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Women, Crime and Statistics

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Differences between societies in their approaches to understanding crime and punishment are evident, particularly with respect to differing definitions and motives. However, there is always a need to measure crime rates within these societies in order to understand the types of crimes being committed. In addition to determining what crimes are occurring, and their seriousness, there is a need to establish a valid mechanism for dealing with deviant behavior on the one hand, and with the social perceptions of deviance and crime on the other.

Crime statistics have often been the object of criticism and doubt with respect to their limited significance, and there are numerous methodological reservations. However, recorded crime statistics remain one of the necessary measurement techniques that can be transformed into useful sociological indices. They are crucial in supporting national strategies aimed at fighting crime on many levels (prevention, deterrence, security, etc.) and in various areas (social security, economic security, environmental security, etc.).

Hence, criminologists are puzzled when most Arab countries refrain from participating in periodical data collection by competent organizations within the United

Nations, which hope to establish the existence of different types of crime in addition to determining the procedures of criminal justice systems around the world. The steps taken by the Prince Nayef Arab University for Security Sciences (the scientific arm of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers) to establish a comprehensive statistical study on crime in the Arab world, did not live up to expectations despite the thoroughness and robustness of the research, which was conducted using highly advanced scientific methods.

Studies conducted on the deviant behavior of women mainly attempted to provide an understanding of the relationship between deviance and variables such as unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, low education levels, reproductive health, sexual education, population density, migration from rural to urban areas, immigration, and different levels of development and economic growth. In addition, they researched the relation between deviance and levels of production, ensuing work divisions and living standards, which are all influenced by the mass media and the information technology revolution, which are products of globalization - the process which will crush every society that does not know how to benefit from its advantages and avoid its pitfalls.

It is obvious that all of these factors have had various social-psychological effects, and have contributed to an upsurge in crimes committed by women, including crimes, that until recently, have been only committed by men. These include taking part in or leading national, international, and transnational organized crime syndicates – the aim of such organizations being primarily to amass financial gains, which have been laundered. Many incidents indicate the participation of females relatively on par with that of males, even in extreme cases where violence and bloodshed are involved. Cases range from mere bodily harm to murder, drug trafficking, weapons trafficking, trafficking of human organs, and of humans - particularly women and children - to terrorist crimes connected with transnational organized crimes.

Overall, it can be said that the perception of women as permanent victims, has, since the beginning of the 1970s, evolved to include women as criminals. Yet, regardless of their physiological difference from men, female crimes must be dealt with because over the years they have also negatively affected both women and society.

Taking into account the aforementioned observations, the limited scientific studies and official reports published in very few Arab countries show that the rate of crimes committed by women in these same countries in 1990 accounts for the following percentages (out the total percentage of crimes): 3.7% in Egypt, 5.1% in Libya, 6.8%

in Jordan, 6.5% in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, , 6.8% in Iraq, 8% in Qatar, 8.7% in Syria and 14.9% in Sudan compared to 23.3% in Germany, 19.1% in Austria, 13% in Belgium, 20.7% in Japan, 18.4% in the United States, 17.3% in France, 14% in Britain, and 14.5% in Sweden; whereas the female crime rate was 11.86% of the total crime rate in Lebanon in 1974 .

Clearly, the high crime rate in Lebanon compared to that of other Arab countries (except Sudan) reflects the psychological and social conditions of Lebanese women, particularly in light of the exceptional circumstances witnessed by Lebanese society between 1974 and 1984. However, the percentage of 11.86% confirms the claims that prior to the Civil War, crime rates in Lebanon were similar to those seen in industrial nations for reasons we do not have space to discuss in this paper. Nevertheless, a look at the abovementioned figures highlights the need for research to address the high rates of female deviant behavior, and the types of crimes that are on the increase and cannot be understood using statistics alone. Suicide and suicide attempts, for example, are on the rise in comparison to the overall total rates and to cases involving men (see table).

In conclusion, the aforementioned data arouse concern and assessment is an essential step in dealing with the problem, especially since hasty solutions are usually a waste of time and energy. What is necessary for success in understanding and dealing with female criminality is a scientific approach in drawing up a national security strategy with clear objectives, using a coherent methodology, in addition to the regular monitoring, accountability and later reevaluation of all studies and programs. This should form part of a comprehensive national development strategy established by the appropriate authorities, perhaps within the framework of the Socio-Economic Council. It should also involve public research institutions, research centers and various organizations within civil society. Until such time, the relevant and concerned parties must be identified and must commit to a reform framework, thus promoting a safe and stable society.

Translated by Nadine El-Khoury



Picture Credit: Myriam Hajj

Table 1: Individuals who committed suicide between 1994 and 2000

| Gender | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
| Age | Under15 | 15-18 | 19-22 | 23-26 | 27-30 | 31-34 | 35-38 | 39-42 | 43-46 | 47-50 | 51-54 | 55-58 | 59-62 | Over 62 | Total |
| 1994 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 27 |
| 1995 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 28 |
| 1996 | 0 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 26 |
| 1997 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 27 |
| 1998 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 50 |
| 1999 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 15 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 65 |
| 2000 | 0 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 45 |

Table 2: Individuals attempting suicide Between 1974 and 1988

| Gender | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-------------|-------|----------|
| Age | Under 15 | 15-17 | 18-24 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50-54 | 55-60 | Over 60 | Unspecified | Total | Under 15 |
| 1974 | 1 | 4 | 21 | 17 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 7 | 79 | 3 |
| 1975 | | | | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | | 7 | 1 |
| 1977 | | 2 | 11 | 7 | 4 | | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 10 | 49 | |
| 1978 | | 3 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 41 | |
| 1979 | | 2 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 3 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 30 | |
| 1980 | | 1 | 11 | 10 | 7 | 3 | 1 | | 3 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 45 | 3 |
| 1981 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 3 | | 1 | 3 | 2 | | 28 | |
| 1982 | | | 2 | | 1 | | | | | | | | 3 | |
| 1983 | | 2 | 10 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | | 3 | 37 | 1 |
| 1984 | | | 11 | 4 | 7 | 2 | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 5 | 32 | 1 |
| 1985 | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 3 | 15 | |
| 1986 | | | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | 10 | |
| 1987 | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | |
| 1988 | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | |

Table 3: Individuals attempting suicide between 1994 and 2000

| Gender | Male | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
| Age | Under15 | 15-18 | 19-22 | 23-26 | 27-30 | 31-34 | 35-38 | 39-42 | 43-46 | 47-50 | 51-54 | 55-58 | 59-62 | Over 62 | Total |
| 1994 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| 1995 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 11 |
| 1996 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 11 |
| 1997 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| 1998 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 18 |
| 1999 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 43 |
| 2000 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 31 |

Source: IT Department at the General Directorate of Interior Security Forces

| Under15 | 15-18 | 19-22 | 23-26 | 27-30 | 31-34 | 35-38 | 39-42 | 43-46 | 47-50 | 51-54 | 55-58 | 59-62 | Over 62 | Total | Unspecified | Total |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------------|-------|
| 0 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 9 | 57 |
| 0 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 18 | 9 | 55 |
| 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 7 | 48 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 0 | 43 |
| 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 14 | 0 | 64 |
| 1 | 13 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 48 | 0 | 113 |
| 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 60 |

| 15-17 | 18-24 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50-54 | 55-60 | Over 60 | Unspecified | Total | Unspecified Gender | Unknown | General Total |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-------------|-------|--------------------|---------|---------------|
| 18 | 34 | 16 | 6 | 3 | 3 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 95 | 1 | | 175 |
| 1 | 3 | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | 7 | | | 14 |
| 3 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 34 | 1 | | 84 |
| 5 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | 2 | 5 | 25 | 1 | 22 | 92 |
| 3 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 26 | | 23 | 79 |
| 1 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 1 | | 2 | | 2 | 1 | 2 | 28 | | 24 | 97 |
| | 8 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 16 | | 19 | 63 |
| | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | 2 | | 70 | 75 |
| 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 19 | 1 | 37 | 94 |
| 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 17 | 1 | 15 | 65 |
| | 4 | 1 | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | 7 | | 10 | 32 |
| 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | 1 | 3 | | 8 | 21 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 3 |

| Female | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------------|-------|
| Under15 | 15-18 | 19-22 | 23-26 | 27-30 | 31-34 | 35-38 | 39-42 | 43-46 | 47-50 | 51-54 | 55-58 | 59-62 | Over 62 | Total | Unspecified | Total |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 19 |
| 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 17 |
| 0 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 15 | 40 |
| 0 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 0 | 47 |
| 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 31 |
| 2 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 39 | 26 | 108 |
| 0 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 33 | 0 | 64 |