

***Effects of Family Background Characteristics on  
Educational Participation of Girls in Egypt,  
Morocco and Turkey, 1992-2003***

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# ***Introduction***

The level of schooling of women in most MENA countries is rather low. Especially in the countryside there are many women who did not even complete primary education.

These women have few possibilities for getting a job outside agriculture, and – especially when they migrate to the cities - they are economically very dependent on their male family members.

Because most women without education are not able to read and sometimes do not even speak the countries dominant language, they also depend on the male family members for their contact with and information about the outside world.

As a result, these women may play an important role in the reproduction of the prevailing values (including the values which stress a subordinate position of women) to the next generation.

Attempts to change the traditional value patterns in these countries will not be much successful, if the horizon of these women is not widened and their dependency not decreased.

An important way to do this is by increasing the women's level of schooling.

However, policies directed at increasing the educational level of woman can only be effective, if they are based on a thorough understanding of the factors by which their school attendance is furthered or hindered.

Our paper intends to add to this understanding by analyzing the effects of family and other background characteristics on the participation in primary and secondary education of girls in Egypt, Morocco, and Turkey.

# ***Research questions***

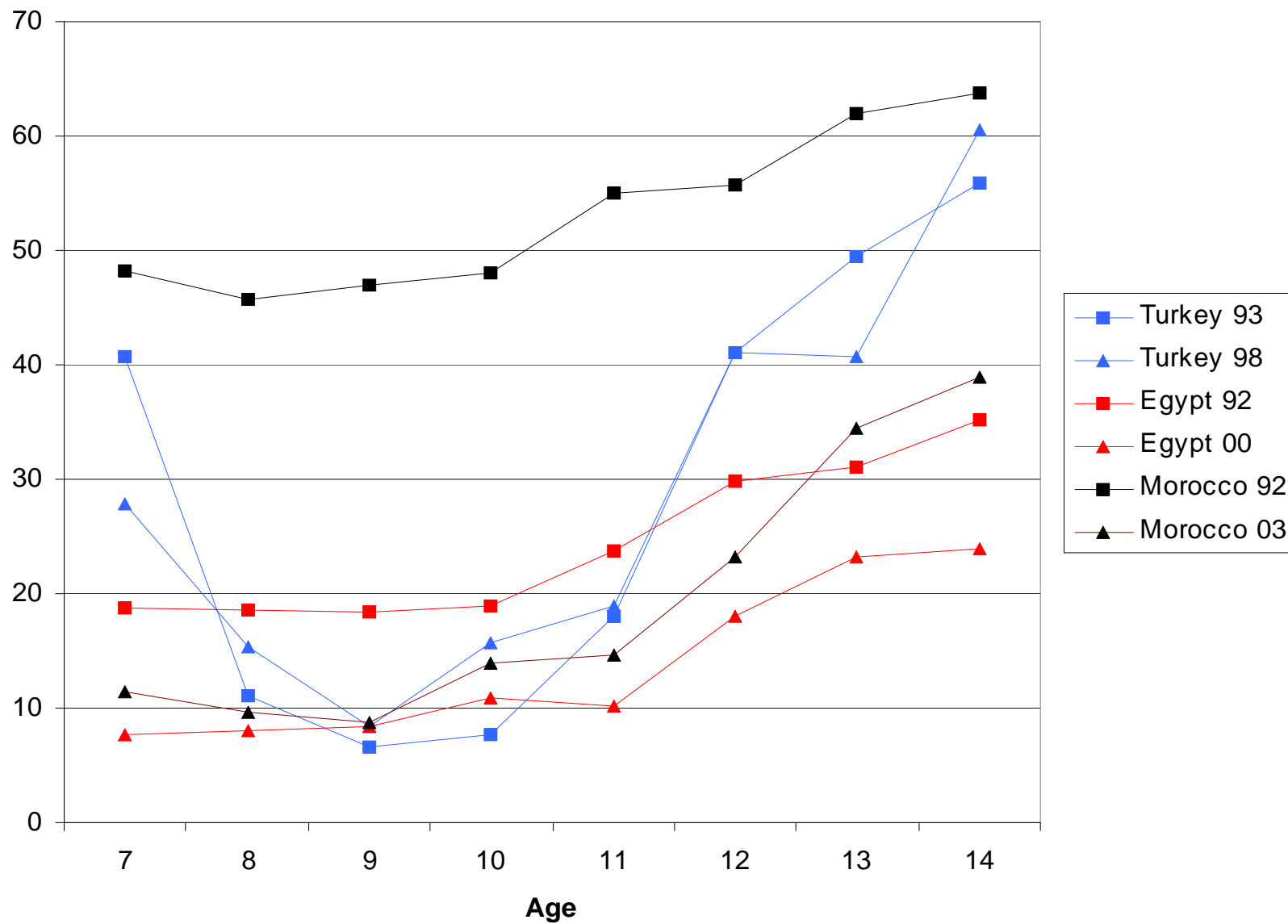
1. To what extent is the educational participation of girls in these countries influenced by the socio-economic, demographic, geographic and cultural characteristics of their family background and of the larger environment in which they grew up?
2. To what extent have the influences of these factors changed over time in recent decades?
3. To what extent do the influences of these factors differ among the countries?

# *Data*

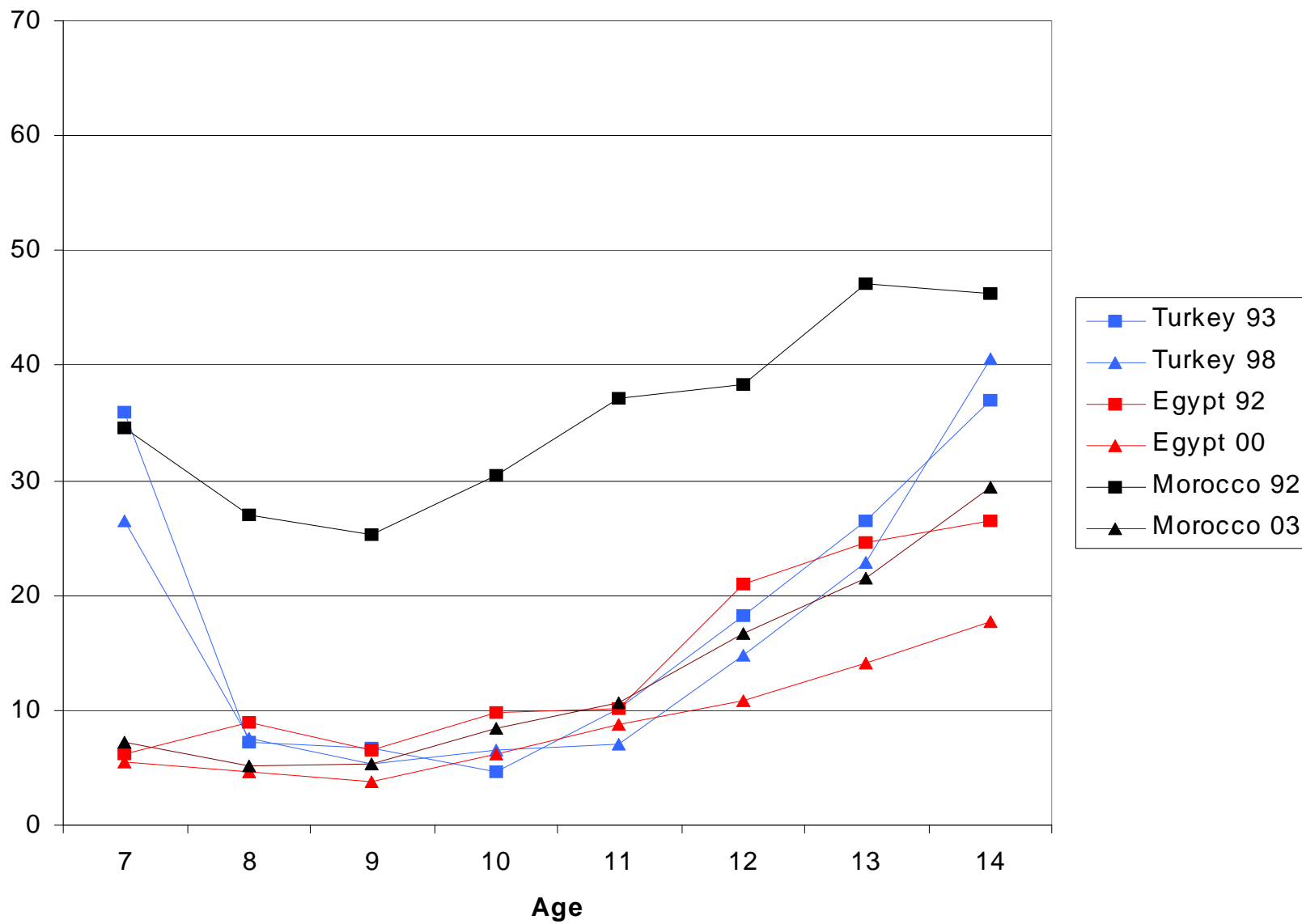
## Demographic and Health Surveys

	Number of girls	Number not in school
Egypt 1992	5,510	1,323
Egypt 2000	7,318	1,021
Turkey 1993	2,697	774
Turkey 1998	2,415	695
Morocco 1992	2,977	1,587
Morocco 2003	4,350	981

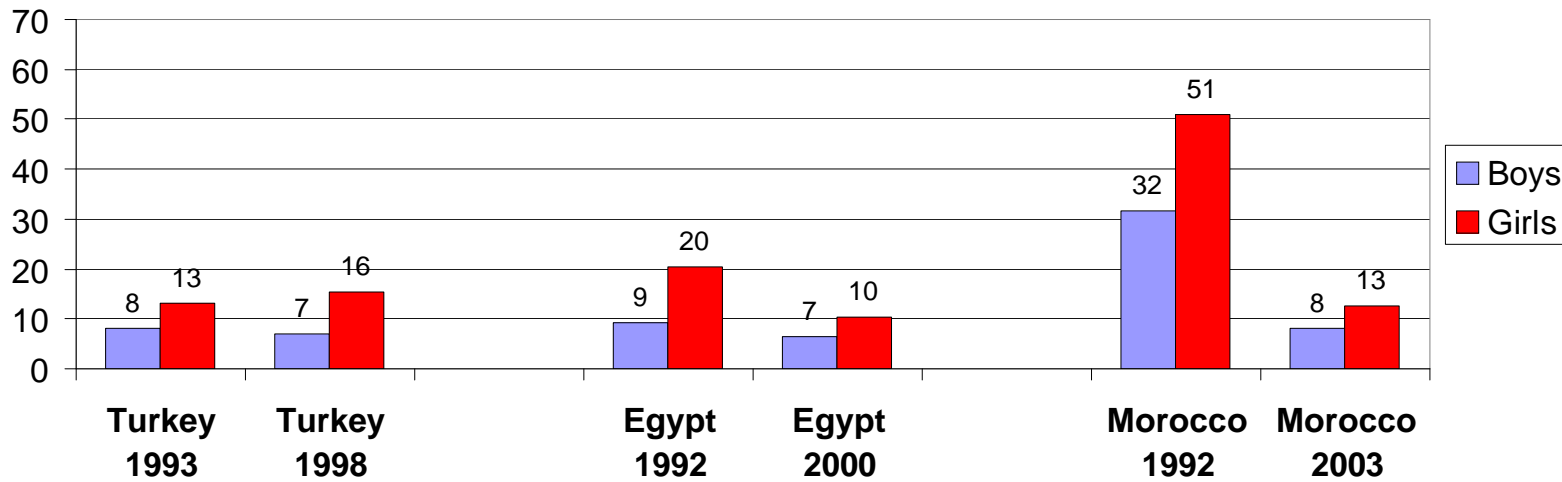
Percentage not in school of girls in Turkey, Egypt and Morocco by age



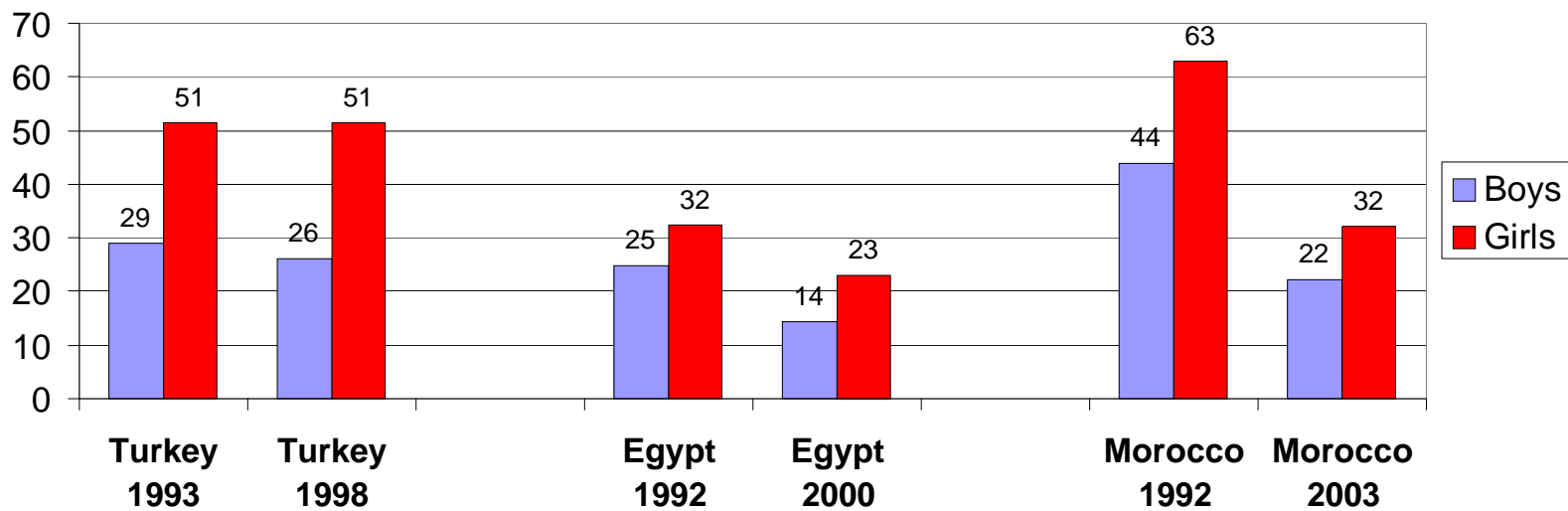
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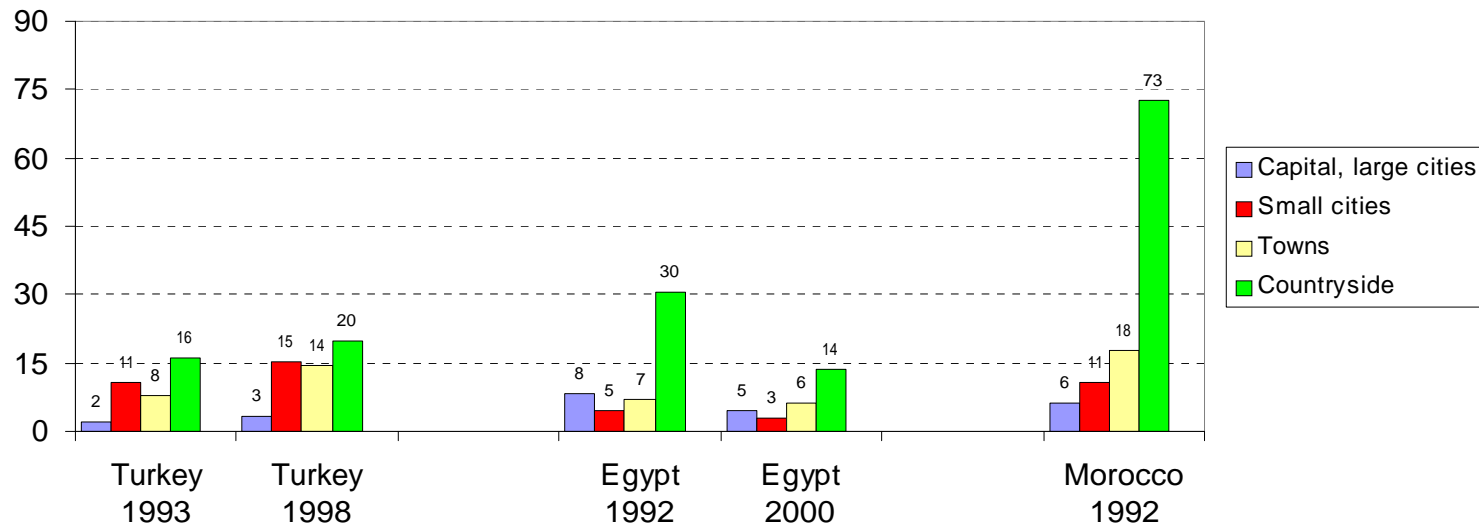
**Figure 1b. Percentage *not* in education of boys and girls aged 9-11 in Turkey, Egypt and Morocco**



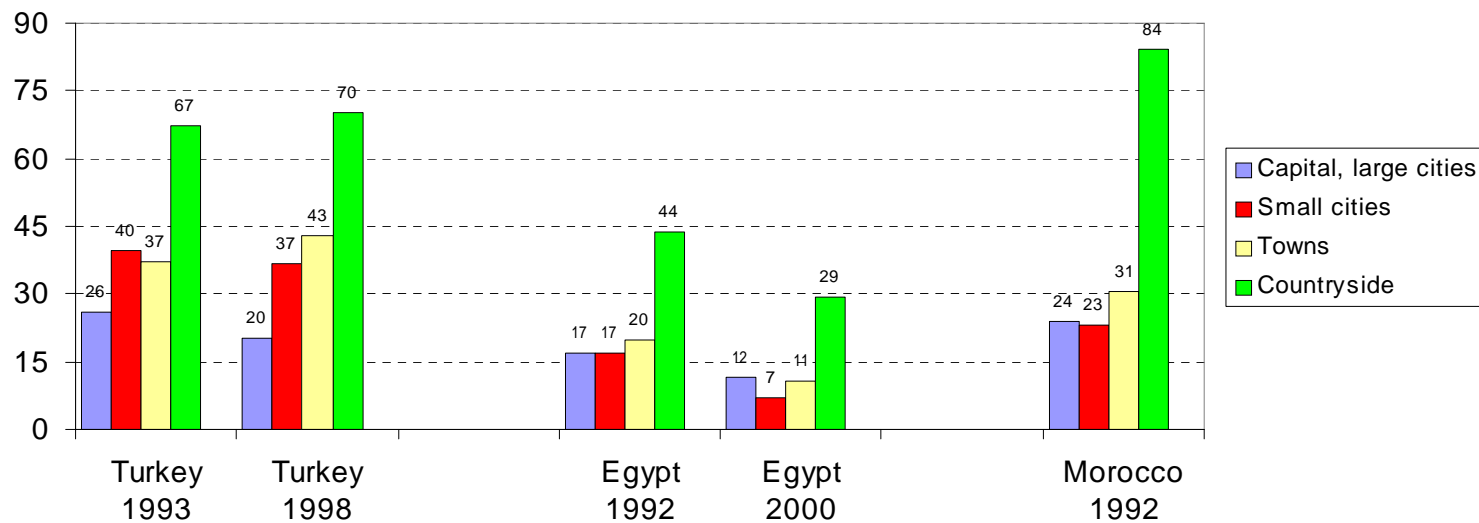
**Figure 1c. Percentage *not* in education of boys and girls aged 12-14 in Turkey, Egypt and Morocco**



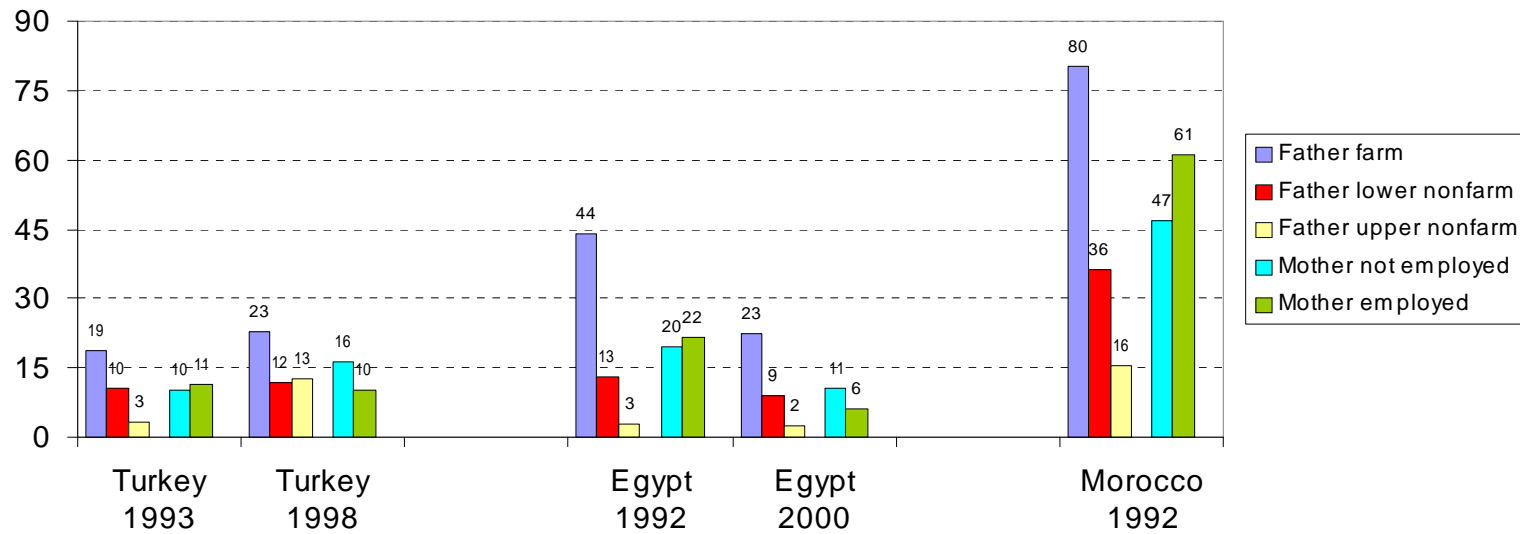
**Figure 2a. Percentage not in education of girls aged 9-11 in Turkey, Egypt and Morocco according to urbanisation**



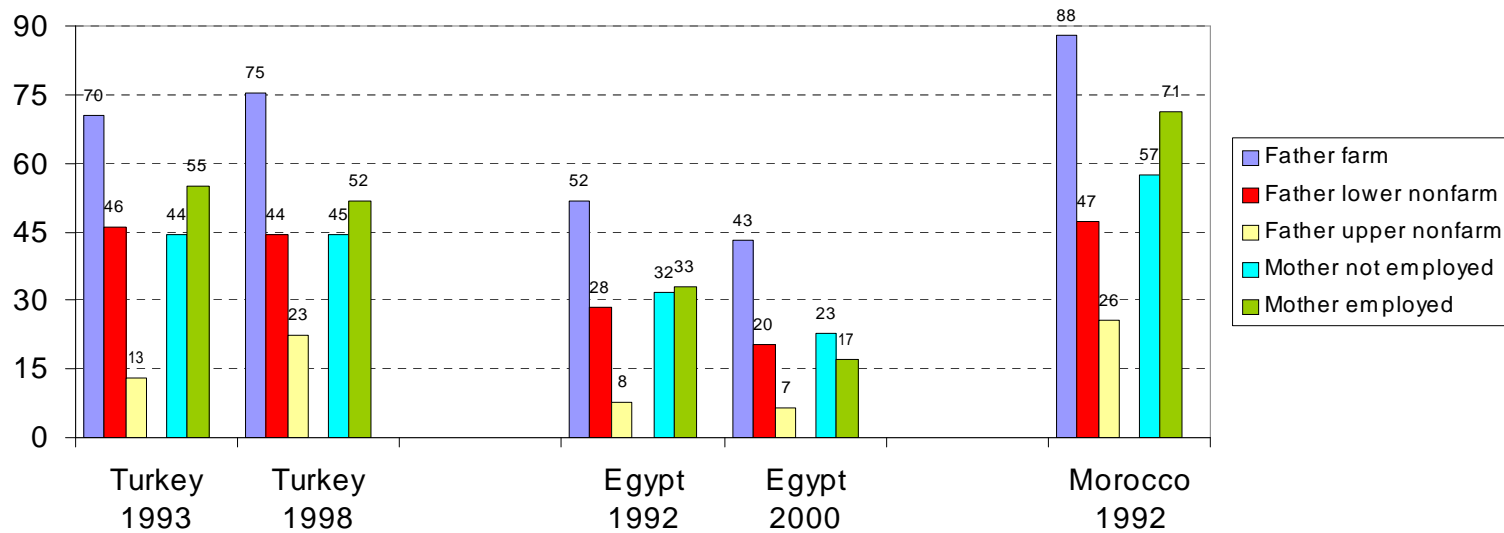
**Figure 2b. Percentage not in education of girls aged 12-14 in Turkey, Egypt and Morocco according to urbanisation**



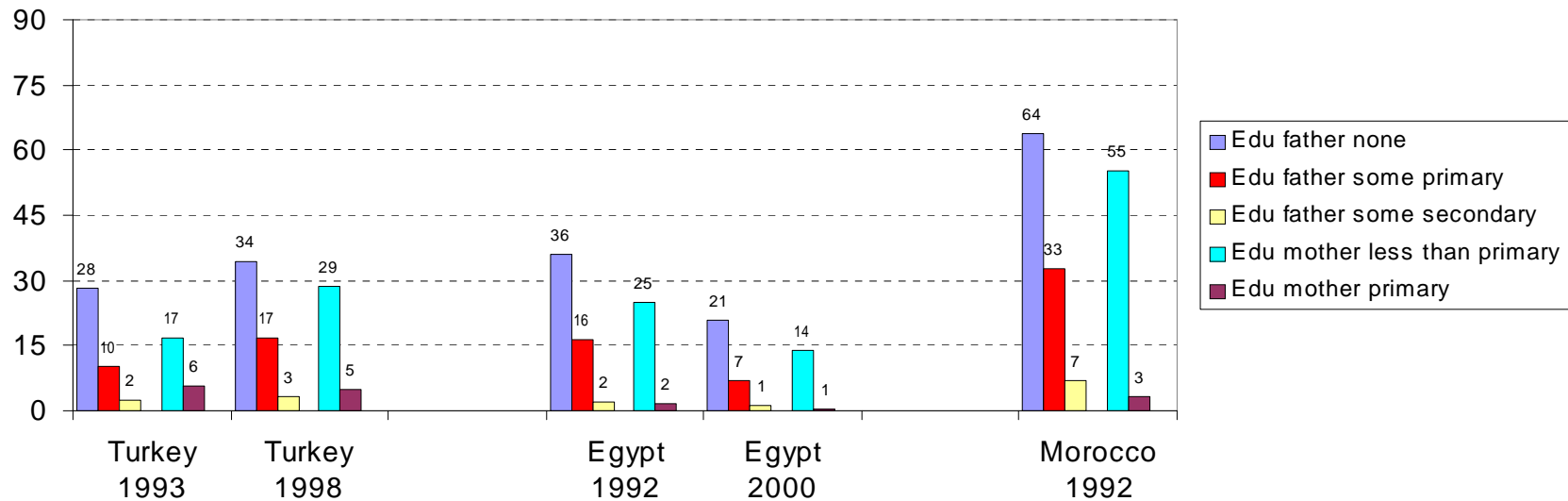
**Figure 3a. Percentage not in education of girls aged 9-11 in Turkey, Egypt and Morocco according to parental work/occupation**



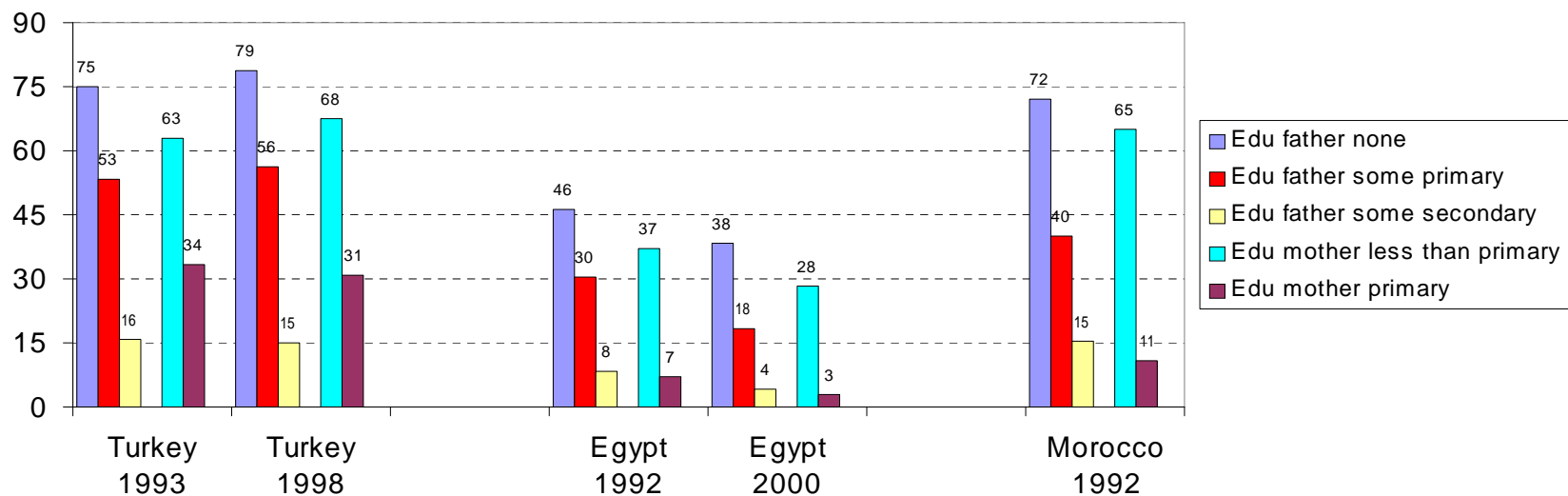
**Figure 3b. Percentage not in education of girls aged 12-14 in Turkey, Egypt and Morocco according to parental work/occupation**



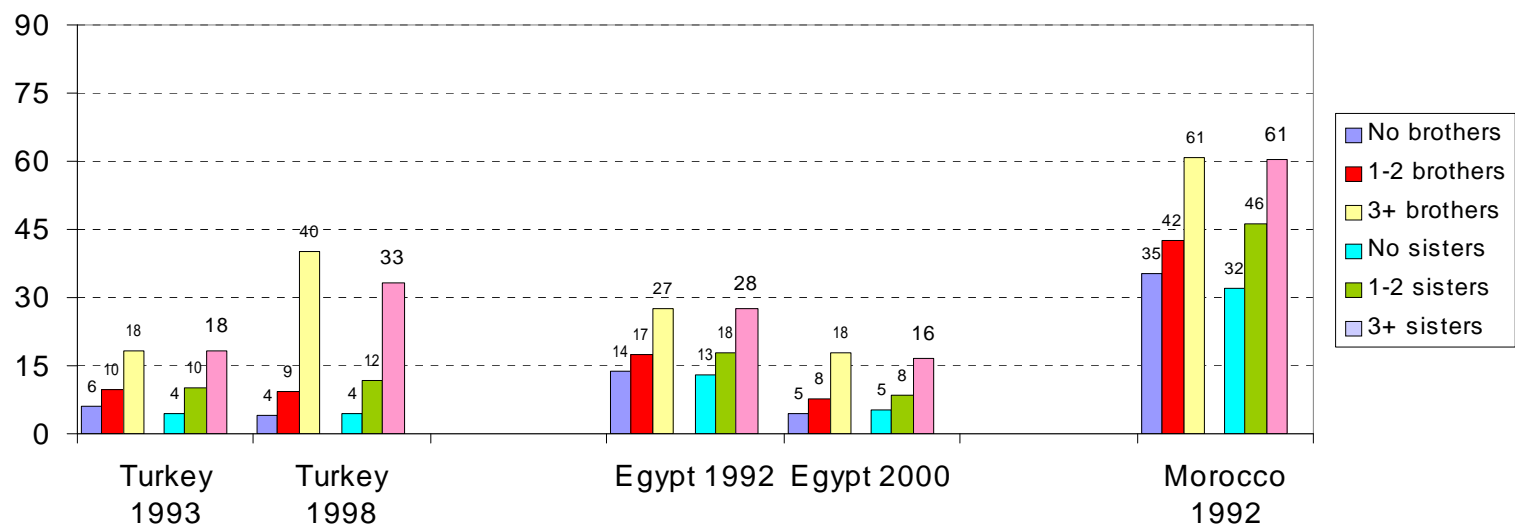
**Figure 4a. Percentage not in education of girls aged 9-11 in Turkey, Egypt and Morocco according to parental education**



**Figure 4b. Percentage not in education of girls aged 12-14 in Turkey, Egypt and Morocco according to parental education**



**Figure 5a. Percentage not in education of girls aged 9-11 in Turkey, Egypt and Morocco according to number of brothers and sisters**



**Figure 5b. Percentage not in education of girls aged 12-14 in Turkey, Egypt and Morocco according to number of brothers and sisters**

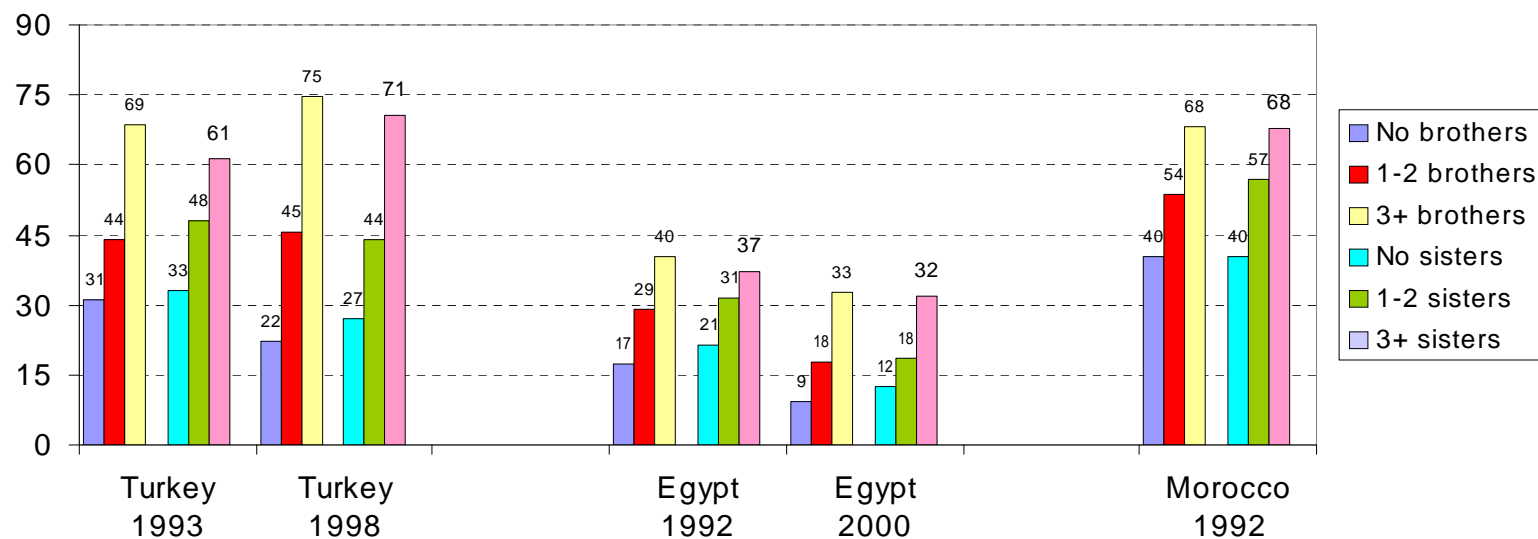


Table 2. Logistic regression coefficients predicting participation in education of girls aged 12-14 in Turkey, Egypt and Morocco

	Turkey 93	Turkey 98	Egypt 92	Egypt 00	Morocco 92
Education father					
<i>None</i>	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<i>At least some primary</i>	0,66**	0,54	0,39**	0,75**	0,74**
<i>At least some secondary</i>	1,52**	1,87**	1,15**	1,55**	1,62**
Occupation father					
<i>Farm</i>	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<i>Lower nonfarm</i>	0,36	0,94**	0,38**	0,59**	0,75**
<i>Upper nonfarm</i>	1,45**	1,23**	1,06**	0,81**	1,11**
Mother primary education	0,53**	0,87**	1,01**	1,14**	0,94*
Mother employed	-0,01	0,04	-0,10	-0,33*	-0,82**
Urbanization					
<i>Capital, large city</i>	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<i>Small city</i>	-0,29	-0,59*	-0,08	0,96**	0,31
<i>Town</i>	-0,10	-0,72*	0,09	0,57	0,03
<i>Countryside</i>	-1,04**	-1,34**	-0,79**	0,02	-2,06**
Number of sisters					
<i>None</i>	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<i>One or two</i>	-0,37	-0,79**	-0,52**	-0,49*	-0,55
<i>Three or more</i>	-0,62*	-1,55**	-0,63**	-1,12**	-0,67
Number of brothers					
<i>None</i>	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<i>One or two</i>	-0,48*	-1,10**	-0,42	-0,50	-0,67
<i>Three or more</i>	-1,17**	-1,67**	-0,78**	-1,12**	-1,04*
Birth order					
<i>Oldest child</i>	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<i>2-5th child</i>	0,16	-0,08	0,08	-0,27	-0,71**
<i>6th or later child</i>	0,51	0,28	0,27	-0,26	-0,18
Extended family	0,46*	0,59**	0,01	0,34*	0,70**
Age child	-0,42**	-0,49**	-0,14*	-0,22**	-0,47**

\* P<0.05    \*\* P<0.01

# *Conclusions*

In spite of substantial improvements (especially in Morocco and Egypt), there was still a large number of girls out of school in the recent years in all 3 countries:

- *Primary education 10-15%*
- *Secondary education 20-50%*

Educational participation was especially low in the countryside.

Likely reasons for this are:

- Worse schooling and transport infrastructure
- Cultural/patriarchal restrictions on girl's freedom of movement

However the findings are also very relevant for children in the cities, because the effects of the family background factors did not differ much between cities and countryside

# ***Family background effects***

When the parents have little or no education, or the father is employed in farming, the chances that their daughters go to school are strongly reduced

Having two or more sisters or brothers substantially decreased the chance for girls to be in primary or secondary education. Because these effects differ little between brothers and sisters, it most likely is a *family size* effect

Living in an extended family increases the chances that older girls go to school. This suggest that the extra hands at home decrease the need for girls to help in the household

*Although participation itself generally increased, the strength of the family background effects changed little over time*

# ***Policy implications***

The large variation in educational participation according to family background characteristics indicates that there is still much to be gained with policy measures aimed at increasing participation

## ***Vicious circle of disadvantage***

If mothers have little education, their daughters have less chance to go to school

The daughters of those uneducated daughters again have less chance to go to school

And so on.....

## ***Urgency of the problem***

This circle is strengthened by the fact that uneducated women tend to have more children than educated women.

As a result, relatively more children will be born in disadvantaged households, which makes the problem extra difficult to solve....