

Gender Representation in Egyptian Media

September 2025

Introduction

This report aims to analyze gender representations and feminist messages in mainstream media content in Egypt, focusing on how public discourse around women's and gender issues is shaped through various traditional and digital media platforms. This work is part of a broader effort to understand prevalent cultural discourses, discover opportunities for positive intervention to promote gender equality, and confront messages that reinforce stereotypes or justify violence and discrimination.

The report relies on a systematic analysis of content from 71 media samples distributed across six main categories of media, selected based on their prevalence and influence in shaping public opinion in Egypt. It also pays special attention to youth responses to these messages, whether through digital solidarity campaigns or forms of resistance and satire, reflecting the dynamic and sometimes contradictory nature of the relationship between media and the audience.

Although this section serves as the main entry point for the report, it is formulated based on in-depth analysis of a recent sample of media content collected from January to June 2025. Thus, the introduction reflects the general trends revealed by the analysis and the pathways taken by the research, ensuring that the report aligns with the social and cultural realities of Egypt while adhering to the common analytical framework established in the first phase of the report's preparation.

Influential Media and Reasons for Their Selection

Egypt boasts a rich and diverse media environment that includes both traditional and digital platforms, making it a dynamic arena for shaping public discourse, particularly concerning gender and feminist issues. Six main categories of media platforms have been chosen to represent the most influential and widespread media that reach large audiences and affect their perceptions of women's and men's roles in society. These platforms offer a variety of visual, written, and digital content, providing a comprehensive understanding of how gender is represented in the Egyptian context.

1. Television (Series, Films)

Television remains a primary medium for shaping public opinion in Egypt (**Abdel Maqsood & Abdo, 2025**), especially during peak times such as Ramadan when families watch series daily.¹ The content of these works often focuses on family issues, relationships, and marriage, reflecting or reproducing traditional gender roles. Conversely, some recent productions challenge these perceptions. Channels like MBC Masr and Al-Qahira Wal-Nas, along with the platform Shahid.net, have been selected for their popularity and reach, offering dramatic and entertaining content that forms an important part of the prevailing visual culture.

2. Online Journalism

News websites are key sources that citizens turn to for information and event analysis, influencing how gender and feminist issues are framed. Platforms such as Youm7, Al-Masry Al-Youm, Al-Watan, Sada Elbalad, and Al-Shorouk have been chosen for their high levels of audience engagement and diverse editorial orientations. Analyzing their content helps understand how women and girls are represented and whether coverage of issues like gender-based violence is neutral or reinforces stereotypes.

3. Advertising

Advertisements play an effective role in reproducing gender stereotypes, often presenting women within domestic roles while depicting men as authority figures or competent. YouTube has been adopted as a primary source for monitoring advertisements, given its open platform that hosts a vast array of ads targeted at the Egyptian audience. These ads are broadcast on television screens, reaching millions of citizens, with their reach doubling during Ramadan.

4. Social Media Platforms

Digital platforms like TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram have become primary spaces for crafting and circulating public discourse, especially among youth. Short videos, hashtags, satirical memes, and personal stories proliferate across these platforms, making them an important source for observing shifts or conflicts around gender values. Additionally, they have a broader youth audience outside traditional and formal media coverage.

¹ Public and Experts' Attitudes Toward the Performance of Egyptian Television Channels in Ramadan: A Study in Light of the Active Audience Theory and Media Criticism Approach, Amani Reza Abdel Maqsood & Khaled Jamal Abdo, Scientific Journal of Radio and Television Research, 2025, p. 1.

5. Songs

Songs are a powerful expressive medium in Egyptian popular culture, carrying strong connotations related to love, authority, and gender imagery. Some songs promote a strong image of women, while others reinforce patterns of male dominance or symbolic violence. Platforms such as Anghami and YouTube have been utilized to monitor the most popular and influential songs, analyzing their content in terms of both implicit and explicit gender messages.

6. Talk Shows

Talk shows, particularly those prevalent on YouTube, serve as spaces for discussing various societal issues² and often feature influential figures and opinion-makers with widespread acceptance and followership. A selection of programs with broad audiences that generate intense online interactions has been chosen for their role in deepening or challenging prevailing gender discourse.

7. Justifications for Platform Selection

The combination of these six media categories represents a comprehensive analytical approach that allows for monitoring multiple levels of gender representation in Egyptian media. Traditional media, such as television and journalism, still hold significant influence among large segments of the population,³ while digital platforms provide a space for youth expression and the circulation of counter-narrative. The importance of this diversity lies in its ability to reveal contradictions between what is officially broadcast and what is produced informally, equipping the report with an effective tool for analyzing the media landscape and its impact on gender perceptions in society.

Presentation and Representation of Gender, Feminist Messages, and Gender-Based Violence in Media Content

Analysis of 71 media samples across six different platforms revealed 141 gender-related messages, reflecting a clear diversity in the discourses surrounding women and gender in the Egyptian media space. Messages reinforcing traditional gender roles dominated the findings with 31 messages, accounting for 44% of the total messages analyzed. This indicates the continued portrayal of women and men in inherited stereotypical roles, which reinforce gender segregation and limit images of diversity and empowerment.

Gender Messages	Number of messages	Narrative Direction
Supportive feminist ideas	28	Supporting narratives

² Talk Show Programs and Crisis Media, Mahmoud Ahmed Lofty, Al-Arabi Publishing and Distribution, 2018. <https://tinyurl.com/5bf3txkf>

³ University Youth's Use of News Channels and New Media as a Source of News, Abdel Mohsen Hamed Ahmed Okeila, Nesma Ahmed El-Batriq & Amin Saeed Abdel Ghani, Journal of Specific Education Research, Page 234, <https://tinyurl.com/bdtvcsd6>

Empowerment and independence of women	11	
Traditional gender roles	31	Negative narratives
Toxic masculinity	19	
Gender stereotypes	16	
Criticism of feminist ideas	10	
Victim blaming	5	
Gender-based violence	21	Neutral

For example, the series "Half the People Are Called Mohamed" provides a clear example of how gender stereotypes are reproduced in comedic drama. The work revolves around a married man who engages in parallel romantic relationships with multiple women, a situation that is presented in a light-hearted and satirical manner. The hero is presented as intelligent and adventurous, while the female characters are reduced to stereotypical images of naivety, emotional, or passive-aggression. The work normalizes male infidelity by turning it into a source of laughter and entertainment, ignoring the moral or psychological dimensions of the subject, which in turn reinforces gender double standards in romantic relationships. The widespread dissemination of content on platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram has contributed to entrenching and normalizing these messages among audiences, revealing the continued presence of patriarchal discourse in Egyptian popular drama and its perpetuation as part of the social imagination.

Following this, supportive messages for feminist ideas and gender equality were identified with 28 occurrences, representing 39% of the messages. This suggests the presence of clear voices advocating for equality, albeit limited in comparison to the dominance of traditional messages.

In the series "80 Bako", the storyline directly addresses women's financial independence and the patriarchal constraints imposed on it. The main character, "Boussy," embodies the struggle between her desire to achieve professional self-realization and the pressure from her partner who rejects her autonomy. Gender-related messages emerge on multiple levels: on one hand, the narrative normalizes male dominance over women's life and career choices through threats of separation and emotional blackmail; on the other hand, it opens space for rethinking concepts such as "protection" and family support, implicitly advocating women's right to financial independence as a means of empowerment and self-discovery. The series critically reflects the lived realities of women in middle and lower socio-economic strata, where women's work is often viewed with suspicion and subjected to social pressure, while also portraying possibilities of resistance through female solidarity networks and the capacity of women to reshape the boundaries of their social roles.

The third category of messages highlighted references to gender-based violence, which appeared 21 times, making up 30% of the messages. This reflects a notable presence of this form of violence in media content, with almost all messages aimed at raising awareness and

warning about its dangers, particularly its implications for children and families, without negative portrayals or normalization of violence.

For instance, news articles generally reflect a strong tendency to adopt a supportive and awareness-raising discourse aimed at protecting women from violence, often portraying them as a particularly vulnerable group in need of protection. For example, an article on the National Council for Women's seminar on cyber-violence is a clear example: it highlights the dangers of online blackmail as a life-threatening risk that may even lead to suicide, while simultaneously emphasizing the Council's role as a key actor in awareness-raising and legal education. In this way, the article combines the framing of women as potential victims with a call to strengthen their agency through reporting mechanisms and the use of existing legal frameworks.

Content related to toxic masculinity and patriarchy appeared 19 times, or 27%, indicating the ongoing normalization of male dominance practices within certain discourses. Gender stereotypes were reported in 16 instances, approximately 23%, confirming that media continues to produce and promote superficial and inaccurate patterns of portrayal for both women and men.

The series "Fahd the Hero" serves as a clear example of toxic masculinity and patriarchal authority in Egyptian drama. It portrays the man as the savior who confronts corruption and injustice to protect his sister, while women are reduced to victims in constant need of guardianship. Although the show raises debates about social issues such as class injustice and abuse of power, it simultaneously reinforces gender stereotypes by linking women's value to their vulnerability and depicting men as decision-makers and protectors, thereby reproducing patriarchal discourse rather than challenging it.

Messages addressing women's empowerment and independence were less prominent, appearing only 11 times, or 15%, indicating the limited coverage that highlights women's roles as independent agents capable of leadership and decision-making.

The song "Taratt Taratt" stands out as a powerful example of women's empowerment and independence in the digital sphere. Through a satirical and protest-driven style, it breaks the silence by mocking patriarchal justifications of violence and exposing the commodification of women in social and familial relations. With lines such as "If he hits me, it's for my own good" and "I'm just the tied T", the lyrics cleverly subvert cultural codes to challenge traditional gender norms and dismantle the stereotype of the submissive, idealized woman. The sharp, sarcastic tone reframes women as conscious and resistant agents capable of saying "no," while men are depicted as figures of toxic masculinity seeking control. With over a million views on YouTube and broad circulation across social media, the song's impact transcended art, becoming a tool for mobilization and sparking public debate on violence and discrimination, making it a form of artistic resistance that reinforces feminist discourse on independence and empowerment.

Rap music in Egypt has emerged as one of the most influential forms of artistic expression in recent years, significantly shifting the themes of mainstream songs that once

focused mainly on romance or social drama. Rap's boldness in addressing sensitive issues—such as gender-based violence, economic pressures, and social restrictions—through direct and relatable language has resonated strongly with young people. This has enabled rap to attract a broad audience of both teenage boys and girls, who see it as a space to voice their struggles and aspirations for change. As a result, rap is no longer just youth entertainment but has become a powerful cultural platform that shapes public debates on gender and social justice.

Critical or sarcastic messages towards feminist ideas were noted in 10 instances, or 14%, reflecting a resistant discourse against feminist concepts or derogatory attitudes towards them. Finally, content placing responsibility for the violence experienced by women or justifying abuse, often manifesting as victim-blaming, was recorded in 5 instances, accounting for 7% of the total messages. Although this is a small percentage, it points to a dangerous discourse that requires attention and confrontation.

In one famous talk show in Egypt, “**The Blind Date Show 2 - Episode 59 with Sara & Mohamed**”, the episode reflected a clear debate over gender roles in marriage. Mohamed initially appeared supportive of easing the wife's burdens, but soon revealed his adherence to patriarchal values, reducing the woman's role to cooking, cleaning, and childcare, and even justifying infidelity if the wife was busy with work. In contrast, Sara rejected these views, emphasizing the importance of equal partnership, and was framed as an independent, conscious, and empowered female voice challenging gender bias. Meanwhile, Mohamed was presented as a contradictory character, combining a seemingly rational discourse with deeply rooted patriarchal attitudes, mirroring the tension between women's growing participation in the workforce and traditional expectations. The episode's wide reach contributed to reinforcing feminist awareness among the audience, particularly women and youth.

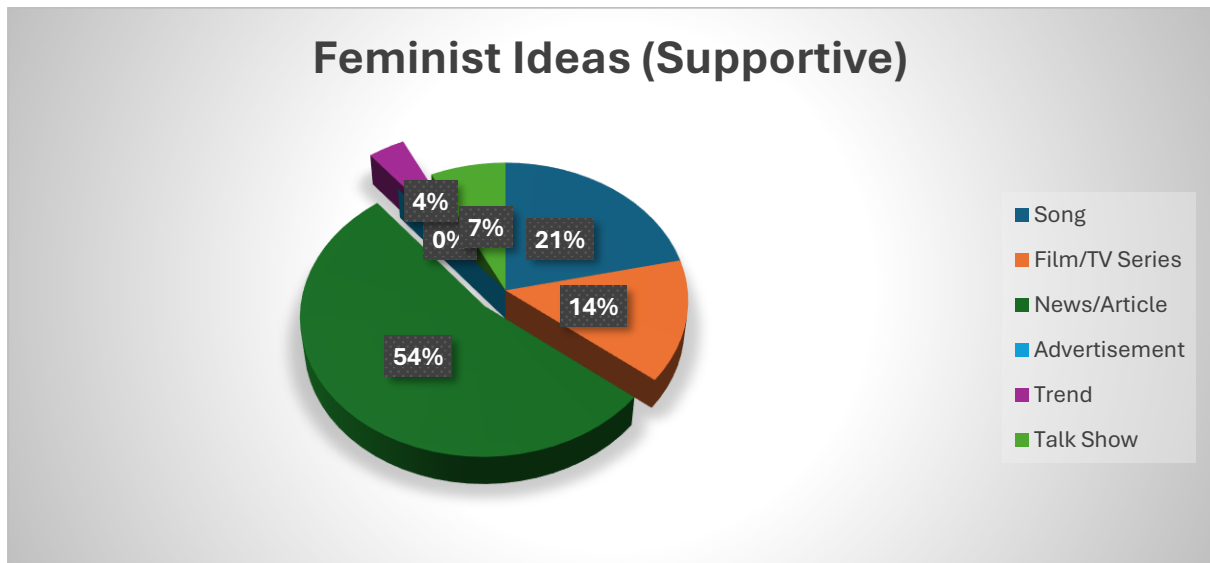
Analysis of Gender Messages by Media Platform

1. Support for Feminist Ideas

Data revealed that support for feminist ideas was predominantly found in journalistic content, where articles and news reports accounted for approximately 54% of the messages advocating for feminist ideas. This reflects a relative inclination within this type of platform to offer discourse more aligned with empowerment and equality issues. Following this, songs represented 21%, indicating the presence of feminist ideas in some modern artistic expressions, particularly in contemporary rap music that has gained popularity in Egypt over the past few years.

Films and series, which have a broad audience impact, contributed only 14% to supportive messages, potentially reflecting ongoing reservations or constraints in the dramatic treatment of gender issues. In contrast, talk shows accounted for 7%, while trending content (videos or popular interactions on social media) was the least represented in this context at only

4%. This suggests that feminist discourse in the interactive digital space still faces challenges in becoming a mainstream current within popular content.⁴

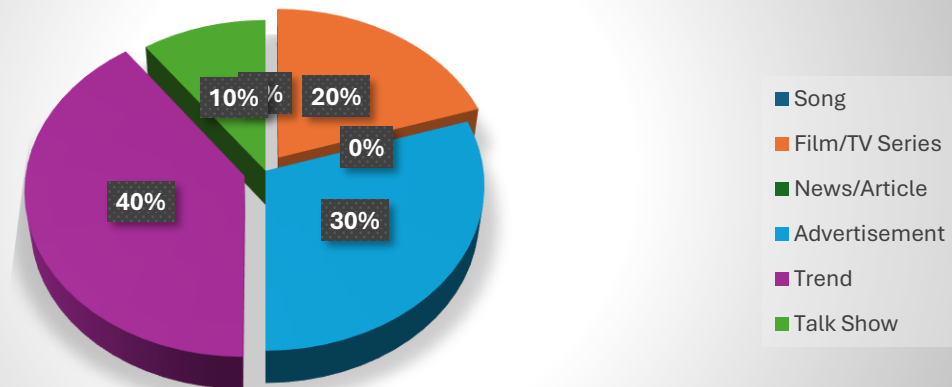


2. Critique or Satire of Feminist Ideas

The analysis, as illustrated in the following chart, indicated that messages involving satire or critique of feminist ideas were primarily concentrated in fast-paced digital content aimed at the general public. Trending content comprised about 40% of this type of messaging, reflecting the prevalence of anti-feminist or conservative discourses in the interactive digital space, especially on social media platforms that thrive on sarcasm and simplification. This was followed by advertisements at 30%, highlighting the continued use of stereotypes or negative portrayals in marketing discourse. Drama (films and series) contributed 20% of critical messages, while these messages appeared in talk shows at a lower rate of 10%, suggesting a degree of restraint or caution in the discourse presented through these programs compared to popular or entertainment content.

⁴ The Feminist Archive in Egypt - Series #3 (Arab Reform Initiative Podcast), Arab Reform Initiative, 2024, <https://tinyurl.com/m4k2m96b>

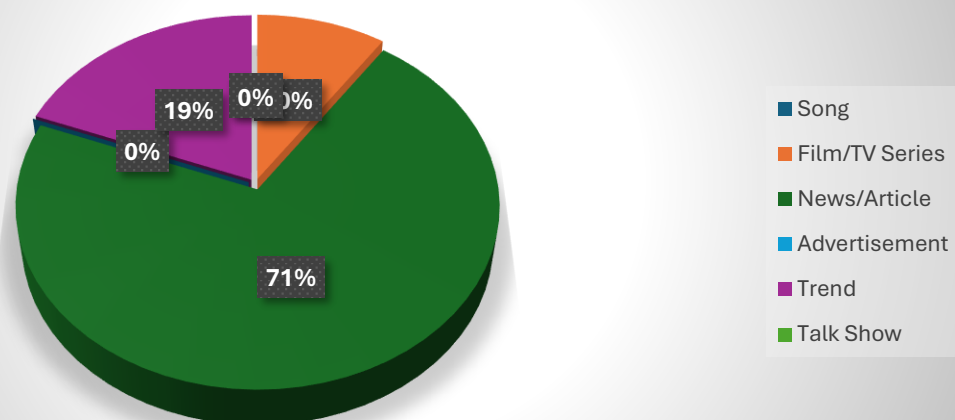
Feminist Ideas (Ridicule/Criticism)



3. Gender-Based Violence

The analysis results showed that the vast majority of messages related to gender-based violence were published through articles and news reports, accounting for 71%. Most of these messages were characterized by a clear informative and warning tone, reflecting the media's interest in highlighting this issue from perspectives of protection and accountability (Imam, 2024). Trending content ranked second at 19%, indicating that some issues related to violence against women have begun to elicit wide public engagement on social media platforms, whether through shared stories or solidarity campaigns. Films represented 10% of the messages, a relatively limited representation, which may indicate a lack of direct dramatic engagement with the issue of gender-based violence or its confinement to narrative patterns that do not prioritize the issue independently.⁵

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

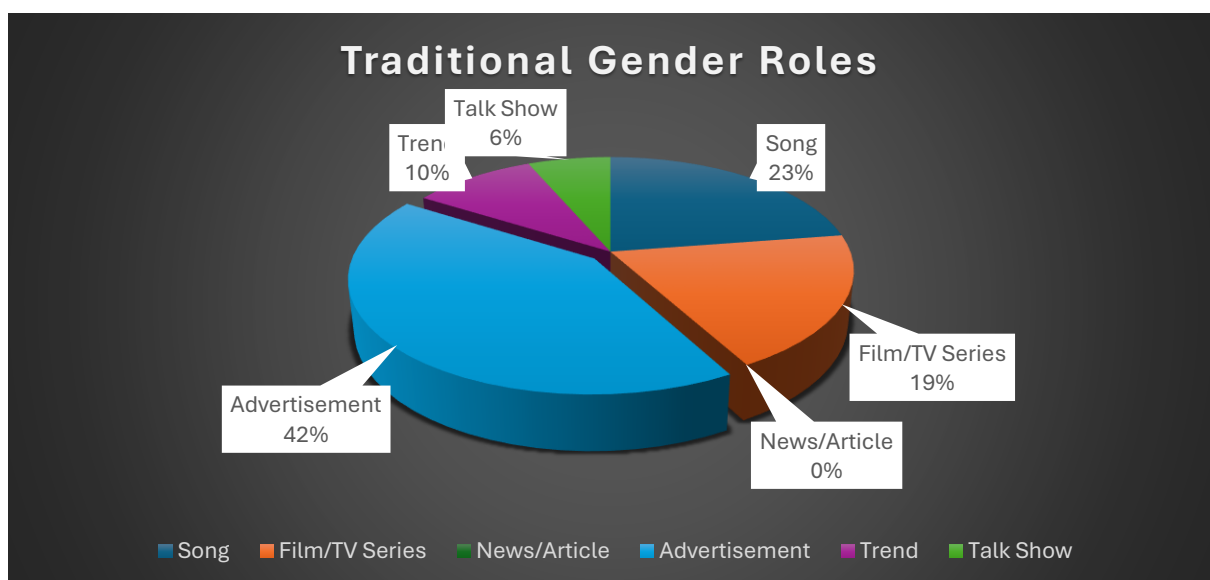


⁵ Frameworks for Egyptian Newspapers' Treatment of Violence Against Women Issues, Abd El-Salam Mohamed Aziz Imam, Scientific Journal of Journalism Research, 2024, P. 148
<https://tinyurl.com/3pk9rmr2>

4. Traditional Gender Roles

Advertisements topped the list of platforms that reinforce traditional gender roles, accounting for 42% of the total messages in this category. This reflects the prevailing pattern in Egyptian advertisements, (Al-Gebeily, 2021) which still portray women as homemakers responsible for the kitchen and family care, while men are depicted as income providers or decision-makers. Songs ranked second at 23%, often focusing on traditional relationships and messages of sacrifice for men. Dramatic works (films and series) contributed 19%, as some scenarios continue to reproduce traditional roles for women as mothers or wives or as subordinates to men.⁶

Trending content represented 10% of the messages, reflecting the ongoing circulation of these images in public social discussions, particularly in comments related to family roles. Finally, talk shows contributed 6%, often through discourse that presents these roles as social facts that are beyond debate.



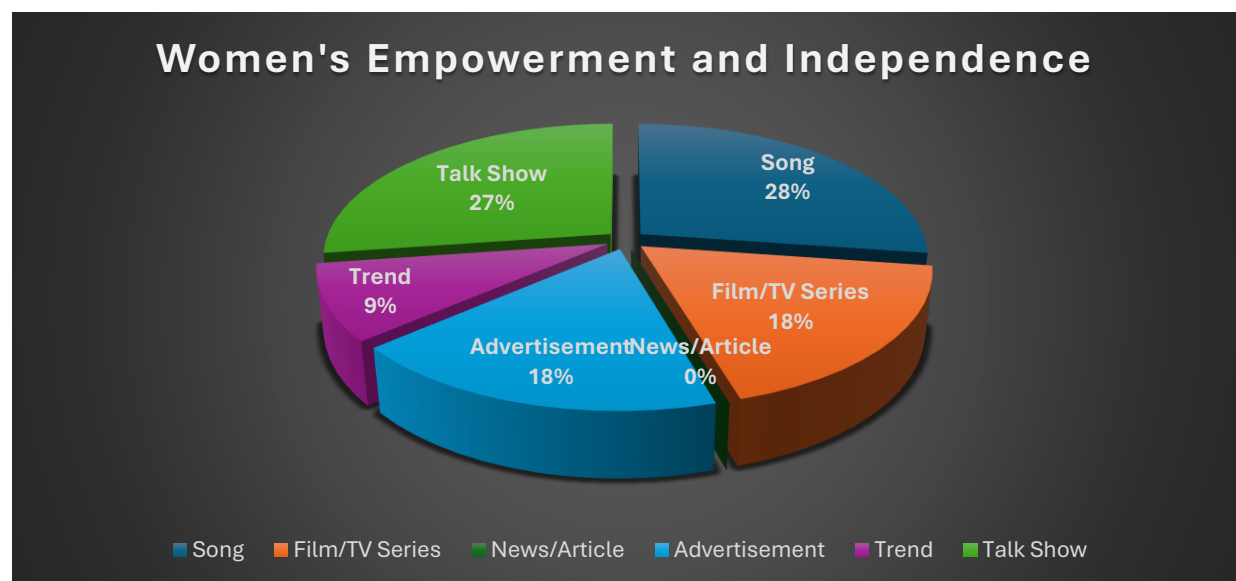
5. Women's Empowerment and Independence

Messages in the media supporting women's independence and empowerment exhibited notable diversity across platforms, with songs leading at 28% of the messages. Many songs celebrated strong and independent women, calling for liberation from stereotypes and dependency, particularly in new rap music. Following closely were talk shows at 27%, which discussed topics related to women's rights alongside inspiring success stories of women challenging societal constraints. Dramatic works (films and series) contributed 18% by depicting strong female characters who are decision-makers and ambitious, particularly in social and realistic narratives.

Advertisements also accounted for 18% of the messages, especially those promoting products aimed at working women or marketing messages related to financial or personal

⁶ The Image of Women in Facebook Ads, Omnia Bakry Al-Gebeily, Egyptian Journal of Mass Communication Research, 2021, pp. 387-393. <https://shorturl.at/SvEBu>

independence, although some blended empowerment with traditional themes. Finally, trending content represented 9%, featuring digital campaigns or feminist discussions that circulated on social media, highlighting the importance of empowerment and self-reliance.

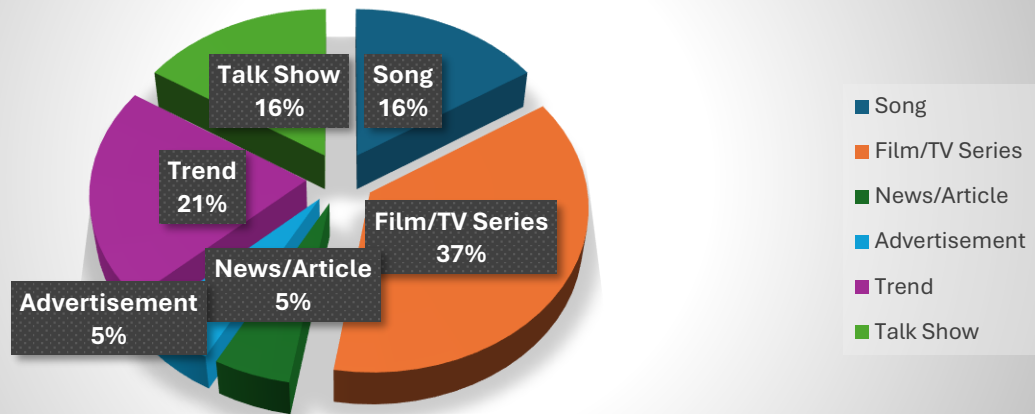


6. Toxic Masculinity/Patriarchy

Films and series emerged as the primary source for promoting or addressing concepts of toxic masculinity and patriarchy, constituting 37% of the messages related to this theme. These messages often featured male characters characterized by control, dominance, violence, or denial of vulnerability, sometimes presenting these traits as justified or natural within the dramatic context. Trending content ranked second at 21%, particularly in discussions justifying violence or mocking men who express their emotions, or defending men's "right" to impose decisions on women in family and romantic relationships.

Songs represented 16% of the messages, often glorifying the controlling man or attacking independent women, or justifying domineering behaviour as stemming from jealousy or love. Talk shows contributed 16%, featuring discussions that carried discriminatory gender judgments or justified regressive behaviours under the guise of tradition. Advertisements and articles each accounted for 5%, often appearing in promotional contexts that reinforce stereotypes about the "strong, reliable man" versus the "weak woman in need of care."

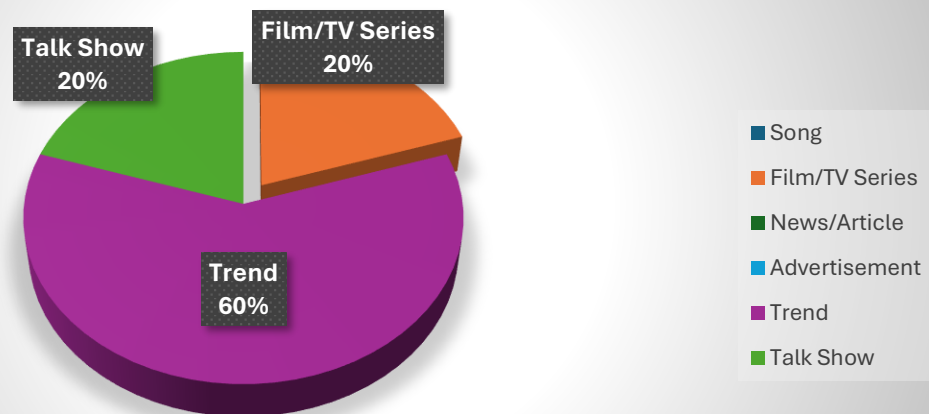
Toxic Masculinity/Patriarchy



7. Victim Blaming

Trending content on social media emerged as the primary source for victim-blaming messages, accounting for 60% of these messages. These often appeared in comments on harassment or violence incidents, blaming the victim's clothing, behavior, or timing of their outings. Films and series contributed 20% through scenes and scenarios that place responsibility on the victim, either directly or through implicit messages that portray the victim as "provocative" or "disrespectful of traditions," which helps reinforce gendered mental frameworks among the audience. Talk shows also constituted 20% of the messages, particularly in placing the burden of responsibility on the victim instead of holding the perpetrator or legal system accountable.

Victim Blaming

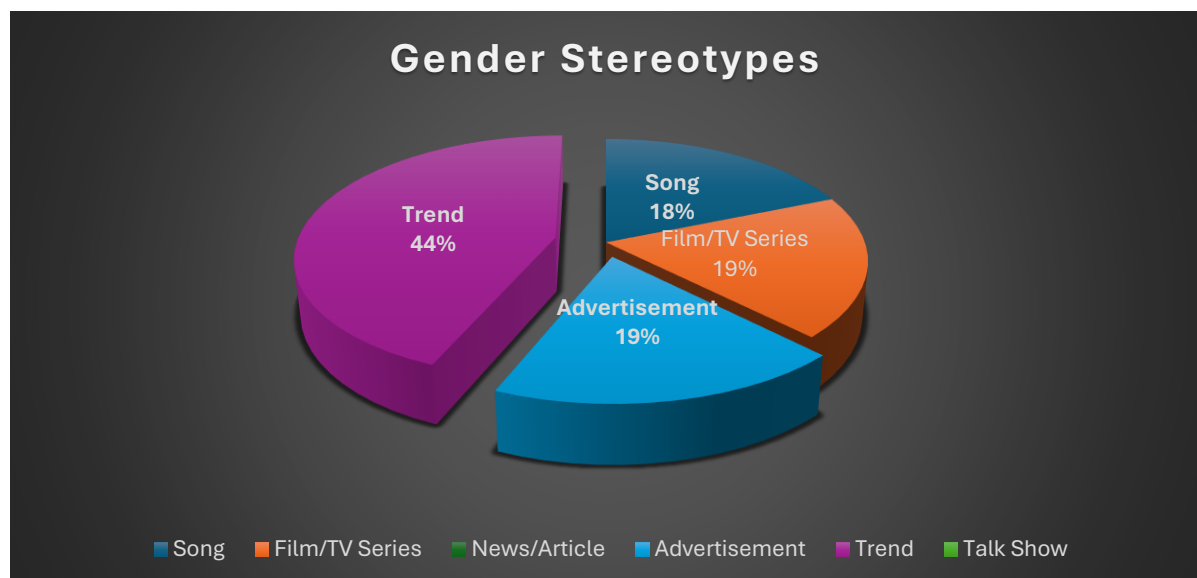


In another context, based on our collected samples, a short video titled “Two Girls Dancing in the Metro” sparked wide controversy after showing two young women dancing inside a Cairo metro carriage to film a TikTok clip. Although the act itself was not criminal, the dominant public discourse—led mainly by men—supported their arrest under the pretext of protecting “societal values,” while only limited female voices defended the girls’ freedom of expression.

This incident highlights clear gender bias that imposes stricter moral standards on women in public spaces, while also showing how social media can amplify an individual act into a public debate that reinforces patriarchal norms and legitimizes restrictions on women's bodily expression and freedom of movement.

8. Gender Stereotypes

Trending content on social media was the primary source for disseminating gender stereotypes, accounting for 44% of these messages. These often took the form of satirical clips or challenges that spread widely, reproducing ready-made templates about women and men, such as "women are unfit to drive." Such messages contribute to the light-hearted yet impactful and rapidly spreading reproduction of inequality. Films and series as well as advertisements each represented about 19%, often displaying stereotypes through repetitive and unrenowned roles, such as the woman obsessed with appearance or men. These images are presented as self-evident social facts, deepening their entrenchment in public consciousness. Songs accounted for 18%, often linking female attractiveness with submission or weakness, and masculinity with control and violence



Dominant Gender and Feminist Narratives in Popular Culture and the Actors Behind Them

Content analysis of 71 media samples revealed recurring discursive patterns in gender representation within Egyptian popular culture. These patterns were not neutral; they reflected multiple stances toward women's issues, ranging from support and empowerment to the reinforcement of traditional roles or even the exercise of symbolic violence against women.

- 1. Dominance of Traditional Messages and Reinforcement of Stereotypical Gender Roles:** the analysis showed that the prevailing gender discourse continues to reinforce traditional roles for women and men, with messages promoting these roles constituting 44% of the total observed messages. This strong presence reflects a media culture that emphasizes gender segregation by repeating familiar stereotypes, such as the nurturing or enduring woman and the strong male provider. This limits the possibilities for diverse

representation and hinders the shift toward more inclusive concepts of gender. This trend illustrates how media contributes to the reproduction of social concepts that entrench differences rather than transcend them.

2. **Relative Presence of Feminist Ideas and Gender Equality Values:** despite the dominance of traditional messages, a notable presence of discourse supporting values of equality and feminism was observed, accounting for about 39% of the total messages. This suggests that there is a limited space for critical approaches to gender disparities, encouraging women's empowerment and achieving gender justice. However, these messages still face challenges in balancing against dominant narratives and often reflect individual or community efforts that are unstructured and seek to confront prevailing stories, rather than being part of a clear institutional media policy.
3. **Acknowledgment of the Dangers of Gender-Based Violence:** although overall representation was limited, messages addressing gender-based violence comprised 30%, with most focusing on raising awareness and warning about its dangers, particularly its negative effects on families and children. This presence indicates a rising societal awareness of this issue and signals a relative shift in media discourse toward highlighting a phenomenon that has long been overlooked in serious media coverage. Nevertheless, these messages still suffer from a lack of in-depth treatment that connects gendered violence to the cultural and social structures that sustain it.
4. **Normalization of Toxic Masculinity and Patriarchy in Media Discourse:** a discourse that normalizes aspects of male dominance appeared in 27% of the messages, through the glorification of traditional masculinity or implicit suggestions of men's superiority in decision-making and control. This presence shows how some media content, perhaps inadvertently, contributes to entrenching patriarchal systems and legitimizing controlling male behaviors, thereby limiting opportunities for achieving gender justice and making it difficult to resist violence and discrimination against women.
5. **Continuation of Gender Stereotypes:** gender stereotypes accounted for about 23% of the messages, with women often represented in superficial or traditional roles, such as the bride, the self-sacrificing mother, or the victim, while men are highlighted as leaders or protectors. This reflects a lack of genuine diversity in media narratives and contributes to recycling a limited and reductive understanding of gender that does not reflect the complexity of reality or the diversity of gender experiences in Egyptian society.
6. **Weak Presence of Messages Supporting Women's Empowerment and Independence:** messages highlighting women's independence or leadership roles appeared in only 15% of the samples, indicating a serious absence in portraying active and decision-making women. This lack of representation reflects the media's limited ability to change stereotypes and indicates a specific shortcoming in dramatic treatment. While Egypt is a major producer of dramatic and cinematic content in the Arab region, the focus on these issues is either limited or negatively framed, often highlighting women's failures in one aspect of life in contrast to their professional success, such as emotional failures or portraying them as domineering figures.

7. **Satire of Feminism as an Indicator of Resistance Discourse:** critical or sarcastic messages about feminism were observed in 14% of cases, indicating the presence of a resistance discourse that seeks to question the legitimacy of feminist propositions or diminish their significance. This discourse takes various forms, including ridicule or mockery, or framing feminist ideas as a threat to the traditional social order. Such discourse reflects not only a rejection of gender equality but also contributes to the dissemination of distorted perceptions about the feminist movement and its goals.
8. **Victim-Blaming Discourse: Subtle Justification of Violence:** some messages that place blame on women for the violence they experience appeared in 7% of the total messages. These messages often take the form of implicit justifications for assault, such as referencing a woman's behavior, clothing, or deviations from the "norm," thereby reinforcing the logic of "victim-blaming." Although these messages were relatively few, their danger lies in legitimizing violence and shifting responsibility away from perpetrators, which is a concerning indicator of the persistence of cultural structures that impede justice.

Youth Interaction with Media Narratives on Gender and Feminism in Egypt

In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in the engagement of Egyptian youth with media discourses related to gender and feminism, particularly through digital spaces. This interaction has ranged from active support and participation to resistance and rejection, reflecting a sharp social and cultural divide concerning gender and equality issues.

First: Digital Interaction and Online Participation

Social media has become a central platform for youth engagement with gender and feminist issues. During prominent harassment incidents, such as the "Fairmont Girl" case, platforms like Facebook, X, and TikTok were flooded with extensive posts from youth, especially young women, who used hashtags like #MeToo to document their personal experiences, express solidarity with victims, and call for accountability.⁷

The #MeToo movement has represented a global turning point in addressing sexual violence, providing a broad digital space for victims of abuse to break the silence, share their experiences, and demand accountability. Its impact extended to the Egyptian context, where many young women interacted with the hashtag and launched local tags like #AnaKaman (in Arabic), reflecting an expanding digital awareness of rights and feminism, particularly among the younger generation.

This momentum created by the MeToo movement did not remain confined to the virtual space; it also spurred tangible initiatives and demands on the ground. Campaigns focused on legal gaps and institutional shortcomings in protecting reporters and witnesses emerged. For instance, the "Witnesses Without Protection" campaign, launched by the Egyptian Women's Issues Foundation, expressed local solidarity with the protest spirit of MeToo, focusing on specific issues within the Egyptian context, such as the absence of legislation protecting those

⁷ Sky News, Controversy in Egypt after the Public Prosecution closed the Fairmont girl case | #Platforms, May 2021, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5jJDWg0n68>

who testify or report cases of sexual and domestic violence. Thus, MeToo evolved from a global hashtag into a source of inspiration for local models of struggle aimed at addressing the deep-rooted legal and social issues that hinder justice for victims and witnesses in Egypt.⁸

Conversely, analyses of user comments on these posts revealed a pattern of reactions that placed responsibility on victims for what they endured or called for "modesty" as a means of protection, repeating the narratives of "victim-blaming" that are still prevalent in collective consciousness. Notably, this opposing discourse did not only come from older generations but also involved some young people from both genders, who reproduced stereotypes and traditional gender roles. It is important to note that the nature of these comments faced strong rejection and backlash from supporters of victims, both women and men, indicating a rising resistance to this negative form of discourse.

In Egypt, media narratives of a religious nature that are anti-feminist are widely disseminated and continuously recycled by influencers and public figures, notably Sheikh Abdullah Rushdi, who enjoys a large following on social media. These individuals tend to undermine feminist discourse through ridicule or by framing it as a threat to religious and national identity, while reproducing ideas that assign women responsibility for the violence inflicted upon them. Among these ideas is the troubling association between women's clothing and harassment, representing a dangerous shift away from addressing the core issues of gender-based violence.

In a sarcastic comment about the decision of German gymnasts to wear more modest attire, Abdullah Rushdi reproduces one of the most damaging stereotypes in discussions of sexual violence: linking harassment to women's clothing. This narrative shifts the blame onto victims for the violations they suffer instead of holding the perpetrators accountable. Even when the act of assault is condemned, it reinforces a culture of justification and silence, obstructing the path to true justice. Rushdi employs the athletes' decision as evidence to support his viewpoint, despite the fact that the choice stems from a conscious feminist effort to combat the sexual objectification of female athletes, rather than a justification of the idea that "clothing causes harassment." Notably, the perpetrators in the case of the American coach were indeed held accountable, while Rushdi uses the incident to launch aggressive critiques against secular discourse, which does not contribute to awareness of the issue but rather reproduces the dichotomy of "nudity versus morality."⁹

The reactions to Abdullah Rushdi's comments regarding "women's clothing and harassment" highlight a sharp divide in Egyptian public opinion, revealing the depth of cultural and value conflicts within society. On one hand, his statements received broad support from a significant segment of males, reflecting a commitment to a traditional viewpoint that blames women and attributes harassment issues to "women's behaviors," rather than focusing on the perpetrators and the protective systems that shield them. This support indicates the continued

⁸ Launching Campaign "Witnesses Without Protection", November 2020, available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1577539085782362>

⁹ Gymnasts wear more modest clothing after the incident with the American coach who harassed them., July 2021, available at:

<https://tinyurl.com/2bwek8wz>

dominance of patriarchal narratives in public discourse and a cultural complicity with stories that criminalize women instead of defending them.

Conversely, Rushdi faced intense backlash from feminist activists and supportive men, especially from secular circles, who viewed his discourse as a distortion of public consciousness and an obstruction to any rights progress. They regarded Rushdi's statements as an extension of a series of positions that entrench impunity and dilute the discussion around harassment, recycling it within superficial moral narratives. While many comments rejected the linkage between clothing and harassment, some exploit a small segment of the population that may be less educated or more attached to outdated societal norms, finding in this narrative an excuse to justify harassment.

Second: Resistance and Rejection

Despite the increasing feminist momentum, a segment of Egyptian youth, particularly males, still expresses explicit or implicit rejection of feminist narratives. This rejection takes various forms, the most widespread being the production of memes mocking the discourse of equality or promoting statements that portray feminism as an "imported" ideology threatening "societal constants." Influencers known for their anti-feminist rhetoric, who employ religious or nationalist narratives to reject concepts of gender and diversity and promote conservative masculine models, have gained significant followings.

Social media platforms in Egypt have seen a notable increase in posts mocking feminist discourse, clearly aiming to question the objectives of the feminist movement and undermine the credibility of women involved in it. A sarcastic tone is often used to depict feminists as "unloved women" or "unsuccessful in marriage," attempting to link their embrace of equality ideas and social challenges to personal failures or psychological issues. Memes and sarcastic comments are employed to undermine feminist discourse, portraying it as an individual case outside societal context, rather than a movement reflecting structural issues concerning social justice.¹⁰

Frequently, stereotypical narratives are recycled that portray feminism as a guise for oppression or a mechanism to escape traditional "feminine" responsibilities. This reflects a broad cultural resistance that goes beyond mere rejection of feminist discourse; it personalizes the conflict and ridicules activists, reducing their demands to "hatred of men" or "rebellion against marriage." In Egypt, various electronic platforms have been identified that explicitly attack feminism, bearing names that overtly oppose feminist thought, such as a well-known page called "Feminism is Destruction for Humanity," which openly criticizes feminism and equality.¹¹

Overall, the interaction of youth with media discourse related to gender and feminism in Egypt reflects a state of cultural fluidity and social tension, ranging from enthusiastic support to sharp rejection. Initiatives that promote critical awareness of gender issues and provide safe spaces

¹⁰ Random Facebook posts, July 2025: <https://tinyurl.com/243bpd4b>

¹¹ Facebook page called "Feminism is the destruction of humanity": <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100093728469457>

for dialogue are gaining traction, especially given the strong influence of digital media in shaping the attitudes and concepts of the new generation.

Gender Representation Gaps in Media and Barriers to Change

Despite a clear numerical presence of women in Egyptian media, whether as presenters, journalists, or participants in media and dramatic production, the content does not necessarily reflect values of gender equality or promote feminist narratives. On the contrary, a review of 71 media samples shows that dominant messages still tend to reinforce traditional gender roles and marginalize critical aspects that challenge these roles, indicating structural and cultural gaps in gender representation.

1. First Gap: Dominance of Traditional Gender Roles in Representation

Data indicates that 44% of media messages in the studied sample reinforced stereotypical images of women, confining them to roles of mother, wife, or subordinate to men under the sway of customs and traditions (Baraka, 2023, p. 1452).¹² These messages predominated in advertisements (42% of traditional gender messages), followed by songs and series, albeit at lower rates.

The primary barrier here is not the absence of women from narratives but rather the employment of their presence within a framework that serves a socially desirable traditional image. This trend is largely driven by conservative societal norms. On the other hand, there have been challenges to these roles and presentations of impactful and inspiring women's experiences in dramatic works, which have received significant acclaim in Egyptian society.

2. Second Gap: Weak Positive and Independent Representation of Women as Agents

Despite the presence of supportive messages for women's empowerment (15%) and general feminist ideas (39%), the content still depicts women in interactive contexts with men, as victims or partners, rather than as independent decision-makers or public leaders. Moreover, some representations of successful women are often superficial or carry implicit negative traits, such as family failure or emotional isolation, which dilute the essence of leadership and reinforce counter-narratives that question women's ability to balance professional success with personal stability. This reflects a selective and conservative representation of women's roles, still subject to strict social conditions that limit their presence as influential and independent forces.

3. Third Gap: Marginalization of Gender-Based Violence in Private Spheres

Despite a noticeable presence of gender-based violence issues in about 30% of the observed messages, media coverage of these issues often came in direct, limited awareness contexts with minimal public impact, lacking in-depth dramatic treatment that addresses the roots of violence and its societal and cultural structures. Even when these issues are addressed in series or programs, they are often presented from a cautious perspective that maintains the image of

¹² The Digital Feminist Discourse of Egyptian Women on Facebook: A Qualitative Study, Engy Baraka, Journal of Media Research, 2023, pp. 1452 :<https://shorturl.at/kR85b>

"family cohesion," prioritizing tolerance or silence over accountability and justice, which undermines the discourse's structural impact.

This pattern shows that Egyptian media, despite its broad scope and multiple platforms, has yet to successfully build alternative narratives that portray women as public opinion leaders or producers of social knowledge. Instead, positive images are often presented symbolically or individually, without being connected to a clear system that drives broader cultural transformation. This keeps women's media presence confined to traditional roles—such as mothers, caregivers, and victims—or to exceptional individual models presented as outliers that cannot be generalized.

Common Barriers to Changing Gender Representation

1. Dominant Masculine Perspective on Social Media

Although social media platforms are relatively free (Mohamed, 2021), interactions often adhere to patriarchal and conservative religious perceptions. Feminist activists are mocked, and their personal experiences are linked to failure or moral decay, weakening their credibility and creating an environment hostile to feminist discourse. This adverse digital atmosphere even influences traditional media, which tends to avoid entering into battles that could affect its popularity or funding.

2. Lack of Investment in Feminist and Independent Content

There are insufficient spaces or sustainable funding for producing independent feminist or progressive media content, especially in official or private channels (Khamis & El-Ibiary, 2022). As a result, most feminist initiatives remain within the realm of temporary digital campaigns or individual projects, preventing the accumulation of alternative narratives capable of challenging the dominant stereotypes.¹³

Key Findings from Gendered Media Content Analysis

1. Dominance of Messages Reinforcing Traditional Gender Roles

Messages that reinforce traditional gender roles (such as confining women to the home or depicting them as subordinate to men) constituted the largest share of content, accounting for 44% of the total messages. This type of messaging was particularly prominent in advertisements and songs, reflecting the continued entrenchment of stereotypes in Egyptian media culture.

2. Relative Presence of Supportive Feminist and Empowerment Discourses

Messages supporting feminist ideas were observed at a rate of 39%, with 15% specifically addressing women's empowerment and independence. However, these messages primarily came from journalistic articles or limited awareness content, often lacking depth or presented symbolically without genuinely challenging prevailing norms.

¹³ Egyptian Women Journalists' Feminist Voices, Sahar Khamis & Rasha El-Ibiary, 2022, <https://shorturl.at/3oXPL>

3. Clear Coverage of Gender-Based Violence Issues but Lacking Impactful Dramatic Treatment

Messages addressing gender-based violence appeared in 30% of the sample, particularly in journalistic articles and awareness campaigns. However, the dramatic treatment of these issues was limited or superficial, often sidestepped with justifications that preserve "family cohesion," without addressing the roots of the problem or demanding genuine accountability.

4. Presence of Implicit and Recurrent Male and Patriarchal Narratives

The proportion of messages containing toxic masculinity or promoting male authority over women was about 27%. This appeared in various media, particularly in television series and songs. This type of discourse praises male dominance or belittles women's roles outside the traditional framework.

5. Continuation of Gender Stereotypes in Presenting Women and Men

Gender-based stereotypes were observed in 23% of the messages, varying from depicting women as weak and emotional, to portraying men as sources of absolute power. These images were particularly repeated in entertainment content.

6. Satirical or Critical Messages Towards Feminism Reflecting Resistance to Feminist Discourse

Approximately 14% of the messages included mockery or direct attacks on feminist ideas, especially through social media trends and advertisements. Some messages mocked women's failures in marriage or dismissed feminism as "a foreign ideology," reflecting the existence of narratives resistant to values of equality and diversity.

7. Manifestations of "Victim-Blaming" Discourse Despite Its Low Percentage

"Victim-blaming" discourse appeared in 7% of the messages, especially in the context of harassment and assault issues. Despite its low percentage, its presence indicates the danger of its repetition, as it has a direct impact on silencing survivors and undermining trust in the judicial and social systems.

Overall, despite positive indicators in some media content models, the general scene clearly tends towards reproducing traditional gender narratives. These narratives confine women's roles to the home, emotion, or dependence on men, while erasing images of women as leaders or independent community activists. This trend not only reflects the inclinations of media producers but is also linked to a broader cultural structure that prefers the symbolic stability of gender roles at the expense of critical discussion or fair representation.

In many cases, gender is approached cautiously or through a tolerant logic that prefers maintaining "family cohesion" rather than questioning the structural roots of violence or discrimination. Even when gender-based violence is presented as an issue, it is often framed in moralistic or symbolic terms, without being reflected in dramatic or analytical narratives capable of destabilizing entrenched norms.

In contrast, this ranges from being a platform for solidarity and free feminist expression, such as in interactions with harassment issues or initiatives like "Witnesses Without Protection", to being a fertile ground for counter-discourse, where mockery and scepticism are used to undermine the credibility of activists or portray feminism as an extreme ideology alien to "conservative Egyptian society."

This duality in the digital space reflects a broader reality. There is an expansion of feminist discourse in terms of presence and boldness, but it still faces fierce cultural and social resistance, fuelled by patriarchal authority, populist religious discourse, and the collective need to maintain the "symbolic order" of gender relations. As a result, gender discourse in the media in Egypt remains oscillating between the desire for progress and the fear of breaking norms.

Ultimately, the Egyptian media landscape offers a vivid illustration of how gender discourse functions as both a site of resistance and a mechanism of reproduction for patriarchal norms. It captures the struggle between entrenched cultural traditions and emergent feminist voices seeking space for alternative narratives. This tension underscores the importance of situating media analysis within broader political and social transformations, recognizing that the media does not merely reflect reality but actively participates in shaping the terms of debate around gender in contemporary Egypt.