



Masculinities and Transition: Enduring Privilege?

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Cover photograph Cairo, Egypt. A metalworker and his young assistant shape a disc of metal into a bell-shaped part of *shisha* (waterpipe).

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Contents

Acknowledgements	4
Acronyms	4
Executive summary	5
Introduction – by J. Edström, R. Aly, A. Greig and C. Walker with C. Müller	7
Why masculinities and transition?	7
Regional context	8
EBRD’s role in transition countries	11
Method and country choices	11
Egypt – by R. Aly	12
Gender and masculinity in Egypt’s transition	12
Policy context and case study methods	14
Findings	15
Strategic implications for EBRD and its partners	17
Kazakhstan – by A. Greig with D.T. Kudaibergenova	18
Gender and masculinity in Kazakhstan’s transition	18
Policy context and case study methods	20
Findings	21
Strategic implications for EBRD and its partners	23
Turkey – by J. Edström with M. Çağlar	24
Gender and masculinity in Turkey’s transition	24
Policy context and case study methods	25
Findings	27
Strategic implications for EBRD and its partners	29
Ukraine – by C. Walker with S. Babenko	30
Gender and masculinity in Ukraine’s transition	30
Policy context and case study methods	32
Findings	33
Strategic implications for EBRD and its partners	34
Conclusions and recommendations – by J. Edström, R. Aly, A. Greig and C. Walker	35
Synthesis of findings	35
Emerging priorities	37
Recommendations	40
References	41
Endnotes	43

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Acronyms

CAPMAS	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (Egypt)
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
EU	European Union
FSU	Former Soviet Union
GDP	gross domestic product
HR	human resources
IFI	international financial institution
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMAGES	International Men and Gender Equality Surveys
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MSMEDA	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (Egypt)
NCW	National Council for Women (Egypt)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	small and medium-size enterprise
SPGE	Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive summary

Policy responses to promoting gender equality in transition countries have broadly focused on improving equal opportunities for women. In its Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2016–2020, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD 2016) specifies three objectives for such improvement: (1) increased access to finance and business support for women-led businesses; (2) increased access to employment opportunities and skills for women; and (3) improved access to services. The Bank has pursued these objectives through its loans and investments, as well as policy dialogues and technical cooperation in transition countries, most notably in its Women in Business programme. It has also worked to strengthen the institutional capacity of both state and private sector partners to integrate gender-responsive policies into the recruitment, training, promotion and retention of women. Advocacy with governments to remove barriers to women's economic advancement has addressed issues such as maternity leave, retirement age and labour codes. The EBRD's strategy 'importantly recognises that engaging men will be a key requirement to ensure success' (2016: 4). It makes clear that a transformation of men's harmful attitudes and practices is needed for women's advancement, greater equality and more resilient transitions, and that it will also benefit men themselves. However, what this transformation might require of the Bank in its work with governments and the private sector remains as yet unarticulated. That is what this study has set out to explore.

The study comprised a literature review and primary research in selected countries, focusing on sectors with relevance for EBRD's work on gender equality. Four countries – Egypt, Kazakhstan, Turkey and Ukraine – were selected for their significance within their sub-regions, the availability of relevant EBRD-supported projects and investments, and logistical feasibility. Pairs of researchers conducted key informant interviews and focus group discussions with EBRD officials, government and corporate counterparts and project beneficiaries in each country. In total, 79 men and 81 women were interviewed, including managers, employees and small-scale entrepreneurs.

Findings and strategic implications

Progress on women's economic advancement remains constrained by persistent and pervasive gender stereotypes, reinforcing gender segregation at work and the gendered division of labour at home. These stereotypes appear to flourish even though all of the countries are in the midst of transitions toward more modern market economies. Indeed, the literature and this study suggest that dislocations within these transitions – the loss of state welfare service provision or increased job insecurity, among others – have been accompanied by renewed gender traditionalism, perhaps to provide a sense of order amid rapid change. Headline findings include that:

- Strategies for closing the gender 'gap' neglect many men's deleterious experiences of transition.
- There is little perception of a problem with equal opportunities in the workplace and economy.
- Inequalities are often put down to women's choices and 'natural' role in childcare or family life.
- Men's traditional gender role as primary breadwinner remains dominant across the countries.
- Gender stereotypes persist, but attitudes to gender roles and equality vary, and are in flux.

This study indicates a need to broaden how strategy conceives of gender in two ways:

1. to focus on changing gender *relations*, not just on including women; and
2. to recognise the *gender effects and dynamics* of all projects, involving both women and men.

Two key strategic implications follow from such a broadened conception of gender strategy:

► **Complement women-focused interventions with initiatives to change gender relations**

A gender relations approach to equal opportunities in employment and skills could strengthen the capacity of human resources (HR) departments to identify and address restrictive patriarchal aspects of workplace culture.

In financing for women's entrepreneurship, such an approach could usefully also target male business partners of female entrepreneurs and support male business advisers to be champions for gender equality. For access to services, there is a need to broaden the focus on transport and infrastructure projects to address service gaps in the care economy and to increase men's involvement in care work.

► **Work directly with men as agents of positive change, alongside women**

There are several entry points to engage men as agents of positive change in gender relations, most notably in relation to work–life balance and health. Efforts are also needed to increase men's involvement in care and uptake of services.

Recommendations

Directions for internal capacity building and technical cooperation:

- Make men and gender relations visible in internal work and challenge gender stereotypes.
- Use stereotype-defying examples to illustrate gender strategies, internally and in cooperation.
- Challenge patriarchal mindsets in multiple ways, using male business partners of female entrepreneurs and male business mentors as champions for women's economic advancement.
- Include masculinities-aware HR advice in equal opportunities and advisory services.

Directions for projects and investments:

- Integrate issues of men, masculinity and gender relations along the value chains of investments, through engaging key personnel in HR management and training, and through the Women in Business programme.
- Continue help to formalise the economy by tackling corruption, thereby stemming the growth of gender inequality resulting from the abuse of patriarchal power.
- Correct market failures in access to gender-sensitive personal financial services, so clients can access these without men working excessive hours and women working a 'second shift' of care at home.

- Invest to minimise key constraints to gender equality. For example, as childcare is a common obstacle for women in business, support gender-equitable crèches.
- Build on good practices in community development to engage men alongside women and children.

Directions for policy dialogues:

- Encourage and facilitate policy dialogues and strategies targeting men's health problems.
- Promote national dialogues on gender and masculinities with stakeholders, on:
 1. gender equality in social and economic policy surrounding the 'care economy';
 2. promoting men's engagement in childcare and domestic work; and
 3. better gender-balancing in educational streaming to technical and social subjects.
- Support business and trade union leaders to speak out against traditional gender stereotypes.
- Support the development of campaigns to improve work–life balance, emphasising that shared responsibilities within the family are a win-win for women and men alike.
- Champion positive examples of supportive male partners to highlight that work–life balance is not solely women's responsibility.

Two men sit and look over the city of Ankara, Turkey.
 PHOTOGRAPH: © LASSI KURKIJÄRVI
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 Two men are sitting on a stone ledge, looking out over a vast cityscape. The man on the left is wearing a white t-shirt and light-colored pants, while the man on the right is wearing a striped shirt and dark pants. The city below is densely packed with buildings, and a hill with a monument is visible in the distance under a clear sky.

Introduction

To speak of masculinities is to speak about gender relations. Masculinities are not equivalent to men; they concern the position of men in a gender order. They can be defined as the patterns of practice by which people (both men and women, though predominantly men) engage that position. There is abundant evidence that masculinities are multiple, with internal complexities and even contradictions; also that masculinities change in history, and that women have a considerable role in making them, in interaction with boys and men.

(RAEWYN W. CONNELL)¹

Why masculinities and transition?

There has been significant progress in gender equality globally over recent decades, such as in school enrolment or in labour force participation rates, and in certain groups of men's and boys' attitudes to gender equality, particularly among younger, educated males in urban areas (Barker *et al.* 2011). Yet, historically embedded structural barriers and patriarchal relations seem to counter progress in other areas – such as unpaid care work, or women's access to property and productive resources (Hassink *et al.* 2015). In the context of rising global and local economic inequalities, we have also seen the emergence of 'backlash' against

women's empowerment in many settings (Shahrokh and Edström 2015). This is relevant in many countries undergoing transitions where the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) operates. This report aims to explore experiences of men and constructions of masculinity in four significant transition countries – Egypt, Kazakhstan, Turkey and Ukraine – to consider how best to complement the Bank's women-focused interventions in its projects and investments, within its mandate to enhance both the resilience of transitions and equality of opportunity.

EBRD's Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality (SPGE) 2016–2020 draws from evidence to argue that 'the failure to share the costs and opportunities of the transition process more evenly is costly for several reasons' (EBRD 2016: 8). It recognises that 'the legitimacy of the market and political system ... can be questioned on the grounds of inequality' and that major proportions of a country's 'skilled and well-educated human resources will be untapped' without equal opportunities, as well as that such inequalities 'may have strong spill-over effects on social cohesion and stability' (*ibid.*). The strategy argues that such 'inequalities present ongoing obstacles to the sustainability and effectiveness of EBRD investments and inclusive, resilient transition in particular' (*ibid.*). In brief, the SPGE aims to respond to this challenge with three objectives – all designed to increase or improve access to: (1) finance and business support for women-led businesses; (2) employment opportunities and skills for women; and (3) services. The Bank has two main strategies for achieving these objectives: expanding the number of investments and projects which promote gender equality, and promoting dialogues for more enabling environments in its countries of operation.

Yet, relatively little attention has been paid to what financing initiatives to build gender-equitable, sustainable economies might mean in terms of working with men. For example, the ability of some men to play the 'breadwinner role' – a central plank of dominant constructions of masculinity across the world – has been undermined by some aspects of economic development central to globalisation (Cornwall, Kariotis and Lindisfarne 2016). Findings from a plethora of studies suggest that these changes are both challenging and complex. There is an urgent need to apply a masculinities lens to analysing the reconfigurations of local, national and regional 'gender orders', if EBRD and its partners are to engage men as agents of positive change, alongside women, to strengthen the resilience and inclusiveness of transitions.

Several reviews of evidence from the field of work with men and boys (Ricardo, Eads and Barker 2011; Fulu, Kerr-Wilson and Lang 2014; Edström *et al.* 2015) note the progress that has been made across a wide range of areas. Effective strategies typically include combinations of peer education, using male advocates, media programmes, workplace initiatives, and community-based activities to change social norms. Yet, little research has focused on transition countries.

The central message of this study is that EBRD and country partners need to build on this broader progress and address the lack of attention to men and masculinities

There is an urgent need to apply a masculinities lens to analysing the reconfigurations of local, national and regional 'gender orders'.

in transition contexts. This implies a need to reframe the understanding of gender inequality – and of gender strategy – as always (a) relational between genders and (b) structurally embedded in the economy and society.

This report thus aims to explore how different experiences of transition have produced different forms of security and insecurity for different groups of men, as well as how this may impact on gender relations in different settings. For example, although favourable attitudes toward gender equality is commonly associated with better-educated, middle-class men, some studies indicate that transition in various countries has benefited such men by enabling a 'shoring up' of male privilege and the re-establishment of patriarchal relations (e.g. Kaser 2008). By contrast, men from lower socioeconomic groups have sometimes been more pragmatic about departing from traditional gender norms and divisions of labour (Walker and Roberts 2017). It is thus crucial to understand the differential impacts of different transition trajectories on different groups of men and on women in regionally contextualised settings. Two central questions guide this study:

1. How should women-focused interventions in projects and investments be complemented or adapted to increase the resilience of transition, and women's and men's equality of opportunity?
2. What strategies for engaging men as agents of positive change, alongside women and girls, may be particularly promising in the EBRD regions?²

Regional context

EBRD countries of operation span a set of interconnected regions – from Central Asia through the Middle East to Europe and North Africa – which have experienced major economic, sociocultural and political transitions for several millennia, often marked by long periods with a rich diversity of interdependent cultures collaborating, competing and contesting for access to markets (Frankopan 2015). There has been a defining and recent 'shift' in many countries toward more open and deregulated market economies. This has often been accompanied by moves toward more democratic

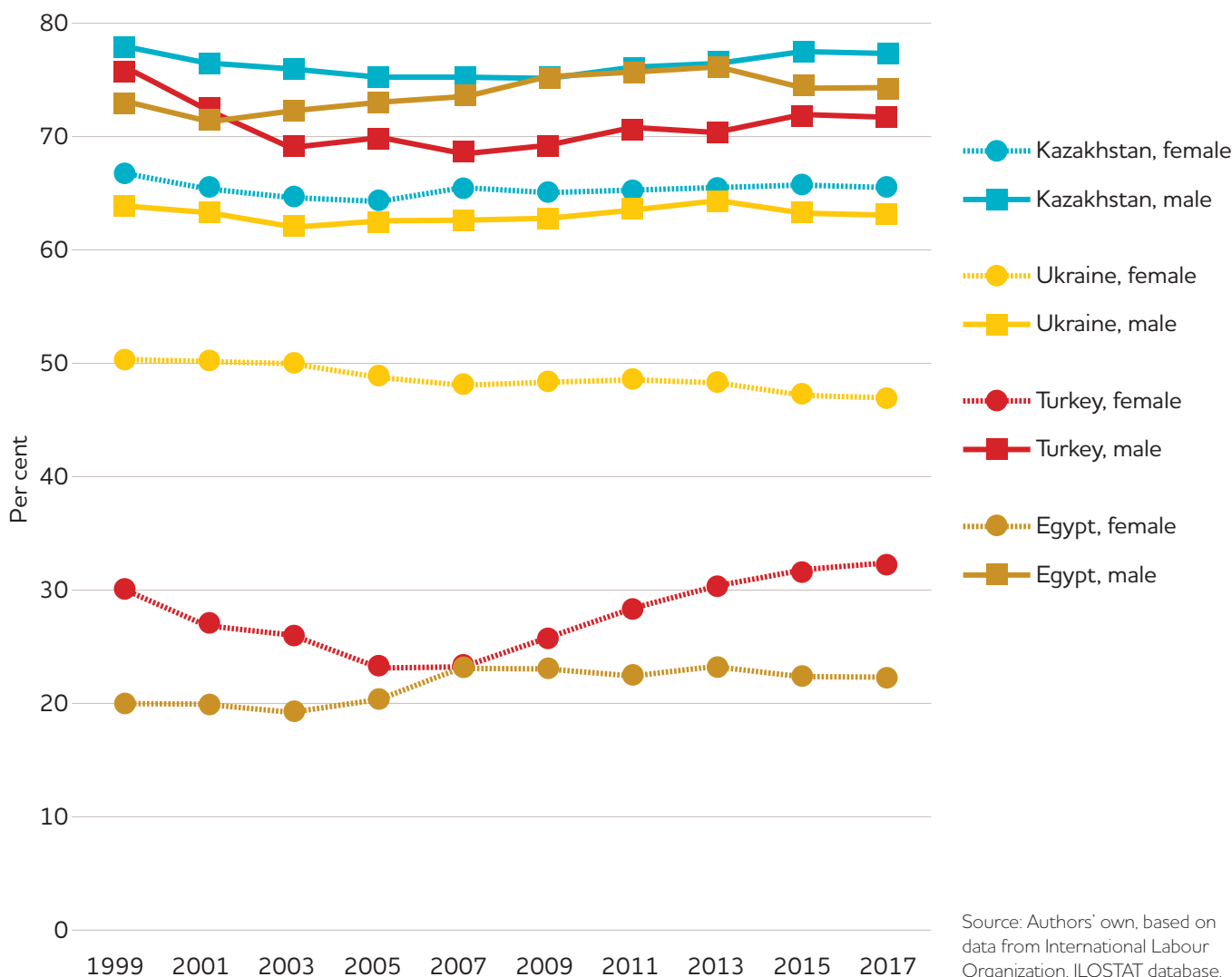
governance. This is clear in most countries of the Former Soviet Union (FSU), but also in many other countries in these regions, as part of a broader trend of globally integrating markets. From developments following ‘the Arab Spring’ and other recent events, however, it is evident that characterising ‘transitions’ is by no means simple and that these are typically – and, perhaps, ‘by nature’ – fragile. It is also clear that economics cannot be divorced from social and political dynamics, particularly within a shifting global order. Four countries were chosen for this study with the aim of capturing some of this diversity and on the basis of their strategic significance within the region – namely Egypt, Kazakhstan, Turkey and Ukraine.

Most countries in the EBRD regions have undergone major economic, social and demographic transitions during the twentieth century, with long-term trends of increasing per capita incomes and life expectancy, alongside falling birth rates.³ However, following

the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, countries such as Ukraine saw declines in living standards, employment rates and life expectancy until the mid-90s, followed by a slow recovery (stagnating somewhat following the global 2008 downturn). Other countries, such as Egypt and Turkey, also saw dramatic improvements, especially following the Second World War, although these have slowed since 2008.

Economic growth and growth in average per capita incomes have continued overall, although the crises of the 1990s in FSU countries left Ukraine worse off by 2017 than before 1990. As Figure 1 shows, female labour force participation remained relatively high in Kazakhstan, while Ukraine saw a decline between 1999 and 2017.⁴ In Turkey, there was a much lower starting point (about 30 per cent) before the millennium and, after declining for some years, it started to recover from around 2007. In Egypt, the female labour force participation rate has remained consistently low, at around 20 per cent.

Figure 1 Labour force participation rates, by sex: comparative trends across four countries (% of male/female population ages 15+)



Source: Authors’ own, based on data from International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT database.

Ukraine and Kazakhstan have undergone dramatic changes over recent decades, which have had a significant impact on their respective gender systems and inequalities. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) had had an 'etacritic' gender order (Zdravomyslova and Temkina 2007), in which the state overtly manipulated constructions of masculinity and femininity in line with political, demographic, military and economic objectives. At the same time, it allowed traditional assumptions about the 'natural' capabilities of the sexes to go undisturbed. While the 'women's question' was considered resolved in access to education and employment and the socialisation of childcare, women still took a 'second shift' of domestic duties. They were generally lower paid than men and less likely to reach positions of public influence. Men's realisation was to be found almost entirely in the public realm, as male workers or soldiers devoted themselves to building socialism. In the post-Soviet period, these models have tended to become rejected in favour of more traditional constructions of masculinity and femininity in what has been described as a patriarchal renaissance (Watson 1993), wherein such constructions are utilised by the state and by the market for both new nationalist projects and for emerging capitalist economies. This has a range of consequences for gender relations across the public and private spheres, and thus also for the shape and resilience of transition in these countries.

In exploring how patriarchy is being reshaped in Turkey and the Balkans sub-region, Kaser (2008) draws a distinction between private and public patriarchy, arguing that 'private patriarchy' persisted and survived despite different official declarations (and reforms) to mark its 'end'. The material conditions of patriarchy gradually weakened and a major decline in patriarchal relations in Western Europe had a big influence in Turkey and the Balkans, with feminism also gaining ground in the sub-region in the latter parts of the twentieth century. Yet, 'state patriarchy' survived in the Balkans and 'state feminism' in Turkey (where 'progress' was imposed top-down), which led to different forms of resistance at private levels. The crumbling of these gender orders in the latter parts of the 1980s prepared the ground for a 'patriarchal backlash', given impetus by legacies of violence from various ethnic conflicts, a re-Islamisation in Turkey and other Muslim communities in the Balkans, and a broader 're-traditionalism' in the Balkans, idealising pre-socialist 'good old times'. Kaser (*ibid.*) nevertheless argues that there is 'no way back' to traditional patriarchy, since recent laws have re-balanced rights between women and men, and since women's movements have started to mobilise again.



There is a received wisdom that Arab and Muslim men are 'uncaring, lascivious, misogynistic, and unbending religious zealots who constitute a danger to women and indeed the world. This view of Arab men owes much to Orientalism (old and new) ... and broader characterizations of hegemonic masculinity' (Inhorn 2012: 7). However, the reality is far more complex, and scholars increasingly advocate a more relational and processual approach to Egyptian, Arab and Muslim masculinities and patriarchy.

All four countries in this study now recognise married women and men as having equal ownership rights to property, and national legal frameworks mandate a woman's right to paid maternity leave.⁵ However, only Ukraine and Kazakhstan guarantee women the right to return to an equivalent position after maternity leave. Egypt is the only country of the four where (a) no legislation against domestic violence exists, (b) married women are legally required to obey their husbands, and (c) the law does not mandate non-discrimination on the basis of gender in hiring. Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Turkey all have legislation on domestic violence, but only Turkey has legislation that explicitly criminalises marital rape. On these measures, arguably Turkey has the most progressive legislative framework for women's rights, and Egypt has the least progressive framework. Kazakhstan's and Ukraine's legal situations for women are similar on most of these issues.

EBRD's role in transition countries

Established in 1991 to help build a new post-cold war era in Central and Eastern Europe, the EBRD has since played a historic role in fostering change toward market-oriented economies and in promoting private entrepreneurship. The Bank has expanded its regional scope of operations into new places such as Turkey (in 2009) or Morocco and Egypt (in 2012), among others. An ability to respond decisively and rapidly to major events has been one of the Bank's key characteristics from the outset; be it in responding to the collapse of the Soviet Union, financial crises or events around the 'Arab Spring'. Throughout such changes, the EBRD has focused on banking systems and privatisation reforms, price liberalisation, and the building and strengthening of legal frameworks for property rights. The Bank's mandate is – perhaps unusually for a development bank – to assist only countries which are 'committed to and applying the principles of multi-party democracy [and] pluralism'. Furthermore, a commitment to safeguarding the environment and certain social safeguards – including gender mainstreaming – are central to how the Bank operates and are also in line with the global goals of Agenda 2030 and the Addis Ababa Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in 2015.⁶

The foreword to the Bank's SPGE points out that the strategy 'importantly recognises that engaging men will be a key requirement to ensure success' (EBRD 2016: 4). The strategy underlines that a transformation of men's harmful attitudes and practices is not only needed for women's advancement and greater gender equality, but also that it can contribute to men themselves benefiting and to more resilient development. Relations between men in different contexts and groups also drive the way they engage in both public and private. The private sector plays a fundamental role in shaping such dynamics and can contribute positively by responding to the needs of different male and female workers and managers in equitable and enabling ways. It thus has a major role to play in identifying and realising opportunities to engage men as agents of positive change, alongside women and girls.

Method and country choices

The approach in this exploratory study was one of focusing in on four significant country case studies with grounded (primarily qualitative) research, to glean a view of promising directions for the Bank in its approach to supporting sustainable, inclusive and equitable transitions. The countries were chosen on the basis of their strategic significance within the region, for the availability of suitable EBRD-supported projects and investments, and considering logistical feasibility. All countries represent

highly relevant examples of their respective sub-regions as well as of different aspects of transitions. Egypt's rapid and challenging changes since the Arab Spring place it at the heart of certain transformational dynamics in the Southern Mediterranean. Turkey – historically and geopolitically at the crossroads of Europe and Asia – provides another case of a significant power in the region, centrally placed in relation to trade, migration and regional politics. Kazakhstan is clearly a significant country in the Central Asia sub-region and Ukraine provides another regionally significant example, located between Russia and neighbouring countries in the Central and Eastern Europe sub-region. Being an FSU country with deliberate, if challenging, moves towards open markets and a pluralistic society, Ukraine provides good potential for leveraging lessons drawn to the sub-region.

The methodology consisted of a literature review combined with primary evidence, gathered through country field visits by four pairs of researchers. The fieldwork sub-teams adopted a common approach to exploring three sectors in each country, following EBRD's investments (or 'following the money'), interviewing staff and partners from the Bank's offices down to firm management and workers at the 'shop floor'. The four country sub-teams used a common set of questions (adapted for each country and type of informant) and common methods. The methods included: semi-structured key informant interviews; focus group discussions (FDGs); and collection and analysis of statistics and material from EBRD, national sources and project literature. In all, 160 informants – 79 men and 81 women – were interviewed across the four countries, including: selected EBRD staff, project staff or officials with in-country counterparts, project beneficiaries such as employees and small-scale entrepreneurs, as well as community members and academics. Following the fieldwork, the teams compared findings and shaped recommendations for the EBRD and its partners; the country-pairs developed country-specific findings and recommendations, whilst the broader team synthesised implications and suggested directions for EBRD and other stakeholders at a broader level. The findings are presented in this report and are also summarised in four individual country briefs and one summary brief.

The rest of this report is structured into four parallel country case study chapters, followed by a final chapter that reflects on findings from the four countries and synthesises the main lessons and strategic implications, and closing with some recommendations for the EBRD, its partners and other relevant stakeholders. Country chapters are ordered alphabetically and, as they are drafted by separate experts addressing contextualised challenges in relation to the same central questions, the reader need not cover every country chapter to appreciate the final chapter.

Cairo taxi driver and family.
PHOTOGRAPH: © SCOTT D. HADDOW
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Gender and masculinity in Egypt's transition

The uprising of 2011 was motivated by a widespread rejection of the Egyptian police state, the absence of a free and fair democratic process, and widespread and long-term economic hardship for the majority of Egyptians. In 2019 these same challenges remain pervasive. Since 2014, 'transition' in Egypt has tended to focus on economic reform at the expense of political reform. The decoupling of the political and economic transition has led to praise for Egypt's economic reform on the international stage and simultaneous condemnation for the repressive political climate that has been created. This is emblematic of the challenges of gender interventions in Egypt; a more gender-equitable economy will continue to be forestalled by the absence of a masculinities agenda and a more holistic approach that engages the social and cultural aspects of gender development work.

Gender and development literature tends to focus on men as obstacles to gender equality in Egypt. Only in recent years has research taken men and masculinities as the focus of analysis. Little is known about how men feel about their

bodies, ageing and sickness, the demands of work, and the social expectations of their peers and families (Ghannam 2013). Recent research on gender and masculinity in Egypt strikes a cautionary tone towards the prevailing assumptions of what Amar describes as the 'masculinity industries' and 'crisis masculinities' (2011), long-standing gender policy paradigms like quotas (Sholkamy 2012), and approaches that over-embodiment women and disembody men (Ghannam 2013). Scholars increasingly advocate a more relational and processual approach to Egyptian, Arab and Muslim masculinities and patriarchy. Gender is relational in the sense that Egyptian women and men interactively produce and reproduce gender norms and practices. It is processual in that it is articulated at different times in a person's lifecycle and in tangible social and economic settings. It is through a holistic engagement with both men and women that gender asymmetries can be better understood and reduced.

Gender inequalities are pervasive and persistent in Egypt; estimates from the International Labour Organization (ILO) for 2017 show stark and persistent gender disparities in

relation to formal labour force participation (21.9 per cent for women versus 66.8 per cent for men), employment-to-population ratios (16.9 per cent women, 61.3 per cent men) and unemployment rates (23.1 per cent women, 8.3 per cent men). According to the National Council for Women (NCW) (2017), private sector employers shun young women for fear that their expected family commitments will ‘reduce productivity’, resulting in the unemployment rate for recent women graduates reaching 20.5 per cent (compared with 3.7 per cent for men). Career progression opportunities are also limited for women, with estimates suggesting that just 5.7 per cent of firms have women owners and 7.1 per cent have women as senior managers (World Bank 2016). Gender wage differentials have risen sharply during the past two decades and some have found evidence for a process of ‘defeminisation’ in both formal and informal employment (AlAzzawi 2014). In the industrial manufacturing sector, women’s employment has dropped from 11.1 to 5.1 per cent between 1999 and 2011 (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) 2016).

Similar divergence between men and women is also apparent among young people (15–24 years). Young women are less likely to participate in the workforce (18.7 per cent compared with 38.7 per cent of young men) and more likely to experience unemployment (38.4 per cent compared with 25.7 per cent of young men). Young women are also more likely to be out of employment, education or training (34.4 per cent compared with 18.7 per cent of young men).



Working women are thought to make up 46.7 per cent of the workforce in the informal economy, which may

/// A more gender-equitable economy will continue to be forestalled by the absence of a masculinities agenda and a more holistic approach that engages the social and cultural aspects of gender development work. ///

account for up to 50 per cent of economic activity in Egypt (ILO 2012). Up to 60 per cent of women working in the informal sector are engaged in unpaid care (CAPMAS n.d.). Income, spending and consumption data suggest that 17.8 per cent of households are female-headed, with an average household size of three. It is estimated that 26.3 per cent of female-headed households live below the poverty line (*ibid.*).

An estimated 8 million Egyptian women experience violence each year (NCW 2017). Sexual violence remains a common experience for women at work, at home and in the street (Ambrosetti, Amara and Condon 2013; Shash and Forden 2016). Men and women both hold patriarchal values and these in turn affect household decision making, childcare, and access to work, education and information. Religion and popular psychology continue to inform Egyptian attitudes towards the nature of men and women and their respective roles and duties (see Box 1 for gender-disaggregated indicators).

Box 1 Gender-disaggregated indicators, Egypt

		
Age at first marriage, 2014	22	27.5
Life expectancy at birth (years), 2016	73.8	69.3
School enrolment, tertiary (% gross), 2016	34.8	34.0
Vulnerable employment (% of female/male employment) (modelled ILO estimate), 2017	31.8	17.3
Female genital mutilation prevalence (%), 2015	87.2	–
Fertility rate, total (births per woman), 2016	3.3	–
Women who believe a husband is justified in beating his wife (any of five reasons) (%), 2014	35.7	–

Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal – All gender indicators

Policy context and case study methods

Egypt is ranked 132 (of 144 countries) in the 2016 Global Gender Gap Index. In legislative terms, women in Egypt enjoy equal rights to work, ownership of property and businesses. However, in practice, women face significant challenges accessing these rights and are disadvantaged by both legislation and custom in terms of inheritance, divorce and, therefore, equity and collateral. In the past ten years efforts have been made to reduce some gender gaps in relation to access to finance and basic social protection. In 2007, the Ministry of Finance identified gender gaps in policies, programmes and services that inhibit women's ability to establish and sustain small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) equally and, in turn, has sought to improve access to finance for women (Ministry of Finance 2007). In 2017, the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (MSMEDA) reported that 50 per cent of the enterprises it had lent to were owned by women (MSMEDA 2017).

Since 2014, the el-Sisi regime has made numerous gestures towards women, who it sees as patriotic, fiscally disciplined, family oriented, and cognisant of the 'sacrifices' needed to 'transform' Egypt. Women have become the core voting constituency of the current regime, celebrated as the mothers of martyrs in defence of the nation and, importantly, increasingly recognised for their economic activity. The most tangible government interventions beyond legislation have been the Takaful (conditional) and Karama (unconditional) cash transfer programmes funded by the World Bank (Takaful means 'solidarity', Karama means 'dignity'). There are approximately 2.3 million families enrolled in Takaful and Karama, 88 per cent of whom are female-headed households. In light of ongoing economic hardship for the majority of Egyptians, these programmes have offered an important safety net for the most vulnerable, giving them financial support and access to services, including antenatal and postnatal medical care (World Bank 2017a). The NCW (2017) has an ambitious national strategy to improve women's political participation, and strengthen their economic and social rights by 2030. However, one consequence of the government's current discourse on women as

the backbone of the nation has been the increasing prominence of a disparaging public discourse about work-shy young men who are seen, in turn, as less patriotic and therefore less manly.

Empowerment work in Egypt is likely to continue to concentrate on facilitating access to resources and address the practical needs of women to counter these challenges. However, Hatem (2016) argues that interventions should aim to increase awareness about gender inequities as well as opportunities for women and men to acknowledge their changing roles and aspirations at home and at work. In the absence of a more relational approach, taking relations between men and women into account, gender strategies run a risk of 'preserving and reinforcing gender inequalities' (Drolet 2011: 634). For its part, the EBRD has sought to mainstream gender and youth inclusion components across its investments and policy dialogue.

After scoping the possibilities and restrictions of on-the-ground research in Egypt, we concluded that the most fruitful area for research would be EBRD's SME activities, in particular: (1) the Business Advisory Services; (2) women's credit lines; (3) SME credit lines to banks; and (4) direct loans to SMEs. This reflects the Bank's first Egypt strategy priority as well as the largest sector (55 per cent) in its Egypt portfolio (EBRD 2017a: 4–6). Four bank employees were interviewed to gauge how they conceptualise and factor in gender and masculinities in their investment portfolio. Their assistance was also sought in identifying businesses and entrepreneurs whose experiences speak to the concerns of the project.

The SME sector and the partners directly engaged with EBRD activities under priority 1 of the Egypt country strategy contain a diverse range of businesses engaged in manufacturing, artisanal and craft industries, and the knowledge and service economies. In total, 22 interviews⁷ and five field visits were undertaken in two metropolitan locations (Cairo and Alexandria) over a period of three weeks. These involved female business owners (5), male business owners (3), male employees (4), men working in the informal economy (2), and gender experts, activists and social entrepreneurs (4).

/// In the absence of a more relational approach, gender strategies run a risk of reinforcing gender inequalities. ///

Findings

Men's resistance to gender equality and women's empowerment

Both women and men suggested that 'Egyptian men' were not supportive of successful businesswomen. As one businesswoman put it, it is common for husbands, fiancés, fathers and brothers to 'obstruct a successful woman in as many ways as possible, psychologically, emotionally and practically'. Others reported a widespread experience of men acting against the business interests of their wives and daughters. Many women reported that the only alternatives to abandoning their businesses in these cases was to create 'appropriate' positions in the business for husbands and/or male relatives in order to 'give them their status as men (*makantuh*)'. This seems to be especially the case when women provide a larger income to the family than their husbands and immediate male relatives.

A number of male interviewees explained this as the result of Egyptian society being 'Eastern' – a commonly used trope designed to denote traditional family values and gender roles. Others believed that men felt inadequate and uneasy about changing roles within the context of the family. One male interviewee who owned an SME explained that a woman 'who becomes financially independent or earns more than her husband is a threat. She can easily get divorced, she doesn't need him... Here [in Egypt], men need

to feel needed.' While there are signs of changing social attitudes regarding women's right to work, young female entrepreneurs are still perceived as 'unmarriageable' and subject to a lifecycle whereby they were most active before marriage (and children) or after raising their children to an appropriate age. These findings emphasise the importance of engaging men in gender advocacy and interventions.

Relational perceptions of 'gender roles'

These experiences frame the relationship between men and women in the context of economic activity in relation to money, dependency and therefore control on the one hand, and very fixed ideas about women's reproductive roles on the other. Notwithstanding an array of interpretations, Islamic scripture creates a relatively clear relationship between men being the main breadwinners and male authority/guardianship of women. However, recent literature on masculinities in Egypt has argued against such narrow framing, pointing to a more fluid set of relationships in terms of decision making at home and reproductive choice for women. It has been argued that other values and behaviours – like fairness, steadfastness, sharing, supportiveness, generosity, kindness and care – are all equally constitutive of the idealised Egyptian man rather than simply the control of women.



Al-muski, Cairo, Egypt.
Carrying bread.

PHOTOGRAPH: © FRANCISCO ANZOLA
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Nonetheless, many interviewees (men and women) believed that under 'normal' circumstances men should be the main providers and that women's employment is a response to economic necessities rather than rights, aspirations or choices. This was accompanied by a widespread belief that when job opportunities are scarce, men should be given priority based on their natural role and right as breadwinners. In contrast, a number of young men and early career entrepreneurs working in social entrepreneurship and the tech sector distanced themselves from these ideas, and instead reported that talent, skill and commitment – regardless of gender – are more important to the workplace than traditional gender norms and roles.

Equality of opportunity and acceptance of women's care burdens

Overall, employers presented a gender-blind approach to hiring or argued for gender complementarity at work. Neither of these responses involved providing support for women to help them mitigate limited opportunities and competing demands. For those who considered themselves gender blind in their attitudes to hiring, Egyptian society and culture were to blame for the curtailed opportunities available to women.

A significant proportion of women suggested that women 'do not face any challenges other than believing in themselves' and that they 'find ways' to manage the competing demands of work and home. This was well illustrated at one of EBRD's 'Women in Business' events where a prominent male business expert acknowledged that women entrepreneurs are expected to 'work 24 hours a day' as businesswomen, doting wives and committed mothers – all of which he argued were possible by 'planning and organising their time effectively'. As an EBRD employee put it, under these circumstances, women try to take on the 'superwoman role', striving to do more than is reasonable. There also seemed to be a widely held opposition to quotas and, in some cases, men were resentful, with some even believing that women received more help from the state and civil society, that women were taking jobs from men, and enjoyed advantageous access to credit – all in contradiction of available statistical data. These findings emphasise the need for a relational approach to gender that engages with the attitudes and expectations of both men and women.

Gender and age in employment and education

A number of employers, both men and women, reported negative experiences of young men across social classes, suggesting that 'men have changed' and that they no longer seemed to want the responsibilities of 'being a man' while still expecting to enjoy its privileges. There are widely held views among employers that young men (in particular unskilled or semi-skilled) were work-shy and unable to commit.

These insights from business owners seemed to be based as much on their personal experiences as fathers and mothers as their experiences as employers.

A preference for women workers was also widely expressed based on their 'diligence' and 'commitment' to work. Nonetheless, there was an acceptance among employers that young women workers (both skilled and unskilled) were high-turnover employees, inevitably getting married and becoming mothers. This was reported as limiting their employment and career progression. Yet none of the employers interviewed reported offering maternity leave or any other support to allow their female employees to continue working; despite maternity leave being mandated under Egyptian law, it appears that in practice it is rarely available. Education and training seem to be as gendered as the workplace, with men and women being funnelled in very clear directions that fuel the gendered divisions of labour and limit opportunities.

Suggestions for increasing men's support for women at work

When asked about how men could help support women in work, ideas of being emotionally and practically supportive were most common. Childcare and domestic duties were seen as women's realm by almost all interviewees, with few exceptions. Yet recent data from UN Women suggest a complex set of contradictory responses on these matters. Few Egyptians considered it shameful when men engaged in caring for children and undertaking domestic work, yet a higher proportion of women (17.5 per cent) than men (9.7 per cent) feel that it is shameful. Ninety-eight per cent of men and 85 per cent of women believed that changing diapers, feeding and bathing children were the mother's sole responsibility, while 87 per cent of men and 77 per cent of women believed that a woman's most important role is to cook and take care of the family (El Feki, Heilman and Barker 2017).

While rhetorically, many men assert that childcare and domestic duties are women's responsibilities, in-depth interviews suggested that many men contribute to childcare and (to a far lesser extent) domestic duties. This is reflected in survey data, which suggest that 44.6 per cent of men and 53 per cent of women would welcome short paid paternity leave (*ibid.*).

Men's sense of masculinity in the face of transition

Men reported clear attitudes towards the notion of transition that focus on their circumstances in the wake of the flotation of the Egyptian pound (November 2016 onwards). This period has been one in which men have struggled to provide for their families. For young men in both formal and informal employment, the inflationary pressures have forestalled their aspirations to move out

of home, buy or rent property, get married and start a family. As one young man who acknowledged his relatively privileged circumstances put it, 'every day I watch my privilege being eroded and my opportunities shrink'. For a number of male interviewees working in the formal and informal sectors, migration was a prominent theme of their accounts of the future. For one man running an SME manufacturing business, the flotation of the Egyptian pound had wiped out his expansion plans. He reported difficulty in paying for imported machinery and raw materials, as well as a range of regulatory changes that have led him to consider taking his business to other emerging markets like Kenya and Uganda. Interestingly, his desire to relocate was motivated as much by what he described as 'the poor standard of primary and secondary education' for his children in Egypt as by a desire to expand his business and increase his profit margins in a more conducive environment.

For men working in the informal economy as day-labourers, inflation, a lack of price regulation and sharp

rises in the cost of basic utilities like water, electricity and fuel (as a result of cuts in government subsidies tied to the latest International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan) have created great difficulty in their ability to provide basic household provisions. Equally, they described an inability to afford adequate health care and to pay for ongoing costs of schooling like transport, lunch, uniforms and stationery. Most distressing for these men was that they were no longer able to gift their children during the various religious and cultural festivals or meet traditional expectations like preparing their children for marriage through a long process of acquiring white goods and furnishings for daughters, and real estate and capital for sons. For these men, transition is inexorably linked to extreme difficulty in fulfilling their role as providers. Their accounts were candid about their anxiety about the future and the prospect of getting older and less able to undertake strenuous work, feeling depressed, hopeless and resentful of policies that they perceive as having impoverished the most vulnerable.

Strategic implications for EBRD and its partners

International financial organisations project a positive macroeconomic outlook for Egypt while maintaining that price hikes, a large informal sector, high youth unemployment, and low labour force participation and gender disparities remain perennial challenges and vulnerabilities. Gender-positive interventions must find a balance between creating new opportunities for women on the one hand and addressing the prevailing masculinised gender cultures across a range of work settings on the other. In Egypt, a 'common sense' gendered division of labour exists, which further strengthens the gender stereotypes on which training and work opportunities are designed. Meanwhile, projects that involve men are not seen to include any obvious gender component, reflecting an assumed gender neutrality in relation to men at work. In order to continue to promote gender equality in Egypt, international financial institutions need to also address this 'masculinities blind-spot' and consider men's gendered needs at work by addressing the following:

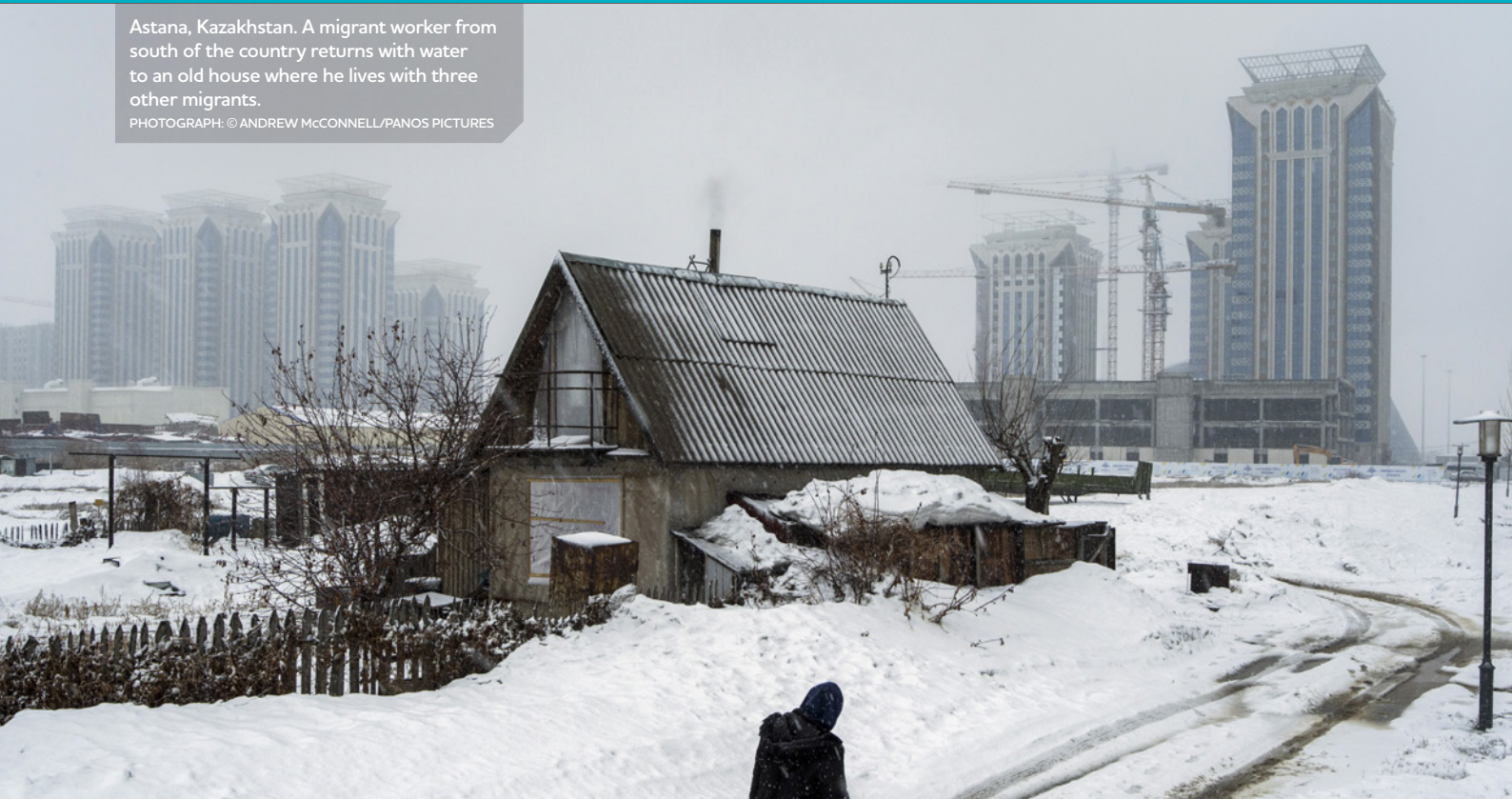
- **Internal capacity:** Integrate men in the development process and encourage positive masculinities. This might include gender assessments for men, encouraging positive masculinities by inviting men to engage in work with/by women, giving prominence to the relationship between work life and home life, inviting men to training sessions for women, offering men a period of paid paternity leave to promote men's reproductive role, and promoting stereotype-defying examples to disturb gendered monopolies on work or training.

/// International financial institutions need to address this 'masculinities blind-spot' and consider men's gendered needs at work. ///

- **Investments:** Include gender- and masculinities-aware human resources (HR) advice in business advisory services. This might include an organisational culture component within HR advice to encourage companies to see the benefits of offering maternity and paternity leave.
- **Technical support:** Involve and consider men in training that targets women. This is particularly important, as female entrepreneurs in Egypt are often in partnership with their husbands and share responsibilities for their businesses. Excluding such business partners from training initiatives not only limits their utility to many female clients, but can also result in dropout.
- **Policy dialogues:** Champion positive examples of supportive male partners to highlight that work-life balance is not solely women's responsibility. More prominence should be given to discussions of men's reproductive roles, child-rearing practices, and their work-life balance in gender/needs assessments of businesses and projects that employ men.

Astana, Kazakhstan. A migrant worker from south of the country returns with water to an old house where he lives with three other migrants.

PHOTOGRAPH: © ANDREW MCCONNELL/PANOS PICTURES



Gender and masculinity in Kazakhstan's transition

Kazakhstan has transitioned from lower middle-income to upper middle-income status in the past two decades. Women's participation in the labour force is lower than men's but is still the highest in Central Asia. Gender parity in access to education has almost been achieved and women represent the majority of students at higher education (Dubok and Turakhanova 2017). Women are increasingly active in starting their own businesses, with over 40 per cent of active SMEs now headed by women. Unusually, more women than men (56 versus 52 per cent) hold an account at a financial institution.

Yet, gender disparities in economic and social life persist. A recent study (Dubok and Turakhanova 2017: 2) concludes that '[p]atriarchal norms remain dominant in the country'. Horizontal and vertical segregation in the labour market restrict women's economic opportunities and earnings, and women's salaries are only 67 per cent of men's salaries, on average (OECD 2017). This reflects women's concentration in traditionally feminised and lower-paid sectors. Women 'make up 70 per cent of

hired workers in the areas of healthcare, education and social services', but 'compose the top management of only 9.8 per cent of major corporations' (Republic of Kazakhstan 2016: 13). The sharp reduction in poverty and improvement in social indicators that have characterised the post-Soviet transition, at least since 2002, have been driven by significant growth in the energy and mining sectors. The oil sector alone accounts for 60 per cent of total exports and more than 25 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) (OECD 2017). These sectors remain heavily male-dominated, both in terms of workforce and management. By contrast, more than 2 million women are considered self-employed, typically lacking the benefits and protections of formal employment.

The family remains a key foundation of social and economic life. Time-use studies show that women spend three hours more per day than men on household activities (Dubok and Turakhanova 2017). The cultural significance of the daughter-in-law (*kelin*) has increased in the post-Soviet period, being celebrated as embodying

Kazakh tradition. This may mask the continued exploitation of unpaid female household labour (Kudaibergenova 2016) and concerns about the increase in polygynous unions, as well as the continuation of bride-price (*kalym*) and bride ‘kidnapping’, which are frequently highlighted in social policy discourse on the family and women’s empowerment (Republic of Kazakhstan 2016).



The institutions of marriage and the family are also changing. Kazakhstan has one of the highest rates of divorce among spouses under 30 years old, amounting to almost 45 per cent of marriages before 30 (*ibid.*). It is estimated that every fifth child is born into a single-parent family, with the number of single mothers being twice that of single fathers (Dubok and Turakhanova 2017). Urbanisation and migration (both internal and external) are reshaping family and community relations, amplifying urban–rural economic inequalities as well as regional and ethnolinguistic disparities that cut across gender (Bissenova 2017).

In both policy-oriented and scholarly literatures on the gender dimensions of the social and economic transitions of the past 30 years, men and their gendered experiences of transitions are scarcely discussed. Academic work has been mostly concerned with the complex legacies of the gender politics of the Soviet era (Edgar 2006; Kandiyoti 2007; Lubin 2007) and the significance of gender, as lived experience and symbolic resource, in the interrelated dynamics of modernisation and re-traditionalisation. More recent work has addressed the use of gendered symbols and stories in the project of post-Soviet nation-building (Kudaibergenova 2016) and the meanings and practices of young women’s femininities in the shopping mall – an emblematic space of the new urban landscape (Jäger 2016). Masculinities, by contrast, remain largely unexamined.

Male health is an emerging area of concern, including men’s significantly lower life expectancy.

A study by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) of gender issues for men in Europe and Eurasia (Somach 2011) looked at the economic dislocations of the immediate post-Soviet period and their impact on the ‘patriarchal male role’, which threaten the four markers of traditional manhood: ‘money, leadership, security, and procreation’. The study notes the indices of this ‘crisis of masculinity’ in terms of trends in male morbidity and mortality, as well as an increase in male violence. Kazakhstan’s economic growth, not least in the traditionally masculinised extractive industries, clearly troubles this somewhat simplistic account of a ‘crisis of masculinity’. But male health is an emerging area of concern, including men’s significantly lower life expectancy (see Box 2) and extraordinarily high rate of juvenile suicides for boys (Dubok and Turakhanova 2017). With 40 per cent of the population under 24 years old, any discussion of dynamics and trends in gender relations must take account of age. A recent report by the ILO (2015: viii) notes that ‘a significant number of school leavers from general secondary schools remain without any professional qualifications’, thus prolonging ‘the transition of young people from school to work’. This may affect young men especially, owing to the continued expectation on men to be the primary breadwinner.

Box 2 Gender-disaggregated indicators, Kazakhstan

		
Life expectancy at birth (years), 2016	76.6	68.1
School enrolment, tertiary (% gross), 2017	55.5	43.9
Vulnerable employment (% of female/male employment) (modelled ILO estimate), 2017	24.9	26.2
Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work (% of 24-hour day), 2012	17.1	7.7
Fertility rate, total (births per woman), 2016	2.7	–
Women who believe a husband is justified in beating his wife (any of five reasons) (%)	35.7	–

Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal – All gender indicators

Policy context and case study methods

The government and businesses in Kazakhstan agree with us that a modern economy is impossible without fully utilising the talent and potential of both men and women. (Janet Heckman, former EBRD Director for Kazakhstan, speaking in Astana on 10 February 2017 at the forum 'Empowerment of Women in the Corporate Sector', cited in Pyrkalo (2017))

The Concept of Family and Gender Policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2030 (henceforward, the Concept), outlines the principal priorities for the national response to the issues discussed above. The Concept (Republic of Kazakhstan 2016: 9) emphasises that the 'process of ensuring equal opportunities of men and women is being hindered by the existence of persistent social stereotypes on the social roles of men and women'. It notes that such stereotypes affect the vertical and horizontal segregation of the workforce by gender, in turn linked to the disproportionate burden of care responsibilities borne by women. The Concept (2016: 9) characterises this in terms of the '[g]ender-specific freedom of men', which 'leads to low participation on the part of fathers in the upbringing of children and the issue of alimony payments for child support'.

As the Concept notes, this 'gender-specific freedom', which is linked to prevailing norms of masculinity, can damage men's health, whether owing to the stress of trying to fulfil the breadwinner role or to the harmful behaviours associated with manliness, such as alcohol and tobacco abuse. This emphasis on men's health is the main way in which men's gendered life experiences are addressed. The

Concept sets targets for women's economic empowerment and greater representation in senior decision making positions in business, the law and politics, as well as for a reduction in domestic violence and the gender gap in life expectancy. It commits to a range of strategies to boost women's economic opportunities, outlining a number of provisions for family support for working parents. This includes a declaration that the '[i]nstitution of fatherhood will be reinforced, while ensuring equal conditions for fathers raising children in exercising their rights' (Republic of Kazakhstan 2016: 23), and a media strategy to 'explore the issue of parents' equal participation in upbringing and socialisation of children' through 'all popular science publications' (Republic of Kazakhstan 2016: 24). The Concept also outlines a proposal to establish 'healthy lifestyle centres' to 'foster in men the culture of healthy lifestyle and the avoidance of smoking, drug and alcohol addictions' (Republic of Kazakhstan 2016: 25).

Assessing the gender inclusion gap as 'medium', the EBRD has channelled its efforts to promote gender equality through its Women in Business programme and work with the energy and transport sectors to improve women's access to employment and skills. This study thus focused on these sectors. A total of 13 single-gender focus group discussions were conducted with respondents (management and workforce) from these three sectors, in Astana, Almaty and Aktobe. A further 24 individual interviews with EBRD staff and key informants (from civil society, academia and the UN) were completed. Focus groups and interviews, using a semi-structured survey tool, were conducted in Kazakh, Russian and English.

Building site, Astana, Kazakhstan.
PHOTOGRAPH: © ALAN GREIG



Findings

There is little perception of a problem with equal opportunities in the workplace

Professionalism is the most important thing, so gender plays no role.

(Male respondent, energy sector)

A commitment to ensuring equal economic opportunities is at the heart of the EBRD's Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality. The Bank assesses gender inclusion gaps for Kazakhstan as medium across labour policy, labour practices, employment and business, and access to finance. But it notes (EBRD 2017b: 24) the problems of occupational segregation outlined in the previous chapter and that 'women lag behind men in skills, wages and opportunity in some high-value sectors, and employers have at times struggled to diversify their workforces'. In response, strategies for equalising economic opportunities have been implemented through the Women in Business programme, as well as through specific initiatives within male-dominated sectors to challenge gender stereotypes at work by improving the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in traditionally male-dominated jobs (e.g. hiring the first female bus drivers in Almaty).

Yet, focus groups revealed high levels of scepticism about the need for specific equal opportunities policies and strategies. Many state companies' employees, both male and female, appeared confused and irritated by questions on equal opportunities. When asked directly if there was such a document in their companies that provided for equal pay, promotion, health care and other workplace conditions, regardless of the employee's gender, almost all respondents referred to the Constitution and fewer respondents referred to the Labour Code. The widely held view, from operational staff to HR managers, was that gender plays no role in employment opportunities or career development because of the professionalism of the company and that any preferences based on gender would be punished by law.

By the same token, problems of vertical and horizontal occupational segregation by gender were attributed to women's choices and capabilities. Male and female respondents alike expressed the view that women were under-represented in senior management positions because they choose to prioritise their family and childcare responsibilities over their careers. Similarly, the under-representation of women in certain sectors and jobs was explained in terms of women's inherent capabilities. This view can, in part, be linked to section 27 of the

2016 Employment and Labour Code, which bars women from 287 jobs (concentrated in the mining, metallurgy, hydrocarbon processing, construction and transportation sectors), although a recent amendment has reduced this list by nearly a third, opening up jobs for women in transport, construction and chemical industries.

Men's roles as husband and father remain tied to being the economic provider

Men do not take paternity leave because they are the main breadwinners and because there is a stigma that he cannot stay at home while his wife is working instead.

(Female respondent, energy sector)

Notwithstanding significant economic and social change over the past two decades, traditional views on the division of labour appear to remain dominant. There was near-universal agreement among male and female respondents that the man's primary role and responsibility within the family was as economic provider, while it was women's responsibility to take care of the family. Provision for paternity leave exists, but only one respondent reported knowing a male colleague who had made use of this provision, and they had done so to pursue other work opportunities rather than to spend time with their newborn baby. Men's lack of uptake of paternity leave is acknowledged as a problem in government gender policy (Republic of Kazakhstan 2016), linked as it is to both economic pressures and social norms.

There was some recognition that this pressure on men to be the economic provider can result in overwork and stress, and related health problems. A 2018 World Health Organization (WHO) study (Farrington *et al.* 2018) in Kazakhstan reports that dietary risks, high systolic blood pressure and high body mass index are the highest-ranked risk factors for disease burden, measured as disability-adjusted life years. The same report notes that men's substantially higher mortality rates from cardiovascular disease can be attributed to the influence of gender norms on disease risk factors, as well as 'weak health-seeking behaviour among men and the low priority of men's health in health services' (*ibid.*: 11).⁸ Concerns about a lack of work-life balance, and its impacts on men's health, were expressed by some respondents. Further research is needed to determine how these impacts may vary based not only on gender, but on education and income levels as well as occupation and location. One respondent in Aktobe noted the different circumstances of middle-class and working-class men; a middle-class man may have more time to spend with his children, but this may be more

difficult for a working-class man doing shift work in the oil industry, with long periods spent away from home.

The gendered division of household labour also has profound impacts on women's economic opportunities and progress. There was widespread agreement among male and female respondents alike that women's under-representation in the most senior levels of management and decision making was in part due to their family and childcare responsibilities. Women prioritise – and are expected to prioritise – family over career. A range of views were expressed on the degree to which women experienced this decision as an active and positive choice or as the result of pressure to conform to social norms of femininity.

Gender stereotypes persist, affecting both men's and women's working lives

The traditionalist order discriminates [against] women, not the Labour Code or employer.
(Male respondent, energy sector)

Many gender stereotypes persist: men are risk-takers, women avoid risks; women can multi-task, men are more single-task focused; men are lazy and corrupt, women are hardworking and honest; women are gossipy and emotional, men just get on with the job; women's and men's brains are different – men's having more capacity for logical thinking, women's being more sensitive, etc. The sharp distinctions between men/masculinity and women/femininity drawn by these stereotypes serve to rationalise the vertical and horizontal gender segregations in the workforce, outlined in the opening chapter. Key informant interviews with female entrepreneurs and business professionals revealed the extent to which these stereotypes are internalised in ways that limit women's career ambitions and economic opportunities. As one female respondent said: 'We have a glass ceiling in our minds and we have to break it in our minds'.

The normative force of these masculine/feminine stereotypes also confines men within restrictive notions of what it means to be a man, and reinforces hierarchies not only between men and women but also between men. Those men who actively and visibly take on the 'caring

Men who take on the 'caring and sensitive' work of child-rearing face the stigma of being seen as lesser men.

and sensitive' work of child-rearing in order to support their wives in their careers face the stigma of being seen as feminine and thus lesser men. One male respondent who has publicly advocated for men's greater support for women's rights and empowerment recounted being ostracised by some of his male friends. Only two of the female respondents in the focus groups reported that their husbands were supportive of their career growth and successes.

Men's attitudes toward social and economic transitions in gender relations vary

I can see a growing number of men getting interested, and some involved, in support of women's rights and equal opportunities. Men have different reasons for this. For many, it seems to be about a personal interest in the wellbeing and prospects of women in their own lives.
(Male respondent, academic)

Male respondents expressed a range of views, from progressive to conservative, when asked about changes in gender relations over the past 20 years. Some reported a greater openness on the part of men toward issues of gender equality and less-rigid ideas about what it means to be a man, especially among the younger generation. Others expressed resentment about women's economic empowerment initiatives, which they perceived as discriminating against men or as undermining the 'natural order' of the family and society. These views were not necessarily widely held but were forcibly expressed. A number of respondents warned against 'importing Western ideas' about gender into Kazakhstan, whose culture they identified as Eastern/Asian and not Western/European.

Male concerns about women's economic empowerment can be understood not simply in relation to a persistence of patriarchal norms but also in terms of economic conditions more generally. Notwithstanding significant economic growth, especially in traditionally male-dominated sectors, an ILO report (2015: ix) notes that 'poorly enforced labour legislation with large-scale informal employment and the downward movement of wages indicates high labour market and wage flexibility and low job and income security for workers'. Such economic insecurity has a particular salience for men, given pressure to be the breadwinner.

At the same time, while overall poverty has significantly reduced, economic inequalities persist. The ILO (2015: vii) reports that 'in 2013 the average income of the 10-percent-richest population group exceeded that of the 10-percent poorest group 5.6 times', also noting marked regional disparities. Further research is needed.

with a broader sampling of respondents (by region, occupation and education level), but at the very least it can be suggested that prevailing economic insecurities and inequalities may find expression in an anxious masculinity, whose resentments of women's empowerment are linked to precarious economic conditions facing many men.

Informal aspects of workplace culture and practice affect gender issues at work

As already noted, a widely held view among respondents (male and female) was that the formal professionalism of the workplace environment obviated the need for specific equal opportunities initiatives, but more problematic aspects of informal workplace culture and practice also emerged. Many male respondents in the Advice for Small Business focus groups identified the issue of maternity leave as putting them in an uncomfortable position when they have to find maternity leave cover or train another person if the work requires it. It was acknowledged

that decisions on hiring and promotion are sometimes influenced by the age of the woman involved, and thus their presumed likelihood of pregnancy, as was also corroborated by many female respondents.

In some of the one-on-one interviews with female respondents, the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace was also identified, as was the issue of bullying of men by other men, albeit to a lesser extent. Government action on violence against women has accelerated in recent years, most recently with the 2017 Prosecutor-General's Office roadmap *Kazakhstan without Domestic Violence*, but efforts to include workplace sexual harassment (either within legislation on violence against women or as part of the Labour Code and in line with ILO standards) have thus far not been successful. Increasing awareness of the economic costs and social harms of sexual harassment, especially among male business and political leaders, remains a priority.

Strategic implications for EBRD and its partners

The benefits of economic growth are still affected by persistent gender disparities in employment, income, and the burden of unpaid care. Pressure to be the male breadwinner distorts many men's work-life balance, in a context in which 'large-scale informal employment and the downward movement of wages indicates high labour market and wage flexibility and low job and income security for workers' (ILO 2015: ix). A *gender-relational* approach, taking account of both women's and men's gendered experiences of economic and social change, can help to ensure that transition is both sustainable and inclusive, by focusing on the following:

- **Investments:** During preparatory stages, assessment and monitoring processes could be used to help loan beneficiaries identify problematic aspects of workplace culture that undermine progress towards equal opportunities. Within programmes for female entrepreneurs, male business partners and male business mentors are as yet untapped resources as champions of male support for women's economic advancement.
- **Policy dialogues:** Women's burden of domestic labour and the pressure on men to be the main breadwinner serve to limit women's economic opportunities and exacerbate work-related stress among men. Existing government policy on gender equality provides a framework for campaigns on improving work-life balance and men's health, with an emphasis on shared responsibilities within the family as a win-win for

/// Taking account of both women's and men's gendered experiences of economic and social change can help to ensure that transition is both sustainable and inclusive. ///

women and men alike. Supporting business and trade union leaders to speak out publicly against traditional gender stereotypes about women's and men's roles is also a priority.

- **Technical advice:** Current efforts to reform HR policies to promote the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in male-dominated sectors and management tiers needs to address the informal barriers that women face, linked to masculinist workplace cultures. Male employees and management can be agents of change to transform such cultures if they are actively involved in questioning the negative impacts of masculine stereotypes, not only on women but also on themselves.
- **Internal capacity:** Current approaches to gender focus exclusively on women. Strengthening the capacity of staff to understand and apply a *gender-relational* approach to their work is an urgent priority.

Hacıbektaş, Turkey. A man walking in a square while children play near by a statue of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.
PHOTOGRAPH: © ALFREDO D'AMATO/PANOS PICTURES

Gender and masculinity in Turkey's transition

Since its 'rebirth' as a secular nation-state in 1923, Turkey has occupied an uneasy position between Europe and the Middle East, struggling with economic development, ethnic conflicts and political violence. Since the global changes following 1989, Turkey has become one of the largest economies in the world, as well as a major power broker in the region. Despite failures in resolving several ethnic, religious and historical conflicts, the country has transformed from a military dictatorship into a maturing, if still troubled, democracy (Öktem 2011). Two financial crises in 2000 and 2001 resulted in a major collapse of output and employment, but also laid the ground for a new wave of restructuring and neoliberal reforms (Öniş 2009), redefining the relationship between the state and the financial sector, opening the economy to foreign direct investment, and adopting a range of reforms modelled on the EU. The economy has been booming as a result, but new challenges have emerged since the crisis of 2008 and subsequent political developments.

Scholars have explored how the growth of a new globalised middle-class has shifted relations of gender

and class, both by society being increasingly redefined through consumption (e.g. Kandiyoti and Saktanber 2002), and how resulting new axes of power and subjectivity are enabling new spaces of governance and resistance in Turkey's engagement with neoliberal globalisation (Özbay *et al.* 2016). Islamic cultural elements have also re-emerged to challenge the earlier established secular idea of authentic Turkish identity. Analysing gender policies of the AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) government, Coşar and Yeğenoğlu (2011) have argued that its ruling period has seen a new mode of patriarchy emerging, characterised by a new combination of nationalist, neoliberal *and* religious discourses, quite unlike earlier liberal and republican gender ideologies. For example, despite improvements in girls' basic access to education, new changes in education policies since 2012 are thought to negatively affect girls' schooling, while the promotion of larger families is seen by some as also undermining gender equality (Acuner 2013).

Şimşek and Öner (2015) argue that traditional Ottoman hegemonic masculinity evolved through the nation state-building of the twentieth century as a dominant

ideal defining masculinity in the public sphere and as focused on hierarchy and power. While less public and authoritarian ideals of masculinity have also evolved among certain groups of Turkish men, many such men remain conflicted and unable to let go of the comforts and benefits of deeply embedded male privileges (*ibid.*). Noting how women’s increasing participation in the labour force is impacting on gender identities at work as well as at home, Yavuz (2015) describes a sub-culture of young men who drive ‘modified’ TOFAŞ cars and construct their identities in new ways, described as a consumption-focused route to individualisation and to build a coherent masculine identity in a time of rapid social change. Yet, traditional hegemonic masculinity is still being reproduced in many masculine social contexts and many men struggle with social change, often suffering from the pressures of trying to uphold the more traditional roles still expected of them ‘as men’ (Sebnem 2017). This may be used by some to excuse their use of violence as ‘due to suffering’ (Türk 2015), or represent a sense of ‘precarious manhood’, when challenged by female partners or unable to live up to expected responsibilities (Türkoğlu 2013).

Despite the common view of masculinity as ‘public’, it is important to understand how masculinities are also shaped in the home and in relation to women (Özbay and Baliç 2004), particularly in light of recent tendencies toward ‘traditional’ family values, and on increasing men’s emotional roles and responsibilities at home. Barutçu (2013) traces the social and physical construction of Turkish men’s gender identities through five life-stages of ‘becoming men’: circumcision, discovering sexuality, national service, entering work, and getting married. These are seen as reproducing ideals of Turkish manhood at each stage and over new generations (*ibid.*). Islamism became gradually integrated into Turkey’s secular political system in the 1990s, as Islamic ‘conservative democrats’ softened



their earlier political stance. Yet, Tuksal’s (2004) research describes how such men, having passed through traditional rituals as youths in the 1970s and 1980s, retain mindsets based on traditional Islamic codes of masculinity that are highly resistant to change.

Exploring masculine cultures within institutional settings, Altinoluk (2017) turns to academia to discern gender normative patterns in socialisation at work, language, views of discrimination against (or privileging of) female colleagues, and gendered ideas about administrative roles. She suggests that many male academics reproduce highly gendered norms, often unaware and despite seeing themselves as progressive allies of women (*ibid.*)

Policy context and case study methods

Despite significant institutional and legal improvements for women in earlier decades and an active women’s movement, women continue to face serious obstacles and Turkey continues to rank relatively low in indices on women’s economic participation and opportunity (Acuner 2013). Two important strands emerge from the literature on policy and women’s position in Turkey’s economic transition. The first points to women’s very low labour force participation rates, attributed to the combined effects of rural-to-urban migration over several decades in the context of inadequate employment creation and a general lack of gender-sensitive macroeconomic policies or specific policies to stimulate demand for women’s labour (Dedeoğlu 2009). Progressive social and human resources policies like maternity leave and other benefits have not brought substantive gender equality in the workplace or the labour market, as implementation lags far behind (*ibid.*). More women are thus in vulnerable employment than are men, and they are taking on far more unpaid, domestic and care work (see Box 3).

Box 3 Gender-disaggregated indicators, Turkey

		
Age at first marriage, 2013	24.2	28.1
Life expectancy at birth (years), 2016	79.0	72.5
School enrolment, tertiary (% gross), 2015	88.9	101.8
Vulnerable employment (% of female/male employment) (modelled ILO estimate), 2017	36.7	24.8
Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work (% of 24-hour day), 2015	19.2	3.7
Fertility rate, total (births per woman), 2016	2.1	–

Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal – All gender indicators

A second strand highlights that women’s entrepreneurship has increasingly become seen as an indispensable part of business life and as a solution to the underemployment and unemployment of women in the economy, as well as for their individual ‘empowerment’ (Karabat and Sönmez 2012; Ecevit 2017). This is seen as a high priority for regions where women’s participation is lagging behind (Memiş, Paksoy and Paksoy 2007). While official policies are often characterised by exclusive provisions or arrangements for female entrepreneurs, they face many problems due to specific regional gendered challenges (Yalman and Gündoğdu 2014). Despite the rapid growth of such initiatives, there is little systematic analysis of the current state of female entrepreneurship or its broader impact on gender equality (Ecevit 2017).

Reflecting these two strands, EBRD’s approach to promoting gender equality in its support for transition in Turkey can be described as a combination of (1) encouraging gender-sensitive equal opportunities employment and HR policies for its partners; and (2) promoting its Women in Business programme to improve access to credit and business advice for female entrepreneurs. EBRD’s narratives and approaches for operationalising gender within its investments focus on closing ‘gender gaps’, mainly via employment and economic participation. In terms of women’s entrepreneurship, facilitating access to finance and business advice through the Women in Business

programme is the Bank’s key lever. For women’s inclusion in the labour force, the Bank engages strategic partner corporations to advise on HR strategies for recruitment, retention and promotion, often with proactive activities for attracting female staff, policies to make the workplace more accommodating for women, and specific benefits for women (particularly connected to childcare).

Three sectors were selected for study, with associated EBRD project investments. These included (1) the Women in Business financing programme for female entrepreneurs; (2) an investment loan in the ‘TOFAŞ’ passenger car at a manufacturing sector plant (of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles) in the ancient capital Bursa; and (3) an energy sector electricity distribution partner, ‘TREDAŞ’ (under IÇ Holdings), in Tekirdağ. Twenty-seven participants were interviewed in 20 individual interviews and three focus group discussions, in July 2018. Participants included six staff from EBRD, 11 from TREDAŞ and five from TOFAŞ, along with four female clients of the Women in Business programme and one academic working on masculinities. From the two companies in manufacturing and electricity distribution, ten participants were drawn from upper- and middle-management levels, while six were floor workers. In total, 15 women and 12 men were interviewed.⁹ One limitation of the study is that the sites visited – Ankara, Bursa, Istanbul and Tekirdağ – are all located in the wealthier parts of Turkey.



Istanbul, Turkey.
PHOTOGRAPH: © JENNIFER W.
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Findings

Some progress for women, but ‘masculinities-blind’ understandings of gender based on stereotypes remain

The first observation on EBRD’s efforts to secure a more gender-equal and sustainable transition is that issues of gender equality are visibly engaging staff in many roles and sectors. The Turkish offices are clearly working with gender and inclusion colleagues from London and it is also clear that these efforts are bearing some fruit. The team met with a number of impressive female entrepreneurs benefiting from the Women in Business programme. The TREDAS company in Tekirdağ was implementing an ambitious programme of nine gender projects and has considerably increased women’s participation in this traditionally male-dominated firm, though some more exposed tasks remain primarily performed by men. The TOFAŞ car manufacturing plant in Bursa also has a proactive programme for the recruitment and promotion of women, which has accelerated in the wake of introducing robotics in production. As explained by a female blue-collar floor manager: ‘especially among blue-collar workers, we have hired many more women over the past few years’. Such progress was also approved of by many male employees. A male HR manager compared not making full use of women in the labour force to ‘flying a plane that has two engines... [and not] using the second one’.

Across discussions it became clear that the key challenge for incorporating issues of masculinity in existing strategies for improving gender equality is twofold. First, addressing ‘gender’ is thought of mostly in terms of ‘women’s disadvantage’ and helping women to ‘close the gap’. Second, men and masculinities are left out of view in gender strategies, despite the fact that ‘... the system is designed for men, both the economic and the social system’, as noted by an EBRD employee. While many participants proclaimed strong beliefs in equality, such that a woman or a man can do any job, most also recognised the historical male dominance in their sector. A male worker at TOFAŞ argued that ‘there is only inequality in terms of physical power’, while another male worker from TREDAS stated: ‘I believe men and women are equal.’ Yet, narratives of ‘natural’ gender differences were often used to justify gender strategies, with ideas such as that men use bad language but behave better at work when women are present, that women are better managers or team leaders (as they are thought to be more organised and can ‘care for people’), or the idea that a mixed workforce is more productive because women and men have ‘complementary qualities’. As expressed by one female

HR manager in TREDAS: ‘We need feminine energy in the electricity sector.’ Similarly, in discussing relations with the men in her life, a successful Women in Business entrepreneur argued that ‘... by their nature, men and women are complementary... We make a good team.’

Men’s responses to changes for women’s greater equality

As suggested by the academic literature on Turkey, men’s reactions to efforts at building gender equality are at times resistant or ambivalent, but by no means generally opposed to more equality, even among working-class men. As a female engineering worker in TREDAS explained: ‘... things are changing. Men are getting over their assumptions about housework’, and when asked about the currently hypothetical option of sharing childcare, with paid paternity leave, a male worker claimed: ‘Of course I would do it [take the leave]. Because it’s also the right of fathers, to be with their kids.’ Most men approve of women and men working together and see it as preferable to the alternative, while several male workers interviewed expressed clear resentment against women-only benefits, perceiving them as discriminatory (especially male workers with female partners without access to similar benefits); this was clearly expressed in the question returned by one male shop floor worker: ‘What about my children?’ Yet, most fell back on the idea that childcare is more natural for women in Turkey and remains ‘women’s work’.

Transformations in gender relations and masculine power seem to be impacting on the legitimacy of past and current ideals in conflicting ways among different groups of people, according to our respondents. Rather than mainly by social class, this difference was often explained by reference to political leanings (e.g. secularist versus traditionalist/Islamist) and partially by overlapping regional differences (Western and economically dynamic regions vs Eastern and poorer ones). Recognising that this research focused on the Western regions and our findings cannot be generalised, both leanings could be found in middle management, while shop floor workers, Women in Business entrepreneurs and higher-level managers tended to be more likely to present themselves as ‘progressive secularists’ and to question the legitimacy of a hardening gender order.

These differences can play out in complex ways for some individuals, however, and proclaimed beliefs in equality also coexisted with a sense of entitled male supremacy in some cases. For example, one male HR team leader presented his approach to supporting women at work by using language of clear paternalistic protectionism: ‘I am

very protective of women, especially women in my family... and this applies to the women I work with, especially those under me’.

Perceived obstacles to progress on gender equality

Throughout the interviews, the defining challenge in terms of both equal opportunities at work and appropriate support for women came back to childbirth and women’s perceived natural role in childcare, which is usually managed ‘at home’ in Turkey. Corporate policies for addressing this centred on specific additional benefits for women, such as extra leave and payments for childcare, which were seen as mitigating the problem, though many male employees (including some managers) perceived these benefits as unjust. Managers tended to see them as necessary in the absence of a satisfactory socialised provision of childcare, or the perceived unaffordability of commensurate policies and programmes for increasing the role of fathers in childcare. While these examples of good practice were seen as strategic and positive aspects of these corporations, it was also acknowledged that the broader sectors and the economy overall were lagging far behind in this regard. Hence, these firm-limited approaches to compensating for this system-wide inequity presents individual firms and corporations with a structural challenge in terms of costs and competitiveness, sustainability and scalability of such approaches – at least in the absence of a more effective social provision of care or a stronger and enforced regulatory policy framework in the economy.

Aside from being seen by some as failing in ensuring provision of socialised childcare, the state was also criticised in the area of education, whether in terms of declining quality generally, for failing to attract girls into more ‘professional’ streams (such as engineering, technology or science), or for a perceived re-gendering of curricula and increasingly pushing young women into more traditional roles. Linked to this was a deeper sense of perceived conflict between tradition and Islamic identity versus a more ‘modern’ one. EBRD staff, partner companies’ managers, several women in business and other study participants commonly expressed concern over current politics, with its official promotion of motherhood for women, as threatening progress made on gender equality. Several people noted that the president has proclaimed that the ‘best career for a woman is being a mother’. Some of these points were also shared by an academic, who pointed to a new and more patriarchal culture combining populist, nationalist and traditional elements, as noted in the academic literature. Nevertheless, many pointed out the complexity of historical changes and how there have been many deep changes for women, noting that women have come too far to reverse these gains.

Visions of future needs for building sustainable gender equality

In terms of how to achieve further progress on gender equality, a common theme was that change will happen over generations and will need to involve both child-rearing and education, although (as already noted) people were less optimistic about current trends in the country. Another approach was to ‘demonstrate’ good practice and point to the future through the promotion of women and role-modelling good female leadership, in order to change minds at all levels. For example, a female shop floor manager at TOFAŞ argued that, ‘If we can show them that women have different benefits, more benefits, for the job then I think it will increase the number of women that we can employ.’ The overarching narrative was thus one of the advancement and success of individual women – and, yes, in greater numbers – changing the reality of the workplace and markets *de facto*. Several people pointed to a need to also address the deeper structural challenges involved through national dialogues for policy implementation reforms. Yet, most were pessimistic about how to resolve the unequal burden on women for childcare. One Women in Business entrepreneur and an EBRD staff member agreed (in separate interviews) that promoting crèches as a female-friendly business sector may be worth exploring as a strategy for women in business. However, some caution was raised over complicated regulation accreditation and poorly developed professional education for the childcare sector.

Many interviewees suggested the need for a more relational approach and more direct engagement of men in strategies for gender equality, whether for corporate employment and equal opportunities strategies or for the Women in Business programme. Many such views centred on encouraging men to become more supportive of women in business, at work or in the family, and some pointed out the need for this to challenge stereotypes both in the home and at work. Building men’s engagement in responding more to gender-based violence was also suggested as an important issue, both for society broadly and for the workplace. For capacity development, a few respondents from HR teams suggested working with key strategic staff along the value chains of the Bank’s investments, including looking at the gender dynamics of senior management of major holding companies. The role for TREDAS of a perceived gender equality pioneer in IÇ Holdings was mentioned as a very good example. A male HR manager in TOFAŞ also pointed to the role of Ford, and Koç Holdings was also highlighted as a potentially progressive stakeholder that would be open to considering masculinities in their strategic approaches.

Strategic implications for EBRD and its partners

The overarching narrative of progress on gender equality was one of advancement for individual women in changing the reality of the workplace 'by numbers', even if aided by positive discrimination in the face of structural and cultural obstacles. Another theme was that change can only happen 'over generations' and involving education and care-sharing practices, even if there was less widespread support for the idea of men getting more heavily (or substantively) involved in childcare. The roles of EBRD and partners is seen as having a positive influence on HR policies and practices, though several male workers perceived women-only benefits as unjust, which prevented their positive engagement with gender equality. The Bank and other financial institutions could strengthen their contributions to a more equitable and sustainable transition by addressing the following:

- **Internal capacity:** Make men's roles and issues of masculinity more visible in their internal work. Build and democratise a shared understanding of men and masculinity within gender and inclusion strategies, while challenging gender stereotypes. That would include by integrating gender relations between men and women into problem analyses as well as into strategies for investment and institutional change. This needs to make visible the contradictions between structurally embedded inequalities and individuals' incentives, beliefs and capacities in ways that do not demonise men, while still holding them to account.
- **Investments:** Together with national financial partners, consider the potential role of masculinities in strategically investing in sectors and strategies to minimise key structural constraints to gender equality (for example, exploring the feasibility of investment and technical support for gender-equitable crèche businesses).

/// Several male workers perceived women-only benefits as unjust, which prevented their positive engagement with gender equality. ///

- **Technical advice:** Build on its positive engagement with key personnel along the value chain of its investments and integrate masculinities in these collaborations to build greater capacity for developing inclusive gender equality solutions in HR management and development. This could include within childcare solutions, recruitment and career progression, with considerations of 'positive discrimination' in relation to equity and sustainability.
- **Policy dialogues:** Make a positive contribution, alongside other stakeholders, to addressing the lack of socialised childcare and encouraging reforms towards gender equality in areas such as parental benefits, as well as more gender-equal educational streaming towards technical and caring professions, to challenge gendered stereotypes. Efforts to encourage men to engage with childcare could be leveraged with combinations of dialogue, policy and social changes, including campaigns, and drawing on the work of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). For example, the NGO ACEV (Mother Child Education Foundation) works with women on childcare and reaches out to men on this topic.

/// Make men's roles and issues of masculinity more visible in internal work. Build and democratise a shared understanding of men and masculinity within gender and inclusion strategies. ///

Lviv (Lvov), Ukraine. People walking in the city centre at night.

PHOTOGRAPH: © PIOTR MALECKI/PANOS PICTURES



Gender and masculinity in Ukraine's transition

As already mentioned, gender regimes in the Soviet Union were characterised by overt state attempts to manipulate constructions of masculinity and femininity in line with a range of political, demographic, military and economic objectives. In post-Soviet Ukraine, dominant representations of gender roles appear in many respects as inversions of the Soviet images of the worker–mother and the worker–soldier. As the country has attempted both to distance itself from the Soviet past and to establish a strong and independent self-identity, images of masculinity and femininity have emerged which have both nationalist and traditionalist overtones. In contrast to the Soviet emphasis on women's 'dual role', constructions of femininity in post-Soviet Ukraine prioritise domesticity and motherhood, as epitomised by the *Berehynya* spirit – a mythological goddess–matriarch whose primary functions are to protect the home, the family and the nation. In material terms, this shift in emphasis is epitomised by the redrawing of women's relationship with the state and their new relationship with the market, as

forms of Soviet welfare supporting women's public role are removed.

For men, there is some continuity in the ideals of patriotism they are supposed to share with the state, as two historic figures have fed into contemporary constructions of hegemonic masculinity; namely, the Cossack, and the fighter of the UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent

Consistently, the biggest problem facing men in Ukraine – and particularly men occupying the lower echelons of the labour market – has been the near-impossibility of meeting expectations of them as providers.

Army), both regarded as undefeatable defenders of the nation. However, men’s more immediate public and private roles have been transformed by the shift from state to market, such that in addition to serving the nation, self-realisation should now come through individual success in the marketplace and, in turn, as a breadwinner for one’s family.

The respective emphasis on women’s domestic role and men’s role as breadwinners reinforces stereotypes that permeate all spheres of life in Ukraine and are at the root of a series of gendered problems faced by both women and men, many of which have been exacerbated by the severe economic and social dislocations experienced periodically since the collapse of state socialism and currently exacerbated by the war with Russia. The disadvantages faced by women in the labour market are clearest in the gender pay gap, which, while improving from 29.1 per cent to 23.7 per cent between 2000 and 2014, was still significantly behind the EU27 average of 16.4 per cent (United Nations 2015: 46), and placed Ukraine 67th among 142 countries ranked by the Gender Equality Index (Uvarova 2016). Such disadvantages stem primarily from forms of horizontal and vertical segregation rather than access to employment, with women concentrated in lower-paid professions and in low- and middle-ranked positions (United Nations 2015: 47); they are further reflected in women’s representation in political positions, progressing only from 8.6 per cent to 13.6 per cent of members of parliament over the same period (*ibid.*: 43).

Consistently, the biggest problem facing men in Ukraine – and particularly men occupying the lower echelons of the labour market – has been the near-impossibility of meeting expectations of them as providers in what continues to be a low-wage economy characterised by widespread income insecurity (World Bank 2017b). This contradiction elicits responses from men that range from



the proactive (40 per cent of men usually work more than 40 hours per week) (UNFPA 2018: 29) to the reactive (alcoholism is 6–7 times more prevalent among Ukrainian men than women, and particularly widespread in rural areas, where poverty is endemic) (Bureychek 2013: 354). These responses to insecurity are harmful to men: life expectancy for men has consistently been around 11 years lower than for women (see Box 4), while the death rate for 20–45-year-olds is more than three times higher than for women of the same age group (Riabchuk 2013: 206–7). Male responses to insecurity are also harmful to women, 27 per cent of whom have experienced some form of gendered violence (Volosevich *et al.* 2014).

Box 4 Gender-disaggregated indicators, Ukraine

	♀	♂
Age at first marriage, 2012	23.0	26.4
Life expectancy at birth (years), 2016	76.5	66.7
School enrolment, tertiary (% gross), 2014	89.5	77.6
Vulnerable employment (% of female/male employment) (modelled ILO estimate), 2017	14.3	16.9
Fertility rate, total (births per woman), 2016	1.5	–
Women who believe a husband is justified in beating his wife (any of five reasons) (%), 2012	2.9	–

Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal – All gender indicators

Policy context and case study methods

Ukraine has signed up to a range of commitments on gender equality, both internationally and domestically.¹⁰ Nevertheless, as has already been illustrated, there is a large gap between *de jure* commitments and their *de facto* delivery, which stems from the lack of embeddedness of the gender equality agenda in Ukrainian government and society.¹¹ Perhaps most importantly, the cultural embeddedness of gender stereotypes itself undermines governmental commitments, as evidenced by the equivocal support for gender equality at the presidential level, with the former Russia-supported Yanukovich government equating gender equality with progressive Europeanism, and thus rolling back government action in favour of neo-conservatism (Van Metre and Steiner 2017). In this respect, the current geo-political situation is a two-edged sword: on the one hand, by turning Ukraine to the West, the war with Russia increases the possibility of the gender equality agenda taking root; on the other hand, it is difficult to see the government prioritising an agenda that remains 'foreign' during a period of national crisis, when neo-traditionalist constructions of both men and women are being heavily mobilised.

That said, it is crucial to distinguish between women-focused gender policy, which can draw on the public role of women under state socialism and is thus far more advanced than in other transition regions (see elsewhere in this report), and men-focused gender policy, which is almost entirely absent at both government and civil society levels. With the exception of the recent legislative provisions for paternity leave (see below), policies and projects addressing men as gendered subjects have come mostly from international agencies and domestic NGOs, which reflects a deeply embedded tendency at government level to view gender change through an equal opportunities framework, in which problems relating to women's access to the public sphere dominate, and men's public and private roles are left unchanged.

Problematizing and addressing the latter have been a handful of NGOs (amidst a bulk of more socially conservative NGOs focusing on, for example, army veterans) such as Men against Violence, established in the city of Kherson in 2004, and the National Network of Men-Leaders Against Violence, founded in 2009. A recent project funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the British Embassy in Kiev, the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Centre for Social Reform has generated significant new data on men's lives and the range of problems underpinning gender-based violence (UNFPA 2018). The stress

Current gender policy remains focused on women; gender issues affecting men are almost entirely absent.

experienced by men because of attempting to live up to unachievable ideals of masculinity in a structurally poor economy, and the resulting tendencies towards overwork, alcohol abuse, morbidity and violence, are well documented by the project, in contrast to a gender-mainstreaming approach in which masculinity has not featured.

Several EBRD staff in Ukraine seemed to echo the broader national discourse on gender equality: gender strategy appears to be viewed as of secondary importance after other national priorities, including corruption, banking infrastructure and liquidity, green economy transition and energy independence. At the same time, and further echoing national sentiment, it is felt that gender inequality is not as urgent a problem in Ukraine as it might be in, for example, countries in which gender relations are dictated by Islamic law and customs. The Bank's primary levers in regard to gender equality are its Women in Business programme, which offers a range of non-financial instruments to women-owned micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, and its gender action plans, which are developed as part of any loan deal.

In order to explore the research questions in the Ukrainian context, three sectors were chosen for case studies that were identified both as key for the Bank's operations in terms of volume of investment and for their potential direct and indirect impacts on gender issues. These were: agribusiness, represented by the Kiev, Poltava and Khmelnytsky branches of the Astarta Holding Company; a municipal project, represented by the Kharkiv Metro Extension Project; and the Women in Business programme, represented by Promo, a textiles company in Kiev. In all three case studies, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with executives, employees and the relevant Bank leads, while the Women in Business case study also included EBRD business consultants.

Findings

Gender strategies meet gendered realities: ‘equal but different’

In a study exploring gender mainstreaming approaches hitherto used in Ukraine, Hankivsky and Salnykova (2013: 435) point to the failure of attempts to implant mechanisms and policies developed elsewhere and a need to create strategies more appropriate to the Ukrainian context. EBRD gender strategy documentation might be seen as a case in point. While focusing on gender equity in hiring and promotion processes and on gender desegregation, a municipal projects strategy document states, in connection with the need to help employees to balance work and life commitments, that ‘although in most families both men and women work, obsolete stereotypes render women responsible for caring about family and family members, while men are expected to make a successful career outside their home’ (Safulina 2017: 40).

While referred to as ‘obsolete’ in EBRD documents, such stereotypes were largely unquestioned in interviews with executives and employees across the sectors studied. Across all three case studies, employees enjoyed flexible working arrangements, but it was women who would use these to deal with family matters: ‘We as women have a lot of issues that we must resolve in working time, not possible at the weekend’ (Astarta Khmelnytsky office, female employee).

Men’s work–life balance, by contrast, was skewed disproportionately towards work, with one respondent claiming not to have taken a day off for three years as he worked multiple jobs to save for a property deposit:

It was really difficult to buy a flat, I’ve been living in Kiev for 11 years and we only just bought a flat. It’s small but it’s ours. Until recently, I had a period of two years when I worked without a day off, for two whole years. I’ve got this as my main job and I worked weekend days as a chef... Also on holiday days... Of course, it’s difficult because we’ve got a baby, my wife’s on maternity leave, so as a man [kak muzhik] I have to look after everything, I have to keep everything together. I’ve done security work too, one-off jobs, whenever I can, I don’t turn anything down.
(Egor, 37, despatch manager, clothing factory, Kiev)

This tendency for men to overwork reflects the national picture, in which, as noted above, as many as 40 per cent place their immediate material needs above longer-term considerations about their health and wellbeing. In this context, men are at risk from both the effects of

overwork and the possibility of falling into more harmful, reactive responses. Meanwhile, childcare continues to be a responsibility shared between mothers and grandmothers (Koshulap 2012; Strelnyk 2017), with only 2 per cent of men taking parental leave since legislation was introduced to allow this in 2010 (Strelnyk 2017: 178), despite the popularity of books such as Andriy Chepay’s (2016) *Tato v Dekreti (Father on Parental Leave)*. Again, ‘obsolete stereotypes’ are not easily disturbed:

I don’t really know about [paternity leave] but a friend of mine did it, because his wife earns more than him, but to me that seemed a bit strange [dikovato]... Before my wife got pregnant she earned more than me too... I just worked, worked, worked to get ahead of her... It’s inside me, it’s what my dad showed me.
(Egor, 37, despatch manager, clothing factory, Kiev)

The notion of women as ‘equal but different’, segregated from heavier forms of labour, was widespread, underpinning forms of horizontal segregation common in the Soviet workplace. The new business sector also fitted this framework – women could succeed in what was now seen as a very open business infrastructure, but tended to choose ‘passion projects’ that they treated as ‘an extension of their family’, and for that reason were more limited in growth. Despite EBRD’s efforts to challenge gender stereotypes for women these remain deep-seated, while men-focused policies that might have an impact on gender-related problems in the Ukrainian context – policies such as promoting men’s physical and emotional wellbeing – are mostly absent.

Positive indirect impacts (1): anti-corruption as a gendered agenda

While the prevalence of traditional attitudes towards gender roles nullified some of the EBRD’s attempts at direct gender interventions, the case studies indicated many ways in which different aspects of the Bank’s overall country strategy had positive indirect impacts on gender. Tackling corruption, for example, might be framed as targeting a problem that undermines not only legal, economic and democratic objectives, but also gender equality, since corruption in multiple contexts has been identified as predominantly the abuse of power by men, with women more likely to be the objects of corrupt practices (Borgström 2012; Transparency International 2014; Chen 2016; Portillo and Molanon 2017), which thus exacerbates gender inequalities.

Thus, in supporting companies such as Astarta, which prides itself on its anti-corruption stance even to the point of missing out on land leases and other contracts, the Bank is helping to reverse an endemic problem threatening to undermine transition in multiple ways, not least in relation to gender. Conversely, the Kharkiv Metro Extension Project was a public sector municipal project with a typically male-dominated management structure and no discernible commitment to anti-corruption, indicating that this is an area for improvement.

Positive indirect impacts (2): community-level inclusion targets men, women and children

In addition to its work on corruption, the Bank’s support for companies with social inclusion programmes not explicitly targeting gender issues similarly has a number of indirect and positive gendered outcomes. The agricultural holding company Astarta devotes enormous efforts and resources towards its ‘social work’ programmes, whose purpose was both to reward the communities in which its operations were based and to ensure its future recruitment and retention. In the Khmelnytsky and

Poltava branches, such programmes covered school refurbishment, maintenance of wells, road construction, free computer literacy classes for all ages, and comprehensive ‘social packages’ for employees (paid sick leave, free accommodation and meals, access to sanatoria, etc.).

Astarta came to us in 2007. Before that, it was all individual farmers, but now we have a collective agreement with rights protection and mediation, and a whole range of social programmes, all the development programmes across all of the villages, it all depends on Astarta – it’s like a big family, like a state within a state.

(Vice director of social and economic affairs, land and personnel, Astarta Poltava)

The community cohesion fostered by this programme will help to stem a range of gendered problems connected with the rural degradation witnessed since the beginning of the post-Soviet period, including damaging levels of men’s out-migration, women’s turn to subsistence, and hazardous male alcohol consumption linked to marginalisation.

Strategic implications for EBRD and its partners

Many of Ukraine’s gender-related problems are rooted not only in its neo-traditionalist gender order, but in dysfunctional economic contexts (at work and in managing households), which encourage men and women to revert to traditional gender scripts. As such, formalising and normalising the economy have strong gendered benefits that should be recognised and encouraged. In addition, gender-inclusion strategies need to be more broadly conceived, moving from a focus on women only to one on women, men and communities. A strategic focus on the following should be developed:

- **Investments:** Continue to tackle corruption by investing in partners committed to the anti-corruption agenda, thereby stemming the growth of gender inequality resulting from the abuse of patriarchal power by men.

- **Policy dialogue:** Work to develop and normalise the banking infrastructure, so that both businesses and individuals seeking finance (loans, mortgages, etc.) may do so without resorting to strategies where men work excessive hours and women face a ‘second shift’ alone.
- **Technical advice:** Encourage and facilitate the development of gender strategies targeting men’s health problems (including stress, overwork, depression and anxiety). These have been slow to develop domestically, but will be better received within gender strategies than the promotion of aspirational gender norms that are easily externalised as ‘Western’.
- **Internal capacity:** Recognise the ‘gender and inclusion’ potential in good practices of companies focusing on community development to support and build upon these – in more relational, gendered terms – to positively engage men alongside women and children.

Gender-inclusion strategies need to be more broadly conceived, moving from a focus on women only to one on women, men and communities.

Conclusions and recommendations

Exploring the issue of masculinities and transition in four highly significant countries across EBRD sub-regions, this study has found Egypt, Kazakhstan, Turkey and Ukraine at what appears to be another uncertain phase in history. Major changes are reshaping these societies, their economies and gender relations between women and men in ways which are neither linear nor easily predictable. In this final chapter we lay out some common issues emerging from the four countries. Based on the above grounded research on the nuanced complexities of masculinities and transition from a rich diversity of contextualised settings, we first draw out common themes and exemplify these by recalling select country findings, from the bottom up as it were. We then trace key emerging priorities and conclude with some recommended directions for EBRD, its partners and other stakeholders. These should be read as indicative, recognising that most recommendations will require further detailed research, elaboration and development within specific country contexts.

Synthesis of findings

Our findings and the broader literature suggest a gradual – if uneven – improvement in the status of women in transition countries over recent decades. These improvements have been driven variously by demographic transitions, urbanisation, economic growth and ‘modernity’ changing family life and gender roles, in part linked to increases in women’s labour force participation and education. Women’s entrepreneurship has also been significant for progress on gender equality, but employment in the more established formal sectors remains fundamentally important and structurally male-dominated – with horizontal and vertical gender segregation. Whilst EBRD has engaged with both of these aspects in its support to countries, what can be characterised as the Bank’s ‘closing the gap methodology’ for inclusive transition impact appears insufficient in

engaging men as positive agents of change, and risks new forms of patriarchal resistance emerging.

The literature and our country findings also show that both men and masculinities (i.e. ideas and identifications of ways of being manly) are diverse, complex and changing, both for individuals and between generations. This is important for recognising the possibility of change, but also that this change needs to be directed, as it is nested in broader processes of change. Our findings challenge us to explicitly address the reasons why men would want to engage as positive agents of change alongside women. Why give up patriarchal privilege? We have seen men’s attitudes to equality range from resistant, through to more ambivalent, to explicitly supporting women’s empowerment. This has implications both for finding ‘entry points’ for engaging men, and for how to stage or sequence such engagements (for example in training, advocacy, etc.). We also need to consider ‘how’ or ‘in what roles’ men can be agents of positive change. Are they colleagues, bosses, bankers, life-partners and/or business partners of women who need support? This can inform how different groups of men may be engaged to do things differently alongside – and in relation to – women.

Rapid developments have also come with increased volatility, insecurity and stresses in people’s private lives, with a concurrent falling back on traditional gender roles, facilitated by a sense of ‘vacuum’ left in earlier progress in provision of social and care services or formal directions on gender equality. These changes have played out in slightly different ways in the four countries studied. Whilst there is no simple way to group these four countries, women are clearly at greater levels of inclusion ‘at work’ in the two FSU countries, where men’s reactions to women’s advancement and to transition are also more ambivalent. By contrast, in the more deeply patriarchal contexts of Turkey and Egypt, with greater levels of women’s exclusion from employment, gender inequality is framed as a problem more specifically for women.

The resulting focus on ‘getting men on board’ with women’s inclusion is perhaps less concerned with men’s own troubles in dealing with change. Yet, the central role of masculinities and the relational nature of gender in how this is embedded in the economy is common to all, if manifested differently. Several common themes emerge, which we summarise below.

Strategies framed as closing the gender ‘inclusion gap’ neglect many men’s deleterious experiences of transition

The Bank’s efforts are indeed bearing some positive fruit for women’s employment. However, ‘gender’ is still thought of mostly in terms of ‘closing the gap’ for women and men are broadly left out of view, as the entire system is already run by men. Yet, the study revealed that some men’s sense of masculinity may be affected in the face of transition, which is overlooked by gender strategies, and resentment of these surfaced for some men who struggled to provide for their families. In Egypt, young men in formal and informal employment have experienced severe inflationary pressures, which were said to have forestalled some men’s aspirations for the future. In Ukraine, men facing adverse economic conditions were seen as at risk both from the effects of overwork and more harmful, reactive responses, as was also noted in Kazakhstan. Our findings suggest that the Bank’s current method may be impactful in strengthening women’s access to finance, skills, jobs and services, but also that it is less effective in engaging men and thereby transforming gender relations.

Little perception of a problem with equal opportunities in the workplace and economy

In most of the countries, we found high levels of scepticism about the need for specific equal opportunities strategies, and particularly by some men in all countries. A common view was that there was non-discrimination at work and that current rules and, in some cases employers’ proactive strategies, were guaranteeing this (perhaps most pronounced in Turkey, but clearly common in all countries). In several countries, narratives for ‘change’ toward greater gender equality were based on numbers of women at work and inspirational female role models

/// ‘Gender’ is still thought of mostly in terms of ‘closing the gap’ for women and men are broadly left out of view. ///

to change patriarchal mindsets. Yet, many persistent problems were noted, such as informal aspects of workplace culture (often based on historical momentum and traditional views of essential gender differences) and the issue of maternity leave as putting employers in an ‘uncomfortable’ position and putting women at a disadvantage, as noted in Egypt and Kazakhstan, for example.

Inequalities put down to women’s choices and ‘natural’ role in child-rearing or family life

In all four countries, problems of vertical and horizontal segregation by gender were often attributed to women’s own choices and capabilities. For example, the popular Ukrainian notion of ‘equal but different’ segregates women from heavier forms of labour, underpinning older forms of horizontal segregation from Soviet times, while new businesses also adopted this framework. The same rationale was mentioned in different ways in all four countries.

Stereotypes rendering women responsible for unpaid domestic care work were largely unquestioned across all the countries, and childcare continues to be seen as a responsibility shared between mothers and other women. This was also encoded in the idea that women can be successful because they are good at multitasking – including doing ‘their’ domestic care work (as was expressed in Turkey and Ukraine, for example). Indeed, narratives of ‘natural’ complementary gender differences were often used to justify gender equality strategies in several countries.

Men’s traditional gender role as primary breadwinner remains dominant

Men’s predominant economic role in all four countries is still that of the ‘natural’ breadwinner. While perceptions of gender roles and masculinities did also vary among some groups, for most people, and under ‘normal circumstances’, men ‘should be’ the main providers for the family, as described in Egypt (although some young Egyptian men and early career entrepreneurs distanced themselves from this view). The study revealed conflicted narratives on equality. While many claimed to support and believe in equality, most also recognised the historical male dominance in work sectors and sometimes combined the logic for gender equality with gender stereotypes and ‘role models’ (in Turkey and Kazakhstan), or beliefs that men and women are ‘equal but different’ (in Ukraine).

As a result of the resilience of the male breadwinner stereotype, men’s work-life balance was skewed

disproportionately towards work in most settings, particularly noted as problematic in Ukraine and Kazakhstan but also alluded to in Turkey and Egypt in different ways. While in all countries some people argued for greater attention to men's roles in the home and in relation to families – including taking on more care work – men's roles as husband and father remain tied to being the economic provider.

While gender stereotypes persist, attitudes to gender roles and equality are in flux

The study found that deeply rooted gender stereotypes are negatively affecting both men's and women's working lives, and also attitudes to the prospect of greater equality. In terms of men's resistance to gender equality, we found that there was a lack of support from many men for successful businesswomen, particularly in Egypt but also in other countries. Many Egyptian men used self-Orientalising tropes to validate traditional family values and gender roles, whilst in Turkey and Ukraine some informants believed that many men felt inadequate or uneasy about changing roles within the context of the family. Traditional expectations of women's care responsibilities were recognised by many people across all four countries as a major obstacle to progress on gender equality. Few solutions were proposed, although some across most countries argued that men 'should' do more in the home, as well as that 'things are slowly changing'. By contrast, some noted contexts of hardening traditionalism as a serious threat, as seen in Turkey and Ukraine, while many felt that 'women have come too far to go back home'.

Men's attitudes toward changes in gender relations varied across and within the four countries. Male respondents expressed a range of views – from progressive, to ambivalent or conflicted, to conservative views. Those expressing some resistance or ambivalence were not necessarily opposed to more equality, but unclear on what this could look like or were concerned about losing out in the process of change. Resistance or progressive views did not seem to correlate with class or occupation. Some of the most egalitarian views were expressed by blue-collar working men in Turkey and Ukraine, for example. While younger men tended to be more likely to believe in greater gender equality, age could also affect others' perceptions of men's masculinity, as Egyptian young men were described as work-shy, for example.

The findings of this study thus raise implications for future priorities, opportunities and strategic questions, which we turn to in the following section, before concluding with recommendations for the Bank and other stakeholders.

Emerging priorities

This study has identified a number of key challenges for incorporating issues of masculinity in projects and strategies within transition contexts. Exploring EBRD's own narratives, approaches and tools for operationalising gender within projects and programmes, the country research teams discussed criteria and operational indicators used for measuring gender inequality and evaluating progress (such as gendered employment/employee rates, pay gaps, or progression disparities) and explored underlying beliefs and apparent implicit (or explicit) 'theories of change' about how gender equality can develop and about how issues of masculinity may be seen to undermine or influence equitable transitions. This section thus explores the implications for our two central questions: first, 'how might women-focused interventions in projects and investments be complemented to increase the resilience of transition and equality of opportunity?' and, second, 'what types of strategies for engaging men as agents of positive change might be particularly promising in EBRD regions?'

Complementing women-focused interventions for resilient transitions and equal opportunities

As explained in the introduction, through its Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality (EBRD 2016), the Bank responds to the challenge of building gender-equal and sustainable economic transitions by implementing two main strategies: (1) expanding the number of investments and projects that support the promotion of gender equality; and (2) promoting dialogues for more enabling national environments in its countries of operation. These strategies have three key objectives, namely increasing or improving access to: (1) finance and business support for women-led businesses; (2) employment opportunities and skills for women; and (3) services.

► ***Financing and entrepreneurship***

In order to complement the current SPGE objective to increase access to finance and business support for women-led businesses, a number of potential priorities emerge for different countries. In all four countries, a first priority and a good place to start is to build on what the Bank does best and work towards doing business in a more (a) masculinities-conscious, and (b) gender-relational way. In several countries, it was noted that business advice and training for female-led businesses did not include male business partners or take into consideration the role of men in those female entrepreneurs' lives.

An immediate priority would be to assess in more depth how this could be addressed within the Women in Business programmes or alongside them. Beyond the immediate programme strategies, in a country like Ukraine, doing

business in a more relational and masculinities-informed way could include work to further develop financial markets and the banking infrastructure using a gender-sensitive approach, to enable both businesses and individuals seeking finance (for loans or mortgages) to do so without resorting to strategies where men work excessive hours and women face a 'second shift' at home.

Another priority is to build on strategies to tackle corruption, thereby stemming the growth of gender inequality resulting from the illegitimate exploitation of patriarchal power by some men. It could also involve investing in specific sectors strategically to minimise key structural constraints to gender equality. For example, where childcare is a common obstacle for women in business, such as in Turkey and many other countries, supporting the development of gender-equitable crèche businesses could be a viable strategy worth considering. For such shifts to take place, however, there is a need to raise awareness among decision makers in social and economic planning – that is, raising awareness of the structural constraints and costs of systemic gender inequality, as was identified in Kazakhstan.

► **Equality of opportunity in employment**

There is a strong need to make masculinities visible and to challenge gender stereotypes in the internal work of EBRD and its partners, in order to build more shared understandings of men and masculinities and to integrate these into problem analyses, investment strategies and strategies for institutional change. This could be done by building on progressive work already being undertaken to challenge stereotypes about women at work within broader equal opportunities strategies, and by promoting office cultures where gender equality is already a broadly shared value, as was identified in Turkey. In places where gender is less visibly on the agenda of staff and partners, EBRD should aim to 'gender men at work' – for example, by including or strengthening gender- and masculinities-aware HR advice in Business Advisory Services.

► **Provision of services**

EBRD's strategies for investment in services have tended to focus on the more 'hard' end of physical infrastructure projects, public works, and urban transport and the like. These investments have gendered dimensions and should be explored further using a men and masculinities lens in order to make them more aligned with the objective of building gender-equitable sustainable transitions. Further investment in gender-equitable and economically sustainable education strategies is clearly an important area for development and also improvement through inclusion of a masculinities perspective.

A major current gap lies in the sphere of social services, especially in the gendered care economy. Addressing it would involve: (1) fully accounting for the costs and benefits of unpaid and paid care; (2) considering gender-equity in remuneration (and lack thereof); as well as (3) counting the full (social and economic) costs of the lack of care. Particular priorities include a need to appropriately value and de-gender domestic care work in the economy, as well as services for men's mental health and wellbeing, and for responding to gender-based violence.

► **Promotion of public and policy dialogues for gender equality**

Alongside greater numbers of investments and projects in support of the three objectives outlined, the Bank aims to implement the strategy by promoting dialogues for more enabling national environments in its countries of operation. Our study shows that there is clearly a need to develop and support public and policy dialogues on gender equality that highlight the central relevance of masculinities to social and economic change. Such policy and public dialogues are needed on issues of masculinities in relation to work-life balance and could usefully appeal to current concerns about men's health in Kazakhstan or Ukraine, for example, or to the structural injustices of gender inequality in socioeconomic policy on the 'care economy' also in Turkey or Egypt.

A related priority for improved national dialogues is for business and trade union leaders to speak out publicly against traditional gender stereotypes about women's and men's 'roles', as was identified in Kazakhstan. Such dialogues should consistently use stereotype-defying examples to illustrate gender strategies and to disturb gendered monopolies on particular areas of work or training, as is needed in Egypt and other countries.

Engaging men as agents of positive change alongside women

Considering priorities to complement the women-focused strategies discussed above, we now turn to priorities for new strategies for engaging men more specifically as agents of positive change, alongside women and girls. Priorities for this need to consider a range of questions, such as 'who?', 'why?' and 'how?': questions about men's roles, entry points, motivations, relations and approaches to change. Three common areas of concern emerge from this study, which we summarise and relate to such questions below.

► **Concerns about work-life balance and men's health**

Gender strategies targeting men's health problems – such as overwork, work-related stress, depression and anxiety

– are needed for finding entry points of relevance and concern to men. This involves appealing to men's sense of having human needs and rights, while highlighting the human and personal costs of oppressive ideals of masculinity, to men themselves as well as to loved ones (women, children and other men) in their lives.

In the countries studied, this could include campaigns on improving work–life balance and men's occupational health, emphasising shared responsibilities within the family, as well as promoting men's engagement in childcare, using positive examples of supportive male partners. Campaigns focusing on men's stress and overwork have been slow to develop domestically in Ukraine, for example, but would probably be better received than the promotion of aspirational gender norms that are easily externalised as 'Western'. Efforts to emphasise shared responsibilities within the family as a win–win for both women and men are also needed in Kazakhstan, while the few small efforts to promote men's engagement in childcare that already exist in Turkey and Egypt should be expanded. In all such efforts it is useful to champion positive examples of supportive male partners to highlight that appropriate work–life balance is not solely a woman's responsibility, and it is essential that naturalised gender stereotypes are challenged within such work.

► **Concerns about impact of gender stereotypes on HR management and workforce development**

As we have seen, men can play a range of supportive roles in relation to gender equality at work, which facilitates progress in recruitment, retention, progression and equal opportunities more generally. We have also seen that many current strategies for progress involve relying on traditional gender stereotypes, which have unequal and negative implications for workers and entrepreneurs, particularly for women but also for some men, as highlighted by the exclusion of men from gender strategies in Egypt and the broader 'naturalised' divisions of labour in all four countries.

The Bank could usefully consider improving existing capacity building and cooperation by considering different kinds of men and their roles at work and in relation to women in business. This involves using both internal capacity building and external technical cooperation to challenge and change patriarchal mindsets among key staff and partners. EBRD could also consider men as participants in women-focused activities and involve them in specific training that targets women for support in all countries, whether for women's business development or for equal opportunities in the workplace. Male stakeholders in the Women in Business programme are an easily

accessible target group, as evidenced in Kazakhstan, Egypt and Turkey. One way to approach capacity development would be to integrate masculinities in existing positive collaborations with key strategic individuals and groups along the value chains in corporations, as in Turkey. It would also be useful to recognise and build on the 'gender and inclusion' potential in good practices of companies focusing on (for example) community development, to positively engage men alongside women and children, as was seen in Ukraine.

► **Concerns about oppressive masculine 'informal' business practices**

The informal sector is particularly important for women's economic advancement and opportunities, but also for certain groups of men who may struggle in current economic transitions. Intersectional disadvantages often mark the experiences of such groups, whilst the informal sector is sometimes also marked by insecurity, rogue practices and masculine practices that exploit patriarchal social power relations. Informal practices also operate within businesses in the larger firms and corporations in the formal economy, as described in Kazakhstan.

The entry point here is more one of fairer practices in the economy and recognising that certain informal practices, and certainly corrupt practices, trade on patriarchal relations. This is of concern to women and men alike, even though women and men may be affected in different ways. Examples from the study include addressing the masculine practices of corruption in Ukraine (building on EBRD's existing anti-corruption efforts), addressing sexual harassment in the workplace (which was mentioned in Kazakhstan and Turkey), or the exclusion of young men from employment through stereotyping them as lazy (in Egypt).

In light of these implications, it seems clear that the familiar 'closing the gap' models rely on theories of 'separate spheres' of power, which are outdated in a world where gender is increasingly recognised as relational. Many men's ambivalence about traditional models of masculinity attest to this. More importantly, these outdated models fail to make visible the ways that men's engagement in gender equality (even in small ways) can 'strengthen the legitimacy of the market and political system as reflected in laws, institutions and outcomes', as described in the SPGE (EBRD 2016). Ironically, it is also limiting in that major proportions of a country's 'skilled and well-educated human resources [male, in this case] ... [may actually] ... be left untapped' in strategies for gender equality and, furthermore, that 'positive spill-over effects on social cohesion and stability' may not be realised.

Recommendations

The findings of this study suggest three directions for new strategies for EBRD and other international financial institutions to complement women-focused projects and to engage men as agents of positive change, alongside women and girls, in transition countries.

Directions for internal capacity building and technical cooperation:

- Make men, masculinity and gender relations visible in internal work and challenge gender stereotypes – in problem analysis, in investment strategies and for institutional change.
- Build on existing work to challenge stereotypes about women and use stereotype-defying examples of men, in order to challenge regressive masculinity and to illustrate gender strategies for disturbing gendered monopolies in particular areas of work or training.
- Challenge patriarchal mindsets in multiple ways. Within programmes promoting female entrepreneurship, the male business partners of female entrepreneurs and male business mentors are untapped resources as potential male champions for women's economic advancement.
- Include masculinities-aware HR advice in equal opportunities strategies and business advisory services.

Directions for projects and investments:

- Integrate issues of men, masculinity and gender relations along the value chains of investments, through engagement with key personnel in HR management and training, and through business advice and training targeting female entrepreneurs.
- Continue to help to formalise the economy by tackling corruption, thereby stemming the growth of gender inequality resulting from the abuse of patriarchal power.

- Correct market failures in access to gender-sensitive personal financial services, so that clients can access loans, mortgages and pensions without resorting to men working excessive hours and women facing a 'second shift' of care work in the home.
- Invest strategically to minimise key constraints to gender equality. For example, as childcare is a common obstacle for women in business, be proactive in supporting gender-equitable crèche businesses.
- Build on the good practices of companies focusing on community development to positively engage men alongside women and children.

Directions for policy dialogues:

- Encourage and facilitate national policy dialogues and strategies targeting men's health problems.
- Promote national dialogues on gender and masculinities with in-country stakeholders, on (1) gender equality in socioeconomic policy on the 'care economy'; (2) promoting men's engagement in childcare; and (3) better gender-balancing within educational streaming to technical and social subjects.
- Support business and trade union leaders to speak out publicly against traditional gender stereotypes about women's and men's 'roles'.
- Champion positive examples of supportive male partners to highlight that appropriate work-life balance is not solely women's responsibility.
- Support the development of campaigns to improve work-life balance, emphasising that shared responsibilities within the family are a win-win for women and men alike.

/// Make men, masculinity and gender relations visible and challenge gender stereotypes – in problem analysis, in investment strategies and for institutional change. ///

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Endnotes

- ¹ www.raewynconnell.net/p/masculinities_20.html
- ² EBRD currently works in five regions: south-eastern Europe; Central Europe and the Baltic States; Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (including Ukraine); Central Asia (including Kazakhstan); and the southern and eastern Mediterranean (including Egypt), as well as two 'other' countries (Russia and Turkey). For a full list of countries, see: www.ebrd.com/where-we-are.html
- ³ These long-term trends are easily and effectively explored visually by selecting the relevant countries and indicators on the website 'Gapminder': [www.gapminder.org/tools/#\\$chart-type=linechart](http://www.gapminder.org/tools/#$chart-type=linechart)
- ⁴ Labour force participation rate is the proportion of the population aged 15 and older that is economically active: all people who supply labour for the production of goods and services during a specified period.
- ⁵ The four countries' legal frameworks on gender equality were explored in the *World Bank Databank Gender Statistics*, <https://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=Gender%20Statistics>
- ⁶ Agenda 2030 strives to tackle critical structural barriers to social and economic change with its Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality, and there are also a number of progressive targets on gender under other SDGs, such as Goal 8 on employment. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, agreed in July 2015, also made commitments on women's equal economic rights, pledging to undertake legislation and reforms to give women equal access to ownership and control over land, credit, inheritance, natural resources, and other forms of property. These commitments are well justified by findings from survey data across 44 countries, which show men's use of physical and sexual violence against female partners as significantly linked to the degree with which law and practice disadvantages women in access to land, property, and other resources (Heise and Kotsadam 2015). Policies need to focus on broad social change, which requires the positive involvement of men across political, economic and social spheres. United Nations *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>
- ⁷ Egypt does not have an 'interview culture', but written consent was gained for all the interviews used in the analysis. A semi-structured interview technique was adopted that focused on participants' personal experiences of gender values and practices at work and at home, and their experiences and ideas about transition. There is an expansive literature regarding the problems of interviewing in settings where the public sphere is severely constrained and where sharp distinctions are drawn between the private and public spheres.
- ⁸ According to the global report on tobacco control in 2015, the prevalence of smoking by adults in Kazakhstan was 46 per cent (men) and 4.5 per cent (women). Estimated alcohol consumption by those who consume alcohol is the highest in the WHO European Region, for both men (32 L/year) and women (18 L/year).
- ⁹ The methods included semi-structured individual interviews, tailored to types of participant, and focus group discussions also deploying semi-structured discussion guides. In all cases, participants were offered the option of full anonymity and informed consent was obtained.
- ¹⁰ These include the Sustainable Development Goals, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and, more recently, the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement. Domestically, the State Social Programme on Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men up to 2021 attempts to overcome institutional barriers to gender equality, while measures such as the repeal of a law preventing women from entering 458 'male' occupations in 2017 indicates progress on the legislative front.
- ¹¹ This is manifested at government level in a number of ways, including: a failure to complete administrative reforms at regional level; low levels of inter-agency collaboration and coordination; residual state financing for gender policy and thus dependence on international donors; and substandard statistical bases for gender equality monitoring.

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