Sexual Harassment: Its Economic and Social Dimensions on the Streets of Cairo

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba

In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Joint Master of Arts

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Abstract

This thesis examined the conditions under which *taharrush* (sexual harassment) has become normalized in Cairo, allowing acts once deemed unethical by Egyptians to become a daily experience. Experiences of *taharrush* were explored through an ethnographic study of three neighborhoods in Cairo and 20 semi-structured interviews with women from diverse backgrounds and age groups. Through the literature review of key themes and a historical analysis of the Egyptian context, this research explored the rise in sexual harassment over time and under different presidential regimes. The cross-generational aspect of this research highlighted the prevalence of sexual harassment in the past three decades. Furthermore, through the participants' voices, numerous themes emerged explaining the increase of *taharrush*, such as: economic difficulties, decline in *akhle* (sense of community), and violence against women perpetrated by security officials. The interviews showed women's experiences of sexual harassment, the perceived causes behind the issue of harassment being trivialized and normalized, and ways in which women combat harassment and security issues within Cairo.

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my adviser Dr. Dean Peachey for his unlimited patience and guidance throughout this long process. I also thank Dr. Maureen Flaherty and Dr. Ceren Belge for their insightful experience, support and flexibility. I would also like to thank my family: Baba, Mama, Ena and Farah for their constant encouragement and love, for also supporting my educational travels that have led me around the world. A great thanks to Amo Somgea and Tant Nada for helping me connect with participants, taking me in as one of their own and support throughout my time in Cairo. Equally I thank my friends for their contributions to this thesis: Justine, Kris, Lakshman, Obasesam, Saad and Robin. Finally, I would like to deeply express my gratitude to all my participants for sharing their experiences and realities without them this thesis wouldn't be possible. I cannot express the appreciation I feel towards all of you thank you once again for all the support, patience and guidance you have provided me over the years.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the realm of Sexual Harassment

Introduction:

A 2013 study conducted by United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women) helped to publicize women's disheartening daily realities in Egypt. The study (El Deeb, 2013) reported that 99.3 percent of Egyptian women have experienced some form of sexual harassment, and 50 percent claimed that on a daily basis, they experienced harassment within public areas. In 2008, the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights (ECWM) (Cited in Sandels, 2008) conducted a survey on sexual harassment in Cairo that showed that 83 percent of Egyptian women and 98 percent of foreign women have experienced harassment.

This thesis examines the experiences of women over time in Cairo. This will be achieved through an ethnographic exploration of the author's experiences, and well as in-depth interviews with women from diverse backgrounds. The thesis concludes with a discussion about ways in which women are combating harassment in Cairo.

Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this study is to better understand why sexual harassment has increased in Cairo and why it has become normalized. This research argues that the increase of sexual harassment in Cairo can only be understood through multiple lenses. One lens is the increase in poverty, which in turn has created numerous justifications such as the "marriage crisis," decline in *akhle* (sense of community and connectedness)

and education. Other lenses are the militarization of women and the shift in gender dynamics.

This research will contribute to knowledge in two ways: by highlighting women's experiences in public space and contributing data on sexual harassment within public spaces internationally and more specifically in Cairo.

Sexual harassment has been a widespread problem for women over the past three decades in Cairo, however due to its normalization, women have been silenced in combating this fundamental limitation of their freedoms. Thus this research attempts to amplify women's voices and their experiences throughout their lifetimes and explore causes relating to the increase in and the normalization of harassment, specifically in a time of change within post-revolution Egypt.

Scholarship on sexual harassment started with a focus on academia and the workplace (Bowman, 1993; Roswarner, 2005). Since the millennium research has included sexual harassment in public areas. However, little research on sexual harassment exists in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), which is a gap in the literature that this research will attempt to fill. While a few organizations exist in Cairo to combat sexual harassment (such as UN Women, Harassmap and the Nadeem Centre), due to social taboos around topics of harassment and lack of funding, women's experiences and statistics regarding harassment are scarce. This research is unique in its cross-generational component that allows a diverse array of women, who have lived under different regimes to discuss their experiences of harassment throughout their lives.

 Dhillon, et al (2009) analyzed MENA societies in terms of three time periods: traditional life course, welfare life course, and post-welfare life course.

Before the 1950's in the traditional life course, a majority of citizens lived in rural areas and worked in agriculture with high poverty rates and low educational opportunities, especially for women. During this time period, essential passages, such as marriage and employment, were highly dependent on the community and family.

During the welfare life course from the 1950's until the early 1980s MENA states gained independence and a major influx of urbanization occurred. The new nationalist leaders provided several welfare programs to citizens that included education, protection, and employment opportunities. This created a drastic shift in which the community was no longer the provider of essential passages such as employment and marriage. The role was taken over by the state, as the state became the employer of a majority of citizens. However as MENA economies became stagnant, states were no longer able to provide the welfare programs its civilians had come to rely upon, which leads to the current time period, post-welfare life course.

The post-welfare life course has existed since the early 1980's. As states could no longer afford their government subsidies, states attempted to move towards a mixed economy that incorporated both neoliberal policies and state controlled sectors. States reduced or ended social welfare programs. Generations born during this time period struggled to achieve the lifestyle their families previously enjoyed, having neither

community, family nor government resources to rely on during life passages (Dhillion et al, 11-38).

The shifts described by Dhillon, et al. significantly affected the changing roles of women in by altering their employment and educational opportunities. A historical context will be summarized from 1952 until 2013. During this time a series of Egyptian presidents emphasized different economic and social policies that significantly shaped the roles and expectations of women in Egyptian society.

Gamal Abdel-Nasser (1952-1970):

The transition between the traditional life and the welfare state commenced with independence for Egypt (Dhillion et al, 2009). The early 1950's were an unstable time for Egypt with mounting frustration over the Arab-Israeli conflict, the British occupation, and the former king, King Farouk's inability to rule. Gamal Abdel-Nasser became the second Egyptian president, after Mohamed Naguib who ruled for 18 months. In 1952 a military coup led by Nasser made him president. Nasser remained president until he died of a heart attack in 1970. Nasser's political ideology revolved around Pan-Arabism, which emphasized the need for a collective Arab identity. Pan-Arabism is often related to Nasserism, which ideologically attempted to create a self-reliant Egypt to enhance political and economic growth within the state. Nasser envisioned Egypt as the leader of the Arab world; he endorsed an innovative Egypt that would lead the Middle East within the political, social, and economic arenas (Rameriez et al, 1997).

Nasser's Pan-Arabism reduced Egypt's reliance on its colonizers (British and France) for imports or economic assistance. He hoped that Egypt would lead the Arab

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world in taking control of its ownership and property, which had been exploited by its colonizers and the aristocrats of Egypt. To accomplish this, Nasser fostered close relations with communist Soviet Union.

In creating a self-sustaining Egypt, the Egyptian market was transformed to produce all possible goods within Egypt, which required the contributions of everyone, including women. These economic reforms generated millions of employment opportunities for Egyptians who had previously lived in rural Egypt. In doing so, the reforms shifted gender norms by promoting women to be active members of society. The enhancement of women's status in Egypt during Nasser's rule can be seen through his social programs, especially the educational reforms. Nasser's educational reform provided free education for all Egyptians, regardless of gender. In addition, Nasser assured all new graduates a government job upon completion of their degree.

These social reforms were very significant for women, as most families previously only educated their sons due to limited financial resources and employment was reserved primarily for men. Nasser understood that providing free education and employment opportunities to women would not increase female participation within the workforce unless gender norms changed. Thus, Nasser introduced regulations requiring corporations to increase female participation within the workforce. These included mandatory daycare for companies employing over one hundred women, providing fifty days paid maternity leave, and ensuring women would retain their jobs once they returned from leave. The impact of these reforms for women's participation in the

economic realm was momentous, as women entered the workforce for the first time without having to compromise their gendered responsibilities (Hatem, 1992, 234-39).

As a believer in secularism and economic development, Nasser was a strong advocate for gender equality. Under Nasser, women gained several rights and freedoms in a short period of time, including obtaining the right to vote in 1956, when Nasser amended the constitution in order to make all Egyptians equal under the law. Article 31 of the *Constitution of Egypt* stated: "All Egyptians are equal under the law in public rights and duties, without discrimination due to sex, origin, language, religion, or belief (quoted in McLarney, 2013)." Following the constitutional change, the first Egyptian female politicians entered parliament in 1957. Nasser was not only dedicated to enhancing the status of women politically but also wanted to encourage their increased participation in his regime.[1]

Nasser's ability to increase women's participation within the workforce may be related to his relations with Islamist organizations. Nasserism emphasized the separation of religion and the state – something unheard of in Egypt prior to Nasser's political reign. Religious organizations, especially the Muslim Brotherhood (Egypt's leading Islamist organization founded in 1928), had been crucial players within the political and social realms in a country that is 90 percent Muslim. The influence that the Brotherhood has on women's roles within public space has differed depending on the liberties granted through each president. As Nasser was a firm believer in secularism, he banned all religious organizations from the political sphere. When members of the Brotherhood

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[1] Leila Ahmed (2011) showed the link between positive constitutional reform and the enhancement of women's status in public space in Afghanistan in 1964.

attempted to undermine Nasser's authority by spreading religious and political propaganda, Nasser imprisoned them, before they could expand in size and ideologies (Zollner, 2009, 51-54). As a banned organization the Brotherhood had little influence over society, and women's roles in public space.

For the first time in Cairo's history, most women were no longer simply homemakers but had the opportunity to gain new social roles. However, the new freedoms and responsibilities women gained were short-lived with the death of Nasser and Nasserism in 1970.

Anwar El-Sadat (1970-1981):

After Nasser's death, Anwar El-Sadat, Nasser's vice president, was sworn in as Egypt's new president. Sadat's ideology was antithetical to that of Nasser. Sadat hastily moved away from Pan-Arabism to an *Infitah* which implies an 'open door' economic policy. Sadat's *Infitah* shifted from the strong connections to the communist Soviet Union and Egyptian self-sufficiency, by reaching out to the capitalist United States that would entail market liberalization and foreign investment. As Egypt shifted towards a capitalist mentality, society in Egypt changed drastically. Egyptians who had become dependent on the state witnessed a rapid increase in poverty and this paralleled a shift in ideology regarding women's roles in public space (El-Guindi, 1981).

The move towards capitalism has been popularly perceived as crucial to the Egyptian economy (Tibi, 2001). Many government jobs, the main source of employment under Nasser, were cut by Sadat to decrease civilians' reliance on the state, while decreasing state spending. Because foreign investors (Western European and American

companies) were hesitant to abide by Nasser's economic regulations, specifically those emplaced to protect female workers, Sadat removed state regulations to allow foreign investors into Egypt. Foreign investors argued that hiring Egyptian women was an unnecessary expense; if they hired Egyptian men, the companies would not have to pay for daycare and maternity leave. Despite the effects on female workers, Sadat still wanted an increase in investors and positive international recognition. The intent on opening up Egypt's economy meant that domestic issues became secondary. As economic policies shifted Islamist organizations were provided with the chance to gain political power (Tibi, 2001).

While Sadat's interests may not have focused on women, first lady, Jehan Sadat, ensured the perception of Egypt as a progressive and liberal state to capitalist allies. During the 1970s the role of first lady of Egypt was born. Ms. Sadat travelled with her husband on several presidential trips representing the image of the Arab woman. Ms. Sadat continues to be a strong advocate for women's rights in Egypt even today and is specifically praised for implementing women's rights to divorce, which became known as *Jehan's Law* in 1979. While *Jehan's Law* was not fully implemented, it attempted to create a legal responsibility for husbands to register divorce cases with the court. Legalizing divorce provided women the legal right to claim alimony and child support, over which women otherwise had no control. Prior to *Jehan's law* men could divorce their wives by stating, "I divorce you" three times as commonly practiced in Islam. This practice provided men the luxury of abandoning their families without any legal responsibility to their wives or children. *Jehan's law* provided women the opportunity to

gain rights within the family structure, and created independence for divorced women (Al-Ali, 2000). The importance of legislations created under Ms. Sadat cannot be undermined; *Jehan's Law* gave women power and voices within the private space, which had previously been neglected. Prior to *Jehan's Law* in cases of divorce women had to give up their homes and any financial support they received from their partner on behalf of herself and her children, often leaving these women financially and socially isolated. The law achieved a form of respect for women in their households and decreased violence against women in the household as it forced accountability of men (Hassan, 2000).

While Ms. Sadat was moving women's rights forwards, Sadat was focused on creating allies. As a pious man, Mr. Sadat felt that maintaining positive relationships with the Muslim Brotherhood was important for himself and the state, which led to his decision to free all the members of the Brotherhood who were imprisoned by Nasser. Since the majority of the Brothers were against Nasser's communist ideologies, Sadat felt that he could only benefit from another ally that would legitimize his regime through Islam. As the Brotherhood became a legal component of the public forum, their political influence became essential in reshaping women's roles in public space (Zollner, 2008).

As economic difficulties were on the rise in Egypt and the government reduced its welfare policies, the Brotherhood took the opportunity to win over the population with 'Islamic alternatives'. Through the popular slogan, "Islam is the solution" the Brotherhood provided advice and solutions to different economic, political, and social problems created by the Sadat regime by promoting an orthodox version of Islam. As

employment opportunities were limited for women by foreign investors, the Brotherhood was certain to remind women of their Islamic duties as mothers and homemakers.

The rise of Islam in Egypt is also connected to the high migrations to the Gulf states (Mule and Bathel, 1992, 329). As Egypt was facing its economic crisis, the rise in oil prices marked an economic boom in the Arab Gulf '*khaleej*' (specifically rentier states such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, UAE, and Iraq) creating millions of job opportunities for Middle Easterners. Many Egyptians migrated to the *khaleej* in hopes of finding a better life. Migrating to the *khaleej* resulted in a rise in the Egyptian middle class. Families who migrated to the *khaleej* made more money than the Egyptian government could offer, which meant that the new Egyptian middle class could afford good and services that the lower class could not. This influenced Egyptian women in two essential ways: style and duties (Macleod, 1992).

The first category, style, was brought over from the Gulf States to Egypt by Egyptian homemakers who travelled to the *khaleej* to be with their husbands, and wanted to show off their new status through their '*khaleeji* attire'. Women's fashion in the Gulf promotes modesty by covering women from unwanted attention. The two major articles of clothing are the *abbiya*, a long loose black dress that covers the entire body (which is sometimes worn tight to show off a woman's physique, or with light embodiment), and the black *hijab* (a scarf that covers the hair). Prior to the change in fashion women, the *hijab* was not popular in Egypt. As the new middle class showed off their new wealth through the *'khaleeji attire'* piety became a symbol of middle class wealth.

Second, as family income increased, the need for women to contribute financially decreased. Women were strongly discouraged and often prohibited from entering the workforce and doing daily activities in public spaces, such as grocery shopping or bargaining in the market, as it was affiliated with a lower class activity. A social stigma emerged around women leaving the house to do basic tasks that signaled lower financial privilege. These new restrictions limited women's interactions within public space. The newfound modes of fashion and the rise in class status were both driven by increased incomes and religious ideals. This resulted in a limitation on women's interactions in public space (Macleod, 1992, 533-537).

Sadat's aspirations for Egypt as an international hub for business appeared to be failing by the 1980s. In attempts to improve the status of Egypt, Sadat continued to focus on international relations in hopes of bettering economic regulations in order to mend the internal conflicts. However, increasing discontent and dissatisfaction with Sadat's rule contributed to his assassination in 1981 (Ansari, 1984).

Hosni Mubarak (1981-2011):

Hosni Mubarak became president in 1981 and would rule Egypt for the following thirty years. Mubarak inherited a nation with rising disparities that divided the nation and shaped the reforms he would later implement. Similarly to Sadat, Mubarak exhibited a capitalist ideological stance that led to stronger relations with the Western world. Egypt became the greatest recipient of US aid after Israel, receiving a sum of 1.3 billion US dollars, which provided the US with a crucial role in Egyptian politics (See OECD, 2010). As the United States became Egypt's strongest ally and employment issues in

Egypt were on the rise, Mubarak was compelled to enforce mandates and regulations that were neoliberal. Mubarak's regime undertook economic and political reforms that were forced on Egypt by the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that promised to enhance the status of Egypt but further crippled the Egyptian state (Roccu, 2013).

Mubarak maintained social welfare programs for the first two decades as president, until high employment, rising inequality and declining economic growth forced the removal of the highly costly welfare programs. In 2005 the WB and IMF removed Egypt's welfare programs whereby bread, lentils, rice, washing power and other basic necessities were no longer subsidized in accordance to a neoliberal policy. According to the World Food Program the abolition of the welfare state resulted in Egypt's malnutrition rate rising to 19.8 percent from a low of 1 percent in one year (See UN WFP, 2013). As welfare programs were revoked, the cost of living rose, while employment remained scarce and incomes remained stagnant. Many neo-liberal economic policies were imposed by the Mubarak regime during this period, which resulted in high frustration within the nation. The effects of the economic ratifications within the regime have been harmful to the Egyptian population, both men and women, which will be explored in the current framework.

Neoliberal reforms upheld by Mubarak were not limited to economic reforms but included several political reforms such as women's rights and democracy. Under the Mubarak regime several constitutional reforms took place such as the ratification of the *Egyptian Charter of Human Rights and Freedom* that included freedom of expression and

political participation for women. In 1981 Egypt became the first Arab country to ratify The Convention Against All Form of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), two year after its adoption by the UN. However some reservations were made by Egypt, for example, a new divorce law passed in 2000 enabled women to divorce their husbands unilaterally. Egypt withdrew its reservation on Article 9(2) granting women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children. The reservation was originally made to prevent "a child's acquisition of two nationalities where his parents are of different nationalities, since this may be prejudicial to his future," which was ratified in 2008. According to Egypt's third periodic report on CEDAW, the country's legal texts show significant development in terms of raising gender awareness. As the duration of Mubarak's regime progressed, Mubarak continued to ratify and promote international treaties relating to women's rights, while little change occurred on the ground (Engle, 2006).

The link between democracy and development is strongly connected to economic and national development (Gelinas,1998). Egypt's need to democratize became highly noticeable with the new turn of the century and the severe pressure on Mubarak to democratize by the United States, IMF and the WB. In response the Mubarak regime held Egypt's first elections in 2005. While the legitimacy of Egyptian democracy is questionable, the 'democratization' of Egyptian politics forced the regime to tolerate groups that had otherwise been banned, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. For the first time in Egyptian history the Brotherhood was allowed to compete for individual positions within the Egyptian council. During the 2005 elections they won 88 seats out of the 454

seats in parliament (Shehata and Statcher,2006). Although the number of seats did not provide them the power to make any constitutional changes, members of the Brotherhood were recognized as members of parliament.

As Egypt became a democracy the Brotherhood could spread their messages with fewer official restrictions. This provided the Brotherhood with an essential opportunity to assist the community and partake within Egyptian politics without being condemned as an extreme terrorist organization (Zollner, 2009, 48). The political transformation allowed the Brotherhood to emphasize their democratic intentions. Through democracy the Brotherhood aimed to emplace Islam, as "the central goals of an Islamic state are to enhance justice and oppose tyranny. At this moment in history, democratic institutions are the best means for achieving these goals and, thus, democracy 'is the form of government that is closest to Islam (found in Rutherford, 2006).'' Post 2005 elections the Brotherhood gained legitimacy and support from Egyptians and the international community (Zollner, 2009, 52).

For the rest of Mubarak's term, he continued to introduce neoliberal policies that reduced the quality of life in Egypt, which ultimately ended his career, and made him the first president in Egyptian history to be forcefully removed. The rising frustration over economic, political, and social freedoms led to the Egyptian revolution in 2011. Citizens protested from January 25th until February 11th, 2011 in Tahrir Square until Mubarak officially stepped down (Soueif, 2011), and shortly afterwards he was arrested on charges of corruption. Currently, Mubarak is in the military hospital in Maadi suffering from several medical conditions and attending his legal hearings.

Mohamed Morsi (2012-2013):

In 2012 Egypt had its first post-revolution election. The Muslim Brotherhood, led by Mohamed Morsi became Egypt's new leading party with 51.7 percent of votes. In less than one year of the Brotherhood's rule, Egypt remained politically and economically unstable, while women's rights suffered drastically. It would be difficult and unfair to critique the Brotherhood's economic or political performance in under a year, as the economic and political situation in Egypt suffered significantly during the revolution, however their choice to decline the status of women was highly criticized. According to the Thomson Reuters Foundation survey "discriminatory laws … contributed to Egypt's place at the bottom of a ranking of 22 Arab states," which is linked to proposed laws under Morsi in 2012. In 2013, the National Council for Women (NCW) issued a statement denouncing the Muslim Brotherhood's "attempts to marginalize and exclude women from the political scene," and even described the yearlong reign under the Muslim Brotherhood ruled as the "worst and most cruel [year] for Egyptian women" (Boros, 2013).

As the Brotherhood ruled Egypt, their inability to govern effectively was clear and raised high levels of frustration within the Egyptian population. Morsi attempted to draft several laws with high Islamist agendas, which led to another revolution by the population in June of 2013. Millions of Egyptians once again gathered to Tahrir Square to protest and demand the removal of the Brotherhood, which resulted in severe violence for seven months, until Morsi and all members of the Brotherhood were removed, by the high demand of the population with the assistance of the military. Since the removal of

Morsi, Egypt had been run by Adly Mansour and the military (Kirkpatrick, 2013), until the 2014 elections in which Abdel-Fattah El Sisi, the former Minister of Defense and Military Production, was elected with a sweeping 96.1 percent of votes (Kingsley, 2014). While El Sisi's government is attempting to rebuild the crippled state of Egypt, after three years of political instability Egypt is slowly politically and socially stabilizing. While the future state of Egypt remains unknown, El-Sisi's regime claims they will create a better Egypt for the future.

Through Egypt's historical background it is clear that the numerous issues faced by Egyptian women have increased as the political and economic situation within Egypt have worsened with time. These limitations include: economic, political and social reforms. Thus in understanding the current situation of sexual harassment assessing the historical background through the different presidents, and the revolution, will allow coherent arguments to come forth through the ethnographic research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction:

This chapter discusses academic theories on six areas relevant to sexual harassment in Egypt:

1. **Defining Sexual Harassment:** provides a deeper understanding of what is sexual harassment and the different forms and definitions that exist at the international level;

2. **Feminist Conflict Perspectives:** provides a gendered lens from peace theories to provide clarity and understanding of sexual harassment as a larger part of violence against women, while highlighting cultural tensions;

3. **Sexual Harassment and Economics:** assesses women's economic position and participation in public space in relationship to their experiences of sexual harassment;

4. **Gender and the Public / Private Divide:** deconstructs perceptions of the private/ public divide and women's roles and the impact on sexual harassment;

5. **Social Norms:** posits acceptable interactions within public spaces and reasons men harass women;

6. **Security Forces and Sexual Harassment:** investigates the role security forces and legal authority hold in undermining women's rights through structural violence.

Defining Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment is a form of violence against women that occurs in every society. The term sexual harassment according to Afroditi Pina et al,(2009, 127) emerged in the 1970s in the United States and first appeared as a legal concept in 1976. In American law at the time, sexual harassment was interpreted as a problem that occurred within the workplace. Since then, sexual harassment laws have spread internationally with the ultimate goal to end sexual harassment.

The ambiguity and complexity of sexual harassment is apparent in its definition as no uniformity exists in labeling what activities are considered sexual harassment. Dale Spenders (1985) suggests the power of naming affects the credibility of issues depending on the language based on neutral bias of the name. For instance sexual harassment is referred to as eve-teasing in India, which uses a poetic term to make it sound like a game; Mexican Spanish uses *propoios* instilling the ideas of proper or suitable; German uses *anmache* which is nor positive or negative just refers to as street remark; and Syrian Arabic uses *taltish,* meaning verbal behavior. Scholars, on the other hand, often use more severe terms such as sexual harassment (Wise and Stanley, 1987), street harassment (Gardner, 1980; Dang, 1986; Kramaloe, 1986; Packer, 1986), or sexual terrorism (Sheffield, 1987; Kissling 1991). The term used to define sexual harassment provides credibility and a form of empowerment to women in expressing their experiences.

UN Women defines harassment as:

"Any improper behavior by a person that is directed at, and is offensive to another individual and which the person knew or ought reasonably to have known would be offensive. It comprises objectionable or unacceptable conduct that demeans, belittles or causes personal humiliation or embarrassment to an individual. Mildly offensive

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comments or behavior can rise to the level of harassment if they are repeated; a single incident can be considered harassment if it is so severe that it has a lasting negative impact on the individual(s) concerned. (UN STAFF *Harassment Definition,* 2015)"

However, the UN definition provided an ambiguous understanding to women's experiences of sexual harassment, which undermines the complexity of sexual harassment. This research will focus on Cynthia Bowman's definition of sexual harassment. Bowman's interpretation of sexual harassment is specific while also focusing on the gendered nature of sexual harassment:

"(1) The targets of sexual harassment are female; (2) the harassers are male; (3) unacquainted with their targets, (4) the encounter is face to face; (5) the forum is a public one, such as a street, sidewalk, bus, bus station, taxi or other place to which the public generally has access; (6) the context of the speech if any, is not intended as public discourse. Rather, the remarks are aimed at the individual (although the harasser may intend that they be overheard by comrades or passer-by), and they are objectively degrading, objectifying, humiliating, and frequently threatening in nature (1993, 535)."

As the two definitions suggest, defining sexual harassment is complex due to its multiple layers. Schultz (1998) proposes that in order to properly understand sexual harassment we must understand the purpose of the observed action by differentiating sexual harassment and sexual coercion. Sexual harassment works with the purpose of undermining and degrading the victim's self-confidence to enforce gender expectations whereas sexual coercion expects sexual factors.

Sexual Harassment in the Global Context:

Sexual harassment is an issue that women across the world experience. UN Women reported that 40-50 percent of women living within the European Union experience sexual harassment in the workplace, 83 percent of American schoolgirls in

grade 8-11 face sexual harassment in school, and in 2010 66 percent of women

experienced sexual harassment at least 2-5 times each day in New Delhi (UN Staff, *Facts*

and Figures on ending violence against women). Dunckel-Graglia (2015) reported that

nine out of ten women are sexually assaulted in the public transport system in Mexico

City.

Furthermore, Tabasum (2012) found that fear of sexual harassment in public

spaces has the largest negative impact on women's mobility in Afghanistan. Finally, 55

percent of American women described themselves as afraid to walk alone at night in their

own neighborhood (Day, 2001).   These statistics exemplify the international reality of

sexual harassment.

Sexual Harassment within the Middle East and North Africa:

Just as in other global regions, the MENA region also suffers from high rates of

sexual harassment and violence against women. Mona Abu-Hanafi (2009) provided a

brief summary on sexual harassment across the Arab world through the findings of

women's right and UN organizations. Her research found that 80 percent of Arab women

have been subjected to sexual harassment at some point in their lives, 90 percent of

women in Yemen have experienced sexual harassment either in the workplace or public

spaces, 27 percent of Algerian women experience harassment by their professors at the

university level and 23 percent of children in Saudi Arabia, and 33 percent of women in

Lebanon experienced harassment.

Lahsaeizadeh and Yousenfinejad (2012) conducted a study with 369 students at

Shiraz University to assess women's exposure to sexual harassment in Iran. The authors'

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findings showed that 97 percent of participants experienced sexual harassment at some point in their lives. Ninety-one percent of participants reported experiencing sexual harassment the most in crowded streets, followed by 82 percent in parks, 73 percent in taxis, and 70 percent in un-crowded alleyways. Participants felt that sexual harassment was most likely to occur in areas that offer little protection either due to isolation or overpopulation, and thus tried to avoid those areas. While participants tried to avoid certain areas to reduce their chances of being harassed, 75 percent suggested that regardless of time, the chances remained equal to being harassed. Majority of participants felt that regardless of their attire or make-up they could get harassed. If they wore makeup or dressed more fashionably their chances increased, but this did not limit their personal choice in attire, in which only 19 percent claimed to not dress up or wear makeup.

Lahsaeizadeh and Yousenfinejad (2012) suggest that research on sexual harassment in Iran is limited under the pretenses of Iran being an Islamic state with Islamic men, which implies that men do not harass women, and women who are harassed are 'asking for it'. Their research resonates with the other limited research on this topic in the MENA region, which primarily focuses on Morocco and Egypt.

The Global Girl Media released a documentary called *Breaking the Silence: Moroccans speak out against Sexual Harassment* (2013) in which Moroccan's discuss the forms of sexual harassment they face on a daily basis. All of the participants in the documentary regardless of gender claimed issues of harassment are deeply rooted within Moroccan culture. Participants' stories varied from being followed home, to being

catcalled, to being physically assaulted, or to being stabbed by a harasser for rejecting them. All the women in the documentary regardless of age, socio-economic background, or religion claimed to experience sexual harassment equally.

When asked why harassment exists in Morocco participants suggested because harassment is not perceived as a form of violence but as repercussions to women misbehaving. Said Noiru, a Moroccan lawyer, discusses the difficulties of ending sexual harassment from a legal perspective. Noiru suggests that Moroccan law does not protect women in the streets. As Moroccan law is proof based, the law works in a way that forces women to prove that they were harassed. Furthermore, even if a woman could prove she was harassed police officials would not take her complaint seriously.

Legislation in the MENA region essentially avoids issues of violence against women because they are understood to be private manners between family members or because they exist within a patriarchal system. Warrick (2005) examined Jordanian legislation regarding violence against women, specifically 'honor killings' in response to rape and premarital sex. Through a historical overview, Warrick examined the social and religious implications of women's sexual honor and innocence, and its role in the legal sectors. The concept of honor killing is a family or legal partner's legal right to kill their daughter or wife for betraying her personal and family's honor. These incidents may occur willingly or as a consequence of rape. Jordanian legislation justifies honor killings through the use of *sharia law* in which a woman's honor is of essence to womanhood and Islam. As honor killings are legalized the majority of individuals within that society believe that it is their duty to judge women's innocence. Warrick (2005) suggested that as

a result of honor killings Jordanian women are highly unlikely to report any form of gendered violence to the police, family members, or friends out of fear that their innocence is questioned that may result in honor killing.

In Morocco, Article 490 of the penal code prohibits sexual activity outside of marriage. To protect women against incidents of rape Article 475 was introduced. This article absolves a rape crime if the perpetrator agrees to marry his victim; the article was created as an alternative to honor killing. Article 475 suggested that by getting married the woman is being protected. Through marriage the woman is able to maintain her pride and familial dignity (Katz, 2014). Skalli (2012) argued the perception of innocence and virginity is harmful to Moroccan women's rights and freedoms as they hinder women's ability to control their futures. Skalli uses the example of Amina Filali to show the dangers of Article 475. Filali was a Moroccan girl who was raped at fifteen and forced to marry her rapist although she objected. The rapist continued to rape, abuse and starve her throughout her marriage until she committed suicide at sixteen in 2012. Skalli (2012) emphasizes that incidents such as Filali's are not uncommon within Morocco; however are not discussed publically due to familial and individual shame. Filali's death sparked international and national controversy as a result of which Article 475 was revoked forcing all rapists to prosecution. The harms in laws such as Article 475 and honor killings is that they punish women for actions inflicted onto them by men instead of prosecuting actions of gender based violence. Unfortunately, even if Article 475 has been removed there is no

guarantee that rural communities will not force marriage or honor killings onto women who reject marriage.

Issues of sexual harassment in the MENA region, as in the rest of the world, are complex. Legislation and social norms within the MENA region often blame and silence women and simultaneously perpetuate a system of abuse and gendered violence.

Post Arab Spring MENA and Violence Against Women:

When the Arab Spring swept over the MENA region over four years ago, women were among the first to suffer for partaking in an influential participatory role in the uprisings and especially during the political transitional period that succeeded the Arab Spring. According to UN Women (Shalaby, 2013), political transitions do not always lead to democracy and peace and may destroy key gains in the quest for gender equality. The Arab Spring, which was perceived and welcomed, as a new era of liberation and empowerment for women, did not deliver on this promise.

The status of women within the nations that led the Arab Spring deteriorated drastically after 2011. The Thomson Reuters Foundation (Bayoumy, 2013) published a poll in 2013 ranking Egypt as the worst Arab state for women, coming in last at 22nd place, with Yemen, Libya and Tunisia, coming in 18th, 9th, and 6th places respectively. The poll illustrated how women in the Arab Spring fell victim to increased violence whether it be rape, sexual harassment or detainment to stop protestors. The poll also demonstrated how Syria's civil war had "a devastating impact on women at home and in refugee camps across borders, where they are vulnerable to trafficking, forced and child

marriage and sexual violence". In Libya, the physical abuse of women has been on the rise after 2011; post Muammar Gaddafi women's legal rights are scarce. Johansson-Nogués also claimed that in Egypt and Tunisia "security forces had reached for sexual violence to deter women from protesting, [and] … aggression towards women in Libya was used, as too often in conflicts, to humiliate the male enemy and to compromise his male honour" (2014, 400).

The Arab Spring was a difficult period for women to cope with issues of gender-based violence. In Egypt and Tunisia, as the political situation slowly stabilizes and new governments are elected women are able to address issues of gender based violence. Whereas in Syria and Libya, because political violence continues to increase, women's rights continue to decrease without any signs of hope. Women's rights are one of the last issues addressed in war torn regions because basic survival and national stability are projected as the ultimate goals to sustainable peace (Johansson-Nogués , 2014).

Taharrush in Egypt post-revolution:

Although sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women existed prior to 2011, with the instability within the nation, these problems appear to have escalated. Nazra, a women's organization in Cairo, claims that acts of violence against women "have not only persevered but are flourishing (2012)." When ENCW interviewed 13,500 women across Egypt to express the most pressing issue facing them in post revolution Egypt "85 percent of Egyptian women agree sexual harassment is the most urgent problem facing women and girls in transitional Egypt, despite the prevailing political and social instability in the country (Shalaby, 2013, 1). "

As women protestors took the streets of Egypt protesting and demanding a better life in Egypt, the government used numerous degrading techniques in hopes of deterring women from protesting against the regime. Nazra states as the Egyptian population was "faced with a female populace that refuses to 'go home', the security forces have been implementing new ways of 'scaring them home'….arbitrary detention, beatings, attempted choking, and sexual assault and harassment, including attempts to strip women, threats of rape, insults of a sexual nature, and other kinds of degrading and inhumane treatment. (2012)"

Incidents of government brutality within Tahrir Square became notorious; such as the picture of the *hijabee* protester who was stripped to her bra by military soldiers while being kicked in Tahrir Square (Longbottom, 2011). Another example is Samira Ibrahim (cited in Philptchenko, 2012) who was partaking in a sit-in protest in Tahrir Square when police detained her and the other female protesters. While detained, the women were exposed to electric shocks, beaten by the officers for many hours, and were all forced to take a virginity test.

As a response to the failure of the Egyptian authorities to condemn or investigate several well-publicized incidents of sexual assault by private actors, several international organizations started condemning the government for failing to apply law and order and to importantly protect its citizens For instance, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, said that "the fact that sexual violence is permitted to occur with apparent impunity in a public square, and that the authorities have failed to prevent these attacks or to bring more than a single prosecution against the hundreds of men

involved in these vicious attacks" (Arrott, 2013).

Feminist Conflict Perspectives:

In order to grasp sexual harassment as a larger form of violence against women, it is important to understand the gendered struggles, battles and victories of women through feminism. This study heavily relied on the participants' gendered lenses (examines gender and power), which often emphasized feminism as a part of an Egyptian woman's identity. Egyptian women articulate a form of feminism that includes their religious beliefs and cultural practices that works within their lifestyles and not as an ideology imposed by Western women. Thus this section will incorporate the dualist ideologies of feminist conflict perspectives to assess gender boundaries while acknowledging Middle Eastern feminism to remain true to the participants' identities.

Feminist conflict perspectives analyze interactions between gender and power through a gendered lens (Porter, 2007). Cynthia Enloe (1989) emphasized that feminist conflict perspectives are important in including women's voices that are otherwise oppressed and marginalized. However, the problem emerges when the perception of feminism is limited to women's struggles and empowerment through patriarchy (Russo, 2006). Enhancing the status of women by simply acknowledging gender relations is harmful as it neglects the multiple lenses and identities of women. Gender is one of many important lenses that explain feminist conflict perspectives. Women's multiple identities affect their experiences and reality (Engle, 2006; Sylvester, 2002). Other lenses that provide a holistic perspective include: demographics, disability, politics, class and culture (Atashi 2015; Flaherty, 2015).

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While feminism attempts to overcome polarities, numerous dichotomies exist within feminism. Specifically in cultural feminism tensions between the Western feminist and the 'Third World Woman' clash as two separate ideologies because of Western feminism's notion of leading and advancing the 'developing world' (Mohanty, 1991). Through her work in Ukraine, Flaherty (2012) found that the Western style of feminism is not the sole mechanism for understanding women's narratives, which is why feminism must be understood through local mechanisms. Atashi (2015) emphasized the harms of cultural feminist tensions in post Taliban Afghanistan. Her research found that change becomes rejected as 'Western values'.

Chandra Mohanty (1991) proposes that feminism need to be considered from a transnational perspective so as not to undermine the 'Third World Woman'. This means valuing and sympathizing with cultural and religious traditions that are often viewed as oppressive by Western feminists. Numerous other scholars have contributed to Mohanty's conceptualization of transnational feminism such as Mackinnon (2006) and Riles (2002). This demonstrates that feminism has a strong background in each society and needs to be understood within each specific context to avoid objectifying and oppressing women from the 'Third World'. Scholars such as Lila Abu-Lughod (1993, xx) and Saba Mahmood (2005) argue that transnational feminism or the notion of 'Third World Woman' alone is not enough in understanding the Middle Eastern women. Middle Eastern women need to be understood through a Middle Eastern lens that takes into account the unique culture and religion that is not universal to all 'Third World Women'.

The need for Middle Eastern scholars to be the leaders on Middle Eastern women has become especially important since September 11. Post 9/11 and specifically after the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan Middle Eastern and Muslim women are often put in positions where they are not understood, but rather the imagination of irrationalism, anger and hatred within the 'Arab streets' (Bayat, 2003). The Middle East has become perceived as a singular violent and oppressive region, undermining the diversity within each country and the religious differences.

Religion in the MENA region has constantly created a form of anxiety for feminists and scholars: "women's active support for socio-religious movements that sustain principles of female subordination poses a dilemma for feminist analysts (Mahmood, 2005, 5)". Hirschkind and Mahmood (2002) emphasizes that scholars are unable to understand Islam as a religion of liberation and freedom for Muslim women, not only a religion of oppression. Concurrently, Homa Hoodfar and Anissa Helie (2012) note that the perception of the Middle East is often connected to Islam, however not all women within the Middle East are Muslim nor do all Muslim women identity with the identity affiliated with Islam. Such a perception limits the understanding of the Middle Eastern woman and her numerous roles.

Furthermore, the academic Orientalism (Said, 1978) that exotifies, sexualizes, and silences the Middle Eastern women and projects Middle Eastern men as barbaric can be overcome by heeding Middle Eastern scholars who critique and comment on the Middle East from a place of knowledge about and acceptance of the diversity of culture, religion and values in the region (for further information see: Hatem, 2011; El-Tahawy, 2015;

Amin 1890 (in Ahmed, 1992); El- Shaarawi, 1920 (in Badran, 1995)). Recognizing and crediting the extensive literature on Middle Eastern feminism provides a grasp and credit to feminism within the context. As Janice Boddy (1989) noted, this development breaks away from the judgments of agencies of empowerment as oppression.

Sexual Harassment and Economics:

The effect of women's socio-economic disposition and the link to sexual harassment is one of the prominent arguments by sexual harassment experts. Scholars (Viswanath and Mehrotra 2007, Neupane and Chesney-Lind 2014) suggest that women's economic disposition is the largest determinant of sexual harassment; specifically, women from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more prone to sexual harassment due to their inability to negotiate spaces whereas women from higher and middle socio-economic backgrounds can avoid undesirable spaces. This section will explore women's experiences of sexual harassment through the macro level issue of national urban planning and the micro moments of each woman's ability to negotiate spaces based on her financial ability. Lastly, this section will examine men's socio-economic positions and the effects thereof on sexual harassment.

To resolve issues of overpopulation and lack of housing, governments have planned cities to segregate societies based on incomes and levels of crimes. Such segregations occur by enforcing or expanding slums, government housing, urban neighborhoods, and gated communities. Teresa Caldeira's (2009, 319) study of urban development in Sao Paulo, Brazil found that "the ability [of more privileged inhabitants] to impose their own code of behavior including rules of deference onto the city," results

in segregated communities that can limit unwanted attention. Furthermore, Calderia (2000) suggests that higher perceptions of crimes rates that accompany social inequalities legitimize land segregation in urban development. This can be seen in Egypt, when the Mubarak government focused on maintaining the comfort and privilege of the upper class communities by continuing to build numerous gated communities outside of Cairo for thirty years to house 800,000 people. Meanwhile 11 million Egyptians live in informal shanty towns (such as gravesites and dump mountains) unrecognized by the state where basic necessities such as schools, health care services, and police are not provided (Sims 2011; Blaydes & Belge, 2014). Dorman (2009) claimed that the Egyptian government allows and encourages the creation of shantytowns to avoid the demand for government housing. Diane Singerman and Paul Amar (2006) further this argument by suggesting that social inequalities materialize in urban landscape in the form of spatial and socio-cultural segregation in Cairo. For example, gated communities are primarily built around desert areas in Cairo, which are difficult to commute to via public transport.

Increased segregation results in condensed crime rates and poverty within certain neighborhoods. Viswanath and Mehrotra (2007) noted that the consequences of urbanization and segregations of cities have numerous negative consequences on the average woman's safety in Delhi, India. Their research, which included the opinions of 500 women, finds that governments most often neglect shantytowns and lower income neighborhoods, which increases the level of fear of sexual harassment in women. Daily obstacles that women felt may increase their chances of being harassed were: lack of street lights, unpaved roads, unreliable public transport, and lack of police and security

forces. Furthermore, Nilay Yavuz and Eric Welch (2010) conducted a study in Chicago

to understand the anxiety of women within lower economic communities while using

public transport. Their study found that the more crime became normalized, the less

likely women wanted to be out within public spaces. Unfortunately, they had no

alternative. Women interviewed in the Chicago study suggested they would be more

comfortable if governments improved facilities available to them: by making the trains

more aesthetically appealing (instead of being ruined, rusted and vandalized); or if

security monitored train services more often to reduce sexual harassment within the train

stations (Yavuz and Welch 2010, 2499).

According to Michel De Certeau (1984) cities are strategically spatially

organized by the powerful especially those with financial privilege and affluence. De

Certeau's theory suggested that those powerful members of society have the ability to

negotiate the urban planning of city as desired. The organization of cities often limits the

interactions of the undesired members of society, the lower classes, and the prestigious

and affluent members. Anouk De Koning (2009) conducted an ethnographic study of

women from higher socio-economic backgrounds in Cairo to understand their daily

negotiations within public spaces. The women De Koning observed all lived highly

mobile and rather public lifestyles. This was tied to the perception of them as "outsiders,"

which implies the capability to create exclusive new spaces that exclude the cultural

context (e.g. piety or harassment). For instance, individuals from higher socio-economic

backgrounds could go to "contemporary" style coffee shops, such as Starbucks and

Costa. In such spaces societal norms of gender interactions are exempt, women and men

can gather together for long periods of time, without being judged as immoral woman. Such new spaces have become exclusive because they only serve the higher and middle class allowing them to create new social norms while excluding those who cannot conform.

Furthermore, women from higher socio-economic backgrounds, had the ability to choose between the numerous means of transport in Cairo, which implies they can limit their proximity with unknown civilians and avoid undesirable areas such as shantytowns out of fear of harassment. Participants chose to spend more money (2 'EP' Egyptian Pounds) using an air conditioned bus that is less crowded to reduce their chances of sexual harassment. On the other hand, women from lower socio-economic backgrounds did not have such a financial luxury and thus took the overcrowded bus with no air conditioning (1 EP). Economic privilege provides women with higher socio-economic backgrounds the ability to negotiate their interactions within public spaces.

Another component of sexual harassment is the enforcement and maintenance of power. Thompson (1994) highlighted that men that are most alienated by society are more likely to harass women. They do not do it for pleasure gained from harassing a woman or to de-legitimize women as users of the space but as a form of expressing their perception of personal injustice. Men from lower socio-economic backgrounds and men neglected by society, such as homeless men, are more likely to harass women who are well-dressed, which can be a marker of middle or upper class status. The act does not occur because of the woman's beauty or any other attribute specific to her body or sex; it happens because she symbolizes oppression and societal inequality. Nearly a decade

later, Day (2001) found that men that do not conform into society harass women as a means to display his manliness, force her and those around her to notice his existence, and create the reality that he too can harm her if he desires.

Furthermore, Morales Waugh claimed issues of sexual harassment in the United States are understood as a 'white middle-class problem' (2010, 2). Women of color (primarily Hispanic and African American) experiences of sexual violence are neglected. Day (2001) found that women of color are fearful of Caucasian men due to historical oppression. Deidre Davis (1994) examined issues of sexual harassment of African American women by Caucasian men through "Jezebel imagines". "Jezebel images" portray African Americans as ignorant, primitive, angry and sexual barbaric objects created for their masters' desires. Davis stated that the abuse and sexualization of African American women through the use of "Jezebel imagines," is a modern incarnation of oppression of African American women. This form of oppression creates and replaces historical power dynamics between slave and master, allows the Caucasian man to maintain his financial superiority while suppressing the African American woman into sexual relations, and allows for the fetishization, which normalizes harassment as a right of power (also in Pastore and Maguire, 2000).

Men's economic position is equally important in assessing the connection between economic background and sexual harassment. Mitisutoshi Hurii and Adam Burgess (2012) examined sexual harassment within public transport in Japan. They suggest that the increase in *Chickan* (the Japanese term for sexual harassment) is directly linked to the economic and political shifts in Japan that destabilized the former

patriarchal economic situation by increasing employment for women while undermining the position of men within Japanese society. Out of the 155 women interviewed, nearly all participants felt that *chickan* is most likely be committed by the "salarymen," who are men between the ages of 30-40 and most likely to be white-collar workers who display qualities of loyalty and dedication or traditional Japanese values. Hurii and Burgess (2012) claim the high rise in *chikan* by the "salarymen" is related to the "salarymen's" attempt to maintain the status quo against those who threaten the idea of the Japanese hegemonic state. This generally means women who are employed and educated because they are shifting the traditional roles and replacing men within the workforce.

In Egypt, similar to Japan, men's dissatisfaction with their economic positions is linked to the increase in *taharrush* as seen through the 'marriage crisis'. The marriage crisis hypothesis claims that issues such as lack of housing, unemployment, and the financial inability to support a family are forcing youth to delay marriage. In a predominantly Islamic society, premarital sex is prohibited and illegal. Thus, as the marriage age keeps increasing, young men become sexually frustrated. Concurrently, because they cannot afford to go to coffee shops they gather in the streets and take out their sexual aggression on the young women on the streets. The young men argue this is their only opportunity to explore their sexuality in a state where they are limited from everything (Krajeski, 2011). However, Hanan Kholoussy (2010) argues that the term marriage crisis is not a new phenomenon that Egyptians are faced with. For Kholoussy, the supposed marriage crisis has existed since the colonization of Egypt. During colonization, the British and French along with the Egyptian government, limited

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freedom of speech relating to the poor living conditions within Egypt to reduce potential uprisings of discontent. As a response, journalists fabricated the term 'marriage crisis' as a means to discuss the economic conditions of Egypt in the news media. The term marriage crisis allowed journalists to publish about the political and economic disparities within the state of Egypt and not threaten the state directly by framing their stories about the disparities that were hindering Egyptians from getting married. A similar study by Kholoussy (2010) shows that the percentage of Egyptians getting married has not declined, but Egyptians are indeed getting married later in life. This is linked to the increase of education and rise of marriage age to eighteen. Unfortunately, discussion of this "marriage crisis" is a smokescreen for the deteriorating economic state in Egypt. The average Egyptian comprehends and justifies their declining economic conditions through the marriage crisis smokescreen while neglecting the primary conflict, which is government neglect of economic tensions within society.

The connection between economics and sexual harassment explains the difficulties and frustrations women face based on their location, ability to make financial decisions, and men's reactions to financial burdens. It simultaneously explains why Egyptian women would experience an increase in sexual harassment as government jobs have decreased within the past few decades and why women avoid certain places. However the economic component alone does not explain why nearly every woman will experience sexual harassment at some point or why sexual harassment is normalized by society and not discussed. Scholars such as Moralies Waugh (2010), Bowman (1993) and Anderson and Collins (2004) emphasize that sexual harassment occurs to all women

regardless of socio-economic background and that harassment is normalized through the macro institutions within society and gendering of spaces. Therefore, the following sections will examine issues of sexual harassment and the public and private divide.

Sexual Harassment and the Public/Private Divide:

The disconnect between women's roles between public and private space is perceived as a leading cause of violence against women in the public areas. Within the liberal perception exist two distinct physical spaces for human interactions: the public and private. Private space is projected as the sphere outside of government regulation; it is widely understood as the home or where matters within families occur. On the other hand, the government highly regulates the public arena as a form of protection and control over the high level of human activity that take place within designated spaces open for use by all members of society (Pongrace, 2007). Furthemore, Holland et al (2007, ix) suggested that, "public spaces allow people to meet on ostensibly neutral ground in planned and unplanned ways, to interact with others within the context of the whole community."

The polarities between public and private as separate entities and the effects on violence against women is essential to understand sexual harassment. Jessica Senehi and Sean Byrne (2012, 82) noted that the private/public divide eliminates the monolithic reality of violence against women within both spaces and the state's role in intervention. Through the notion of private is a disengaged binary from the public we neglect the consequences of women's roles in the household and the state's' role in controlling and

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confronting abuse learnt within the private sphere. Elena Embrosetti, et al (2013) suggest that gender based violence often starts in households through learned behavior regarding the role of women, expectations of women, and the ability to abuse women as a form of punishment for misbehaving or not performing in tasks expected of mothers and daughters.

Furthermore, Bowman (1993, 517) states that sexual harassment accomplishes "an informal ghettoization of women- a ghettoization to the private sphere of hearth and home." Katherine Mackinnon (1989, 35) claims that dichotomies, specifically private versus public, reinforce power dynamics specifically by enforcing gender-based violence that limit women's freedom to overcome hierarchy. Within the private sphere, often referred to as the home, men take on the roles of fathers and sons, which are perceived and expected to be the heads of the family and dominate and rule women, while women play the roles of mothers and daughters, which are oppressed and relegated to the bottom of the hierarchical ladder. These dichotomies, according to Mackinnon, translate into the public space through their psychological effects and the norms of women's roles within the household that transpire into women's roles within public spaces (1993). Mackinnon emphasizes that there is no separation between the two spaces; individuals do not leave the private sphere forgetting the norms and values and attain new ones in the public sphere. Thus, as Don Mitchell (1995, 116) noted, public spaces are "never simply places of free, unmediated interactions, however; they were just as often places of exclusion."

Sexual harassment acts as a form of social control that limit women's ability to participate within public space. Mary Bularzik (1978) states the historical roots of

harassment are a form of expression of contempt and hostility by men towards any woman who ventures out of the socially prescribed female sphere (e.g. the home). Diane Barthel and Pat Mule (1992) proclaim that patriarchal culture creates limitations on women's everyday activity which in turn impacts women's social-esteem. Social-esteem is the individual sense of belonging each woman has regarding her personal sense of entitlement within public space. The result in gender segregation reduces women's social-esteem in which they feel they do not belong within the space. Fadwa El-Guindi (1981) notes that the creation of male entitlement to public areas is what causes issues of harassment in the streets. As women attempt to legitimize their use of public space, men feel threatened that women are occupying what they believe is their space and property (Wesely and Gaarder, 2004). Thus men react by acting in aggressive or inappropriate ways towards women who are in male spaces (i.e. public space).

The link between sexual harassment and the public private divide can be traced to the re-emergence of conservative ideology about women's roles in the household in Egypt. The rise in Wahabism resulted in a decreased presence and role of women in public space. Coupled with the phenomenon of new middle class women no longer needing to work to financially assist their families, the idea of women in public space became limited to women using the space temporarily to reach their destination. However, scholars such as Mahmood (2006) and Abu-Lughod (2008) emphasize that while patriarchy exists within the private space Egyptian women find ways to rebel against patriarchal norms in the private space, which carry into their use of public space.

Modern perceptions of piety within the Middle East now hold different roles for women. Saba Mahmood's (2005) book on the mosque movement describes women who go to the mosques to become educated on Islam and the piety of the state. Being a part of the mosque movement allows women to gain Islamic insight while gaining mobilization and a sense of belonging. Having a sense of belonging affects the ways in which women participate in their daily lives. The mosque movement is especially important in rural areas that allow women to communicate with the other women who share similar ideals and morals as them. The mosque movement provides women with a strong sense of mobility and purpose as they connect with other members of the community though Islam.

Lara Deeb (2006) explained that piety empowers women through personal well-being, education and mobility in her study of Shiia women in Lebanon. Deeb argued that women aspire to be the women of Islam. Women often look up to Sayyida Zaynib, the granddaughter of the prophet, for inspiration and reasoning on how they should act in their daily lives to maximize their potential while maintaining piety. Women will negotiate their place within their household and public spaces through inspirational women mentioned in the Quran (Deeb, 2006). The understanding of piety within public space within the Middle East varies depending on women's connections and perceptions of piety and public space.

Sexual Harassment and Social Norms:

The mere concept of the public/private binary is not enough to grasp why sexual harassment occurs within public areas. Sociologists emphasize that social spaces are

made up of social norms and performances. Henri Lefebvre claims individuals interpret their role within public space in different manner. Public space is not one reality for two different people:

> "(Social) space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity — their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder. It is the outcome of a sequence and set of operations, and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object. At the same time there is nothing imagined, unreal or 'ideal' about it as compared, for example, with science, representations, ideas or dreams. Itself the outcome of past actions, social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others.. Social space implies a great diversity of knowledge. What then is its exact status? And what is the nature of its relationship to production?"

(Lefevre, 1991, 72)

Erving Goffman (1963) examined the expectations set forth for social interactions in public places between unacquainted individuals. As strangers, individuals perform an "avoidance ritual" (not creating a connect with each individual we come across on our daily routine, such as not saying hello to each person we pass) which essentially allows us to participate in public places without harming or acknowledging others in attempts to reach our destination. However not all unacquainted individuals will perform the "avoidance ritual". Only those who have nothing to lose and think social embarrassment will not harm their already socially discredited behaviors, such as those with negative stigmas, will perform it. Goffman's theory can be understood through any harassment case because in general, the harasser does not feel men has anything to lose by either catcalling, standing too close, or invading an unknown woman's privacy. The man has decided the "avoidance ritual" should only be performed with certain members of society the women he targets or harasses do not have the ability to limit his social credibility.

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Goffman (1986) subsequently created a classification system for different groups and members of society: the *stigmatized* and the *normals*. The *normals* are those who are a part of the dominant group – be it gender, race, ethnicity, or religion – who control society and look down upon the *stigmatized*. The latter are those perceived by society as unequal, disabled, or a form of social burden. Thus the *normals* exercise acts of discrimination against the *stigmatized* as means of oppression. When applying Goffman's theory towards sexual harassment, one can conceptualize the harassers as the *normals* and women as the *stigmatized*. The role of women, specifically in public spaces, is relegated to the sidelines, marginalized, and unwanted. Thus, Goffman would believe that interactions between males and female within public spaces are normal as they are neutral markers of public passages, as long as they remain positive.

The normalization of sexual harassment through social norms is relevant to women's experiences within Cairo. UN Women (Shallaby, 2013) reports that 99.3 percent of Egyptian women experience sexual harassment at some point in their lifetime. These statistics demonstrate the acceptability of sexual harassment as a means of social conduct in which the severity is not questioned nor punished. Structural violence by the state, a macro-level, hierarchical phenomenon, allows such social norms that are harmful to women to flourish without punishment.

Security and Sexual Harassment:

John Burton (1990) posited three elements that must be met in order for human beings to function: interests, values, and basic human needs. In Burton's analysis,

interests are day-to-day aspirations, including economic aspirations for a pay raise or owning the latest gadget. Competing interests often bring people into dispute, but they are disputes that are amenable to negotiation and compromise. Values are the subject of more difficult contention. People will strongly defend values, whether at an individual or societal level, and will often engage in conflict over values. Values are, however, culturally determined and vary from one context to another. In comparison, Burton deems "basic human needs" to be universal-- applying across culture or context—and include concepts like dignity, autonomy, and respect. Burton argued that such things are essential to the human condition, and are not amenable to compromise or negotiation. Whenever these basic needs are not met, there will be deep-rooted conflict that may be either overt or covert. He noted that conflict involving basic human needs typically cannot be resolved without significant structural or institutional change.

However, according to Reiman (2002), Burton's theory does not include all individuals' needs especially women's. By neglecting gendered lenses Burton's theory assumes the structural order of patriarchy could allow women to function in society without oppression. For instance, sexual harassment is a form of sexual assault on women's individuals freedom and dignity. To combat sexual violence against women societal and legal structures must be change.

Johan Galtung (1996, 74-75) expresses that the state institutionalized oppression through structural violence, which allows for states to control and manipulate its civilians. Structural violence allows states to normalize their control of micro and macro aspects of human life without civilians actively noticing or questioning the structures in

place. Structures claim to act in the benefit of the state by providing for everyone or protecting "us" from "them" through morals, religion, or values. Galtung argues that structural violence is equally if not more harmful than physical violence because it normalizes violence. Sexual harassment is supported through structural violence through infrastructures that create gender subordination, such as educational, economic and government institutions that often neglect and oppress women. These institutions often undermine issues of sexual harassment and other issues of sexual violence, by silencing conversations on sexual violence. Sexual violence is normalized through political, economic and social institutions which silence women's liberties and maintain gender norms while projecting such oppressive features as normal, pious, and fundamental for national growth.

Laura Sjoberg (2010) highlighted the importance of gendered lenses when examining security issues. Sylvester (2002) suggested that policies and security directly reflect the gender dynamics within the nation. Furthemore, Tickner argued gender oppression is enforced at the international level by favoring the 'rational economic man' while women are portrayed as emotional (2001). The enforcement of such binaries are engraved within societies and taught at early ages (Franke, 2002). The creation of a 'masculine hegemony' as the sole model for security issues limits women's capability to enter the realm of politics. Concurrently, Leathermen (2011) emphasized that the masculine order creates a trickle down effect through neoliberal policies to oppress and undermine women internationally. Thus, when gender relations at the security level are

not questioned, the system becomes self-sustaining. Gender relations then remain unequal as masculinity becomes idealized and promoted (Sjoberg, 2010, 5).

Amar (2013) suggests that sexual harassment does not emerge out of cultural norms but is a conflict relating to labor mobility, class conflict, youth alienation, and social disintegration. These phenomena are enforced by the state through strategies such as police brutality towards groups considered 'parahumans'. Amar conceptualizes parahumans is those who are not seem as complete humans because they are disadvantaged through their social, economic, gender, or religious backgrounds. Amar examined police brutality in the case of Egypt during the Mubarak and post-revolution era in relation to the sexualization of female protesters. Amar's study showed that originally states were able to deter protesters through claims of terrorism. However, as elite women started protesting and critiquing the government they were unable to detain elite women under such pretenses. At such a point, governments started sexualizing female protestors by supporting sexual assault and arrests under claims of prostitution, which delegitimizes women's presence within public space, especially political spaces. Kristin Bumiller (2008, xii) claimed that states have used women's empowerments and rights and used them as political tool to oppress and harm women. "The feminist movement became a partner in the unforeseen growth of a criminalized society, a phenomenon with a negative consequence… for those women are subject to scrutiny."

Cynthia Enloe (2013) noted that that police coercion in Egypt continues as states silence a majority of women, especially marginalized women, about their experiences. Enloe asserts that police forces will continue to de-legitimize women's needs as citizens

in public space to ensure the government's orders and guidelines of power and masculinity are followed. Male dominated police forces are able to normalize women's harassment by scandalizing women's presence in public space. A woman's respectability and power are stripped by sexual harassment and fear of sexual violence. In turn, as women are reluctant to go out their presence in public space is delegitimized.

It is important to recognize the key role that security forces play in creating a climate conducive to violence against women. The state permits and perpetuates social structures that normalize and encourage violence against women through direct and indirect means (York, 2011). According to Linda Green (1999) militaries enforce their values through the reproduction of norms into everyday life and conformation through the welfare state. Militaries and states are able to reproduce norms through state funding and promoting gendered institutions. Belinda Leach (2011, 195) emphasizes that violence against women is highly promoted by states through legislation, policies, state representatives, and law enforcement. Leach explored the relationship between the Canadian government and murdered women with a specific focus on Aboriginal women. Her research finds that states are able to condemn women by minimizing the importance women's security issues. They do this by creating perceptions that private matters are limited to domestic issues, that violence against women in public spaces is rare, and if it occurs, it happens primarily to Aboriginal women by men they know.

Issues of structural violence are not limited to silencing protestors, but are very active in women's daily experiences within police stations. Christina Akalde (2011) examined women's experiences at police stations within Peru. Her findings emphasize

that the high levels of structural violence, specifically patriarchy within police stations, often deter women – especially those from lower socio-economic backgrounds – from reporting acts of violence against women. Once women arrive at the police station they are often humiliated, turned away, misinformed about their rights, blamed for the violence they faced regardless of severity, or told to rush home. To cope with these issues of gender-based violence countries like India and Brazil have opened women's police stations. Nonetheless, reports show that police officers reactions remain as apathetic towards gender-based violence due to structural violence present in public and private spaces (Akalde, 2011).

Issues of patriarchy in the police force are instilled in everyday interactions of violence against women. Police officers with traditional perspectives will often sympathize with offenders of acts of violence against women because they view these acts as acceptable or necessary (Yor, 2011). One of the consequences of structural violence within the police force is the 'vocabulary of adjustment'. Eugenie Kanin (1967) suggests that the 'vocabulary of adjustment' is one of the most harmful means towards women because it moves the blame from the offender to the victim. Saroca (2013) found that victim blaming allows perceptions of masculinity to continue while women personalize violence as their faults. Thus security forces encourage and allow the notion of manliness to exist through its structural mechanisms and physical enforcements.

The many cases of structural violence against women through the reinforcement of the security forces is a large source of conflict in Egypt. Cases of sexual harassment are often turned down by Egyptian security forces for being insignificant or unimportant.

Women generally are blamed despite the fact that the security forces as noted within the *taharrush* within Egypt section are often the perpetrators of sexual violence against women. In settings such as Egypt sexual violence is normalized and promoted through structural violence.

Conclusion:

The complexity of sexual harassment and its normalization relates to the lack of understanding around processes that enable its existence around the world. A pressing, fundamental component that is lacking is the discursive gap between scholars whose contributions relate to the micro and macro conditions that enforce violence against women. Sexual harassment is often perceived to be a result of gender barriers within the public private space, social norms, economic struggles, or abuse by security forces.

While literature exists on the subject of sexual harassment, few empirical studies have been conducted that mirrors the realities and experiences of women in Cairo. This study fills this gap by drawing upon and merging numerous theoretical foundations that allow for the incorporation of the stories, voices, and perspectives of Egyptian women. This will enhance a broader understanding of sexual harassment in Cairo and add new knowledge to the literature from an Egyptian perspective. Concurrently, this research aims at discovering why sexual harassment has become normalized in Cairo within the past three decades. This has been made possible by interviewing women from an array of backgrounds and age groups to demonstrate the historical context compared to that of current Cairo and to properly analyze which specific factors contribute to the normalization of sexual harassment.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this research was to examine why sexual harassment has increased and why it has become normalized in Cairo. To answer these questions the methodology used an ethnographic approach. The first component used the ethnographic tool of shadowing, in which I monitored sexual harassment in public spaces in three regions of Cairo, over a period of three months. During a portion of this time, I wore the hijab (for one and a half month) and for the remainder of the time I did not wear the hijab, to observe if sexual harassment differed. The second aspect of the research was semi-structured interviews conducted with Cairenese women from a diverse demographic on their experience of sexual harassment in public spaces. This research was conducted from March to June 2014.

Being Egyptian is the largest component of my personal identity. Growing up being Egyptian and being surrounded with other individuals who grew up with the same morals and mentality was all I knew or expected. Although my parents are both educated and well travelled, I grew up in a household that prioritized traditional feminine roles, such as the importance of marriage. This shaped my personal perspective of the world. My world was inherently sexist in nature, where gender segregation was the norm. However, once I started university in Montreal, and was forced to question gender relations in the Middle East, I became aware of my personal experiences within public space and the difference between Canada and Egypt. Specifically I realized the lack of freedom I felt in Cairo, and how my mother's experiences growing up in a freer society were similar to the experiences I only had the opportunity to experience in Canada.

Ethnographic Shadowing:

James Clifford (2008, 99-101) suggested that the ethnographic process includes the many voices that the ethnographer comes into contact with during a specific time and place. The voices will vary depending on the ethnographer's multiple positions and relations to the physical and social environment. The process of shadowing provides rich data into why individuals interact in certain ways. By shadowing the researcher is able to monitor by watching the same group of people or places to record realities of those being shadowed that the researcher may otherwise undermine.

To equalize the multiple positions I held throughout the ethnographic research, I ensured diversity within the physical and social environment by diversifying the locations and time of the field research. The diversification of location and time allowed me to not only experience different positions but provided me the ability to observe different women's interactions in public space. Furthermore, I maintained a journal of my observations and relations to individuals and spaces, including my experiences and observations of public spaces, along with informal conversations with individuals I met along the journey of discovering harassment.

To assess and relate first hand to the experiences of piety within public place, I decided to wear the hijab for half the duration of the research. By wearing the hijab, I explored several questions including: if piety increased safety, if Muslim or Christian women faced different forms of harassment, and if attire did change the level of harassment. I started off my research without the hijab, for two weeks, then I wore the hijab for a month and a half, and for the final month I removed the hijab. I decided to be

hijabless for the first few weeks to analyze people's interactions with me; under their assumptions I was a Christian woman (indeed Egyptians specifically within shaabi neighborhoods did assume I was Christian since I did not wear the hijab). The second period, in which I wore the hijab, conformed to majority of Muslim women wearing the hijab. Then the final period, in which I removed the hijab, allowed me to experience life in Cairo without the hijab again, alongside an important phenomenon of whether I would be socially shunned for removing the hijab, which is not socially acceptable in Egyptian society.

My choice in attire was essential in understanding interactions within public spaces. For consistency, I matched several outfits that could be worn with or without the hijab, half being loose-fitting while others being more tight fitting and stylish. The outfits had three general themes: work, casual and social attire. My work attire was specifically set to be office appropriate, thus consisted of dress pants or skirts, with blouses and blazers with light makeup. Casual attire was created for everyday wear that consisted of tight cotton pants or jeans and looser shirts, sweaters and dresses. The casual attire fulfilled the needs of public decency, covering everything but my arms again with light makeup. Finally, social attire was created with the intentions of going out, where I wanted and was expected to be slightly more embellished, this was often tight jeans, with equally tight shirts that were fancier tops or dresses often just below the knees with more noticeable makeup. The importance in the distinction between the three categories is not only the difference in the location I wore them to, but the difference in how people

reacted to me depending on what I was wearing, their perception of whether I was pious, or misusing the hijab.

Throughout the three months of research, I consistently visited the same places including: bazaars, malls, coffee shops, shisha lounges, restaurants, busy pedestrian streets and other public spaces. I would go to the same locations at different times of the day using different methods of commute to see if my experience changed depending on location, time, commute and my appearance. I generally dedicated two days a week for each neighborhood I studied, and each visit varied from a minimum two hours to a maximum five hours, depending on the number of activities I would partake in.

Research location:

The ethnographic research focused on three regions of Cairo; Maadi, Shubra-Misr and Shubra El-Kheima. David Sims (2012, 91-93) claims that urban planning projects within Cairo have created two divisions in which neighborhoods are defined. Neighborhoods are characterized as either raki or shaabi.

Raki neighborhoods are high income neighborhoods, they are quiet, with wide streets, abundance of plants, open spaces, modernized and well-maintained buildings, and expensive coffee shops and boutiques limited to commercial streets. Shaabi neighborhoods, often translated to shantytowns or working class neighborhoods. Due to high populations within the neighborhoods, they are often loud from the crowds of people, and music is blaring from stores and cars. Walking space is limited as sidewalks are often occupied by street vendors and roads are narrow.

Maadi was the raki neighborhood for this research. Maadi, like most Egyptian upper class neighborhoods, was built outside of Cairo to maintain exclusiveness, however it was originally filled with summer villas (Sims, 2012, 52). With the expansion of the metro in the early 1990s (Cowell, 1990), Maadi become a part of Cairo that is now reachable by metro within 30 minutes from downtown. The inclusion of Maadi as a part of Cairo removed the privacy once available. The easy accessibility of Maadi has not hindered the maintenance of its modern and raki characteristics, its beauty remains within its parks, and the cleanliness of the roads, and hundreds of large houses, which are often home to international ambassadors and Egypt's upper-class. In the shopping district, Road 9, an American vibe is unavoidable as majority of the young residents communicate in perfect American accents, to which Western restaurants can be found and Egyptian chain stores are set to please the upper class youth that adore the "Western lifestyles" without neglecting the Egyptian culture.

This research covered two shaabi neighborhoods: Shubra El-Kheima and Shubra Misr. Shubra El-Kheima is often referred to as one of Cairo's most popular shaabi neighborhoods. In Shubra El-Kheima, the major dwellings consist of apartments and the occasional shacks made of different materials such as boxes and wood. Majority of residents purchase their produce from street vendors who set up their stands on the sidewalks, selling a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Life takes place within the streets of Shubra El-Kheima; ahwas (coffeehouses which are male-dominated areas) are located on the streets, music is heard from the Tok Toks driving by or from shops, street vendors advertise loudly, and streets are always filled with people.

While Shubra Misr shares many of the same characteristics as Shubra El-Kheima, what differentiates Shubra Misr from other shaabi towns is its strong middle class community and Christian population. Shubra Misr is one of Cairo's oldest neighborhoods, a neighborhood that prior to the 1980s was known for housing several Egyptian celebrities and used for movie scenes to project Cairo's beauty: Shubra Misr has now become one of Cairo's most populated neighborhoods. Shubra Misr's proximity to downtown Cairo and high population density has drastically changed the atmosphere of the neighborhood, making it congested and polluted. Streets that were once wide and filled with villas and trees are now heavily crowded with private cars parked on either side of the streets. Most villas have been demolished and replaced with apartment buildings to fill the high demands for housing. The economic dynamic with Shubra-Misr is projected in the attempts to maintain modernity while poverty and overpopulation force traditional practices. The contrasts between modern and traditional ways of life are apparent in examples such as a donkey-drawn car next to a 2014 Mercedes; shopping malls and street vendors selling similar goods and; shisha lounges across from traditional ahwas. Shubra Misr's diversity also exists among the neighborhood apartments. The most powerful dynamic in Shubra-Misr is the equality between both religious faiths, mosques and churches are often parallel one another, and neighbors celebrate both holidays together.

The ethnographic research placed primary emphasis on the chosen neighborhoods to attempt to control the settings and my personal comfort level. However, throughout my research I visited dozens of neighborhoods within Cairo as my research was being

conducted in a city where I have friends and family I could not limit myself to specific regions. Other regions of Cairo that were explored included: Tahrir Square, Heliopolis, Zamalek, Downtown, Sheraton and Khan El Kalili. While I generally commuted to these areas by car, the research that occurred within these areas is important as they represented regions known to be politically important, tourist locations, shopping districts, residential areas, and elite communities.

Methods of Commuting:

The different means of commuting in this research included: walking, private car, taxi, metro, bus, tok tok (a motorized tricycle with a sitting booth that can fit two or three people) and microbus (a van that functions as a semi-private bus, which transports up to ten passengers who choose their destination within a designated route).

The primary method of commute from Shubra Misr or Shubra El-Kheima to Maadi was the metro due to the huge distance between the regions. The journey by metro takes approximately 30 minutes, whereas taxi, car or bus would take at the least three hours during rush hours. Commuting to and from Shubra Misr and Shubra El Kheima was done by taxi, microbus or bus, due to close proximity of around 20 minutes. While commuting within each neighborhood I had the option of walking, taking a taxi, tok tok or microbus, I generally commuted by each in the three neighborhoods at least once a week. For instance, I would walk to my first destination then take a tok tok to the following, the microbus to my third, and a taxi to the metro or back home.

Focusing on three specific neighborhoods allowed me to control my travel routes and routine. This was one of the most important aspects in understanding women's

experiences within public spaces, as means of transportation are a routine of public spaces. Concurrently, in sitting in the metro for long periods of time, Egyptian women would often talk about their daily life problems, which gave me the opportunity to listen in and contribute to the dialogue. The metro specifically is a unique public space where hundreds of interactions occur. During this research the metro provided me with insight into life in Cairo. Cairo's metro is the most popular method of commuting throughout Cairo for middle and lower income groups, due to its high efficiency, cheap cost of 1 EP, and accessibility to almost all of Cairo's neighborhoods.

Cairo's metro is unisex except for four cars, dedicated to women only, which were created to reduce harassment issues within the metro. Within each metro station there is a waiting area designed specifically for women to wait for these four cars.[2] The area is indicated with a sign that reads "women's section" in both Arabic and English and has a bright red line at the beginning and end, to demonstrate the space. The women's only cars are often filled beyond capacity with women literally pushing to squeeze in to avoid proximity with men. This tendency is so strong that women would often allow two or three metros to pass by just to avoid the unisex cars. Men who attempt to enter the women's only cars receive many unwelcome comments and stares from women who vocally articulate that this is their safe space, that men have the rest of the metro to get into, and that his presence is seen as disrespectful to their space. While, women may project their complaints, they have no actual power to remove the men from the cars unless an officer sees the man in that car, at which point he will be forced to leave.

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[2] See Graglia, 2015 for the impact of gender divided metros on women in Mexico

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The gendering of spaces is not limited to the women's only cars but can also be seen in the unisex cars, which are available to everyone. Like the women's only cars the unisex cars are also crowded; however they often have more empty space within them, as over fifteen cars per train are unisex. While the remaining metro cars are labeled unisex, women often avoid them out of fear of harassment, or unnecessary comments and stares by men. It is important to note that many women do commute within the unisex cars and are not bothered by the social constraints and that not all men feel entitled to the 'gendered space'.

Cairo's metro not only acts as a means of commuting but also provides a moving convenience store. Young men and women walk through the metro cars selling an array of goods to passengers. Metro vendors get their goods from factories that have filed bankruptcy with merchandise to sell, or from private vendors. The transactions are a part of the informal sector; the services are not taxed or monitored by the government, and they are ignored by police and metro officers. Metro vendors are found throughout the day walking back and forth within the cars selling their goods in a loud voice. They sell an array of products such as hijabs, calling cards, makeup, clothes, candies, matches, children's toys and coloring books, and household goods. The metro vendors are generally young men or women from rural parts of Egypt. Occasionally, the vendor may be a child or elderly person selling goods as a means to get an income. Alongside, the metro vendors, the metro has become a popular place for beggars to ask for money.

Children, single mothers, elderly and disabled people walk through the metro or sit at the entrance begging for money, at times offering prayers or a small exchange of napkins.[3]

The secondary form of commuting I used to get around within each region was the microbus. Like the metro the microbus is offered at 1 EP, however unlike the metro where you buy a ticket, in the microbus the passengers work as a quick community to pay the driver 10 EP. One of the passengers sitting in the second row, usually a man, collects the money from the rest of the passengers and once he has 10 EP he hands it to the driver. While this is a quick interaction several unnecessary touches often occur within these interactions and the close proximity of sitting next to other passengers, makes women reluctant to use the microbus.

The ethnographic component of this research allowed me to experience and observe aspects of sexual harassment that are often verbally silenced as voicing them is not deemed acceptable.

Semi-structured Interviews:

In addition to the ethnographic shadowing, personal interviews were conducted with 20 women in Cairo. John Creswell (2014, 177-80) stated that interviews are an important research tool to gain information from participants that allow the researcher to find out specific insights that may otherwise not be clear from directly observing the subjects. Additionally, semi-structured interviews overcome the tension between power dynamics that the researcher may have over feminist anthropology. Semi-structured

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[3] The metro vendors and beggars project the larger of issues of poverty within Egypt, that Egyptians are faced with on every route, while projecting the informal systems Egyptians have created to sustain themselves.

interviews allow women to verbalize their experiences and values without manipulation of the researcher's views on culture and feminism (Abu-Lughod, 2008,5).

The use of semi-structured interviews provides participants with the opportunity to talk freely about topics they deem relevant. Unlike the rigid style of structured interviews that require the researcher to conduct the interview with the same wording and procedure which controls the flow of the conversation, semi-structured interviews allow participants to have some control over the interview. Semi-structured interviews allow the interview to be conducted in an informal setting and the participant to be guided in the direction the interviewer is interested in while allowing the participant to discuss matters they deem important without limiting their words, individual style, or comments.

Interview logistics:

This research was being conducted during March to June 2014. At the time the political state of Egypt was slowly stabilizing as Egypt was undergoing the changes from the 2011 and June 2013 revolutions. Specifically as the military had removed the Muslim Brotherhood from power that year; freedom of speech was closely monitored by the new state. During this period 'Western' propaganda spread unrealistic projections of Egypt to the world. Several news anchors showed images of unrealistic protests and cases of violence to an extent that many Egyptians were unwilling to speak about life in Egypt to anyone who may project Egypt negatively to the outside world. These realities placed restrictions on my research ability for my safety and that of the participants.

Although I am an Egyptian citizen and fluent in Arabic, the fact that my research was being conducted through a Canadian university made people unwilling to discuss the

state of Egypt with me, specifically those who had no prior connection to me or were from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Thus, I conducted 20 semi-structured interviews, in which participants were chosen through snowball sampling to establish trust. I began the interviews with women I had already known either from work, friends, or family and upon completion of their interviews I asked if the participant knew any other women who might be interested in partaking in the research, specifically women who were from different socioeconomic backgrounds, age groups, and religions.

The ages of the participants varied from 18 to 70, the average age being 40. Four of the women interviewed were Christian, sixteen were Muslim, of which, two were affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. Seven women were from lower socioeconomic backgrounds whose employment included: two homemakers, one university student, two cleaning ladies, one elementary teacher, and one street vendor. Seven women were from moderate socioeconomic backgrounds and their employment varied: three homemakers, one university student, one accountant, one secretary, and one retired woman. Six women from higher socioeconomic backgrounds and their employment also varied: two UN employees, one university professor, one homemaker, and two university students. Out of the participants under the age of thirty, five out of seven were single, and the other two engaged, and the thirteen women over thirty were all married except three women who were widowed.

Data Gathering Techniques:

Before any interview started, consent was gained verbally. Verbal over written consent was chosen for several reasons. The notion of written consent is not a part of the Egyptian culture; verbal trust is seen as more valuable than written. Hence asking

interviewees to sign a long document would have been perceived as disrespectful, it also could have brought up issues of illiteracy and feelings of discomfort. As part of the verbal consent interviewees were told that they did not have to participate in the interviews or answer questions that made them uncomfortable, and could opt out of the interview at any point, in which case all data collected would have been destroyed and not included in the final findings. Participants were given the option to opt out of voice recording as well, and two women did, saying they were uncomfortable. To increase participants' feelings of safety, all the participants were given a date until which they could decide to redo the interview, delete parts or the entire interview before it was used for analysis. Refer to appendix A for the script of the verbal consent.

After consent was gained, interviewees were given two choices for location. The first option was my house, which allowed me to control the environment, and level of noise, and assure the interviewees of confidentiality. Ten interviews were conducted in my house. The second choice allowed the interviewees to decide on a location that they deemed comfortable and convenient, and eight interviewees decided to have the interview in their homes and two in the UN Women's office.

All the interviews were conducted in Arabic. Interviews lasted from half an hour to one hour. The first section asked women to discuss their daily movements within public space, what they do when they are outside, means of commuting, times and restrictions they feel within Cairo. In the second section, participants discussed their daily experiences with things they fear and challenges and restrictions felt within public space, including, but not limited to harassment. In the third section, women were asked about

harassment issues, if they experience harassment, how they react, and if they talk about it. The final section elicited participants' cross-generational experiences of harassment and liberty in Cairo that they experienced as well as changes over the decades that have taken place for women. A list of interview questions is available in Appendix B.

During the interviews two forms of data collection occurred: (1) note taking, and (2) when permission was granted, audio recording. Audio recordings allowed me to transcribe the exact wording of the participants later on, while focusing on the interviewee's body language and creating more of a rapport with the participants. No names were used to identify participants in the notes or audio recordings. An assigned participant number was attached to label notes and recordings previous to each interview. During the transcription period participants were given pseudonyms to maintain their confidentiality. Five years after publication of the thesis, December 2020, all data will be deleted and destroyed.

The literature review explored the key theoretical themes including: different perceptions of harassment, reasons sexual harassment occurs, the influence of an individual's economic disposition and spatial location on levels of harassment faced, social norms that normalize sexual harassment, and gender-based violence perpetrated by police officials. Furthermore, the presidential background highlighted the shift of women's roles within public spaces under the different presidents.

This chapter presents the major findings that emerged out of this ethnographic research, including the researcher's personal experiences alongside those of the participants. This research provides insight into Cairo as a complex society, at a time when women are figuring out means to express their multiple identities. This research is in no way meant to project Egyptian women as powerless victims of violence nor represent Egyptian men as sexual predators. It is important for the reader to remember the different feminist conflict perspectives to avoid sweeping generalizations of orientalism and oppression.

This chapter has been divided based on the prominence of four major themes. The first theme analyzes the prevalence of sexual harassment at a cross-generational level. The second theme, explores the effects of social norms, education and values in relation to the normalization of sexual harassment. The third section examines the

economic justifications and causes related to the increase of sexual harassment, through the marriage crisis and its economic burdens on the youth. Lastly, the final section displays the role of the Egyptian security officials in relation to the increase in sexual harassment.

The Different Forms of Sexual Harassment:

As the literature review demonstrated, sexual harassment does indeed insinuate different actions to each individual and is described uniquely through experiences. The Arabic term *taharrush* was at times perceived to be too powerful or could have harmful repercussions for women. Women feared if they used the term *taharrush* their listener could assume *taharrush* to mean rape or touching, thus certain participants used the term *moaksate* which translates into flirting. By using the term *moaksate* the woman removed the severity of violence that happened against the woman in *taharrush*. However, for the women that used the word *taharrush* the meaning varied from: unwanted catcalling, sexual looks, gestures, touching, blocking the way, throwing things, and or sexual comments. In essence, *taharrush* implied unwanted attention that caused annoyance or fear. *Taharrush* according to participants is always a one-sided conversation, meaning the woman did not initiate contact with the man, nor was it wanted, whereas *moaksate* was perceived as gentle.

Prevalence of harassment in daily life
Experiences of younger women

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In response to questions about the prevalence of harassment in the participants'

daily lives, a significant difference emerged between the responses of older respondents

and younger women. Eight of the participants interviewed were under the age of 35 thus

they had spent their formative years growing up under the presidency of Mubarak. These

eight participants, regardless of religion or socioeconomic background, described

taharrush in Cairo as one of the largest issues Egyptians face. I will insert my own

experiences and observations with those of the participants under the age of 35.

> Nadine (21): "Harassment has become the norm, it's so normal, we don't
> even think about it anymore, but expect it subconsciously that we limit our
> clothes and the routes we take home."

> Aaya (22): "Harassment is something all Egyptian women face. Most of the
> time it's verbal, but sometimes it's physical especially in crowded places, the
> man can touch you and run. I've had cowards come up really close to me and
> say inappropriate things about my body or looks, to see if he has a shot of
> getting to know me, he wants to know if I'm 'proper' or not…If it's verbal I
> don't say anything I don't have the patience to deal with every single man,
> but if its physical there is no way I'm going to leave him, I'm sure to teach
> him a lesson and show him he can't treat me or any other woman this way."

The psychological toll and frustration of constant harassment is the most draining

part in my experience. In one of my journal entries while conducting the

ethnographic research, I wrote:

> Today, is near the halfway point of my research. This morning I paused
> before opening the gate to leave home, thinking, I'm not ready or in the
> mood to deal with harassment. I don't know if this is to do with my
> research forcing me to focus on harassment throughout my everyday
> activity, or that I'm tired.

Avoidance Rituals:

The younger participants discussed the daily conscious efforts they make to avoid *taharrush* within public areas. All of the women interviewed under the age of thirty-five expressed a perceived obligation to change their attire to avoid harassment and fulfill society's norms. Concurrently, the participants realized their attire had nothing to do with the level of harassment faced. At times women wearing the *niqab* would be harassed as well, although they are the image of piety. Men would make comments to me such as: "why don't you take of that *niqab* [a veil worn by more conservative Muslim women that is generally black and covers their entire face except their eyes] so we can see what you look like", or "I bet you got something beautiful to show and that's why you're hiding it."

One day in March while walking in *Maadi* with a friend, I saw a woman in her early twenties from an affluent foreign family, who was dressed in a short black dress, black nylons, and high black boots. My friend Sara, who is from an affluent Egyptian family, commented 'She's in Cairo, she shouldn't dress like that!' implying she will draw unnecessary attention to herself. A few weeks later on the metro I saw another young woman, wearing a colorful *hijab* with a knee length black dress with black nylons and flats. I decided to approach the young woman, Rasha, in the metro, and ask her why she chose to wear nylons (This is something that has become uncommon in Cairo. Women will most commonly wear skirts that cover their ankles or wear cotton tights under shorter skirts). At first she seemed annoyed, assuming I was going to judge her about her attire. But

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when she realized I had no intention to criticize her, she relaxed as we spoke for the duration of the metro ride. I learned that Rasha worked in tourism, which was her primary justification for wearing nylons. However, she confidently stated that even if she would discontinue her line of work she would continue to wear nylons and dresses. As we talked about social norms in Cairo, she admitted to constantly being stared at, shunned, harassed for her attire, and lectured by strangers and her family, which annoyed her. Nevertheless, she said she could not understand what the problem with nylons is, and she is determined to make a fashion statement.

While the two women's attire did not differ drastically, what differed were people's reactions to them. As a foreign woman, the first woman could wear whatever she pleased, and while men may have looked and individuals like my friend disapproved, the general society accepts foreigners' style as the exception to the rule. Whereas Rasha is Egyptian, and *a hijabee,* so people stared and commented on her appearance.

Like Rasha, many young Egyptian women dress in bright colors and tight clothes as a way to show their youthfulness within the restrictions on fashion emplaced by society.

Another key finding to emerge from this study was the perceptions of the participants under the age of 35 of *taharrush* and the impact of self-esteem. A general observation I noticed was participants who appeared to possess higher levels of self-confidence-- who walked with their heads held high, and spoke with confidence -- viewed acts of harassment differently from women with lower self-esteem. Women with

higher levels of confidence viewed acts of *taharrush* as daily annoyances, that were either related to their beauty, or as an act that had nothing to do with them but a social problem based on lack of *akhle,* education and poverty. Whereas, women with lower self-esteem blamed themselves and other women for being harassed either by talking too loudly, being inappropriately dressed or asking for attention hence indulging in "victim blaming."

Commuting:

When participants were asked if certain places within Cairo made them more uncomfortable than other places, women often discussed places that are overpopulated, abandoned and polluted as undesirable.

> Aaya (21): "I don't like *shaabi* places. The streets are beyond crowded…. Because of lack of education, poverty, they don't see anything new, I feel they are so caught up and suffocated in their issues of hunger and frustration, that they have nothing to do so men linger in the small crowded streets waiting to harass women."

> Deena (21): "Some places are better in Cairo, but nowhere is guaranteed. I avoid slums, poor areas, abandoned areas, populated areas as well…If I am going to get out of my car and walk on the streets I keep that in mind and I won't be wearing a skirt or a dress…I wear less makeup and jewelry to not stand out… that would make me fall prey to twisted men on the streets. I don't want to get harassed. But it also depends on your commute, if you're driving your own car it won't really matter it will take you where you want to be. You won't have to interact with anyone. "

To understand how women navigate their way around public space public transport was an important means to assess. Depending on the individuals' finances their means of transport determined their ability to control their

interactions with other individuals. When participants were asked about their preferred commuting method:

> Maha (21): "If I'm taking the metro of course my clothes are different from what I wear when I'm in a private car. In the metro, my close proximity to people and the economic class of people limits my ability to be dressed up. But, I am still more comfortable wearing tight clothes in the metro than a taxi, because at least in the metro a man's actions are limited, if he dares do something people will protect me, but if I'm in a taxi wearing a low rise shirt, I can't assure I will be safe, or he won't stare."

> Dina (33): " My preferred method of commute is the metro, it doesn't have any traffic lights, and is by far the fastest way to get anywhere in Cairo. I also like that I can ride the women's car, which protects me from being harassed or stared at in the men's car. Even when it is full I'd rather wait for one or two trains so I can get on. When I'm in close proximity to women, it doesn't matter we're all women, but in the men's car a man could make a comment or stare and the other men will just tell me I shouldn't be in here there is a special car for me, or they will tell me I shouldn't be dressed that way. "

As reflected in the above quotes women's ability to avoid places they deemed uncomfortable is highly dependent on their socio-economic status. Only women from higher socio-economic levels could afford to avoid *shaabi* places, and use a private car to avoid proximity to other individuals. Meanwhile, women in middle and lower socio-economic backgrounds travel primarily through public transport and live in *shaabi* neighborhoods. Therefore, sexual harassment is part of their daily experiences within public space.

Experiences of older women

Twelve of the participants interviewed were over the age of 35, and all except two of them grew up in Cairo. All the respondents lived under the rule of at least one other president besides Mubarak. These participants all stated, regardless of their socioeconomic background, *taharrush* was not something they experienced growing up. Furthermore, they emphasized a sense of safety, beauty, and freedom that Cairo provided its citizens prior to the past three decades.

When asked to define the term *taharrush* prior to the past three decades the participants over 35 insisted they could not relate to the experiences of women today. They suggested that during their youth *moeksate* was the extent of their experiences, and that now they are too old to face *taharrush* to the severity that young woman face. Some women suggested they might hear a few words regarding their beauty, but it's rare. The emphasis suggested that *taharrush* today is hostile, it projects male entitlement as possession by the harasser over the victim. Men harass women today with the intention of making her feel uncomfortable; it is no longer about seduction but rather it represents a change in power dynamics.

> Mariam (47): "*Moeksate* back in my days was simple, it was not *taharrush*. A boy would compliment you or at most wait for you after school to try to get a date, but the minute you said no, that was it, *moeksate* had boundaries. Back then there was fear and understanding that each woman was protected and valued. Each woman had a family that would protect her, and more than that the men from the community perceived each woman as a sister, respected her, and viewed it as their personal role to protect the women. The forms of harassment we see today are impossible and hostile, they would have been limited to the mentally unstable, unlike today where it's almost every member of society who harasses."

Prior to the past three decades, if a case of harassment were to occur, bystanders, either men or women would intervene due to a sense of obligation to assist another member of society, while shunning the harasser.

Jehan (57): "When the rare man harassed a girl the community would shave his head! You should have seen how humiliated these young men would look. Having his head shaved was like the scarlet letter, everyone knew him to be a harasser. He would be ashamed and have his head down and would not dare to repeat the same gesture again. It was *ab* (not proper)… Today it's different, no one taught these boys that this isn't acceptable; the act of touching or annoying her is not acceptable... Society doesn't teach this anymore, they think this is normal."

Manal (60): "When I was younger we didn't have this form of *taharrush* women speak of today. It was flirtatious, you'd have your neighbor flirt with you from the balcony opposite yours, or the guy from another high school, waiting to see if he could walk you home, but it was all respectful and harmless. We all understood there were boundaries that could not be crossed. If a man crossed the line even by a little, or a woman just wanted to tease him, she would get her brother, cousin or some random man on the street to teach this man manners. We valued each other, and had boundaries. Today *taharrrush* isn't feared nor is it projected as disrespectful and wrong."

Participants over the age of 35 believed that *taharrush* is indeed a new phenomenon to Cairo and that this is not something they previously experienced or feared when walking the streets as younger women. They unanimously agreed that during their youth they had the liberty to dress in the latest fashion and could commute at any time of day without worrying that their safety was at risk.

However, the older participants recognized that young women today face a different reality.

Randa (36): "Before we had a lot of safety in the streets. I used to wear short skirts; I didn't have the fear of walking in the streets. Walking, biking, and laughing were all so normal. Today it's impossible. I would never let my daughter wear what I wore because of *taharrush*."

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Contributing Factors:

Regardless of age, participants suggested that the contemporary issues of

taharrush women face within the streets of Cairo are related to larger issues within Egypt

that had not existed prior to the Mubarak regime. Social norms are the backbone of a

society's values, morals, political and social interest. In understanding the increase of

sexual harassment within Cairo, participants discussed social norms as one of the

essential contributing factors in the increase of *taharrush*.

Akhle

The term *Akhle* can be translated as morals or ethics, more specifically; the term

akhle within the interviews was used to describe an individual's relationship to

community, values, and traditions taught through society, religion and family.

When asked to discuss reasons for the increase in *taharrush:*

> Aaya (20): "Before people had *akhle*, people had religion, freedom and
> respected each other. Previously, regardless of what a woman was wearing, if
> she was being harassed, those around her would protect her, because of their
> *akhle,* you had to help one another because you protect and care for each
> other. But today's people have no *akhle*—no respect for those around them or
> themselves."

Shubra-Misr has a reputation for being one of the most communal neighborhoods

within Cairo. When Egyptians find out an individual is from Shubra-Misr the normal

response often is: *agdae nas,* loosely translated as the bravest and rightful people. The

saying *agdae nas* comes from the sense of community seen within Shubra-Misr, if

something occurs within the community everyone comes together to help.

Nada who grew up in Shubra-Misr was asked if she has felt a decline in *akhle:*

Nada (53): "Communities are different now, people don't have the time or energy to care for one another. Everyone is so fed up with their own hardships they don't want to deal with anything or anyone else. In the past we all protected one another and stood by each other. Here in Shubra-Misr it's different. We still have a strong community, because most of the older generations haven't move out, but even here it's not like before. "

Having *akhle* is often related to the older generations, specifically those born prior to the Mubarak era. *Akhle* is not as omnipresent within the younger generations today as it was in the past. When looking at photos belonging to the generations growing up during Nasser and Sadat's era, watching the 'classic' movies, and listening to the stories of participants interviewed and those I met along the journey, I realized *ahkle* is what binds a community together. It is the desire and ability to help someone else because you feel connected to them, the core feeling of humanizing the other, and more importantly not having expectations of anything in return.

Educational Institutions:

Educational institutions play a large role in teaching the desired '*akhle*' of society to their students. When participants discussed the difference between education within the private and public sector and its role in instilling *akhle* two components came out of the conversation: teachers' wages and different conversations within the classroom. Miss Sahar 58 an elementary school teacher within the public sector states:

"The lack of *akhle* comes from our failing educational system. Our ministry is called Ministry of Education and Upbringings, not only education, which means teachers play a large role in raising children. Trust me, I'm a teacher I see all this. Teachers are so badly paid, which has created an indifference towards their behaviors in the classroom, so they forget they are role models, to which children mimic their behaviors without thinking."

Nena (71): "Education is different today, under Nasser and Sadat, teachers were well paid and schools had structure and rhythm. Today all teachers want to do is give *doroos* (tutoring) so they focus little attention to what happens within the classrooms. Whereas before teachers cared and implemented proper values into children."

Public and private schools often take different approaches to sexuality. Private institutions are more likely to create dialogue around sexuality and the importance of *akhle* whereas public institutions are underfunded and often more religious, restricting conversations around sexuality with little focus on *akhle*.

Nadine (20): " I think the increase in harassment is because of the lack of education regarding sexuality, it's become a taboo which is silenced. I went to private school, so yeah we talked about sex education, but in public schools it seems inappropriate so no one talks about it. I think men who aren't taught about sex education harass as a way to explore."

Separation of the genders:

According to participants, one of the largest declines in social norms is the connection and understanding of the other gender. As Egyptian *akhle* decreases, so does the link between male and female friendship and humanization of the 'other'.[4] This results in hyper-sexualizing regular interactions with members of the opposite sex.

Growing up in Egypt, girls are told not to be friendly but straight to the point when conversing with male strangers so that men do not get the wrong idea. This ideology continues when girls become women. Simple conversations between men and

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[4] While I realize that gender is not limited to male and or female, as told by Judith Butler (1990), Betty Roszak (1969) for the sake of the Egyptian culture this research refers to male and female. This is also under the assumption of heterosexual relationships, as homosexuality is socially and politically frowned upon within majority of Egypt.

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women are interpreted as conversation with sexual interest, and women who are overly friendly are seen as promiscuous.

> Omnia (18): "We are raised to be proper: not to laugh too loud, or smile, not to attract unnecessary attention, but for boys, it's different, he can do whatever! A boy is encouraged to test his masculinity, it is okay when a guy sleeps around, flirts, harasses girls, ya know? Even if it's not acceptable no one will blame him he's a man, but me no, I'm a girl."

On my lunch breaks at work, a colleague and I would visit Dina Farms, a grocery store catering to the upper class in Maadi that makes fresh sandwiches. To order a sandwich customers go to the deli and choose their toppings and meats. While ordering my sandwich the worker at the deli, a man in his mid-forties often conversed with me during the process; it was never impolite or sexual in nature as I think he was just a chatty man. However, this made my colleague uncomfortable; to her we were giving this man a chance to get to know us unnecessarily.

One afternoon, I went shopping with my cousin in an area similar to Shubra-Misr called Haday El-Oba to buy hijabs. For the past decade my cousin went to the same store, always being served by the owner, a man in his early thirties. Over the years they have built a rapport, in which they are aware of major events taking place in each other's lives, and make jokes. It appeared that through my ethnographic research men would be less likely to commit acts of sexual harassment towards women they know, specifically within stores and other establishments where invisible barriers exist that limit harassment due to economic incentive. Conversations were more acceptable within business establishments or during a service for a customer. The familiarity of receiving the same service by the same person created a safe space, whereas conversations within streets or with street vendors were seen as unacceptable.

The outcomes of interactions varied depending on the individual's understanding of the conversations and their *akhle.* One night around 11:00 p.m., I left a high-end restaurant by the Nile in *Zamalek*, an upper class neighborhood. The restaurant valet called down a cab for me that took me home in approximately 20 minutes. I was wearing black pants and a tight fitted shirt, with make-up and no hijab. The cab driver, being called over by the valet of a high-end restaurant, had already predetermined certain boundaries; women from upper-middle socio-economic backgrounds normally do not converse with cab drivers, and due to financial restrictions, cab drivers will rarely ask a woman from a higher socio-economic background for their number. Thus, when I conversed with this cab driver, who was in his mid-thirties, it blurred the pre-perceived social norms. Our conversation started with casual talk and then expanded to him telling me about his life, his serving in the Egyptian military, his wife and children, and how he is displeased with his financial situation and marriage. By the end of the ride, I knew this man had misinterpreted our casual conversation, so I decided to get off a few blocks early. When I told the cab driver to let me off, he asked for my number, which I politely declined. After I got out of the cab, the driver followed me for a few minutes. I decided to ignore him after telling him I was not interested. He continued following me until I got close to my house, so I went into the closest *koshk (*convenience store). Within a few minutes, the vendor realized that I had no interest in purchasing anything, and asked if I needed assistance. I replied that my cab driver was following me. The vendor, who was an older gentleman, went outside and asked the driver if he was lost or needed assistance, and the driver drove away. While this was the worst of the experiences I had with taxi

drivers, it highlighted how the lack of *akhle* and respect for women has destroyed the beauty of conversation to replace it with the hyper-sexualization of human connections.

Similar to the stories told by the participants, my family members (of both genders) told me stories of their lives growing up and how normal it was for men and women to engage in ritual conversation (i.e. greetings and other brief interactions) in public spaces. Especially within the community, talking was expected, as everyone knew one another. During this research, I noticed in the two shaabi neighborhoods that dialogues were more likely to occur among older generations.

Victim Blaming:

When participants were asked to further discuss contributing factors to harassment and the effects on women, participants constantly discussed the decline in *akhle* creating a negligent society.

> Amira (20): "If a girl gets harassed she often won't speak up. She feels speaking up will only embarrass her or degrade her self-worth. It's understood as her fault not his…Egyptians are the ones that have caused this crisis, instead of advancing we went backwards. We justify everything through our cultural norms, education, values and religion."

The social blaming of women for acts of sexual harassment has become common. Men are not held accountable but are sympathized with, while the victim is blamed for her perceived seductive attitudes towards the harasser.

Women are especially blamed for harassment when they are in spaces deemed as 'male spaces' by the community. The metro and *ahwas* appear as some of the most gendered spaces within Cairo. The metro, as mentioned within the methodology section,

has both formal and informal gendering of cars, and *ahwas'* have their unwritten gendering of spaces which are primarily male with a few women in the back.

While certain spaces are accepted as 'male spaces,' it appeared that men made the exception for older women, out of respect, or when an older man accompanies a young woman. The days my father would accompany me on metro ride within the unisex cars drastically differed from those days I was alone. When men noticed I was with my father they would offer me their seat to sit down to be comfortable, to protect me, so that I could be close to my dad. However, on days I was alone, I was more likely to be ignored or given unimpressed looks inquiring as to why I was in the 'unisex' section, unless I was wearing the hijab when occasionally I would be offered a seat when other men came unnecessarily close.

In the traditional *ahwas* in *shaabi* neighborhoods, chairs essential reserved for men are often placed on the sidewalks. One day when I went with my male friend, I was not wearing the hijab. As we headed to an *ahwa* in Shubra El-Kheima, he politely suggested we sit inside to 'avoid the heat' or find another more appropriate coffee shop. He was politely trying to tell me that it's not proper for women to be in *shaabi ahwas.* This is a common perception amongst Egyptians, as *ahwas* do not have a closed area to protect women. However, when I insisted on sitting outside he did not object, but we did receive a lot of stares and some comments from men. A few weeks later, I went to the same *ahwa* with a female friend, while wearing the hijab. She clearly told me she was uncomfortable sitting outside, however after much pleading she agreed. The server was not impressed, which was obvious by his gestures and comments. Some male pedestrians

took the opportunity to catcall and show signs of discontent at our presence. Women would stare and give non-verbal signs of disapproval, however women rarely commented.

Unlike *ahwas,* coffee shops had a completely different atmosphere. In coffee shops, my presence was never questioned or abnormal, especially in higher class coffee shops. One day I went to a coffee shop in Maadi where they serve shisha, tea and desserts with a male friend, and our presence was completely normal, as numerous groups of friends were surrounding us. Numerous coffee shops such as these exist throughout Cairo, their modern and closed atmosphere (they do not serve on the sidewalk) allows them to be more gender equal spaces. A spectrum of public- private exist within coffee shops, while they are all public areas depending on the atmosphere some are deemed more private than others. On another day I went to a unique form of coffee shop in Sheraton, which is a newly developed neighborhood in the deserts of Cairo, for upper-income families. This coffee shop was a drive-in, where young people, both men and women, drove in and ordered shisha, coffee and food while hanging out outside their cars, similar to an old fashioned American drive-in. Thus the gendering of spaces, was highly dependent on the economic group it catered towards.[5]

An important distinction exists within the manner in which participants based by age related or justified acts of harassment towards other women. Women over the age of 35 blamed the women being harassed for capturing unwanted attention, while perpetuating the larger of issues of structural violence attached to *taharrush.*

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[5] Engle (2006) and Butler (1990) research the intersection of culture, class and gender.

When participants were asked how they react when they hear of women's experiences of harassment:

Miss Sahar (48) : "If one of my students complains about getting harassed I would tell her to look if she is wearing something inappropriate, ask if she was looking up or down. Girls shouldn't be looking at the young men so they don't catch boys' attention. I always tell girls when you see a group of men cross to the other side of the street. But I know that some women who wear the niqab also still get harassed, some boys' upbringing is just not proper."

Tant Nada (53) : "It's really about the way the girl walks and dresses, she is the one that demands respect for herself. But, there are some young men who don't have *akhle*; they're drunk or on drugs, and hit on everyone, or those who are unemployed who hangout in the streets and harass women to pass by the time."

Women under the age of 35 did not blame one another as they understood they all suffered the same injustice. When participants under 35 were asked how they react to harassment personally, they professed it depended on their mood and severity of the act, as harassment happens so often they cannot be bothered to react to every incident. However when any form of touching is involved, the participants emphasized they do not care if society blames them they will fight back.

Deena (21): "I'm not afraid to say anything, I'm not doing anything wrong, on the contrary I'm doing the right thing. I'm usually fearless, I reply back, when I'm really provoked. I like to teach him a lesson, I like to belittle or degrade him, show him how he makes women feel. It sometimes shocks them."

Nadine (20): "I talk back, especially if I get touched. I feel like I'm taking out my anger. It's exhausting to talk back to every man, and it has no outcome. I don't think me staying silent would change anything."

When participants were asked if they discussed their experiences of harassment with anyone else:

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Aaya (20): "Why would I ever discuss harassment with my family or anyone who has some form of power over me!? They are already conservative enough they will look at me and try to find the problem with me, not this crazy man, but me and force me to cover more."

Piety of the hijab:

In Cairo, the hijab is often seen as a sign of piety acting as a shield to protect women from unwanted advances. There is a societal perception of the hijab as the symbol respect and in many cases a necessary 'tool' to protect against harassment. Interview participants wearing the hijab emphasized they wore the hijab partly as their religious duty, while suggesting the hijab empowered them and provided freedom as the hijab was seen as a connection to a woman's *akhle*. Omnia 18 said, "I get verbally harassed, that's out of my control. But I protect myself by wearing the hijab, if I didn't it [the harassment] would be physical."

I met Omnia in Sharm El-Sheik, a highly popular vacation spot for Egyptians and foreigners. When I met Omnia she was dressed in short tight dresses while her head remained uncovered throughout her vacation. However, when we met up in Cairo she was wearing the hijab with jeans and a cardigan. When I asked why she was wearing the hijab she argued that life in Cairo did not allow her to dress the way she wanted and that the hijab is not only a religious obligation but one that is socially required which protected her from harassment. This case was not unique; I know of numerous young women who remove the hijab when on vacation or abroad but wear the hijab in Cairo. Aaya, 21 discussed with bright eyes her social life and passion for fashion,

"I love night clubs! I love the scene, the music, the dancing! But people don't understand that in Egypt. They think I want to go and get a man and get drunk and stoned. I go to listen to music, dance and get freedom. "

Before going to such establishments Aaya removes her hijab as she feels she would not belong and would be judged as immoral by her presence and clothing (Bayat, 2010 furthers this argument by noting that Middle Eastern youth today go clubbing and drinking and attend Friday prayer the next morning as their ways of creating a space for Islam and modern youthfulness).

While the youth are reinventing images of piety, within contemporary Cairo, regardless of religion, women are expected to be conservative in their attire and mannerisms within the streets of Cairo. Coptic women have more liberty in their attire, such as the ability to wear t-shirts and show their hair. However, depending on the neighborhood they frequent, they have to cope with similar restrictions on attire. When acts of harassment were directed towards a Christian woman her piety could be questioned if her attire was too tight as well but was rarely discussed.

For the first month I was hijabless, whenever I was in *shaabi* neighborhoods people assumed I was Christian. In the metro Christian beggars would give me papers with Jesus on them, which are only given to Christian women. Whereas in *raki* neighborhoods most Muslim women did not wear the hijab until they were older. Furthermore, in *raki* neighborhoods most of the Muslim youth were more disapproving of me wearing the hijab. Most wealthier youth rejected the hijab as a means to remain Western and youthful. The symbolism of the hijab and conservatism as a form of piety

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was more prominent for Muslims within middle and lower socio-economic neighborhoods within Cairo.

When participants were asked if religion made a difference to the level of harassment faced, all of the participants suggested religion has no role to play issues of harassment within Egypt.

> Negla (36): "Whether you're Muslim or Christian it's the same it doesn't matter, this man isn't look for marriage he just wants to harass."

> Amira (21): " People always think I'm Christian even though I'm Muslim, and I'm confident that the levels of harassment I face are exactly the same as women who wear the hijab. It's not a question of being covered up."

At work, I would generally chat with the security guard, a young man in his late twenties, Tarik. I assumed that Tarik was a practicing Muslim since I saw him praying at work during prayer time on my way in and out of the office—an action that is common to religious followers in the workplace. As I started my veiling journey, Tarik congratulated me, and he cut our conversations short for the month I was a hijabee (as a sign of respect to my new found piety). Every day when I arrived in the office I removed my hijab as the workplace was not part of my field research. During my lunch breaks I occasionally would go to the *koosk* without putting my hijab back on, to which Tarik, shocked asked me what happened? I replied I did not feel like wearing the hijab for a two-minute walk, Tarik responded automatically that the hijab was not a joking matter, and must be worn always.

I continued wearing my hijab to and from work, until the end of the hijab period. When Tarik noticed he had not seen my hijab for a few days he asked me where my hijab was. When he saw how inconsistent I was with the hijab he assumed I wore the hijab to

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avoid harassment within the streets of Cairo. His assumption highlighted the underlying necessity imposed on women to change their attire or seek refuge in the veil for protection. The need to change one's attire to reduce the chances of harassment displays the societal issue around gender-based violence; Egyptian men are not held responsible for their actions but instead women are blamed for being sexual, seductive, or attention seekers by dressing in a certain manner.

One evening at 10:00 p.m., at Al Shohada a popular metro station, which provides commuters the opportunity to switch their lines, I witnessed an act of harassment. A young man getting off the car decided to grab a young woman (who was wearing the hijab) inappropriately as he was getting off, however she grabbed him and started screaming at him to 'learn how to be a proper human being'. He denied it was him and people gathered around her to watch what would happen, but no one helped her. People's reactions to this woman vocalizing her harassment were apathetic and unimpressed, others backed away so that they wouldn't be harassed, until one man stepped in telling her to forget about it and told the harasser to leave.

Cooling of harassment:

According to UN Women and the "I saw Harassment" initiative most harassers in Egypt are minors, under the legal age of eighteen (Shalaby, 2013, 2), which is consistent with my observations. Catcalling and harassing women appear as rights of passage for young men to prove their manhood to other young men, which allows *taharrush* to appear as a 'cool' act to young men to get to know women.

In the metro one evening around 9:00 p.m. at Maadi station, I was dressed in dark jeans tucked into my high boots with a conservative, long, beige sweater without the hijab. As I was walking to the women's section of the metro, a group of five young men approximately 14-16 years old sitting at the opposite side of the tracks decided to get my attention by catcalling. Their comments rotated around how I walk seductively, or how I want attention from men, which is why I'm out late. However, I was at least a decade older than these boys. Their catcalls were not meant to get to know me or ask for my number, but to annoy and shame me, while appearing rebellious in front of their friends. When I challenged these young men and their inappropriate behavior they laughed. The 'leader' of the group confidently shouted out that I should behave myself and learn to be a proper woman by not talking back. After using a common reply women use against harassment, "you wouldn't want someone to do this to your sister or mother so why treat other women this way", the other boys took shame while settling down and apologizing, while the 'leader' was only encouraged by the chance of continuing his social interactions. He replied that he does not have any siblings or a mother, while giggling. The metro came and the conversation ended. This scenario highlights the normalization of harassment for young men, and the use of *taharrush* as a way of passing time.

One afternoon, around 3 PM, I was walking on the streets of Shubra Misr with a friend, when a young man and boy, around the age of 25 and 7, who were riding a motorcycle started following us as they catcalled. The young man was telling the boy that he was going to teach him how to pick up women. He slowly started driving to keep up with our walking pace, while asking the boy which girl he would prefer to get to know,

after he made his choice, the young man started using pick-up lines. My friend and I

continued walking as we ignored them for around five minutes, however the young man

seemed determined to teach the boy how to be a man. I asked the young man if he wasn't

ashamed of teaching the boy how to torment and harass women, the young man simply

laughed saying that it's not *taharrsuh* but *moeksate* and is a part of life. He confidently

told me if he didn't teach the boy someone else would, and that no one else was as good

as he is, so he had to teach him from a young age how to pick up women [avoid words

that distinguish respectable and unrespectable women, such as "ladies"] otherwise he

would be missing out on hundreds of opportunities to meet women.

Justification for harassment – the "Marriage Crisis"

Another common explanation offered for the increase in sexual harassment

involves the so-called "marriage crisis" in Egypt today (which Khouloussy, 2013,

connects to the economic crisis). During the interview process majority of participants

justified and explained the increase in harassment by the inability to get married in Egypt.

> Maha (21): "Men can't get work which means no marriage. Now, when he
> sees a girl he goes crazy…before marriage was simple you bought an
> apartment with a room and that was it… Seeing a girl wear shorts wasn't a
> big deal, men would see their wives. He could do whatever with his wife. But
> today there are a lot of classes within Egypt that the word marriage is filled
> with financial burden. These families can't be happy because they don't know
> where they will get financial resources for the marriage and post marriage
> life."

When asked why the marriage crisis has increased, Momena 56 discussed the increase

relating to structural violence which then supports, gender-based violence on more

personal levels:

"Life is hard in Egypt now, the days of Sadat and Nasser, Allah bless them, we had government jobs, we could get married… Today the youth have to do any small job they can get. You work 12 hours a day and if you're lucky you make 900 EP per month…This is all related to poverty, hunger issues, and not just physical hunger but hunger that you can't succeed…if men were employed we wouldn't have as much harassment issues as we do."

During my ethnographic research, I met a young woman named Radwa. Radwa, aged 30, was working random jobs while completing her university degree in translation, which she often paused due to financial restrictions. While Radwa and I became friends because of my weekly routine through the bazaar in Shubra El-Kheima, we became accustomed to seeing one another, after which we eventually would sit at her store and chat over tea. After watching men catcall women within the bazaar, we discussed the normalization of *taharrush* within Cairo. Radwa justified the increase of *taharrush* through the marriage crisis, she argued that men harass because they are displeased with their lives.

Rawda later told me about her personal experience with the marriage crisis haunting Egypt. Radwa met her boyfriend, Hisham, a couple of years ago at work. They dated in secret for a few years, with the hopes of eventually getting married and moving into a small apartment. However, Hisham came from a lower socio-economic background than Radwa, which implies that his financial burdens were heavier than those of her family whom already struggled. Radwa and Hisham tried to find solutions amongst themselves so they could get married, they decided to approach Radwa's mother about the idea. Her mother rejected the idea emphasizing that whatever love the two shared today would be squandered by future poverty. After a few more months of attempting to

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overcome their financial difficulties Radwa and Hisham left one another knowing there was no feasible solution to solve their conflict.

The economic restrictions that are the basis of the marriage crisis resonate within many of the participants' sympathies towards young men who harassed women, as they viewed these young men as unsuccessful versions of their own sons, who lingered in the streets, unable to succeed in life because of obstacles set by the state.

> Bahera (56):"My son, Mahmoud, he's in love and wants to get married. He has a job at a department store, but can't find a job with his degree, which means he can't sustain a family, and on top of that he has no apartment to offer. I can't expect this girl to live in my house with my children and I. I would never accept that for my daughters, and even if I did she would be unhappy having their mother in law watch her…so until he finds a job he can't get married."

While mothers sympathized with the unfortunate realities caused by the marriage crisis, they still had expectations regarding what a suitor should have prepared prior to engagement. Um Sayaad 48 discussed the burdens of unemployment within her family, her twenty-three year old son wishes to get married, but cannot find employment, thus it has become her responsibility as a single mother to assist him:

> " I am old and exhausted, I only work so I can try to marry my son. He always tells me 'haram [it's a sin] you married your other three children and not me. I work all day and night, while he doesn't even work. He says he can't find work…If I don't he will never marry and be one of those street boys."

Although men's experiences and perspectives were not the main focus of my research, in the course of conducting the ethnographic research, I talked informally to some men, about marriage, life, and taharrush within Egypt. In most cases they were men from lower socioeconomic backgrounds that worked in service industries, such as:

taxi drivers, street vendors, convenience store owners, merchants, hairdressers, or tailors.

I spoke with these men because the services I paid for were provided by the same

individual several times throughout the month, which allowed me to build a rapport

amongst these men within a safe environment. The consensus given by a majority of

young men, recently married, and unmarried, was a sense of bitterness about growing up

in the current state of Egypt.

The unmarried men were reluctant to love or care for any woman, they felt falling

in love would be a waste of time as they would not be appropriate suitors. While these

men claimed to be reluctant to fall in love, many of them had girlfriends, and had hopes

of one day marrying her in the future, while worrying a wealthier suitor could one day

approach her family. The men emphasized that no work meant no marriage; concurrently

obtaining a job would not solve their problems but provide them a mediocre life filled

with financial burden, especially once children were conceived.

When interview participants were asked why sexual frustration is taken out on

women today compared to three decades ago, women discussed the obsession with sex,

and regarding women as sex objects. Rosewarner (2005, 2010) explored the harms of

sexualizing women through images found in advertising in public space and the

repercussions on society. Her findings suggest that as women are sexualized through

visible advertising, violence against women in public spaces increases. The inability to

separate the sexuailzation of women and images through media is perceived to be one of

the reasons for the increase in sexual harassment:

> Hanan (44): "People were simple before, there was no sex movies…but now
> men look at women like they're sex objects. People's morals changed with

globalization, the Internet, American movies and the influx of technology. Our youth understand, see and expect so much, so when they can't get married we can't be surprised they're harassing the women on the streets. It's their way of experimenting and coping with reality."

Bahera (56): " Harassment happens because we live in extreme poverty and we have social and religious restrictions on men. Premarital sex is prohibited, we know it's *haram,* but then our boys watch American movies where everyone is having sex, and want to have sex also, he can't understand why not him…He tries to get married, but can't, so when he sees a young girl, he thinks what does it matter if I touch her?"

Security Forces and the Normalization of Harassment and the Effects of the *Sawra*

Public authorities are often the most influential actors in the decline or increase in violence against women, as prominent members of society's public authority shape the political and social norms through their individual actions (Embrosettia et al, 2012). Public authorities (referring to police officers, lawmakers, and the military) in Egypt are an inherent disposition to the silencing of women (Amar, 2012). In Cairo, security forces have a large presence in public space, especially after the *sawra* (revolution). It is normal to see members of the military in the metro, or soldiers in tanks standing outside important sites such as the National Museum of Egypt, government offices and political spaces such as Tahrir Square.

A majority of the participants claimed that reporting incidents of *taharrush* to the police was not an action they would pursue for a few reasons including: lack of trust in legal authorities as they are often perpetrators of acts of harassment, legal authorities do not take complaints seriously and the participant's fear of decline in personal dignity.

When participants were asked if they would report acts of *taharrush* to security forces:

> Deena (21): "Sometimes it's the central security forces who harass women…instead of protecting people they're invading our personal space and harassing us."

> Nadine (20): "Ha! Why would I ever report to the police, they are the first to flirt and harass and sometimes rape, so why would I go to the men that harasses for protection from the same action?"

Assessments of the influence of the security forces within Egypt varied dramatically among the interview respondents. Participants with direct official connections, such as family or friends who are employed as high-ranking security officials, praised and valued the work and protection offered by the forces. Participants with direct connections emphasized they would seek the assistance of officials in extreme cases of harassment.

Participants with family members in the security forces claimed:

> Maha (21): " I feel protected by the police. They have female relatives so they understand the importance of protecting women."

> Amira (21): "If something happened to me I am the kind of girl to take a man to court, but the idea is that our population undermines issues of harassment. To take a man for harassing you to court you would be laughed at, it's not seen as important, you are not coming for a murder case. The only reason I can get my right or take things to court is because I know people…But if I didn't know any military or police officials I wouldn't have been able to do anything, since I do, I have the power to jail or ruin him for a while [Amira later discussed her experiences which she did not want to disclose in detail but hinted at having officers charge her perpetrators with other crimes such as drug dealing]."

> Jehan (57): "Yes, I believe officers would try to help me if I reported rape or harassment, but I don't know if they'd be able to get my rights. The problem is with the law here. The little girl Zana that got raped and thrown off the roof by her rapists, they got 15-25 years in jail only [a murder case that happened

in 2014, for additional information see El-Kady, 2014].We are very generous regarding crimes against women; the courts do not take them seriously. If they gave more serious punishments men wouldn't rape or harass women. Whereas other crimes get the death sentence"

Positive and personal connections with security forces appeared to be important for women as it provides feelings of protection. The positive correlation related to security forces were not linked to socio-economic background, but linked to the connection and value of the Egyptian security forces, specifically the military. I noticed the more a woman valued the military the safer she felt, whereas women who were critical of the security forces and government were more likely to critique the forces while feeling unprotected.

The lack of accountability by Egypt's security forces towards women allows acts of harassment to occur and become normalized. As the security forces are able to commit acts of violence against women without any form of repercussions other members of society will mimic the actions since there are no consequences since those who enforce the law are the ones committing the act.

Participants claimed that reporting a harassment case to the police was seen as irrelevant. If participants filed a complaint even if the police consider filing a report for the victim there would be no outcome of the report being filed, as it wouldn't be taken seriously. Participants suggested an inherent conflict within the structure is the overall apathy towards gender based violence and the lack of law and judicial power to detain or punish the perpetrator unless the officer sees the incident and considers it worth reporting.

According to Guibal (2009) The first case of sexual harassment reported to police officials was in 2008. Noha Rushdi, a young Egyptian woman, was groped by a truck driver and physically dragged him to court, as a result of which he will serve three years in prison and pay a fine of 5000 EP. Because of Rushdi's socio-economic status police officials were forced to take this case seriously, and were unable to slander her position within public space. In response to Rushdi's experiences within public space she has advocated to raise awareness about sexual harassment, however many officials' and Egyptians' response was to undermine her experiences by questioning her morals. Female advocates such as Rushdi who challenge the gender norms become slandered as "mannish thugs" often implying they are lesbians, and Zionists conspirators.

When participants were asked if they had any experiences with the court:

> Amira (20): " Listen, if you don't know anyone you have no power, nothing will come out of your complaint, this is Egypt. I know this girl who got physically harassed by a guy on a motorcycle so she started running after him and screaming, and people around her started running after him trying to help her, it became a huge thing, like seriously. But when they caught him and they found out she was harassed not robbed they were angry at her! This is the kind of population we have! They will protect your materialistic goods instead of your personal well-being."

Several participants felt that reporting acts of harassment to security officials is seen as a 'waste of time' with no positive outcome. Security officials project gender based violence as an insignificant conflict without merit, thus if women reported acts of harassment it would not be taken seriously, women would be told to reconsider the importance of their interest in filing a report. When women were asked what their perception of reporting an act would be:

Omnia (18):"Even if I go to the police station, if I am lucky, they'll just tell me 'ok we'll look into this' while actually doing nothing about it, but they will most likely blame me first or tell me I'm being dramatic and that I need to consider him like my brother."

Christina (44): "Women don't have the courage to go to the police. That's why they have to act in the moment. Even if she goes to the station, what are the police going to get for her? What could they even do? Maybe they will lock him up for 2 hours and then he will leave."

A Matter of Honor:

An equally important component of the unwillingness of participants and other women to report acts of harassment is personal worth and familial reputation.

During the interviews, the conversation occasionally led to the topic of rape and the consequences of rape on the survivors within Egypt. While certain participants stated if they were raped or intensely harassed they would report it to the police, the majority claimed they would not dare to report it, as it threatens their personal and familial reputations. In a conversation with Bahera, 58, she argued that the only benefit of reporting rape is if the rapist is forced to marry the woman, otherwise face prison time, she emphasized that marriage to the rapist is better than being alone because no man wants 'used goods' and that while the woman may lose respect within her family her familial reputation is saved.

A woman's sexual innocence and virginity is of utter (utmost) importance within Egyptian society, women should not be touched by men who are not their husbands, when such acts do occur it is seen as harmful to not only the woman but her family as well. When women are touched either with or without consent, the woman is seen as 'improper' which is why women are unlikely to report acts of *taharrush* specifically

extreme physical cases to the police or family members. The dichotomy of virgin and 'whore' appeared as the only two categories of sexual activity outside of the realm of marriage for women.

> Dina (32): " If a man touches me physically I will fight, but I won't talk about it, especially because I'm married I would feel ashamed. You know what happens most often? Women will come together to talk to each other, but to talk to their parents or a security force is impossible! There is such fear, everyone would ask how could you get harassed? This wouldn't happen if you were a good girl, what did he do? Where did he touch you? Are you still a virgin? They will question her innocence completely which is the largest fear."

Reporting harassment is not a simple act of filing paperwork and discussing the experience to a police officer in Egypt but is one filled with blame and questioning of the female's morals and innocence. The actions committed by officers are what limit women's willingness to report rape and other forms of harassment. It appears the blaming and questioning of a family member's innocence is connected to the denial and unwillingness to discuss sexual harassment as an issue of a few of the older women as seen in the first chapter: if women admitted sexual harassment is an issue within Cairo, then as mothers they would have to question whether their daughters have experienced any cases of *taharrush* and the extent to which it may affect their innocence.

The consequences of the revolution on the perception of taharrush

Regardless of age, and women's feelings towards security forces, 100 percent of the participants agreed that after the 2011 revolution their experiences of sexual harassment within Cairo had shifted for the worst due to the instability within the nation. Having lived in Egypt prior to the revolution I knew *taharrush*

occurred within Cairo before, however the *sawra* acted in a way that allowed Egyptians to discuss and unleash all of Egypt's problems that were otherwise normalized.

Growing up in Cairo I have vivid memories of discussing the political and economic state of Egypt and most people would shrug their shoulders and respond, "but this is Egypt, it works' (for similar findings see Bayat, 2010). After the *sawra,* most Egyptians had an opinion and wanted to discuss the state and their hopes for the future.

When participants were asked to discuss the hardest period they experienced within the streets of Cairo, 100 percent of participants discussed the revolution and the hardships faced when the security forces were removed from power.

> Nena (71): "I have never seen Egypt struggle like it has during the past three years (post-revolution), it felt like the years would never end. I've lived through a lot; the decolonization, the removal of the monarchy, wars against Israel, but nothing was like this, we were united and cared and fought together. Today, I feel limited in my actions, in terms like time I can be out, and I now fear for my daughters within our own neighborhood."

> Deena (21): "Three years ago, I would rather walk or take a cab, I actually didn't drive three years ago. I never thought I needed a car because I could take a cab anytime I wanted; I had the university bus, my family, or the driver around. But after the 2011 uprisings I found myself put in uncomfortable situations so I had to take matters into my own hands and become independent [getting her drivers license and a car to get out of any possible solution]. Post-revolution, in the blink of an eye the road can get blocked by protesters, thugs or police, and you find yourself trapped, where no one was be able to help you."

As noted in the presidential background section, the *sawra* removed government and police officials from the street, as they did not protect or support the masses. The sudden removal of the police generated anarchy within Cairo.

Prior to the *sawra* women anticipated harassment as a daily norm but never rape; however, post the 2011 and June 2013 revolutions, due to the numerous cases of gang rape within Tahrir and lack of law, rape became a common fear amongst women, even if they were unwilling to admit it. As participants emphasized knowing there were no security forces changed the perception of unknown men, men who at most were seen as potential harassers quickly became potential rapists. While this sounds gruesome, anarchy within any nation brings out people's' frustrations and barbaric traits. These characteristics are not exclusive to Egypt but can be seen internationally in post-conflict situations. When women were asked why the revolution was the hardest period regarding harassment:

> Um Sayaad (48): "I was on the metro one day and this man was harassing a woman, being too aggressive, and this other man decided to stand up for her, when the harasser pulled out a knife to make his point, luckily the harasser was alone, and the number of men on the metro car outnumbered him, but these incidents weren't uncommon after the horrid months after the revolution and not all ended so well."

> Aaya (21): "We were too scared to leave our houses, the amount of *bultaka* (crime) happening was unimaginable, my parents refused to let us out, if we went out they couldn't control or help if we came back alive or unhurt, without any authority, you were testing your luck."

> Zaynab (30):" Once during the revolution, I was heading home from work, and I felt someone walking behind me for a while. So I started walking faster, until I was close enough to start running home, so I could lose him, I barely made it in. This didn't only happen to me but lots of women, and even men.

If a man was nicely dressed he could get robbed or killed, and women raped. There was a lot, a lot of fear during and after the revolution, for everyone."

As the participants unanimously articulated: the revolution was emotionally exhausting. However, the *sawra* also acted as an essential backbone for women's initiatives regarding women's rights and sexual harassment. The revolution provided the opportunity for women, who previously would have been silent about harassment, the ability to verbalize their experiences and the need for change (this is not to assume that women were silenced previous to the *sawra* but because of the high percentage of harassment that occurred within Tahrir Square Egyptians could not deny harassment as an issue). For the first time in decades Egyptians couldn't ignore or shrug off the state of Egypt, the *sawra* forced everyone to talk, more importantly it was the first time I can remember that Egyptians were hopeful that maybe a better life was ahead of them. When women were asked if they protested:

> Amira (20): " I used to protest in Tahrir, it wouldn't make sense otherwise! I would turn on the TV, and standing in the middle of Tahrir protesting was always women, just like me. It made me realize that she doesn't have anything that I don't; yet she had the courage to go protest for her rights! I'm not the kind of girl to care, but during the *sawra* you had to."

> Momena (56): "The reason we have harassment is our government is a failure...Which is why I would go and protest during the revolution… I went through several intense moments, like getting tear-gassed but it was all worth it… I need to stand up and give women a voice, if I don't who will? I work so hard everyday, I clean floors, and deal with all kinds of people to try and give my children a better life… I don't want my children to face my hardships. I want them to be educated, and be safe in the streets. It's important for women to come together and realize our difficulties."

While the revolution gave citizens the opportunity to protest and empowered millions of Egyptians, it also acted as a form of justification for issues in Egypt by suggesting that issues didn't exist before the *sawra.*

Throughout my interviews with some of the participants over the age of thirty-five, and in conversations during my ethnographic research I found a recurring theme of rejection of *taharrush* as an issue that existed prior to the *sawra*. Certain participants would argue that sexual harassment was not a real issue Egyptian women faced, but a conspiracy created by Western media to sabotage the state of Egypt. Some Egyptians were convinced that incidents of *taharrush* are limited to Tahrir.

> Marwa (39): "We are a Muslim nation we don't have issues of harassment. We don't have young men standing in the streets anymore or distressing our girls. These problems are related to the Ikwan [Muslim Brotherhood] hiring men to create havoc, their thugs stand on the streets harassing women, they are the ones causing issues to our population. But without them everything goes well. Before the revolution we didn't have harassment or rape it was the Ikhwan."

However, when I would probe the same women who denied sexual harassment existed, whether they feared *taharrush* could affect their daughters, they all agreed they worried for their daughter's' safety, and that sexual harassment is something that could happen. The mothers attempted to assure me *taharrush* would not affect women like their daughters who are "proper and respectable", as harassment was targeted at women who were not dressed appropriately.

Manal, 60, confidentially stated that what makes her uncomfortable within the streets of Cairo is:

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"When I see a young girl wearing clothes that are too revealing or tight. As a Muslim nation we know otherwise, it is not appropriate. When you leave a piece of uncovered candy all the flies will come all over it and want to taste it, but if you have a piece of covered candy the flies won't notice it. These are the women that create harassment [Similar explanations are found in Sandels, 2010]."

As I finished the interview with Manal her 21-year-old daughter, who I later interviewed, arrived wearing leggings, and a tight shirt with her colorful hijab. While Manal had described women like her daughter as scandalous for seeking the attention of men by wearing "inappropriate clothes," she later stated her daughter was "proper". In my attempts to understand Manal's conception of harassment, I discussed with her my personal experiences of harassment, to which she responded in shock, and told me the only reason that would occur is because the man must have sensed my 'foreignness'' which gave him a sense of entitlement. Concurrently, when interviewing Manal's daughter she did agree that sexual harassment was an issue she faced. Women like Manal and Marwa are not uncommon within Egypt, specifically within the older generations and conservative families. The inability to discuss women's issues by women themselves is a part of the larger issue of violence against women within Egypt. If not all women can support one another and talk about an apparent issue that needs to be addressed; it cannot be expected for a nation to solve that issue.

Major Findings:

This chapter reported the key findings on women's experiences with sexual harassment, and their understandings of why sexual harassment has become normalized in Cairo.

The section on the prevalence of harassment experiences highlighted seven key findings regarding the different perspectives on *taharrush.* (1) The omnipresence of *taharrush* and its normality. The research found the subconscious and conscious efforts women put forth to avoid being harassed if possible, while realizing regardless of their actions or efforts to dress modestly, harassment is inevitable. While the participants did not feel helpless or fearful, they felt they could not stop harassment from occurring.

(2) Sexual harassment is a problem women did not face prior to the past three decades. Women over the age of thirty-five could not relate to the severity of women's experiences of harassment today. Interviewees reported that prior to the past three decades, women's experiences within Cairo were safe and peaceful; men flirted with women rather than harassed them, which was projected through the level of respect.

(3) The decline in *akhle* as discussed by participants suggested that as poverty and population size increase people are no longer taught *akhle*. Community within Cairo allows people to care and value one another, thus as this feeling is taken away the younger generations born during Mubarak's era grow up in isolation, feeling no connection to their fellow Egyptians.

(4) Educational institutions are where children and young adults spend most of their days, the roles of their teachers and peers is equally powerful as those of their family in promoting *akhle.* As teachers have become under-paid and over-worked as

Sadat removed the emphasis on government support, teachers are less likely to claim accountability to these children by promoting societal values.

(5) The nonchalant response of society when *taharrush* occurred in public space promotes the normalization of sexual harassment. Primarily through the ethnographic component of this research, it became apparent that acts of harassment were projected as an annoyance for strangers to deal with instead of an act of injustice that needed to be addressed.

(6) The gendering of spaces in Cairo was linked to the increased cases of harassment within spaces projected as 'male dominated'. Victim blaming was highly noticeable in these defined areas.

(7) As sexual harassment is silenced through its normality, younger generations observe and project *taharrush* as the normal way to potentially meet women, means of passing time or having fun with his friends.

Through this chapter, the social norms in Cairo are understood as part of the conflict in normalizing sexual harassment. Cairo's social norms no longer focus and demand respect and the humanization of others but has become individualistic while alienating those around, specifically women. Women's social importance has been undermined as social norms have become gendered and uncompassionate. The shift in social norms is related to the economic and political shifts within the nation that have removed the sense of community.

Two significant findings emerge from the marriage crisis section: the desperation behind the inability to get married and men's sexual frustration.

The frustration and perceptions that the youth would not be able to attain marriage at the point and style that they desire and dream for has created severe tension within Egyptian youth to which young men take out their frustration on women in the streets.

The increase in *taharrush* was linked to a sense of entitlement men possess over women. Men's inability to get married or seek employment employment justified their acts in order to attain sexual gratification. The act of sexual harassment was projected as a form of escape from the reality Egyptian youth face.

The final section on security and sexual harassment highlighted four major findings: instigation of *taharrush* by security forces, lack of consequence, fear of personal reputation and the consequences of the revolution. (1) The security forces' projection as major actors in issues of harassment creates a limited safety and legal network women can access. Certain participants claimed they would be unwilling to report acts of harassment to the police forces due to their personal experiences with security forces. (2) Participants without connections within the security forces stated they were unwilling and unlikely to file a police report as they did not believe the outcome would be fruitful, which is caused by the police's nonchalant perspective pertaining to harassment and lack of legal support relating to crimes against women. (3) Participants claimed that Egyptian women are unlikely to report cases of harassment, specifically rape out of fear of personal and familial reputations that could have strong consequences, thus women were more likely to suffer silently than risk their reputations. (4) The 2011 revolution was the most difficult time for Egyptians to cope with as a nation, specifically women as sexual harassment had no limits. Concurrently, certain women insisted that

sexual harassment did not occur prior to the revolution, nor did sexual harassment exist outside of Tahrir Square. Some Women insisted that members of the *Ikhwan* were hired to harass women to cause havoc in Cairo, while neglecting the governments role and normality of sexual violence in Cairo.

Understanding why women don't report cases or talk about harassment is important for several reasons: lack of safety, providing proactive solutions, ending gender based violence, creating political responsibility, and the lack of statistics and facts regarding harassment. Thus, understanding women's opinions on the role of the security forces and the consequences on women is essential in improving transitional Egypt.

Chapter 5: Beyond the stares, words and touches: Combating *taharrush*

Introduction:

This research explored underlying factors that contributed to the increase in sexual harassment in the past two decades in Cairo, at the micro and macro level including: increase in poverty, decline in community, the marriage crisis, educational reforms, and the militarization of violence against women. None of these findings alone provide a holistic explanation to understand the normalization of sexual harassment within Cairo, nor did one component have higher importance. Only when the findings are understood as connecting pieces with equal importance does the increase in *taharrush* make sense.

The first section will explore key findings that have emerged from this thesis, the prevalence of *taharrush*, justifications and rationale given by men and women, and economic connections to sexual harassment. The second section will analyze changes that need to occur within Cairo to combat sexual harassment. The final section will discuss areas this thesis did not examine to further understand issues of harassment. Then a recap of this research will be provided in the final conclusions.

The prevalence of taharrush:

The most prominent finding that emerged from this research is the prevalence and normalization of sexual harassment. The prevalence of *taharrush* as a new phenomenon is made apparent in interviews with the different generations' experiences in Cairo. Women that lived under Nasser, Sadat, and the first decade of Mubarak, emphasized that

Cairo felt safe to them. Concurrently, they did not have anxieties over what to wear, issues of harassment or other forms of violence within public spaces because they were confident that their communities would condemn any inappropriate act. On the other hand, the younger participants unanimously agreed that they often felt anxious in public spaces out of fear of potential issues of harassment. This research filled a gap as no other research has examined *taharrush* as an issue to emerge within the past three decades in Cairo.

Similar to UN Women's (Shalaby, 2013) report that found that 99.3 percent of Egyptian women have experienced sexual harassment at some point in their lives this research found that all women could relate to issues of sexual harassment within Cairo. However, this research differed by showing that the older women were less likely to be harassed on a daily basis. The older generations claimed that *taharrush* is something they worried about for their daughters rather than themselves.

The normalization and emergence of *taharrush* defies the notion that many sexual harassment scholars held, that a single explanation could be contributed as the reasons for sexual harassment. As the participants highlighted, *taharrush* cannot be explained by a single reason but as a combination of reasons that emerged during Mubarak's second decade of ruling.

Economics and Taharrush:

One of the major findings in this research was the link interviewees perceived between the decline in the social welfare state and the increase of sexual harassment. The decline in social welfare programs included the deterioration in the education system, the

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decline in employment opportunities, stagnant wages, and the high costs of living, specifically housing.

Scholars such as Viswanath and Mehrotra (2007), Neupane and Chesney-Lind (2014) make clear that women's economic status affects their experiences of sexual harassment. While all the participants in this research could relate to sexual harassment, women's economic situation and employment was related to the levels of harassment they were subjected to. Women from higher socio-economic backgrounds could afford to choose their method of commute, which created spatial distance between themselves and perceived sexual harassers. As seen in Nepal (Chesney-Lind & Neupane, 2014) and Japan (Horii & Burgess, 2012) public transport is one of the largest spaces for women to experience sexual harassment.

This research also found that participants regardless of age tried to avoid male dominated spaces, such as *ahwas* and parks. Like De Koning's (2009) research this research also found that women from higher socio-economic backgrounds could afford to gather in gender-neutral spaces such as coffee shops where women and men interact normally. However this research found that gender-neutral establishments were not limited to women from upper socio-economic backgrounds. Women from middle and lower socio-economic backgrounds also had access to gender-neutral spaces. Gender-neutral spaces were not simply limited to *raki* neighborhoods but exist within *shaabi* neighborhoods as well. Malls, theatres and coffee shops are seen throughout *shaabi* neighborhoods catering to the diverse financial backgrounds of the region giving access

to women from different financial sectors. However, to get to these facilities, regardless of socio-economic background, participants still needed to navigate the streets or metro.

S*haabi* neighborhoods were also largely seen as undesirable places to be in, due to issues related to pollution, overpopulation and potential threats of sexual harassment. Sims (2012) and Caldeira's (2009) important work reminded us that shantytowns are home to most people within developing countries. Even though *shaabi* neighborhoods are home to 75 percent of Egyptians (Sims, 2012) participants suggested they avoided such neighborhoods, except their own, whenever they had the opportunity. Participants claimed that issues of *taharrush* could happen in either *raki* or *shaabi* neighborhoods but were more likely to occur in *shaabi* neighborhoods by men from lower socio-economic backgrounds as a consequence of their economic frustrations. However, it is not only men from lower socio-economic backgrounds who commit acts of *taharrush* but men from middle and higher socio-economic backgrounds as well.

Lahsaeizadeh and Yousenfinejad (2012) found their participants were more accepting of forms of sexual harassment committed by men from higher socio-economic backgrounds as their comments were often less vulgar and less physical than men from lower socio-economic dispositions. Participants' in both studies suggested that men from higher socio-economic backgrounds were often in cars that created a physical space or gathered in gender-neutral spaces that enforced a safe space by default.

While the economic repercussions that have emerged under Mubarak's governments explain some of the economic aspects relating to the increase of sexual harassment, the economic argument alone does not encompass the entirety of this

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research. It is important recognize that the 'marriage crisis' hypothesis acted as a form of justification of why sexual harassment has increased according to the participants. This justification ignores the fact that many of the harassment acts on the streets of Cairo are perpetrated by boys who are not even old enough to be married. The 'marriage crisis' allowed participants to make sense of the world around them by justifying and sympathizing with the people engaging in harassment. The importance of having ways to "make sense" of events will be explored further in the following sections.

Just World Theory:

An unexpected finding was that some of the older women denied that sexual harassment was a conflict facing Egyptian society, despite acknowledging concern for harassment faced by their daughters.

Lerner's (1980) Just World Theory posits that people want to believe the world is a sound, rational and just place. In a rational and fair world if people have good behavior they will be rewarded, while bad people and bad actions are punished. Such a world creates predictability and comfort. However, if events occur that threaten the individual's belief of fairness, the individual will act in an "irrational" way to justify their beliefs, such as denial, withdrawal and victim blaming.

By applying the Just World Theory to participants who denied, rejected and blamed other women for cases of sexual harassment, their behavior can be better understood. By believing that *taharrush* does not exist, the participants could believe the world is just, fair and rational. This belief allows them to continue living their lives without believing harm will come to those around them. When women who fall under the

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Just World Theory discussed issues of sexual harassment they claimed that sexual harassment only happened to a 'certain type of woman' suggesting that the victim was bringing unwanted attention to herself.

Maintaining women's piety within the Egyptian context was often seen as a tool to control women's actions and limit conversations on sexual harassment. Throughout this research I heard that proper women do not dress in a certain way, go out at certain times or interact in certain places with certain people. The social perception of piety and morality seemed to be more important than women's beliefs and values, specifically for Muslim women.

This argument does not apply to every hijabee, as numerous women emphasized that the hijab acts as a tool of empowerment. (Deeb 2006, Mahmood 2005, Abou-Lughod 2008). Bayat (2010, 40) suggested that Muslim youth have created their own ideals of youthful piety. This can be observed through the youthful fashion of tight and colorful clothing with a contemporary style to wear the hijab, such as the Spanish style (women tie the hijab as a bandana while covering their hair, but showing their necks). Modern youthfulness, fashion and the hijab cannot be undermined as current fashion in Cairo mimics Western style with the incorporation of the hijab.

Furthermore, certain places forcefully discouraged hijabees to enter as a form of social control. Ashraf Khalil (2009) discussed hijab free zones in Cairo, which primarily included establishments that serve alcohol, such as lounges, nightclubs and high-end restaurants. These establishments would often turn hijabees away to 'protect their

morality'. Through the deeply embedded perceptions of piety, in relation to the hijab, men are able to control women's sexuality and mobility, thus disempowering them.

The attempt to control women's movements within public space and their attire comes down to the obsession with purity and innocence of unmarried women. Participants spoke about fashion, dating and partying as something they were curious about but they could not act on it out of fear of their image. Participants did not necessarily strive for premarital sex as numerous women believe in abstaining, but felt concerned that men would consider them 'loose', that men don't date the women they marry (Bayat suggest that 73 percent of men interviewed would have sex with a woman in a relationship but would not marry her, 2010, 44).

Overcoming violence against women with the new government:

Legal Reform:

With the new El-Sisi government, genuine political changes regarding women's rights need to occur. Under the Mubarak government women were given numerous rights, however, those rights did not translate to the ground level. Unfortunately after the two regime changes, women's rights have suffered drastically, as described in Chapter 1.

Once the 2014 presidential elections results declared El-Sisi to be the winner, millions of Egyptian celebrated at Tahrir Square. During the celebrations one young woman was sexually assaulted by a gang of men to an extent that she had to be hospitalized. Reacting swiftly to this incident and the numerous incidents of *taharrush* that took place in Tahrir Square, El Sisi personally went to the hospital to apologize to her and her family and promised the country legal reform. Furthermore, in July 2014,

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amendments were made in article 306 of the penal code to outlaw acts of sexual harassment (Ahram Online Staff, 2014). The newly enacted law criminalizes sexual harassment in the form of words, gestures, and actions expressed in person or through other means of communication. The penalty attached with the new law is a minimum sentence of 6 months imprisonment and a fine of 3,000 Egyptian pounds. Moreover, the second amendment to the article legalizes harsher sentence for perpetrators in a position of authority over the victim and for offences involving multiple perpetrators (such as mob attacks).

While the legal criminalization of sexual harassment is a large political gain for El-Sisi's government, and El-Sisi often emphasizes the importance of women's roles while addressing the nation, mere legal reform is not enough. During Mubarak's presidency, Egypt was considered progressive in terms of women's rights within MENA. However, there was a gap between the politics and the enforcement of laws, with a lack of initiation of criminal cases by security officials. If repercussions existed for all security officials for the maltreatment of women, only then would gender-based violence be taken more seriously. Amira's legal case highlights the severity of the problem (found in Meerman, 2015).

Amira 26, was taking the metro home when she felt a man put his hands down her skirt: her response was to physically drag him to the nearest police station to file a complaint against the perpetrator. However, when she arrived at the police station the officers told her to go home. However when she insisted:

""The officers knew who my father is, where he works and what his boss' name is. 'Surely your father wouldn't like to hear that his daughter is a whore' one of them said.

They stood uncomfortably close to me the whole time and everybody in the building seemed to be undressing me with their eyes. They catcalled me and whispered dirty comments (Meerman, 2015)."

Determined to bring the perpetrator to justice, Amira insisted on reporting the case, until she became exhausted with her entire neighborhood including street vendors, her doorman, relatives she didn't even know and her direct family telling her to drop the case.

Cases like this are not rare in Egypt. Specifically the police's ability to jail Egyptians to deter them from speaking against the police or social norms is almost standard. Corruption and lack of regulations allows officers to undermine civilians' legal rights while creating false cases to silence and deter others from filing cases they deem irrelevant. Thus gender sensitivity training programs need to be implemented. I suggest mandatory police training with gender sensitivity courses and minority rights, employment of female officers, prosecution of police officers for harassing women or undermining complaints about violence against women, specifically sexual harassment. Moreover, a government body should be created where women can file complaints against officers committing acts of gender-based violence. If the government does not take action to enforce its new laws cases of sexual harassment will continue to be the norm.

Economic Reform

As the marriage crisis was one of the largest justifications of *taharrush* and a general frustration faced by Egyptians, issues dealing with unemployment amongst the youth and high costs of living must also be dealt with by the current government to bring

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about change in a sustainable fashion. As El-Sisi's one year anniversary just passed he has implemented numerous programs to combat issues relating to the economic difficulties of the youth, such as: a project to build 1 million low income housing units for Egyptian youth and the expansion of the Suez Canal which has employed hundreds of Egyptian youth and numerous other government projects to expand youth employment. While El-Sisi's government reassures the population they are working to fix Egypt, more employment opportunities must be created within low-income neighborhoods. Living in Cairo one realizes that the majority of work is done through the informal sector. If the government were to formalize certain informal services within Egypt such as trash and recycling collection or maintenance of street cleanliness, this could provide hundreds of Egyptians with a stable source of income. The current informal system allows each household to pay what they deem fit or what they can afford while workers remain underpaid, which creates a sense of desperation.

Finally El-Sisi's government needs to change the educational curriculum taught at public schools that are often attended by lower income families and increase wages of teachers. According to the ECWR (2012) The Egyptian curricula discriminates against women in that it draws stereotypical images of women that focus primarily on her reproductive role. Furthermore, the inclusion of sexual education and human rights will not only enhance the status of individuals within Egypt but will teach children about their own rights and responsibilities while providing them with an insight into their sexuality.

Women's Initiatives:

While harassment in Egypt has reached disgraceful levels, Egyptian women are making efforts to end *taharrush*. Over the past couple of years Egyptians have shattered the deafening silence by terming harassment as an activity that falls outside the realm of the normal. Numerous of organizations have created initiatives across Egypt to raise awareness in attempts to stop harassment. These initiatives vary from local practices and programs, to UN Women's Safe Cities project, and governmental reforms and social media.

> Omina (18): "I got so tired of hearing about girl's stories of harassment so I decided to take charge. I created an anti-harassment campaign in my high school where I try and encourage other girls to speak up against harassment and protect ourselves. One little trick is to keep an extra pin in our hijab incase someone comes to attack we can poke him. These little things make the difference, and give us the space to talk about our issues!"

Omnia claims that projects like hers are numerous throughout Cairo and that Egyptian women are fighting against traditional gender norms. Furthermore, UN Women works with several think tanks, NGOs, educational institutions and not-for profits to end violence against women. Safe Cities aims at reducing the prevalence of violence against women and girls in public spaces by working at the policy level to have laws that effectively prevent and protect women and girls. In addition, Safe Cities has also designed field interventions in three slum communities in Cairo with the aim of creating a model of a "safe city" that can be scaled up and replicated. Safe Cities invests in the power of the people to bring about positive change to the attitudes and behaviors towards women's rights and their safety. In attempts to end sexual harassment, UN Women created a campaign in 2014 in which every university in Egypt was asked to create a

business plan that would assist in ending sexual harassment. Projects varied from women opening small convenience stores to provide lighting in streets, to self-defense courses and literacy campaigns. In a personal conversation with Noha Saad Zaghloul, project director of Safe Cities stated:

> "There are many threats from effective judicial procedures, services, lack of education and poverty. However to me the biggest challenge is cultural perceptions about women's bodies as sexual objects due to the unequal power relations between men and women that is deeply rooted in the Egyptian culture."

Projects by UN Women attempt to reeducate students and the general Egyptian population about harassment and utilize ideas by Egyptians to create sustainable change. Thousands of local initiatives across Egypt have been enacted to end harassment towards women. Anti-harassment initiatives have different aims which include raising awareness through the streets/social media and schools, raising awareness through theatre and encouraging women to speak up and receive psychological counseling. While these initiatives vary in magnitude they have one thing in common; they speak up against harassment. Some initiatives include stopping harassment by the use of physical force, albeit through peaceful means, such as *Bessma* ("Imprint" in Arabic). In a personal conversation with Nihal Saad Zaghloul, co-founder of *Bessma,* she states that after she was physically harassed during the Egyptian revolution, she co-founded *Bessma* to stop harassment. *Bessma* has volunteers that monitor the streets of Cairo during the Muslim holiday *Eid* to protect women from harassment. Their volunteers stand in groups in populated areas on the lookout for incidents of harassment and protect women by creating a human chain around them. Zaghloul claims that:

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"Unlike other organizations who use the argument she's like your sister or mother we are more direct about a human rights approach. I will tell him 'How do you feel if I grope you or grab your chest right now?' And he often gets awkward and says it doesn't work like that, in which I respond well it doesn't work with you touching her either. Our culture alienates women as sexual beings which is why creating the link between the same feeling is important."

Harassmap is an online organization that allows women to report harassment by SMS or online; women anonymously report what happened, where and when. *Harassmap* provides a map of Egypt with red dots that represent the number of harassment incidents that happen in a particular region. The map creates a clear picture of where harassment most often occurs which allows the organization to further analyze probable causes for harassment in that locale. Moreover, an annual report is drafted which provides statistics of direct information obtained through the *Harassmap,* surveys, and the work of their partners. *Harassmap* provides women with the requisite tools to report their stories and use these stories to create campaigns to end the blaming of women as inviting harassment on themselves through their clothes and their acts. As Egyptians are often in denial that harassment occurs within Egypt to "pious" women, *Harassmap* uses stories and campaigns to change Egyptian perceptions of harassment while providing numbers that can be used to demand legal reform (Harassmap).

Admitting to harassment, whether as the harassed or harasser, is often a difficult and shameful process to overcome, thus in understanding why men harass, finding a safe space was essential. Discussing reality through theatre often provides a safe space for groups to come together to project reality. Jessica Senehi (2009, 203-12) states that storytelling allows individuals to cope with their realities, especially in difficult times,

and pass down their perspectives of important life components onto the audience, by telling their realities and purpose to the audience.

Bussy ("look" in Arabic) is a theatre group that originally emerged out of the American University of Cairo. *Bussy* performs skits and monologues submitted anonymously from both men and women relating to gender issues within Cairo, such as the pressure to get married, gender roles, difficulties of parenthood or sexual harassment. The idea of *Bussy* emerged from the need to discuss gendered issues within Egypt that are silenced through shame and lack of space by both men and women (Attalah, 2010).

Furthermore, it is essential to note that nearly every participant felt more empowered than the generations before her. When participants were asked how they felt the role of women has changed since the times of their daughter or mothers:

> Maha (21): "I think of my grandma or my mom and I know I have more rights. I have the right to education, drive and vote, but they didn't. And more than that I can speak my mind and people will respect me."

> Hannan (44): "I look at my 8 year old daughter today and I know she has more rights than I did at her age. My husband and I speak to her as an adult with opinions, she is part of her life choices. This generation is blessed and empowered."

Thus, regardless of issues of *taharrush* Egyptian women did not perceive themselves as powerless victims of oppression but as strong women with rights that were willing to fight to make life better.

Future Research:

This research explored Christian and Muslim women's experiences but did not examine other visible minorities within the country and did not interview women who do

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not speak Arabic. Further research must examine Somali, Syrian and other refugees' experiences of sexual harassment within Cairo, as they are at a higher vulnerability level. This is an important aspect to understanding the many layers of harassment within Cairo. Understanding refugees' experiences with sexual harassment will highlight issues of poverty, spatial segregation, and two important issues this research did not examine, language and visible distinctions.

Further research must focus on harassment in relationship to article 375, experiences with security officials and other women's empowerment legislations. Such research would provide insight into the government's progress respecting sexual harassment. This would identify reforms that need to be undertaken for women to feel confident with security forces without a *wasta* (the Arabic term for patrimonialism). During my last visit in Cairo, a year after the research was conducted, on the metro I noticed that men from the military were on duty to stand at the female section of the metro to remove men who ventured in, thus enforcing women's safe spaces. However, that was the only time I took the metro during my stay in Cairo thus further research is needed on whether this is sustainable and long term practices.

Research should also examine cross-generational experiences of men and sexual harassment in order to grasp why men harass women if at all. During this research a gap between the genders was highly apparent specifically in regards to conversations on gender-based violence. This would give an insight into men's understandings of why sexual harassment occurs. Alongside, a forum between men and women must be initiated

to assess ways to eliminate sexual harassment and other forms of gender based violence without undermining and eliminating either of the gender.

Finally, further research needs to assess the impact of the various initiatives described above that are aimed at combating sexual harassment.

Conclusions

As Mona El-Tahawy (2015) emphasized Egyptians brought the 2011 revolution because they understood and related to the political oppression of all Egyptians. However, Egypt is in need of a gendered revolution, in which the oppression of the regime, streets and home towards women are addressed and reformulated. While the 2011 revolution led women to speak up about gender based violence, by providing the political space for women's voices to be heard, the average Egyptian is not ready to have a conversation on *taharrush*. As this research indicates, the unfortunate reality is that Egypt has gone backwards with respect to women's freedoms. Prior to the past two decades women argued they had more freedom to dress and travel to different parts of the city without the gendering of spaces. It is critical to note that none of the participants felt powerless or voiceless. While *taharrush* is a large problem, it does not stop women from living their lives. Each woman I came in contact with throughout this research rebelled against patriarchy in her own way. Concurrently, every woman also agreed that they have gained numerous rights in comparison to those of previous generations. Thus, while Egypt has made numerous political enhancements for women, these rights have not made their way towards the streets of Cairo yet.

My hope is that this research contributes to a better understanding of sexual harassment within the MENA region, while attempting to empower academics and politicians to take action towards making social and economic changes that are reflective of the political empowerment women have gained within the past three decades which, however, unfortunately has yet to affect the lives of women within the public or private sphere.

It is my fervent hope that this research and the voice of the women, who participated in it, contributes to a safe, empowered and harassment free Egypt to be secured for all men, women and children.

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Appendix 1. English Script for Oral Consent

Hello, my name is Heba Abdel-hamid. I'm a master's student of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Manitoba in Canada. Here is my card, with all my personal contact information, and my university advisers contact information in case you need to further contact me, or would like to get in contact with him regarding any concerns.

I'm conducting research relating to the generational difference women experience within public space. I want to understand how Egyptian women experience the public space, and what the largest challenges they face are, and how this is related to the different presidents.

If you would be interested, I would like to ask you some questions relating to your experiences and opinions in Cairo. I would like to record our conversation so I can later remember our conversation; however you have the option to say no. If you are uncomfortable with the audio recording of our conversation I will take notes throughout to later remember our conversation.

No one will see the notes, or hear the conversation that will take place between you and I. I will not write down your name anywhere, just your answers, for your confidentiality.

I will ask you questions about your experiences within public space, such as "Where do you go? With who? What's your daily experience like?" The interview will last approximately an hour and a half.

As experiences are sometimes difficult, you do not have to tell me everything, just what you feel comfortable sharing. If at any point you feel uncomfortable you can skip a question, or we can stop the interview. If you decide to stop the interview I will not use any of the information disclosed and will delete our conversation. This is completely voluntary.

It is important for you to know that because (previous participant's name) referred you, you do not have to participate. If you chose not to, I will not inform them of your decision. Concurrently, participation in this interview won't have any direct benefits for you, but it may help with the understanding of women's struggles in Cairo.

The University of Manitoba's Research Ethics Board Committee has approved this research, however they may require accessing our conversations for safety and quality

assurance purposes. If you have any concerns or complaints about this research you can contact them directly at 1- 204-474-7122.

Do you have any questions or concerns you would like to address?

Please keep in mind if you are uncomfortable at any point, or wish to stop the interview we can stop at any time.

Would you like to start the interview?

If no-thank you for your time, and consideration.

If yes:
Do you agree to audio-recording?

A research summary will be provided to you by September 2014, by your choice of means.

Thank you so much, and now we will begin the interview process.

Appendix 2. English Semi-structured Interview Questions

Part I: Background Information

- Participant Number:
- Age:
- Gender:
- Religion:
- Martial Status:
- Neighborhood:
- Level of education:

Part II: Daily Experience

Lets begin by discussing your daily interactions within Cairo.

1. Tell me about your daily movements within public space?
A. Where do you go?
B. What method of commuting do you use?

2. How do you view your social relations within this space?

3. How do you regard your time within public space?
4. How do you dress when you go out?
A. Does it differ depending on where you're going or how you're getting there?

5. Who do you go out with?
A. Do you rely on someone else to go out?
B. Are you more comfortable when with other people?

Part III: Female interactions
Lets discuss your experiences as a female

1. What are the biggest challenges you face within public space if any?

2. As a female, do you think these challenges differ from those men face?
A. If yes, why is there a difference?

3. How do you deal with these challenges?

4. Do these challenges limit your actions within public space, and decisions affecting your personal life?
A. Are you less likely to visit certain place?
B. Does reflect employment opportunities?

Part IV: Street Safety

Lets discuss issues of street safety within Cairo

1. What makes you feel the most uncomfortable within the streets?

2. How often do you deal with this issue?

3. Do you face issues of harassment within the streets?
A. Is it physical or verbal?
B. What do you do?
C. Do you dress differently?
D. Are you more covered? Does the hijab make you feel more comfortable?

4. Do you face these issues more in certain places?
A. Is time a factor?
B. What do you when you experience harassment?

5. Is there a stereotypical predator in your opinion that is more likely to conduct these kinds of actions?
A. Who is he?
B. Why does he act this way?

6. Do you feel protected by the police? Why or why not?

Part V: Life Experience

I would like to discuss your experiences in Cairo throughout the different presidential regimes.

1. Looking back at your life do you feel that your presence or interactions in the public space has changed if at all?

2. For better or worst?

3. What are the major changes that come to mind?
A. Attire, domestic, social, economic roles?

4. What political events do you feel are tied to the decrease or increase of women's status in public space?

5. Have issues of harassment always been apparent within Cairo?
A. If yes, have they increased?
B. If yes, why do you think this is?

6. Do you feel your experiences within the public space have differed from younger or older generations?
A. How so?
B. What do you relate tot his?

Part VI: Egypt today and the future.

I want to discuss your opinion of Egypt post-revolution

1. Have your experiences in public space changed since the Egyptian revolution?

2. Did you protest why or why not?

3. What are your greatest fears for Egypt?

4. Why have changes been more apparent if at all since the Egyptian revolution?
A. Have these issues always existed?

5. What aspirations and hope do you have for the future of Egypt, and how do you suggest these changes come about?

6. What if anything do women need to change to gain security?

7. What if anything do men need to change to gain security?

8. Do governmental changes need to take place?
A. If so what?