue. Communities do not get 'developed' by simply implementing tourism; the economic benefits of tourism should be in balance with social and environmental impacts; and policymakers, developers, or business operators need to be culturally sensitive in their approach and planning. For this, community leaders should be included in tourism planning and development.

Gender roles are determined by economic and political factors, as well as internal, social-cultural factors. In the case of Siwa Oasis, internal factors such as tradition and religion are still strong due to the sense of threat felt for the life change brought by development, including tourism. For women, tourism could hinder achieving equality, which itself is a human right issue. As Ferguson (2011) recommended, tourism development policies should involve gender specialists and "more grassroots feminist tourism projects to offer alternative ways of understanding the relationship between gender and tourism development" (p. 246). The question is, how Islamic feminists can define the relationship between gender and tourism development, and how tourism can be a tool to create equal opportunities for women with more stable job opportunities align with Islamic principles.

This study challenges the stereotype of gender relations in MENA region, showing the complexity of tourism for development. It is suggested that tourism development strategies in rural communities such as Siwa Oasis should be built around policies that are driven from gender equality and human rights principles, which are based on the reinterpretation of the sacred texts.

Finally, although the purpose of this study was to reveal men's perspectives that were largely missing in the literature, women's responses to tourism development would allow further insights into the potentially positive and negative consequences of tourism development. A more holistic picture of shifting gender roles in rural communities in the context of tourism development would certainly benefit Egypt and MENA, as well as global communities.

Note

1　This paper employs the definition of MENA as comprising 14 countries in the Middle East (Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Utd Arab Emirates, Yemen) and 4 countries in North Africa (Algeria, Morocco, Sudan, Tunis).

2　Hadith is the record of the words, actions, and the silent approval of the Islamic prophet Muhammad.

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