



# Industrial Sexuality: Gender, Urbanization, and Social Transformation in Egypt

*Hanan Hammad*

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Millions of Egyptian men, women, and children first experienced industrial work, urban life, and the transition from peasant-based and handcraft cultures to factory organization and hierarchy in the years between the two world wars. Their struggles to live in new places, inhabit new customs, and establish and abide by new urban norms and moral and gender orders underlie the story of the making of modern urban life—a story that has not been previously told from the perspective of Egypt's working class.

Reconstructing the ordinary urban experiences of workers in al-Mahalla al-Kubra, home of the largest and most successful Egyptian textile factory, *Industrial Sexuality* investigates how the industrial urbanization of Egypt transformed masculine and feminine identities, sexualities, and public morality. Basing her account on archival sources that no researcher has previously used, Hanan Hammad describes how coercive industrial organization and hierarchy concentrated thousands of men, women, and children at work and at home under the authority of unfamiliar men, thus intensifying sexual harassment, child molestation, prostitution, and public exposure of private heterosexual and homosexual relationships. By juxtaposing these social experiences of daily life with national modernist discourses, Hammad demonstrates that ordinary industrial workers, handloom weavers, street vendors, lower-class landladies, and prostitutes—no less than the middle and upper classes—played a key role in shaping the Egyptian experience of modernity.

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