Arab Women, Red Lines:
The Anti-Sexual Harassment Movement in Egypt

by

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Contents

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Abstract

Since the Egyptian revolution of 2011, national and international reports noting the prevalence of sexual street harassment in Egypt have proliferated, establishing sexual harassment as one of Egypt's greatest societal ills. Although sexual harassment is a global phenomenon, its existence in Egypt is particularly notable due to the high percentage of Egyptian women who have experienced some form of this type of violence in their lifetime. In this thesis, I trace the development of the phenomenon in Egypt, and emphasize the importance of formulating a national response appropriate to the Egyptian context, rather than implanting the international human rights regime's formula and approach to the issue. I argue that this contextual response exists in the form of an Anti-Sexual Harassment (A-SH) movement, composed of Egyptian civil society groups and latent networks of female victims and their allies. This thesis examines prominent social movement theories for their capacity to explain the rise of this movement, and critiques them for their dependence on Western social movements as models of analysis, and subsequent assumptions of non-authoritarian state contexts. I conclude that the contextual and local focus of the A-SH movement has allowed it to achieve societal impact and to shift public understanding of sexual harassment. In identifying the impending opportunities and challenges presented by Egypt's authoritarian regime and increasing foreign involvement, I emphasize the need for the movement to remain autonomous and contextual in focus.

Introduction

It is difficult to remember all the details of my worst experience with sexual harassment, partially because I have tried to forget them, but mostly because it is the emotional and psychological effects that have dominated and haunted my memory of the incident. It was late afternoon when my two friends and I shuffled onto the public bus with countless other men and women returning home for the day. My friends filled a seat, so I sat next to an older woman in the seat in front of them. The space was small and compact but the aisle to my right left me with a couple inches of room to spare. As people filed onto the bus, it quickly became clear that the seats could not accommodate them, and many would have to remain standing in the aisle. The bus doors slammed shut and the wheels started turning, and we began our twenty-minute journey.

A few minutes into the ride, I became acutely aware of the man towering over me as he stood in the aisle. I avoided eye contact, lest he mistake that for an invitation, but I could feel the intensity of his gaze penetrating into my every pore and settling uncomfortably at the pit of my stomach. Suddenly I felt light pressure against the top of my arm, near my shoulder. I moved instantly away from the aisle and squeezed in as tightly as possible next to the old woman. The pressure against my arm followed my movements. Clearly this was not an issue of space. To my horror, the point of contact on my arm did not remain stationary - slowly I felt the pressure slide down my arm. In an attempt to escape from this unwanted contact, and perhaps also to make it obvious to others what was happening, I pulled my arms into my stomach and curled myself into a ball against the seat back in front of me. Rather than subside, the pressure was applied more forcefully. What was he touching me with? His hand? His arm? His hip? Did I want to know? The minutes were agonizingly long and the range of my emotions overwhelmed me. I wanted to

scream at him for violating my body and intimate space. I wanted to yell for the others to move

him away from me. I wanted the old woman to chide him for his shameful and immoral behavior.

I wanted to curse, I wanted to run, I wanted to cry.

For the remainder of the ride, that bus seat became my psychological chamber of

torment. I felt suffocated by my own inadequacy, stifled by my fear of yelling and causing a

scene, and disgusted by my helplessness as a woman. Why wouldn't he stop stroking me? How

could he think that I was his to violate? Why had I lost my agency and power to command him to

stop? The duration of the bus trip and my inability to escape him seemed to increase his

entitlement to my body and increase my subordination to his touch. I had been harassed before –

men had grabbed me, yelled at me, made kissing noises at me, stalked me – but those instances

had lasted two, three minutes max. Twenty minutes was an exercise of mental torture. Finally at

the last bus stop, my harasser removed his pressure against my body and walked casually

towards the exit, but the psychological mark he had inflicted remained.

Once reunited outside the bus with my friends, they watched with alarm as I immediately

burst into tears. I tried to explain to them what had happened, but was unable to portray the

extent of my disgust with the violation and level of disappointment in my inability to stop it.

Eventually I gave up trying to get them to understand, and prayed privately that they would

never have the unfortunate opportunity to relate to my experience.

I recount this story not only to highlight an example of the sexual harassment faced by

Egyptian women every day, but also to position myself as someone who has both experienced

sexual harassment first-hand and is writing about others' experiences. Since the revolution in

2011, national and international reports on incidents of sexual harassment in Egypt have become

increasingly widespread, and are published with increasing frequency. In consideration of the potential for sexual harassment to result in physical or psychological harm, the percentage of Egyptian women who have been exposed to this type of violence is alarmingly high - the most recent study put this percentage at 99% of Egyptian women. Although women face sexual harassment worldwide, its prevalence in Egypt is particularly notable. This thesis attempts to contextualize the phenomenon and theorize the social movement that has risen to combat its prevalence, as well as to separate this form of violence from its potentially detrimental inclusion in global women's rights initiatives.

Historicizing the Phenomenon in Egypt

Sexual harassment has existed in Egypt for many years, but until recently it has received little scholarly coverage or media attention. The term '*taharosh'*, which translates into 'harassment,' has been introduced into Egyptian Arabic vernacular within the past five years, reflecting the shift in local understanding of the severity of the issue.[1] Harassment's conflation with rape and sexual assault has inhibited a public discussion of the issue, as many women in Egypt fear blame for jeopardizing the reputation of Egyptian society.[2] The tendency for many women to ascribe to societal quietism has led to the establishment of sexual harassment as a norm for Egyptian women, and explains the phenomenon of subsequent acceptance of harassment after daily subjection.

This introduction discusses the contextual specificities surrounding sexual harassment and its perpetuation within Egyptian society. Here I must note my emphasis on *harassment*

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[1] FIDH, Nazra for Feminist Studies, New Women Foundation, and The Uprising of Women in the Arab World. *Egypt: Keeping Women Out. Sexual Violence Against Women in the Public Sphere*. Retrieved from International Federation for Human Rights: www.fidh.org.
[2] Abul Komsan, Nehad. *Clouds in Egypt's Sky. Sexual Harassment: from Verbal Harassment to Rape*. Cairo: The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, 2008.

rather than assault and rape, as the former is a facet of daily life within Egyptian society while the latter are terms that encompass a higher degree of violence on the sexual violence continuum. Rape and assault have recently garnered local and international media attention to sexual violence in Egypt, however. Thus, I will include cases of assault and rape in my analysis, but do so primarily to draw focus to the increasing degree of sexual violence within Egyptian society that has stemmed from acceptance of a milder form, i.e. sexual harassment. By drawing on various reports, surveys, and article sources, I seek to provide a comprehensive background on the issue, before delving into international and Egyptian approaches to addressing sexual harassment in Chapter One. This background will consist of a chronology of numerous sexual harassment incidents since the Egyptian media first began to report sexual violence in the country up until present day. Following this assessment, I will illustrate how elements of sexual harassment manifest themselves in Egyptian society, and in Chapter One I will discuss how these manifestations are not properly encompassed within the legal definition of the Egyptian Penal Code. Finally, I will note throughout this introduction that despite acknowledgement of sexual harassment by the current Egyptian government, there has been little tangible change in terms of its proliferation in society. Chapter Two will explore how this result is due to the way in which the issue has been politicized.

Chronology:

It is critical to chronicle the evolution of sexual harassment in Egypt in order to understand the problem's progression along the sexual violence continuum. Additionally, understanding the scale and background of harassment provides the larger context for the emergence of the Anti-Sexual Harassment movement that avoids a myopic examination. Thus,

the chronology I present here identifies four trends in sexual harassment in Egypt. First, discussion of specific incidents will reflect the increasing violence of the problem. Second, local NGOs and civil society groups' roles in resolving the issue will be introduced and their importance emphasized through examination of the years presented. Third, actions on the part of the governments and security apparatus over the past ten years will be generally seen as dismissive or ineffective. And finally, the Egyptian government's shift in perception of the issue signals the politicization of the Anti-Sexual Harassment movement, which will be explored further in the following chapters.

One of the first mentions of sexual harassment in English-language scholarship can be seen in relation to issues surrounding feminist struggles in Egypt and the adoption and spread of the popularity of the *hijab* from 1970s to the 1990s. As Sherifa Zuhur examines in her article for the *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, the new emphasis on female modesty through dress and the societal problems it instigated was first recognized in the 1990s, when a woman was brutally raped by multiple men in a public bus station and then chastised by the judge for not wearing the *hijab*.[3] Women at this time noted the heightening of harassment of unveiled women and female modesty in the public space became a national topic of discussion. This incident was later deemed "al-Ataba girl" after the name of the bus station and garnered international attention and press coverage. Reactions from Egyptian society, government, and religious leaders overwhelmingly blamed the victim and the media for blowing the incident out of proportion.[4] This landmark incident of sexual violence against women was also the first of an increasing number of cases during religious holidays, as it occurred during the holy month of Ramadan. A

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[3] Sherifa Zuhur, "The Mixed Impact of Feminist Struggles in Egypt During the 1990s," *Middle East Review of International Affairs 5,* no. 1 (2001).

[4] Tom Hundley, "In Cairo, Attacks on Women Shock Society," *Chicago Tribune.* May 29, 1992. http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1992-05-29/news/9202180004_1_cairo-egyptian-woman-broad-daylight

subsequent portion of this chapter will elaborate on the relationship between public celebrations and the increases in rates of sexual harassment.

The second most notably publicized incident of sexual violence against women occurred on May 25, 2005, later deemed "Black Wednesday." This was the first situation where sexual violence against women was indirectly used as a tool of politics by the Mubarak regime. When a small group of male and female protestors gathered in opposition to a referendum, groups of men arrived in buses and began groping and beating the females involved while riot police stood by and watched.[5] As stated by an Islamic preacher Abdel Sabour Shahin, "the technique of assaulting the sanctity of women means two things. The first is preventing women from participating in politics. The second matter is to intimidate their male relatives."[6] This event in the history of Egypt's sexual violence against women was a turning point. Black Wednesday led to the vitalization of the women's movement, where women were determined to start speaking out for their rights. On June 1st of 2005, the Egyptian Mothers group articulated its mission to give "voice for the silent majority of women." They called on all Egyptians to wear black in support of the women who were harassed and assaulted. As stated in their call, "We have decided to go out next Wednesday, for the first time, in defense of the honour of Egypt's women citizens…and demand the resignation of the Interior Minister."[7] Emphasizing its independence from all political groups, the Egyptian Mothers were of the first civil society group to lay the foundation for the eventual Anti-Sexual Harassment movement. The contextual factors within Egypt that allowed for this group to rise to prominence and the variables that have shaped the movement it into what it is today will be explored in Chapter Two.

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[5] Michael Slackman, "Assault on Women at Protest Stirs Anger, Not Fear, in Egypt," *The New York Times,* June 10, 2005. http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/10/international/africa/10egypt.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&
[6] Ibid
[7] "Call from the Association of Egyptian Mothers," *Beheyya,* May 29, 2005. http://baheyya.blogspot.com/2005/05/call-from-association-of-egyptian.html

Incidents of sexual violence and assault on October 24, 2006 and October 2, 2008 were important in the recognition of Eid celebrations as a time when public spaces were increasingly dangerous for women. During Eid al-Fitr in 2006, eyewitness accounts detailed the way in which groups of men would surround any woman they saw walking on the street, push her to the ground, and "feel up" her body as they attempted to tear off her clothing. Women tried to take refuge in taxis and shops but were often pulled out of cars by the hundreds of men surrounding them. There was no discrimination in terms of the victim's dress or self-presentation – even women in the traditional *abaya* were attacked and their robes pulled and torn. Most notably, official sources of media failed to report on these incidents of attacks, despite video evidence that was posted to YouTube by blogger Wael Abbas.[8] The government responded by denying the events, since they claimed there had been no reports of this type of crime. However, the opposite was true. Individual accounts of the atrocities of Eid al-Fitr in 2006 were the foundations for the eventual study produced by the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, which provided the quantitative and statistical background for the start of the Anti-Sexual Harassment movement in Egypt. Although the events of Eid al-Fitr in 2008 followed a similar trajectory, the security response was quite different. After being informed of the violence occurring in the streets, the police immediately rushed to the scene and arrested 38 men.[9] The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights attributed this change to their persistent lobbying efforts and the publication of their survey data on sexual harassment.

This sudden response by security forces must be problematized however, and the true intentions of the security apparatus and government in power must be questioned. Scholar Paul

[8] Sameer Padania, "Egypt: Cairo's Women Speak Out Against Violence," *Global Voices,* November 23, 2006. http://globalvoicesonline.org/2006/11/23/egypt-cairos-women-speak-out-against-violence/
[9] Leila Rheem, "Unsafe Streets," *Al-Ahram Weekly Online,* October 15, 2008. http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2008/917/eg6.htm

Amar suggests that the ECWR's failure to recognize the role of the state and police in sexual violence provided incentive for the security establishment to enthusiastically embrace the campaign as an opportunity to emphasize their role as "gallant, protective real men" who could arrest men and simultaneously "depoliticize their collective aspirations."[10] Thus, although heightened security lessened the threat of sexual violence, its implications within the context of an authoritarian, security state must be recognized, and will be explored further in the following chapters.

Two months prior to the security response during Eid al-Fitr 2008, an incident transpired in a Cairo traffic jam that was eventually replicated in the film *678,* which was the first to highlight issues of sexual harassment in Egypt. As young filmmaker Noha Ostath walked on the pavement next to a busy street, she was grabbed and repeatedly groped by a van driver. Angered by his behavior, Ostath ran after the van and held onto the side mirror in order to force the van to stop so she could take him to the police station.[11] Surprisingly, passers-by tried to dissuade her from going to the police, and some blamed her for her clothing (a baggy sports outfit). At the station, police officers refused to open an investigation without the presence of her father, adding to the unrealistic requirements for reporting an incident of harassment. Ostath's insistence on pressing charges was novel within Egypt, and opened up conversations on measures women have to take in order to protect themselves.

The years 2011-2014 comprised a time period of exponential growth of not only harassment cases, but in media coverage of these issues as well. These instances correlated with the increasing number of public protests, demonstrations, and gatherings, as well as increased

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[10] Paul Amar, "Turning the Gendered Politics of the Security State Inside Out?" *International Feminist Journal of Politics,* Vol. 13, No. 3 (2011), 319.

[11] Magdi Abdelhadi, "Egypt's Sexual Harassment 'Cancer'," *BBC News,* July 18, 2008. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7514567.stm

societal and political tension. Over the year 2011 and following Mubarak's fall from power, female protestors were consistently targeted by Egypt's Central Security Forces (CSF) and were subjected to beatings as well as verbal and physical assaults of a sexual nature. In March of 2011, the interim government of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) amended the Penal Code to increase penalties for "indecent exposure" and rape, but failed to enforce existing laws concerning attacks that fell short of rape, thus further legitimizing sexual harassment.[12] Significantly, the Egyptian government also failed to address or condemn well-publicized sexual attacks on Western women during this year, including US reporter Lara Logan and French journalist Caroline Sinz, which garnered strong international attention and criticism of the sexual harassment problem. Ironically, these attempts by the Egyptian security regime to prevent women from exercising their power to protest backfired dramatically, as the regime was internationally accused of waging a war against women.

Incidents of sexual harassment in 2012 reflected a continuation of the issues under the newly elected Mohamed Morsi government. Despite the noted and publicized prevalence of harassment in Egypt, the Task Force for the Prohibition of Sexual Violence submitted a draft law and clarification memorandum on sexual harassment that was tabled for discussion indefinitely.[13] In one disturbing instance of a woman standing up for her rights, Iman Mostafa Mohamed was walking in Assuit when a male groped her as she walked by. After she spit at him in reaction to the violation, he pushed her to the ground and shot her to her death.[14] Despite the severity of this case, the Morsi government did not respond to this particular case or the issue of harassment in general until Eid al-Adha in October 2012, when civil society groups received 735 complaints

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[12] "Egypt: Prosecute Sexual Assaults on Protestors," *Human Rights Watch,* December 22, 2011.
http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/12/22/egypt-prosecute-sexual-assaults-protesters
[13] *Egypt: Keeping Women Out,* 67.
[14] "Egyptian Street Harasser Murders Woman," *Stop Street Harassment,* September 18, 2012.
http://www.stopstreetharassment.org/2012/09/egyptmurder/

about sexual harassment during the four-day holiday. Morsi responded to the complaints by stressing the need to "fight all phenomena of moral chaos and abuses, especially harassment in Egyptian streets"[15] and Prime Minister Hesham Qandil discussed the need to coordinate with the Education Ministry and media outlets to educate youth about harassment, but no tangible action was taken in the policy realm while Morsi remained in power.

The year 2013 was characterized by increasingly violent cases of harassment and assault, and ineffective strategy proposals by the government to address violence against women by Morsi. On January 25 during the second anniversary of Mubarak's ouster, the organization Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment received 19 reports of sexual assault with some life-threatening cases.[16] These attacks were the first of three "Tahrir Square Assault" incidents that would continue to receive media attention into 2014. These attacks reflected the increasingly violent nature of the harassment of women, as well as a correlation of the attacks with political events that are coordinated by political factions. Another notable facet of these events was the increasing importance of the local media's role and stance on the issues. Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment criticized the media at this time for behaving unprofessionally and violating the privacy of the victims and their families. On May 19, Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim attempted to address Egypt's growing sexual harassment issue by announcing the creation of a violence-against-women department. The department would include female and male officers responsible for receiving harassment and rape victims as well as "raising cultural awareness" of

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[15] Maggie Fick, "Sexual Harassment Spikes over Egyptian Holiday," *Associated Press,* October 30, 2012. http://bigstory.ap.org/article/sexual-harassment-spikes-over-egyptian-holiday

[16] "Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment/Assault condemns the Attacks on Women in Tahrir Square on Friday January 25th, the failure of political groups to secure the square, and unprofessional media conduct," *Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights,* January 29, 2013. http://eipr.org/en/pressrelease/2013/01/29/1612

the problem.[17] Members of civil society groups had doubts about this announcement however. A representative of the organization Shoft Ta7arosh (I Saw Harassment) stated that "Egypt's culture" prevented a woman from reporting harassment to an officer without the fear of being frowned upon or considered immodest.[18] Additionally, police stations were historically sites of verbal harassment, and under Morsi's presidency, victims feared being blamed for dressing inappropriately. Civil society groups' doubts on the effectiveness of the new department were confirmed on August 10th when Shorouk al-Torabi was run over by a car after she stood up to the driver's harassment. The perpetrator was later released on bail despite the severity of the case.[19] The events and attempts at societal reform in 2013 demonstrated the dangers of purely cosmetic government departments that only nominally represented justice for victims of sexual violence, and displayed the increasingly political orientation of sexual harassment in Egypt. In November the Thomas Reuters Foundation polled gender experts and found Egypt to be the worst country in the Arab world to be a woman[20] based on assessments of violence against women, reproductive rights, treatment of women within the family, their integration into society and attitudes towards a woman's role in politics and the economy. According to the poll, Egypt scored badly in "almost all categories" and sexual harassment was explicitly recognized as a daily danger faced by Egyptian women. This designation was expounded by the events of 2014.

In continuation with the trend of mass sexual assaults, in March of 2014 a woman at the Cairo University Faculty of Law was verbally and physically harassed, and narrowly avoided having her clothes torn completely from her body. Several civil society groups including Shoft

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[17] Rana Muhammad Taha, "Interior Ministry Addresses Sexual Harassment," *Daily News Egypt,* May 19, 2013. http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/05/19/interior-ministry-addresses-sexual-harassment/

[18] Ibid.

[19] Leyla Doss, "Government Vs Sexual Violence," *Mada Masr,* June 18, 2014. http://www.madamasr.com/content/government-vs-sexual-violence

[20] Crina Boros, "Poll – Egypt is Worst Arab State for Women, Comoros Best," *Thomson Reuters Foundation,* November 12, 2013. http://www.trust.org/item/20131108170910-qacvu/?source=spotlight-writaw.

Ta7arosh and Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment joined in public condemnation of the event, as well as the government's failure to provide security to women in Egypt.[21] The President of Cairo University's espousal of a 'victim-blaming' narrative was also criticized, and led to a nationwide discussion of appropriate reactions to sexual harassment. On June 3rd at the announcement of Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's Presidential elections victory, an incident of assault that was recorded and uploaded to YouTube promptly became viral and led to a high level of attention and outrage from the national and international community. On this date groups of men attacked a 42-year-old woman by stripping her naked and bloodying and bruising her backside. She suffered injuries to her genitalia and hot water burns over 40 percent of her body.[22] Two days later, Interim President Adly Mansour issued the decree that criminalized sexual harassment as one of his final acts in office. On June 8th at Sisi's inauguration, at least nine women were violently sexually assaulted in Tahrir Square, demonstrating the prevalence of the phenomenon through all eras of governance and political turmoil.[23] In one of his first acts as President, Sisi went to the hospital to visit the woman who had been attacked at his election celebration, and promised to bring justice to victims of sexual harassment nationwide.

The second half of 2014 was characterized by activism on part of civil society and the government in upholding the new anti-sexual harassment law. A ministerial committee charged with identifying the reasons for the spread of sexual harassment met on June 12, where it announced a plan to combat the problem through heavy security presence in crowded areas,

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[21] "The Sexual Assault at Cairo University – Another Episode in the Government's Failure to Protect Women's Bodies; Authorities Espouse Victim-Blaming Narrative," *Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights,* March 23, 2014. http://eipr.org/node/2015

[22] Nadine Marroushi. "Tahrir Square Sexual Assaults Trial Begins." *Mada Masr,* June 25, 2014. http://www.madamasr.com/content/tahrir-square-sexual-assaults-trial-begins (June 26, 2014).

[23] Nadia Elboubkri, "'Why Do Women Want to be Men?' and Other Patriarchal Norms." *The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy,* June 19, 2014. http://timep.org/commentary/women-want-men-patriarchal-norms-egyptian-state-society (June 24, 2014).

higher collaboration with civil society groups, implementation of the recent criminalization legislation, and amendments to school curriculums to raise awareness.[24] On June 15, activists gathered in Cairo to protest against the recent incidents of violence against women and demanded harsher penalties. Their signs read "Death to sexual harassers" and "time to stop rape". Attempts to punish perpetrators resulted in the fining of a taxi driver LE5,000 (US$700) for verbally harassing a woman by calling her a "mozza" (hot girl),[25] the sentencing of a man to one year of hard labor and LE3,000 (US$420) for taking a photo of a sleeping woman on a public bus,[26] and the sentencing of two men to a year in jail after sexually harassing a woman in a shopping mall.[27] In the first serious convictions regarding sexual assault, seven men accused of orchestrating the attacks on January 25, June 3, and June 8 were sentenced to life in prison and two men were sentenced to 20 years. All men were also ordered to pay compensation to the victims in the amount of EGP50,000 (US$6,990) following their trial on July 16th.[28] During Eid al-Fitr, security forces wearing indications that they worked for the Police Force for Combating Violence Against Women arrested several men involved in cases of sexual harassment.[29] Their lack of presence during Eid al-Adha celebrations counteracted this progress however, and civil society groups documented over 200 incidents of sexual harassment.

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[24] "Egyptian Cabinet Introduces Plan to Combat Sexual Harassment," *Ahram Online,* June 13, 2014. http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/103564/Egypt/Politics-/Egyptian-cabinet-introduces-plan-to-combat-sexual-.aspx

[25] "Egypt Court Fines Man After 'Sexy Girl' Remark," *Al Arabiya News,* June 19, 2014. http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2014/06/19/Egypt-court-fines-taxi-driver-for-calling-woman-a-hot-girl-.html

[26] Rana Muhammad Taha. "Sexual Harasser Sentenced to 1 Year." *Daily News Egypt,* June 21, 2014. http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2014/06/21/sexual-harasser-sentenced-1-year/ (June 23, 2014).

[27] El-Sayed Gamel El-Din, "Two Egyptian Men Get a Year in Jail, Fines For Sexual Harassment," *Ahram Online,* June 23, 2014. http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/104542/Egypt/Politics-/Two-Egyptian-men-get-a-year-in-jail,-fines-for-sex.aspx

[28] "Seven Men Sentenced to Life in Prison for Sexual Assault in Egypt," *Egyptian Streets,* July 16, 2014. http://egyptianstreets.com/2014/07/16/seven-men-sentenced-to-life-in-prison-for-sexual-assault-in-egypt/

[29] Melody Patry, "Sexual Harassment Reported Downtown on First Day of Eid," *Mada Masr,* July 29, 2014. http://www.madamasr.com/ar/node/6146

These events show the persistence of the phenomenon in Egypt, despite attempts by the government to address them. They also show that policy change cannot be successful without national implementation of a strategy that involves all sectors of Egyptian public and private life. Most importantly, these incidents reflect that there must be a change in the societal understanding of the issue – rather than an acceptance of the phenomenon as a facet of everyday life in Egypt. The subsequent chapters will discuss other reasons for the inadequacy of Egypt's policy against sexual harassment as well as how the Anti-Sexual Harassment movement has been able to achieve societal impact regarding the issue.

Manifestation of Harassment in Egypt:

In forming an adequate policy and national response to the sexual harassment endemic in Egypt, the specifics of its manifestation must be understood. In 2005, the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR) received over 100 complaints of sexual harassment from women of all ages and socioeconomic classes after launching their "Making the Streets Safer for Everyone" campaign. Realizing an absence of literature and data on the problem and in an effort to understand its extent, the ECWR conducted a study in which it randomly surveyed over 2,800 Egyptian women, followed by in-depth research on the motivations and opinions of men. The astonishing results of this survey were later confirmed by a similar study conducted by UN Women in 2013, which is often cited in national and global reports and articles about the issue.

Who are the victims?

Speaking to the prevalence of the issue, UN Women's study found that 99% of Egyptian women have been subjected to some form or another of sexual harassment.[30] Age did not determine who was victimized but 62.2% of male respondents indicated that women between the ages of 19 – 25 years of age were most susceptible to harassment.[31] The study showed that harassment occurs regardless of economic class of the victim as well, with 90% of female respondents claiming that this was not a distinguishing factor. Perhaps most important to dispelling a widely-held misperception concerning sexual harassment was the study's analysis of clothing and how dress affected a woman's probability of harassment. According to the UN study, 75.7% of female respondents most likely to encounter harassment wore "conservative clothing" without makeup, with conservative clothing being defined as attire that does not reveal the contours of the body and includes long sleeves and ankle length items.[32] Thus, contrary to popular perception among men and women in Egypt, the vast majority of women harassed dress conservatively, reflecting the overall social dress patterns in Egypt. These results as well as others within ECWR and UN Women's reports confirm that sexual harassment is a gendered problem, and that Egyptian women of all classes, practices, and ages are overwhelmingly the victims.

In light of the gender dichotomy presented by this survey data, I must push back on arguments made by scholars like Paul Amar. These scholars insist that harassment is a sexualized issue promoted by international feminists and the Egyptian security state that unfairly target male youth of the lower class.[33] Although specifics of the male reaction to the issue will be discussed in Chapter One, it is clear that the discourse of NGOs like the ECWR do not

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[30] UN Women. *Study on Ways and Methods to Eliminate Sexual Harassment in Egypt*. The United Nations, 2013, 6.
[31] Nehad Abul Komsan, *Egypt's Sky. Sexual Harassment: from Verbal Harassment to Rape*. Cairo: The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, 2008, 16.
[32] *Study on Ways and Methods*, 16.
[33] Amar, 319.

appropriate "UN anti-violence politics" in order to securitize "youth without education" and blame them for their "sexual indiscipline," as Paul Amar may suggest.[34] In fact, survey data presented by the UN study displays that the most educated males - university students - are most likely to commit harassment out of all the males surveyed. Although I agree with Amar that ECWR's call for heightened police security is inappropriate in recognition of the security state context in Egypt, the data presented by this organization was a critical contribution to the Anti-Sexual Harassment movement and its mobilization.

What does harassment look/sound like?

Egyptian women are subjected to various forms of harassment that range from verbal to physical. The leading types of harassment as reported by respondents to UN Women are whistling and verbal abuse, touching women's bodies, dirty looks at the woman's body, using obscene language, and stalking/pursuing. Verbal harassment consists of "ordinary words of flirtation" and "sexually suggestive expressions."[35] Interestingly, only 7.5% of female respondents stated that their experience with verbal harassment had not been accompanied by physical touching of their bodies as well. The primary areas of the female body that are touched in harassment are the woman's breasts at 54.5% and the buttocks and hips area at 13.5%.[36] As noted in ECWR's study, it is not necessary for harassment to relate an explicit sexual message. Other forms of harassment behavior include noises (including hissing and kissing sounds), ogling, gestures, offers to perform sexual acts, questions of a private and sexual nature and

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[34] Ibid.
[35] *Study on Ways and Methods*, 10.
[36] Ibid.

displaying sexual photos or pictures.[37] According to one woman interviewed for the

documentary *The People's Girls* on sexual harassment in Egypt, "Sexual harassment starts with a

look – you feel that your space is not yours, you feel that someone is entering it…a man from

afar looks at you like he will eat you. You feel that you are afraid of him, you feel that he is a

criminal."[38] Although amendments to the Penal Code definition of harassment generally

encompass these examples, the data on the most common forms of harassment should be utilized

by Egyptian education and awareness programs/campaigns in order to specify what constitutes

inappropriate behavior. Critiques of these amendments will be explored further in Chapter One.

Where and when does harassment occur?

Although difficult to measure a social phenomenon across a large geographic area

accurately, the study by UN Women was able to aggregate data from cities as geographically

distant as Alexandria and Qena. This study also included respondents from the governorates of

Assuit, Cairo, Ismailia, Dakahlia, and Gharbia, which vary in their degree of urban and rural

development. Despite this diversity, results across this broad geographical area were consistent.

According to this study, harassment in Egypt was most likely to occur in crowded public places.

The most common place to encounter sexual harassment was in the street, followed by public

transportation, market places, and beaches.[39] Daily harassment was an issue for 49.2% of female

respondents, with 68.9% of respondents claiming that harassers did not discriminate between

different times of the day. Additionally, 48.9% of women believed that harassment has increased

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[37] *Clouds in Egypt's Sky,* 13.
[38] *The People's Girls.* Internet. Directed by Colette Ghunim and Tinne Van Loon. Projected release: Jan 2015.
http://vimeo.com/87694328
[39] *Study on Ways and Methods,* 23.

since the revolution of 2011.[40] Reports of harassment indicate that this phenomenon flourishes during times of public protests and celebrations, reflecting the increase of harassment since the revolution and prevalence of harassment reports during public Eid festivities.

How does harassment affect victims?

The continued prevalence of sexual harassment has several repercussions for women, society, and the economy of Egypt. According to the study by UN Women, reactions by the majority of female respondents to their first encounter with harassment included being "frightened and deeply hurt" and angry at the perpetrator. The psychological repercussions of this treatment of women include a sense of fear, pain, embarrassment, shame, confusion, and depression.[41] Productivity in work and school are affected in addition to feeling a lack of security in public spaces. The study by ECWR also notes that women lack confidence in their dealings with the opposite sex due to their fear of harassment.[42] Physically, the victim may suffer from headaches, bad dreams, and difficulty sleeping. Escalation of the degree of sexual violence in recent cases in Egypt have led to more debilitating and permanent injuries, including mutilation of genitalia, internal and external bruising, and severe burns (boiling water has been used in incidents of attack), among other things.

Despite these immediate repercussions, the continuation of sexual harassment has other serious legal, social, economic, and human rights-related implications. The correlation between public political protests and an increase in harassment of women reveals how harassment has

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[40] *Study on Ways and Methods,* 9.
[41] *Clouds in Egypt's Sky,* 17.
[42] Ibid.

benefitted state authorities by frightening women from demonstrating[43] against the government. This correlation threatens women's universal right to peacefully assemble. Other universal rights violated by the persistence of harassment include the right to freedom of movement and the right to life, liberty and the security of person as delineated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The presence of the phenomenon also affects the Egyptian economy by stifling the tourism industry. The ECWR report notes that 66% of foreign women confirmed that their experience with sexual harassment in Egypt negatively impacted their view of Egyptian society. The perpetuation of sexual harassment also leads to its legitimization within society. The UN Women report states that after repeated exposure to harassment, the majority of women "did not care" that they were being harassed because it was "a common occurrence that happens to anyone."[44] This acceptance of harassment has led to an increase in the degree of violence against women in Egypt however. Incidents of verbal harassment and groping have evolved into incidents of brutal assault and rape that have left Egyptian women debilitated and permanently injured. In the face of increasing sexual abuse and hostility, women and civil society groups are beginning to take a stand to eliminate the root of the violence and eradicate acceptance of sexual harassment as a norm.

Chapter Overviews

Chapter One illuminates the international versus the local approaches to addressing sexual harassment in Egypt. The chapter begins with an examination of the international human rights regime's strategy of 'lumping' various forms of violence into one unifying category of

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[43] Amina Kheiri, "Egyptian Women Dream to 'Crush' Sexual Harassment." Translation by *Al Monitor,* June 24, 2014. http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/culture/2014/06/egypt-harassment-youth-initiatives-campaigns.html# (June 25, 2014).
[44] *Study on Ways and Methods*, 12.

Violence Against Women (VAW), and notes the ramifications of such a strategy within the local context. The second half of the chapter traces the evolution of the legal definition of sexual harassment in Egypt, and emphasizes the need to 'split' types of violence in contrast to the international strategy. This discussion is followed by an examination of reactions to sexual harassment from different actors within society. These sections show how harassment in Egypt has progressed along the spectrum of sexual violence, and how men, media, the government, religious actors, and the security apparatus have variously responded to these incidents. The last section briefly overviews civil society's reaction to sexual harassment, and suggests the rise of a social movement to combat the issue.

Chapter Two theorizes what I deem to be an Anti-Sexual Harassment movement by interrogating prominent social movement theories for their propensity to explain aspects of a movement that exists outside of Western democratic assumptions. I utilize the work of Albert Melucci to examine the collective identity of the social movement, and discuss the movement's inevitable dialectical relationship with the state. I follow this with an analysis of the movement's societal impact through examinations of the mass media and local forms of artistic expression. Finally, I close the chapter by noting the potential challenges the movement may face in an authoritarian context, and discuss the ways in which the movement may maintain its autonomy.

The conclusion will examine continued and increasing international involvement with domestic organizations focusing on sexual harassment. It will include a discussion of the international community's response, its forms of support, and the danger it poses by becoming too extensively involved.

A Note on Theories

In theorizing the rise of a social movement to combat sexual harassment in Egypt, I found the work of sociologists Albert Melucci, William A. Gamson, and Asef Bayat to be particularly productive. Melucci's concept of New Social Movements, in which movements target dominant societal norms rather than the state authorities, is largely applicable to the Anti-Sexual Harassment movement's goals in Egypt and will be introduced in Chapter Two. Gamson's work on measuring a movement's societal impact through shifts in media representation is an illuminating approach to understanding how the movement in Egypt has been able to shift public discourse on harassment. Bayat's book is novel in its focus on social movements, agency, and change in the Middle East. His acknowledgement of the importance of internal social forces, collectives, and individuals to societal transformation within an authoritarian context is reflected in my analysis of the Anti-Sexual Harassment movement in Egypt. Additionally, Bayat's examination of the dialectical relationship between social movements and authoritarian states is useful in understanding the potential challenges and opportunities that the Egyptian movement may face in the future. There is a significant gap in scholarship concerning non-Western social movements that aim to achieve more than policy development or political representation. The work of these three theorists is critical to understanding the rise of a social movement that does not fit these Westo-centric standards, and that is based in an authoritarian setting.

Methods and Positionality

In order to trace the rise of sexual harassment and the subsequent social movement that has developed in Egypt, I used a variety of Egyptian and international sources in both English and in Arabic. I referred extensively to several Egyptian newspapers in order to obtain information on the chronology of sexual harassment incidents. For quantitative data on sexual

harassment in Egypt, I used studies and reports from the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, UN Women, and the International Federation for Human Rights. These reports provided me with data on the percentage of women affected by harassment and specifics regarding the frequency and geographic location of harassment. The reports also supplied information on the qualitative characteristics of the victims and perpetrators, which was useful to understanding the extent to which all Egyptian women are affected by this form of violence. Because I was unable to conduct interviews or collect data on the ground in Egypt, I referenced blog entries, Facebook pages, and video interviews in which women discussed their personal experiences with harassment in Egypt.

In conducting this research, I have been wary of Western scholars' tendency to "utilize vocabularies that may appear superficially similar, yet often have different associations, meanings, resonances and political consequences in the different contexts in which we live."[45] Thus, throughout this thesis, I have used definitions of sexual harassment as provided by Egyptian NGOs in order to avoid the irrelevancy of international understandings of Violence Against Women. In my examination of harassment incidents, I have replicated the terminology utilized in Egyptian reports and personal accounts in order to accurately demonstrate events from the point of view of Egyptians. While acknowledging the differences in meaning that certain vocabularies might suggest, in no way does this signal an "essentialization" of sexual harassment in Egypt or the experiences of Egyptian women. My work does not stem from a preoccupation with the 'woman's condition' in Egypt that subjugates Egyptian women to a population of the 'Other'.

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[45] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Contemporary Feminist Scholarship and Middle East Studies," in *Gendering the Middle East: Emerging Perspectives,* ed. Deniz Kandiyoti (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 1.

In addition to the problems associated with imposed vocabularies and essentialization, I want to push back on two trends in scholarship in relation to "women's issues." First, scholarship on women in the Middle East has largely existed alongside a preoccupation with Islam as the primary marker of identity.[46] In the case of sexual harassment in Egypt, identifying *any* aspect of the issue as inherently "Islamic" or "Muslim" would be a fallacy. My research highlights the nuances that exist with regards to identity and Islam by emphasizing that *all* Egyptian women, regardless of religion, are vulnerable to sexual harassment, and that Muslim religious authorities have played various roles in the perpetuation or eradication of the phenomenon. Additionally, I argue that the societal normalization of sexual street harassment is not the result of some overarching, religiously patriarchal logic, but rather reflective of particular sets of social relationships, power structures, and political contexts in which these norms could be propitiously formulated. Second, the Orientalist history of scholarship on the Middle East has contributed to a narrow notion of a static culture in which Middle Eastern societies are "characterized more in terms of historical continuity than in terms of change."[47] As stated by Bayat, "In this perspective, change, albeit uncommon, may indeed occur, but primarily via individual elites, military men, or wars and external powers."[48] I counter this notion by demonstrating that Egypt is not only undergoing extensive political and societal change, but also that this change is in large part initiated by *women*.

Anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod has noted how within Western media, the issue of sexual harassment in Egypt has seemed to eclipse many other, more serious issues such as state violence in Egypt. She found this focus problematic, and asked me why I wanted to work on this

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[46] Ibid, 9.

[47] Asef Bayat, *Life as Politics*. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 3.

[48] Ibid.

issue over others.[49] In response, I will comment that although political and economic situations may be more determinant factors of women's overall positions in Egypt, there is activity and movement to address the issue of sexual harassment presently, and the immediacy of this action requires attention and response. Most importantly however, the decision to dismiss work on sexual harassment in Egypt on the basis of there existing 'more serious issues' would be to erase the efforts of Egyptian women who are tackling an issue that is within their means to address. Why not focus on these 'smaller' issues, especially when 'larger' issues of state violence or economic downfall are often those contexts that are dominated by men?

In regards to Abu-Lughod's emphasis on *Western* attention as problematic, I have two points concerning my position and identity as a Western scholar. First, in tracing the rise of sexual street harassment in Egypt I do not mean to project an understanding that this phenomenon is exclusive to the context in Egypt. This is an international occurrence and, in contrast to some scholars' championing of the Western woman's position in society, sexual harassment also occurs in the West, albeit under different circumstances and for different reasons. Egyptian women have risen to face this challenge and this threat to their quality of daily life by a magnitude unmatched by Western efforts, and the proliferation of Egyptian NGOs addressing the issue and Egyptian media legitimation of these women's efforts does not exist on similar scale. Second, in Abu-Lughod's own words, my activities "in the affairs of distant places" are conducted in the "spirit of support for those within those communities whose goals are to make women's and men's lives better."[50] Rather than promoting an agenda of 'Western salvation of the Muslim victim,' this thesis aims to champion, admire, and show respect for the efforts of *Egyptian* women as they tackle a contextually specific, yet international issue. In

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[49] In personal email communication (Feb 28, 2015).

[50] Joseph A. Massad, *Islam in Liberalism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 140.

short, attention to the issue of sexual harassment in Egypt does not necessitate a culturalist approach.

I hope that the research in this thesis will be critiqued for its analytic rigor and credibility of argument rather than my authorial voice and position as a "woman from the West." It is with my methods and approach in mind that I hope to end the perpetuation of binaries in scholarship such as West/East, Colonizer/Colonized, Islam/Christianity,[51] and others that exist in post-orientalist scholarship today.

Ultimately, my aim in tracing and theorizing this Anti-Sexual Harassment movement is to elevate the work of Egyptian women who are facing an internationally prevalent phenomenon, which is distinctive in its Egyptian context. It is in my discussion of context where I address the dynamics within Egyptian society that present both opportunities and challenges for the women trying to eradicate harassment, and illustrate how the movement has made inroads in shifting public discourse and understanding of the issue. Most importantly, I want to emphasize the role of Egyptian women as both victims of sexual harassment and agents in achieving societal change. Through my work, I hope to highlight not only their plight but also their power, and in doing so, present a local social movement that challenges the dominance of Western social movement analyses in literature.

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[51] Kandiyoti, 16.

Chapter One:

Tracing the Rise of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Movement in Egypt

The international versus Egyptian contextual approaches to addressing sexual harassment are reflective of the larger strategies adopted by each community. The international human rights regime classifies sexual harassment under the umbrella of Violence Against Women (VAW), in an attempt to create a shared identity among female victims of various forms of violence across the globe. This method of classification – the 'lumping' of all forms of violence against women into one category – exists to provide a cognitive representation of what it means to be a female victim of violence, and endeavors to increase the perception of homogeneity within these categories of violence. In contrast, the community of Egyptian activists has adopted a strategy of 'splitting' sexual harassment from other forms of violence in consideration of contextual facets that deem it appropriate to do so. Such facets include the taboo nature of certain forms of violence in Egypt such as rape as well as the present focus and support of efforts to eradicate sexual harassment within Egyptian society. Both the international and Egyptian activist communities have adopted their respective strategies in order to obtain the most effective results according to their goals. In this chapter, I will discuss and critique both the international community's lumping of sexual harassment into the framework of VAW as well as the Egyptian activist community's attempts to split sexual harassment from other crimes and violence as stated within the Egyptian Penal Code. My emphasis on the contextual will continue into the final section, which will discuss reactions from various actors within the Egyptian government and society to the issue of sexual harassment, and trace the rise of the Anti-Sexual Harassment movement.

The International Approach

The inclusion of sexual harassment in Egypt into the international rhetoric and categorization of "Violence Against Women" is problematic for several reasons. The category of VAW was adopted and defined at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life."[52] The definition was intentionally vague so that incidents ranging from domestic abuse to female circumcision to dowry deaths could be considered as part of the same fundamental problem of patriarchy.[53] The strategic aim of this designation was to build transnational networks of activists that could bridge cultural divides and formulate a global alliance of women. However, the problem with such a 'lumping' of forms of violence rests precisely on the definition's over-generalization. Egyptian representatives who attended the Beijing conference criticized the way in which discussion of these issues was too international and broad in scope, and called for local conferences in which individual issues specific to each country could be addressed. Some women representatives argued that "the international dimension of these conferences generally work at the expense of the concerns of Egyptian women. Amal T., a medical doctor and activist who attended the Beijing conference noted:

'We must agree that different countries have different cultures and different problems. We talked about female genital mutilation, for example, but this problem is only confined to certain countries and doesn't exist in other cultures. Now, when we come to the

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[52] Sally Engle Merry, *Gender Violence: A Cultural Perspective* (United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 80.
[53] Massad, 135.

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implementation, then, of course, every country will see its own problems and will try to implement the recommendations in that specific context…What we have to do is Egyptianize the recommendations and implement what is relevant for our own problems."[54]

Beyond the potential for irrelevancy in the Egyptian context, the second problem presented by the rhetoric of Violence Against Women is the conflation of forms of violence like sexual street harassment with rape, and female genital mutilation which are pertinent to Egypt. This conflation is problematic because each form of violence is accompanied by different societal and cultural implications. As I will discuss in the following chapter, Egyptian societal discourse only opened up to the topic of sexual harassment when this form of violence was separated from rape. Given that rape currently remains "taboo," would be detrimental to the eradication of sexual harassment if they were understood to exist as one of the same form of violence. Additionally, conflation and lumping of separate forms of violence broadens the issue to the degree that finding a solution seems difficult, if not impossible. Rather than attempting to address one issue, social movements, activists, societies and governments would face the challenge of eradicating all forms of violence in Egypt that exist under this category. As discussed by anthropologist Sally Engle Merry, naming individual problems is critical because "each term has a slightly different scope and suggests a different political orientation and solution." If sexual harassment had remained solely within the broadly defined category of Violence Against Women, it might have been more difficult for activists to define the issue and channel responses to it.

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[54] Nadje Al-Ali, *Secularism, Gender and the State in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 206.

At the 2013 session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, members of the commission adopted "agreed conclusions" in an attempt to "cover all forms of violence against women and girls, in all contexts and settings."[55] Thus, sexual harassment is defined as it occurs in its various circumstances across the globe: sexual harassment in health-care settings, harassment in public spaces for the purpose of intimidation, harassment in the workplace, harassment through information and communications technology, harassment in school, harassment on public transportation, and harassment in private spaces.[56]

Although sexual harassment in Egypt occurs in all of these spaces, it is critical to emphasize the role of the *street* as not only the space where harassment of women occurs most frequently,[57] but also the space in which women have the most opportunity to unite against their aggressors. As stated by sociologist Asef Bayat, "Streets, as spaces of flow and movement, are not only where people express grievances, but also where they forge identities, enlarge solidarities, and *extend* their protest beyond their immediate circles to include the unknown, the strangers. Here streets serve as a medium through which strangers or casual passersby are able to establish latent communication with one another by recognizing their mutual interests and shared sentiments."[58] The street in Egypt is thus the critical space in which a social movement to combat sexual harassment obtains its purpose, its identity, its collectivity of participants, and its propensity to affect change.

The Contextual Approach

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[55] UN Women, *Elimination and Prevention of All Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls: 2013 Commission on the Status of Women: Agreed Conclusions.* The United Nations, 2013. Accessed March, 2015 http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/57/csw57-agreedconclusions-a4-en.pdf
[56] Ibid.
[57] *Study on Ways and Methods*, 23.
[58] Bayat, 12.

Legal Definition of Sexual Harassment in Egypt

Prior to the summer of 2014, sexual harassment and assault were not considered crimes as defined by the Egyptian Penal Code, and there was no stated definition of sexual harassment. What existed instead was a vague statement of what constituted "indecent public behavior," filed under the category of 'Misdemeanour.' This definition attributed inappropriate behavior to a "lewd[59] word, deed, or gesture to another on a public road or populated place."[60] This vague legal definition created confusion within Egyptian society, and contributed to women's hesitancy to report the problem, among other factors.

Without explicit definitions, civil society groups noted that women often did not know what constituted harassment. Additionally, umbrella terms referring to the problem like '*mo'aksa'* (flirtation) and '*taharosh'* were connoted with such a wide range of violence against women that victims often feared their usage and the dishonor they could potentially bring to their families.[61] Local NGO's worked constantly to push for amendments that would specify the qualifications of harassment and assault, and criminalize these acts of aggression. During the Mubarak regime in 2008, 16 NGOs formed the Task Force for the Prohibition of Sexual Violence and proposed amendments to the Penal Code that aimed to address the inadequacies in relevant articles. This draft commission defined sexual harassment (article 269) as "the act of following or pursuit with direct or indirect sexual or lewd messages, or delivering such messages via telephone, the internet, or other modern means of communication, or sending messages containing sexual images, text, or figures." The suggested penalty was no more than one year of

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[59] The term "lewd behavior" in the Egyptian Penal Code has been utilized to justify arrests in acts of homosexuality as well. The vague nature of the term, as well as other legal wording like "scandalous acts", has allowed authorities to manipulate articles on harassment so that they encompass homosexuality. http://www.loc.gov/law/help/criminal-laws-on-homosexuality/african-nations-laws.php

[60] *Egypt: Keeping Women Out,* 29.

[61] Ibid.

imprisonment or a fine of at least LE500 (US$70) and no more than LE5,000 (US$700), or both

imprisonment and a fine.[62]

The Task Force for the Prohibition of Sexual Violence against Women submitted the

draft law to the People's Assembly three times over the years 2010-2013 before they received

any action on the part of the government. Although the details of government actions have been

discussed in the introduction, one recent government action must be reiterated that is critical to

current Egyptian legal definitions of harassment. On June 5, interim President Adly Mansour

issued Decree No. 50 of 2014 addressing the demands of civil society groups and recent

publication of sexual assaults. As noted in the introduction however, this decree was more of a

reaction to national and international media outcry following video footage of sexual assault in

Tahrir square than a direct address of civil society activism. The decree formally criminalized

sexual harassment and defined the phenomenon as "accosting others in a private, public, or

frequented place with acts, gestures, or suggestions that are sexual or obscene, verbally,

physically, or through other non-verbal means or actions, including modern means of

communication."[63] Offenders were cited as anyone who "intended to receive sexual gratification

from the victim" and the penalties included at least six months in prison and/or a fine of LE3000-

LE5000[64] (US$420-$700).

Although initially championed as progress in the realm of protecting women from

violence as well as adding "sexual harassment" to the Egyptian vernacular, contestation

eventually developed over key components of the new law. One glaring example of this was the

government's definition of offenders as demonstrated by their *intentions.* As noted by Mostafa

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[62] Ibid.

[63] Rothna Begum, "How Egypt Can Turn the Tide on Sexual Assault." Mada Masr, June 15, 2014.
http://www.madamasr.com/content/how-egypt-can-turn-tide-sexual-assault (June 26, 2014).

[64] Ibid.

Mahmoud, a lawyer at the NGO Nazra for Feminist Studies, determining or proving that a

perpetrator "intended to receive sexual gratification" is unrealistic, and adds to the hardships of

reporting harassment that already exist.[65] In her article "Gender Dilemmas in Sexual Harassment

Policies and Procedures," Stephanie Riger discusses how harassment should "be judged on the

basis of conduct and its effects on the recipient, not the intentions of the harasser."[66] This

approach would prevent the statements of the accused such as "I was just being friendly" from

being considered seriously in court. Another critique of the decree was the lack of specificity

when defining forms of harassment. Despite survey[67] evidence of what constitutes verbal

harassment in Egypt, no mention was made of these common occurrences. This is important

because, as Riger explains, gender bias affects sexual harassment policies due to the way in

which differences between men and women affect perception of harassment. In a study on these

differences within the contexts of the American workplace and university, the data demonstrated

that women are "more likely to see as harassment more subtle behavior such as sexual teasing or

looks or gestures,"[68] while males "generally have much narrower definitions of sexual

harassment and are less likely to evaluate any particular situation as being harassing."[69]

Additionally, women have demonstrated a higher rate of incident reporting when asked about

specific harassing behaviors rather than a general question about their experience with

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[65] Mohamad Adam, "Solidarity and Division in Response to Egypt's Endemic Sexual Violence." The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, June 19, 2014. http://timep.org/commentary/solidarity-division-response-egypts-endemic-sexual-violence (June 24, 2014).

[66] Stephanie Riger, "Gender Dilemmas In Sexual Harassment Policies and Procedures," *American Psychologist,* May 1991.

[67] For the purpose of this chapter, "survey" refers to those conducted by ECWR in 2008 and UN Women in 2013, unless otherwise noted.

[68] Rosemarie Skaine, *Power and Gender: Issues in Sexual Dominance and Harassment,* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1996), 178.

[69] Louise F. Fitzgerald, "Sexual Harassment: Violence Against Women in the Workplace," *American Psychologist,* Vol, 48, No. 10 (Oct, 1993), pp. 1070-1076.

harassment.[70] Psychological research attributes this preference for specificity to the way in which women have come to consider sexual harassment to be normative. Scholars have proposed that the acceptance of these behaviors as routine may prevent women from labeling a negative experience as harassment.[71] Thus, specificity in the definition of harassment may be critical to ensuring accurate understanding of the problem as well as promote reporting of the incident.

In an issue positioning women as significantly vulnerable to attacks by male aggressors, I support Riger's assertion that policies, procedures, and laws written on harassment should be written utilizing the female's perspective on what constitutes harassment in order to adequately defend the perceptions and claims of the primary victims of the problem. Speaking to this point, in Chapter Two I will discuss the role of the National Council for Women in the drafting of the legal definition, and how its involvement has affected the politicization of the cause. As a final critique, I argue that the government's failure to initially introduce a comprehensive national strategy has left women and human rights organizations in Egypt skeptical as to their potential to induce any structural change in the prevalence of sexual harassment in Egyptian public and private life.

The National Reaction

Recent attention on the issue of harassment has provoked a variety of reactions from numerous actors in Egyptian society, government, and public life. The national reaction is the most nuanced aspect of the issue, as Egyptian men and women play different roles and hold different opinions through their positions in government, religion, education, and civil society

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[70] Riger, 499.

[71] Bernice Lott, Mary Ellen Reilly and Dale R. Howard, "Sexual Assault and Harassment: A Campus Community Case Study," *Signs*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Winter, 1982), pp. 296-319

that run counter to preconceived notions of what their position on sexual harassment is assumed

to be. It is within analysis and understanding of the Egyptian national reactions to sexual

harassment that one can see the potentials for success and failure in eradicating the social issue.

Men:

Men in Egypt play varied roles in terms of their reactions and involvement with sexual

harassment and attempts to address it. Of the men surveyed by the Egyptian Center for Women's

Rights in 2008, 62.4% admitted to perpetrating one or more forms of harassment against women,

and primarily blame women for the phenomenon's existence.[72] The espousal of a victim-blaming

narrative attributes harassment to various reasons, including wearing tight clothing, a girl's

indecent behavior, putting on makeup in a provocative way, non-compliance with conventional

customs and traditions, among others.[73] Other men have responded to accusations of harassment

by stressing that their words and deeds benefit women. They assert that their "flirtatious"

expressions raise the morale of the women they harass. Although over 95% of male harassers are

under the age of 40, older men have played a role in perpetuating harassment by questioning the

morals and upbringing of women who receive harassment while out in public.

Not all men have responded to the increase of this phenomenon by blaming the victims

however. Men stand beside women within the ranks of civil society groups and activist protests

that unify against harassment. During efforts to "rescue women from sexual harassment"

throughout Eid Al-Adha in 2014, a teenage male named Ahmed Fayed lost his life to the cause

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[72] *Clouds in Egypt's Sky,* 18.
[73] *Study on Ways and Methods*, 26.

after being stabbed to death by a harasser.[74] In contrast to the typical narrative espoused by men that blames women for their clothing, one protester named Mohamed Abdel Maqsood blamed the phenomenon on the "concept of male superiority" and the way in which men in Egypt regard women as "sexual walking objects".[75] Mohamed and Ahmed's understanding of the situation as well as the role they and many other men play in the eradication of sexual harassment will be explored further, and is testament to the variety of reactions within the male population.

Media:

As will be addressed in more detail in Chapter Two, the rhetoric used by the media in framing sexual harassment and assault is critical to either the perpetuation or eradication of this culture of violence against Egyptian women. Thus, the reaction by media sources to the phenomenon is one of the most important to understand, as it can reflect wider societal changes. Since the revolution in 2011, media sources in Egypt have increased their reporting of incidents of sexual harassment, and have been both applauded and criticized for their coverage. In a 2014 press release condemning the mass sexual harassment case at Cairo University, several civil society organizations chided media coverage of the event as "catastrophic" due to the way in which it minimized and "sensationalized" the incident.[76] One Egyptian television host received criticism and media attention herself for inappropriately reacting to the assaults at Sisi's inauguration ceremony, after she commented on reports of harassment that "Well, the [people]

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[74] Egyptian Streets, "Teenager Killed in Egypt While Defending Women from Sexual Harassment", *Egyptian Streets,* October 6, 2014. http://egyptianstreets.com/2014/10/06/teenager-killed-in-egypt-while-defending-women-from-sexual-harassment/

[75] Ola Noureldin, "Egyptians Call For the End of 'Sexual Terrorism'." *Aswat Masriya,* June 15, 2014. http://egyptianstreets.com/2014/06/15/egyptians-call-for-the-end-of-sexual-terrorism/

[76] Harassmap, (2014). *Mass sexual harassment incident at Cairo University - another episode in the government's failure to protect women's bodies; Authorities espouse victim-blaming narrative.* [online] Available at: http://harassmap.org/en/press-release-mass-sexual-harassment-incident-at-cairo-university/ [Accessed 30 Jun. 2014].

are happy." After Sisi visited the victim of an attack in the hospital, well-known actress Ghada Abdul Razek said, "how lucky she is, can't anyone harass us?"[77] These minimizations of sexual violence by important figures in Egyptian media were criticized alongside the media's publication of victims' identities online, which violate the privacy of the victims and perpetuate women's fear of reporting incidents of harassment. The aims of media coverage of these incidents have also been questioned for their representations of particular political groups and opinions, as reports have often focused on blaming a political group for a specific case of harassment, rather than questioning its daily occurrence within Egyptian society. Despite these flaws, increased media coverage of these events can be associated with a new recognition of sexual harassment as a problem in Egypt. Personal narratives of harassment published by various sources and discussed on major television talk shows have prompted a national conversation that has the potential to alter its prevalence in Egyptian society.

State-Backed Religion:

Sheikhs, religious political parties, and government ministries involved in religious administration have historically invoked Islam in response to sexual harassment in a variety of ways. In 2009, the Egyptian government first demonstrated recognition of the existence of harassment when the government Ministry of Endowments, responsible for the administration of mosques, distributed a pamphlet that tried to tackle the problem through the teachings of Islam.[78] The pamphlet, titled "Sexual Harassment: Causes and Solutions," was distributed to 50,000

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[77] Diana Moukalled, "Egypt's Sexual Harassment Scandal and a TV Act." *Al Arabiya News,* June 17, 2014. http://english.alarabiya.net/en/views/news/middle-east/2014/06/17/An-anchorwoman-and-an-actress-Egypt-s-sexual-harassment-drama.html

[78] Abigail Hauslohner, "In Egypt, Invoking Islam to Combat Sexual Harassment", *Time,* July 10, 2009. http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1909361,00.html

imams across the nation and attributed harassment to "weak religious awareness."[79] Although the government avoided any responsibility by approaching harassment through a religious lens, recognizing that sexual harassment was a legitimate issue for Egyptians was an important first step for government and religious authorities.

After the rise in harassment and assault incidents after 2011, Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi political groups began to espouse a victim-blaming narrative. After the mob attacks in 2013, members of the Shura Council, Egypt's Upper House of Parliament, blamed harassment on the presence of women amongst male-dominated places.[80] They designated Tahrir Sqaure a "male space", and pointed to the "indecent dress" of women during protests and demonstrations. Reda Saleh El Hefnawy of the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Freedom and Justice Party called on women not to stand next to men in protests because they have a "special place," and General Adel El Afifi of the Salafi Asala Party said, "in some cases, the girl is 100% responsible for her rape because she put herself in that position."[81] A female member of the Freedom and Justice Party said that "sexual harassment is caused by the nakedness of women" and the government did not need a law protecting women from harassment, but rather punishing the girl for inciting men to commit the "sinful act."[82] These comments from religiously affiliated political parties in 2013 perpetuated an understanding of the phenomenon that placed blame in the hands of the women victims, and excused the perpetrators for their behavior. Because this view was espoused by authorities with political power, members of the coup that followed them were able to adopt an opposing view that gained support from victims and shifted national discourse.

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[79] Ibid.
[80] *Egypt: Keeping Women Out,* 25.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.

Aside from religious reactions tainted by politics, sheikhs in Egypt at popular mosques have also formulated and dispersed varied opinions on sexual harassment. At a protest held after the attacks in June 2014, Mohamed Abdallah Nasr, known as "Tahrir's preacher," joined the crowd to "make sure people know Islam is on women's side."[83] He cited that the issue of harassment stemmed from a degradation of girls and women, and that the solution could be found in Islam's respect for women as the "other half of society."[84] In contrast, following the same attacks, Sheikh Sami 'Abd al-Qawi gave a sermon in one of Cairo's largest mosques where he denounced harassment but attributed it to "scantily dressed" women.[85] Exemplifying the government's complex role in religion and the persistence of harassment, the Ministry of Religious Endowments, which has the ability to "regulate religious discourse", has not rejected the victim-blaming framework of al-Qawi's statements. Because 85-90% of the population in Egypt is Muslim, the discourse promoted by religious figures and authorities significantly affect the population's view and understanding of harassment. Religion is an integral component of Egyptian culture, and must be on the side of eradicating harassment if the anti-sexual harassment movement is to succeed in promoting change within society.

The Sisi Administration:

As stated previously, the Sisi administration has attempted to approach the issue of sexual harassment in ways that oppose the reactions by former Muslim Brotherhood power-holders and their affiliates. In addition to criminalizing sexual harassment through amendments to the Penal Code, the Sisi administration has proposed plans to increase security for women through the

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[83] "Egyptians Call For the End of 'Sexual Terrorism."

[84] Ibid.

[85] Vickie Langohr, "New President, Old Pattern of Sexual Violence in Egypt." *Middle East Research and Information Project,* July 7, 2014. http://www.merip.org/mero/mero070714 (July 17, 2014).

formation of a ministerial committee that also aims to identify the reasons for the spread of the

phenomenon. However, other actions and statements by the Sisi administration has turned

incidents of sexual harassment into a political blame-game, whereby the administration in power

accuses the opposition for committing such atrocious acts of violence against women. This

political point-scoring behavior was evident under Morsi's government as exemplified by the

way in which the Muslim Brotherhood utilized social media after the attacks on women in June

2013 to spread the message that opponents of Morsi were "thugs" and "criminals."[86] These

activities have been repeated under the current government. After the filmed incident of assault

at Sisi's inauguration, his supporters accused the Muslim Brotherhood opposition of using sexual

violence against women to "ruin people's happiness at the election of Sisi."[87] The media has

played a role in this politicization of incidents by looking for one political group to scapegoat

rather than focus on the proliferation of the phenomenon in the every day. Anti sexual

harassment groups have condemned these types of statements, saying "that the attempts of the

authorities to use the incidents of sexual assault against the women to "smear" the opposition's

demonstrations mark the rock bottom of the official rhetoric of state institutions."[88]

The employment of sexual harassment incidents for the benefit of the current government

can also be attributed to President Sisi's reactions individually. After the much-publicized

attacks in June 2014, Sisi's visit to the rape victim included an apology to her "on behalf of

Egyptian men."[89] This action spurred a frenzy of media coverage and recognition of the issue of

sexual harassment within a matter of days, despite civil society's attempts to introduce it to the

agenda of public discourse for years. Thus, although Sisi's decision to visit the rape victim was

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[86] *Egypt: Keeping Women Out,* 26.
[87] Marroushi, "Tahrir Square Sexual Assaults Trial Begins."
[88] *Egypt: Keeping Women Out,* 26.
[89] Nesreen Salem, "Politicized Bodies, Invisible Women." *The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy,* June 19,
2014. http://timep.org/commentary/politicized-bodies-invisible-women (June 24, 2014).

an important step in the emphasis of the extent of the issue, the concern rests in whether or not he is only meeting the demands of civil society on his own terms. That, in addition to a perception of his visit to the victim as one representing a patriarchal norm of "protecting women," has left many advocates wary of Sisi's potential aims to politicize sexual harassment to reinforce his image as president and patriarchal protector.[90]

The Security Apparatus:

Throughout successive regimes, the state in Egypt has operated largely through its various arms of security. Historically, the police themselves have been perpetrators of sexual harassment and abuse, which has created doubt among anti sexual harassment advocates on the force's ability to reform. During the 2005 protest against Mubarak's referendum, police officers were photographed ordering colleagues to clear a space in which women were subsequently attacked by thugs hired by the regime.[91] In 2011, well-known writer Mona Eltahawy was arrested while reporting on protests and accused riot police of sexually assaulting her and breaking her arms.[92] Under the current government, twenty-two student protesters were arrested and subjected to forced "virginity tests" despite the outlaw of this procedure in 2011.[93] With these incidents in the recent memory of victims, it is of little surprise that women subjected to sexual harassment are hesitant to request help from security forces. In the UN study on the phenomenon, an overwhelming 93.4% of respondents said they were not likely to request help after an incident of harassment.

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[90] Elboubkri, "'Why Do Women Want to be Men?'"
[91] "New President, Old Pattern of Sexual Violence in Egypt."
[92] "Tahrir Square Sexual Assaults Trial Begins."
[93] "New President, Old Pattern of Sexual Violence in Egypt."

Nevertheless, the Sisi administration has involved the security forces in its attempt to address harassment, prompting the question of the government's true intention to resolve the issue. In his announcement of a ministerial committee catered to harassment, Sisi emphasized the increase of security presence in public places and among demonstrations. As Paul Amar has argued, an increase in policing has the potential to "securitize youth as a threat to the public"[94] and can operate under the guise of 'protecting women' while achieving the political aim of arresting protestors. Thus, it is critical that civil society groups remain wary of the police power they promote and advocate for in the setting of an authoritarian regime. Despite these measures however, police and security forces have been overwhelmed by mass cases of assault since the announcement. These examples display the shortcomings and potential threat of the security apparatus and have left more gaps in combating sexual harassment for civil society to fill.

Civil Society:

In every arena of Egypt lacking in terms of its response to sexual harassment, civil society groups have filled the vacuum. They have worked to influence legislation, to protect survivors, to physically guard women demonstrators, to document cases of harassment, to hold government and institutions accountable for their reactions to harassment or lack thereof, and to ultimately change public discourse around sexual violence in Egypt. Since the work began in 2005 by the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, citizen initiatives have been increasing in number in order to match the increase in documented cases of sexual harassment. According to former ECWR employee and co-founder of Harassmap Engy Ghozlan, the change in number of harassment cases reflects not an increase in the number of crimes committed, but rather a new

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[94] Amar, 316.

willingness to discuss the issue that indicates a change in public understanding.[95] Some groups like Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment (OpAnti-SH) and Tahrir Bodyguards, which formed after attacks in November of 2012, work to physically intervene to protect women. Other groups like Shoft Taharosh (I Saw Harassment) and Harassmap aim to document cases of harassment and provide the hard data evidencing the proliferation of the phenomena. Figure 1 represents a sample of the organizations involved in anti-harassment efforts, and displays the range of objectives and tactics utilized by these groups.

Women's Rights Initiatives Involved in Sexual Harassment

	Founding Date	Type of Organization	Primary Objectives and Tactics
Egyptian Center for Women's Rights	1996	NGO	Empower women, Education through media, Monitor law and policies, Surveys and data collection
Harassmap	2010	Civil Society, incubated under NGO Nahdet El Mahrousa	Use of reporting and mapping technology to track harassment, Encouragement of bystanders to intervene
National Council for Women	2000	Government, created by Presidential Decree	Monitor and propose policies related to harassment, Hold

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[95] *Egypt: Keeping Women Out,* 20.

			conferences and debates, Represent women's organizations[96]
Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment	November 2012	Civil Society	Intervene in cases of harassment, Train rescue squads, Conduct outreach and publicity
Tahrir Bodyguards	November 2012	Civil Society	Mobilize men and women to volunteer as bodyguards during protests, Provide women with hotline information and resources
Shoft Taharosh	October 2012	Civil Society, Coalition of organizations	Awareness campaigns, Documentation of crimes, Intervention in crowded spaces
Harass the Harassers	2013	Vigilante	Punish harassers by spray-painting symbols on their clothing and skin
NooNeswa: Graffiti Harimi Project	March 2012	Civil Society	Break social taboos and reclaim public space through graffiti images, Inject positive images into society

[96] http://www.ncwegypt.com/index.php/en/about-ncw/presidential-decree

Nazra Center for Feminist Studies	2007	NGO	Development of Arabic terminology, Production of knowledge through research, Strategic litigation on gender issues

Figure 1

The aggregation of these groups provided the momentum for Penal Code reforms, in part because of the media attention their activities have commanded. Their criticisms of the language of the reforms called attention to the lack of transparency within the drafting process, and united several groups in their desire to be consulted on women's issues. The way in which they have highlighted and brought individual narratives of sexual assault to the forefront has resulted in a humanization of the issue that has resonated with and horrified many within Egyptian society. In their efforts to combat the popular espousal of victim-blaming, civil society groups have adopted tactics like issuing Public Service Announcements to collaboratively condemn individuals who have taken this point of view. Following the case of mass harassment at Cairo University, the President of the University withdrew his claims about the victim's "inappropriate clothing" after receiving massive backlash from civil society groups. This withdrawal was further cemented by a press release containing the signatures of 11 civil society organizations that served to emphasize not only the absolute unacceptability of the president's comments, but also damaging media representations and weak government authority involvement as well.[97] These statements as well as increasing support of demonstrations regarding women's issues have put civil society initiatives at the forefront of an anti-sexual harassment movement on an undoubtedly significant scale.

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[97] *Mass sexual harassment incident at Cairo University.*

Chapter Two:

Theorizing the Anti-Sexual Harassment Movement in Egypt

Contentious collective action is not a new phenomenon in Egypt's social and political history, yet few social scientists that study social movements have attempted to examine these occurrences through a theoretical lens. Within the contemporary context of Egypt's long and rich history of social movement activism, activists and civil society have turned to the street, conference tables, and media outlets, for instance, to show their support for the first Palestinian Intifada and to criticize Egyptian relations with Israel.[98] In the past four years, Egypt and the international community have witnessed the rise of a social movement to combat sexual street harassment, which will be theorized in this chapter. Despite this reality, social sciences in the English language have continued to focus on North American and European contexts with regards to social movements, and have reflected relative disinterest in collective action in the Middle East and North Africa.[99] Historian Joel Beinin attributes this disinterest to "a combination of implicit or explicit exceptionalism, training focused on mastering difficult languages, and a sense that at least until September 11, 2001, these regions were on the margin of global developments."[100] I add that this region has been overlooked due to Middle East social movements' placement within largely authoritarian contexts, and I will demonstrate the challenges faced by the Anti-Sexual Harassment movement as it develops in this setting.

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[98] Frédéric Vairel, "Protesting in Authoritarian Situations," in *Social Movements, Mobilization, and Contestation in the Middle East and North Africa,* ed. Joel Beinin and Frédéric Vairel (Stanford: Stanford Universtiy Press, 2013), 37.
[99] Ibid, 2.
[100] Ibid.

This chapter will interrogate two prominent social movement theories for their capacity to explain aspects of the Anti-Sexual Harassment movement (A-SH) in Egypt. First, I will examine Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT), which has been widely drawn upon in social movement literature. Second, I will introduce New Social Movement Theory (NSMT) and proceed with my analysis of the A-SH movement based on this theory's features. Both theories discuss components of social movements such as a movement's target of change, collective identity, repertoires of contention, and types of movement impact. I will address these components as they are delineated by each theory, and add to the conventional understanding of these ideas by applying them to a movement within an authoritarian context. Additionally, I will present theory on how to measure the A-SH movement's cultural impact, which is absent from both RMT and NSMT literature.

RMT and NSMT were developed within the North American and European contexts, respectively. It is therefore critical to recognize the false assumptions that stem from their Westo-centric orientation. As scholar Joe Foweraker notes in his analysis of Latin American social movements in the 1970's and 80's, European and American theory tend to assume not only an articulate and communicative civil society, but assume a liberal democratic regime as well. Thus, social movements within this context "are seen as vindicating or protecting a particular, delineated and specific set of rights (since universal rights are guaranteed by the liberal polity)."[101] In Egypt, as in parts of Latin America, not only is it inappropriate to assume a democratic political system, but social movements in authoritarian contexts also have to operate in a political system without the guarantee of universal rights and common civil liberties. These challenges will be discussed in the concluding section of this chapter. Finally, this chapter will

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[101] Joe Foweraker, *Theorizing Social Movements* (Boulder: Pluto Press, 1995), 6.

theorize how the Egyptian context may impact the A-SH movement's ability to function in the future.

Problems with RMT

Although theories of social movements date as far back as the 1950s, a satisfactory definition of a social movement remains evasive. One of the first definitions discussed "a deliberate collective endeavor to promote change in any direction and by any means," while other scholars have emphasized common identity and mass mobilization as necessary characteristics of a movement.[102] By challenging the vague qualifications of early definitions, scholar Charles Tilly's definition has become one of the most widely regarded in social movement literature. Tilly insists that social movements are the "sustained interaction between a specific set of authorities and various spokespersons for a given challenge to those authorities."[103] By accepting this definition, however, social movement scholarship becomes susceptible to a form of 'political reductionism',[104] as its focus on 'change' narrows itself to a socio-political dynamic in which explicit authority figures and civil society leaders are the central point of interaction. In contrast to Tilly's definition, the Anti-Sexual Harassment movement's target of change is not primarily governmental authorities, but rather society writ large.

Tilly's definition stems from Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT), which analyzes movements as collective actors trying to gain entrance into a political market. RMT, and its subsequent social movement definition, has a tendency to overstate the function of formal

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[102] Foweraker, 23.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Albert Melucci, *Nomads of the Present* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989) 44.

political channels as avenues of change due to its foundation in American movements, and excludes movements like the A-SH movement which are not privy to this type of influence. In addition, RMT places disproportionate emphasis on the observable and measurable in regards to understanding collective action 'results.' Whereas a gain in political representation, the magnitude of protest turnout, and the quality of policy production may provide a clear understanding of collective action 'results' under RMT, the A-SH movement's aim to induce societal shifts in behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs on sexual harassment is much more difficult to measure. By confining collective action to those measurable and visible forms like protests, this theory neglects the *production* of new cultural behaviors and understandings.[105] In the case of Egypt, this production is demonstrated in the period of time between the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights first survey on harassment and the 2011 proliferation of NGOs and resources for victims, when women (and men) refused to accept the increasingly violent cases of harassment. 'Egyptian women as a red line' became a powerful cultural code, the adoption of which must be understood as a *process* rather than a 'result' following collective action. It is this focus on the *process* of social movement formulation and the *production* of cultural codes through collective action that makes NSMT particularly relevant to theorizing the A-SH movement in Egypt.

New Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Context

Albert Melucci, a leading theorist of New Social Movement Theory, concurs with aforementioned early definitions of a social movement, while emphasizing contemporary movements' propensity to 'promote change' in the direction of society. He contributes to

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[105] Melucci, 45.

standing definitions by proposing that a social movement can be discerned when its actions "violate the boundaries or tolerance limits of a system, thereby pushing the system beyond the range of variations that it can tolerate without altering its structure."[106] In the case of the A-SH movement, the 'system' is societal, and 'gained goods' would be a shift in Egyptian society's understanding of women's role in public space. New Social Movement Theory is more flexible to fitting the Egyptian authoritarian context because it does not assume a direct confrontation with the state authorities. The theory emphasizes collective identity formation, and addresses the process by which social actors challenge the symbolic codes and cultural norms that shape people's behaviors and interactions in the public sphere. In the case of the A-SH movement, the normalization of sexual harassment, as discussed in Chapter One, represents the 'symbolic code' that must be challenged in order to obtain societal change.

While past forms of collective action and social conflict have coalesced along traditional social groupings such as class,[107] Egypt's movement has transcended these boundaries. It has appealed to and attempted to gain benefits for women that span traditional groupings. As is characteristic of New Social Movements, there exists a 'submerged' participation in the A-SH movement that is rooted in everyday life experiences. A submerged network, also referred to as a 'latent' network, is the system of individuals or small groups that exist out of the public eye and out of the visible membership of NGOs and organizations that deal specifically with harassment. To put simply, what distinguishes Egypt's movement as a New Social Movement is that any woman or man who has had a negative experience with sexual harassment is inherently participating in the A-SH movement as long as they object to harassment's everyday existence. 'Objections' to the phenomenon range from active participation in anti-sexual harassment

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[106] Melucci, 29.

[107] Ibid, 41.

organization initiatives to frowning at or chastising an individual harasser. Submerged networks

allow for the circulation and exchange of information on a micro level that is integral to

disseminating new cultural codes that vilify the act of harassment.

One of the central findings of my research is that the A-SH movement ultimately aims for

the overturn of the dominant cultural code upon which relationships between Egyptian men and

women in the public space are founded. In order to recognize the manifestation of these shifts in

codes, Melucci argues that there are three levels[108] in which collective action of New Movements

can have visible effects: institutional changes, new elites, and cultural innovation. First, as

reflected by the criminalization of sexual harassment in Egypt, the A-SH movement has initiated

institutional changes. The formation of ministerial committees to tackle the issue of sexual

harassment in Egypt's streets as well as all-female police forces to receive victims of harassment

also demonstrate changes within institutions of government and the security apparatus,

respectively, in response to collective action addressing the issue. Second, as discussed in

Chapter One, *new elites* have emerged in accordance with their views on harassment. Although

this process remains nascent, it is reflected by challenges to power holders like University of

Cairo's President who chose to rescind statements and attitudes that reinforced harassment,

rather than risk facing considerable backlash and damaged reputation. Third, *cultural innovation*

has gradually occurred through models of behavior and social relationships between men and

women that reflect an awareness of the cultural code that must be overturned. This is also

reflected by additions to Egyptian Arabic vernacular such as '*taharosh'* and methods by which

women are reclaiming their positions within public space, which will be discussed in a following

section of this chapter.

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[108] Melucci, 75.

The A-SH movement retains the qualifications of a New Movement with its "decentralized, nonhierarchical…fluid and participatory" organizational structure, which can be attributed to the numerous organizations affiliated with the cause and the "loose social networks which underpin the movement." [109] The capacity of this organizational structure to ebb and flow as actors and organizations choose to participate is evident in the chronology of the movement: 16 NGO's formed the Task Force for Prohibition of Sexual Violence in 2008; 11 civil society organizations signed the PSA criticizing University of Cairo's President after an incident in 2014; dozens of Egyptian men and women unaffiliated with official organizations demonstrated after the video release of a brutal sexual assault in 2014; eight organizations held a conference the following day addressing sexual violence and the state.[110] Although the specifics of each organization and individual participant vary, their ideological emphases on a 'lifestyle' issue – that of daily street harassment – accounts for the common goal that unifies the movement. The fluctuation of NGO involvement in addition to the movement's reliance on latent social networks of support posits membership within the movement as coalition of groups and individuals. This loose organizational style again puts emphasis on the A-SH movement as a process rather than a definable group with measurable 'results'.

Collective Identity of the A-SH Movement

As stated by Foweraker: "what [new] movements *are* is as important as what they do. The movement is the message."[111] In order to understand the full extent of the A-SH movement's message, it is important to grasp the movement's makeup: who is involved within the latent

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[109] Foweraker, 43.
[110] "Solidarity and Division in Response to Egypt's Endemic Sexual Violence."
[111] Foweraker, 43.

networks? What is the identity shared by those involved? How does the collective identity contribute to the movement's potential for impact? Sociologist Mario Diani explains that the collective identity of a movement is synonymous with actors' solidarity with the movement. The identity of an interacting collectivity is reflected by the actors' "sense of belongingness," and solidarity with the movement is reflected by "sympathetic feelings, associated with the perception of a common fate to share."[112] Only those actors that share the same beliefs[113] and sense of belongingness can be considered a part of the social movement.[114] In the context of the A-SH movement, I argue that actors' 'sense of belongingness' and 'perception of a common fate,' which are critical to establishing a movement's collective identity, emanate from actors' negative experiences and associations with victims of sexual harassment in Egypt. Thus, an affiliation with victimhood is the common identity that ties NGOs, which devote research and resources to victims, to individuals within the latent social networks. As discussed in Chapter One, victims of sexual harassment are disproportionately women, and 99.3% of Egyptian women have experienced harassment. This 'perception of a common fate' among women in Egypt, in addition to shifts in discourse on sexual harassment, contributes to their 'sense of belongingness' to the A-SH movement, and establishes a collective identity of victimhood, which derives from their experiences as women.

Beyond emphasizing 'women' as the primary source of identity for the A-SH movement, it is critical to also recognize overlapping social identities held by the women involved in the movement. As discussed by Foweraker, it would be incorrect to assume that women participate in social movements solely to advance their position as *women*, as opposed to their other social

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[112] Mario Diani, "The Concept of Social Movement." *The Sociological Review* 40, no. 1 (1992): 8.

[113] As noted by Diani: shared beliefs does not imply homogeneity of ideas and orientations within social movement networks.

[114] Ibid.

identities as students, urban poor, professionals, and activists, among others. He argues that social identity is "both multiple and malleable, and is shaped not only by social context but also by institutional context and the strategic moment of engagement" with the social world.[115] These contexts are especially significant in the case of the A-SH movement because of its foment within a contentious political period in Egypt. The protests and demonstrations that began in 2011 and were followed by the overthrow of longstanding dictator Mubarak gave women exposure to revolutionary politics, which is a critical aspect of their complex identities. As part of a political generation, women in Egypt are arguably better equipped to challenge the status quo now than they would have been 15 years ago. This confidence is a key component to establishing a unified collective identity not solely as women, but as women *and* revolutionaries. Additionally, their previous identities as subjects of a repressive ruler are essential to the development of collective action strategies within a non-liberal state context.

The State's Inevitable Involvement

The state's influence on the formation of a collective identity within the authoritarian context of Egypt is one reason why theorizing this social movement cannot exclude a discussion of the movement's dialectical relationship with the state. Because social movements vary in their composition, characteristics, strategies, and goals according to the type of authority they challenge, several contextual specificities that challenge the assumptions of New Social Movement theory must be addressed. Most significantly, this theory assumes a 'normal' political situation in which ordinary people have the ability to pursue their goals through elections of government representatives or lobbying initiatives. In the authoritarian context, the stakes of

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[115] Foweraker, 60.

social movement activity are raised because state repression has made 'normal politics'[116] impossible.[117] This relationship forces the A-SH movement to develop strategies of collective action that consciously avoid confronting the state to the extent that the state may, in turn, feel the need to repress the movement. These strategies are dialectically opposed to mechanisms adopted by the Egyptian state with which to interact with the A-SH movement. The variations in these interactions are exemplified by the way in which members of the Sisi and Morsi administrations have prioritized and dismissed the movement, respectively (see Chapter One). In addition to collective action strategies and mechanisms of interaction, the A-SH movement's interest in formulating and reforming policies that address sexual street harassment put further emphasis on the relationship between the movement and the state. These necessities of interaction within an authoritarian context present challenges of cooptation and repression. These challenges, as well as specific strategies adopted by the A-SH movement and the Egyptian state will be examined in greater depth in the final section of this chapter.

Understanding the context of the state is also integral to social movements because it often determines when and how movements are able to arise and become sustainable. The particular form of a state advances specific opportunities and constraints that Melucci, among others, designated as a 'political opportunity structure.'[118] As explained by sociologist Asef Bayat, political opportunities occur when "the authorities and the mechanisms of control are undermined by, for instance, a political or an economic crisis, international pressure, or infighting within the ruling elites."[119] Examples of crises in Egypt since the rise of the A-SH

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[116] That being said, I understand that "normal" here can be contested.

[117] Foweraker, 26.

[118] Albert Melucci, "Getting Involved: Identity and Mobilization in Social Movements," in *From Structure to Action: Comparing Movements Across Cultures,* eds. Bert Klandermans, Kriesi Hanspeter, and Sidney Tarrow (Greenwich: JAI Press, 1988), 332.

[119] Bayat, 9.

movement are in no short supply: there has been consistent political instability since the

revolution and toppling of Hosni Mubarak; when including interim periods, power has switched

hands five times since 2011; the Egyptian economy began its rapid decline during Morsi's rule

and has remained unstable up to its current point;[120] and international pressure from various

human rights organizations has increased following UN Women's survey on sexual harassment

in Egypt. These current crises, when applied to sociologist Jack Goldstone's analysis of different

social movements, concur with his findings that social groups will only receive serious attention

when an external shock occurs. 'External shocks' cause the established order to accommodate

new social groups because of its need for integration and support in times of crises.[121] In Egypt's

context, this explains why a new authoritarian government has been willing to allow and even

embrace a movement that under ordinary circumstances it may have dismissed or repressed. In

addition, the A-SH movement's primary focus on achieving societal change demands relatively

little from the state, and thus allows the government to dedicate its limited resources to solving

the more immediate crises.

Despite the favorable political opportunity presented by these crises, the A-SH movement

should also be recognized as a direct response to women's increasing inability to occupy public

space due to the threat of sexual violence. Sociologists and political activists Piven and Cloward,

in their discussion of movements that "rise out of the traumas of daily life," state that these daily

experiences often require an increase in the scale of distress in order for individuals to "mute the

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[120] Enas Hamed, "As Gulf Aid Dries Up, Egypt Struggles." Al Monitor, December 30, 2014. http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/egypt-economic-woes-continue-unfilled-promises-support.html (January 12, 2015).

[121] Jack A. Goldstone, "The Weakness of Organization: A New Look at Gamson's The Strategy of Social Protest." *American Journal of Sociology* 85, (1980): 1017-1042.

sense of self-blame" and "view their plight as a collective one."[122] They continue by adding that movements are even more likely to arise when these conditions occur within a context of "wider changes and instability, at times when the dominant institutional arrangements of the society…are self-evidently not functioning."[123] Thus, increasing cases of violence targeting women in a context of political and economic crises introduce an additional social form of crisis, and have provided both the threats and the opportunities necessary for the entrance of the A-SH movement.

Understanding Movement Impact on Society

Due to its placement within an authoritarian context, the A-SH movement employs extra-institutional means of challenging dominant cultural codes in its pursuit of societal change. As defined by sociologist William Gamson, 'extra-institutional means' comprise everything outside of the electoral, judicial, and traditional political realms of influence.[124] Although I will discuss in the next section how the movement's pursuit of policy change does not limit its activity to extra-institutional means, these channels are the focus. Because analysis of social movements typically examines means by which political impact is achieved, there is a deficiency of scholarship on social science's understanding of extra-institutional means and how to measure their societal impact. Political scientist Marco Giugni attributes the primary focus on political impact to three causes.[125] First, the acceptance of RMT as the prevailing theory in social movement literature has led to the subsequent understanding that "social movements are

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[122] Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 12.

[123] Ibid.

[124] William A Gamson, "Social Movements and Cultural Change," in *From Contention to Democracy,* eds. Marco G. Giugni, Doug McAdam, Charles Tilly (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1998), 66.

[125] Marco G. Giugni, "Was it Worth the Effort? The Outcomes and Consequences of Social Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24, (1998): 385.

essentially targeting political authorities…and, hence, they are mainly aimed at provoking political change."[126] Second, there is an eagerness in academia to understand the causes of movement success or failure. Lastly, academics regard policy impact as more easily measured than societal impact.[127] In order to understand how changes manifest within society, I will draw upon the theoretical framework presented by Gamson to address the importance of mass media as a tool for shaping Egyptian public discourse. Subsequently, I will demonstrate how the A-SH movement has achieved societal impact through its use of this medium. I will follow this analysis with a discussion of local forms of artistic expression that reflect increased public understanding, support, and communication about sexual harassment and the A-SH movement's ideology.

The Role of Mass Media

Mass media is an important forum for understanding social impact[128] due to its wide distribution among the public. It provides the "most generally available and shared set of tools"[129] and has the ability to spread new forms of discourse. In the context of Egypt specifically, studies have suggested that addressing violence against women in the mass media offers benefits to the public by developing awareness of the issues presented.[130] In consideration of these attributes, there is a lot at stake for the A-SH movement depending on the way the mass media presents sexual harassment. The movement must actively engage with the mass media in order to avoid misrepresentations of incidents of harassment. Such misrepresentations, as discussed in Chapter One, include holding the victim responsible for their harassment as well as

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[126] Ibid.

[127] Giugni, 386.

[128] Gamson, 59.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Dr. Enas Abu Youssef, *Egypt Violence Against Women Study: Media Coverage of Violence Against Women* (Cairo: Center for Research on Women and Media, 2009), 8.

minimizations of this type of violence against women. Despite these concerns, the A-SH movement can achieve tremendous social impact if the forum is utilized properly.

For the purpose of my analysis, I will be examining the movement's utilization of mass media on three different levels. The first level consists of print and television news media, which overtly discuss the A-SH movement ideology in an informational context. The second level consists of advertisements and public service announcements (PSAs), which focus on presenting the A-SH movement ideology through portrayals, but remain informational in substance. The third level consists of fictional television shows and dramas, which are the most implicit in their discussion of the A-SH movement and sexual harassment in general. With regards to the first level, the A-SH movement's impact on society can be understood as one of four potential outcomes of meaning construction in the news and print media forum. As presented by Gamson, these four outcomes consist of the following: 1) a *full response* in which the movement and message is accepted by media news outlets and gains new advantages; 2) *cooptation* whereby the movement is accepted, but gains no new advantages; 3) *preemption* in which the movement gains new advantages despite not being accepted by the media; 4) *collapse* in which the movement gains neither acceptance nor advantages.[131] "Acceptance" is defined as the gain of media standing, which reflects a measure of achieved cultural power. By applying "acceptance" and "new advantages," to the context of the A-SH movement, it is clear that the movement has made inroads in achieving a *full response* from print and news media forum since the 2011 revolution. In gaining media standing, organizations within the movement are able to provide an interpretation of events and actively participate in the discussion of sexual harassment. In print and news forums, this power is reflected in the sources chosen by reporters, who in turn utilize

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[131] Gamson, 65.

their source's particular perspective. In a study conducted by the Center for Research on Women and Media at Cairo University in 2009, detailed findings demonstrated that men were referred to as sources in print media on the issue of sexual harassment 50 percent of the time, while women were referenced only 16.7 percent.[132] Today however, those participants that are often referenced in Egyptian media as experts are female-oriented groups such as HarassMap, Shoft Ta7arosh (I Saw Harassment), The National Council for Women's Rights, Tahrir Bodyguards, and Nazra Center for Feminist Studies. These groups stand as prototypes of the movement's message while legitimizing the anti-sexual harassment cause with their unified stance on its eradication.

Within print and news media, the A-SH movement is able to utilize this medium in a manner in which activists and spokespeople for the movement are directly quoted. Through these quotes they regurgitate official stances, slogans, and talking points as predetermined by the specific organizations they represent. The second level of mass media, which includes forums such as PSAs, advertisements, and radio, provide more space and time for social actors in the movement to elaborate upon themes, ideas, motivations, dynamics, emotions, and struggles that represent what is at stake in a more visceral and engaging manner. PSAs serve as powerful visual education campaigns that reflect the creator's understanding of the issue at hand. In Egypt, PSAs on sexual harassment by HarassMap and UN Women have been circulated on Internet news sources and the UN Women's video was featured on various international and local sites.[133] Radio programs are another form of mass media in this level that reflect the progress of the A-SH movement's acceptance. Cairo University's study notes that at the time of the survey, radio programs addressing violence against women did not exceed 15 percent, and there was zero

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[132] Youseff, 18.

[133] http://www.cairoscene.com/ViewArticle.aspx?AId=2075-Egypt%27s-Sexual-Harassment-PSA

evidence that programs discussed harassment specifically.[134] Since this time however, radio programs have become increasingly supportive of the movement and have aired PSAs in Arabic and English as well as hosted call-in shows on the issue of sexual harassment.[135]

The third level of my examination of mass media focuses on fictional television programs, which are considered "one of the most important means of affecting awareness among the Egyptian population" due to the fact that television drama series attract the largest audiences of common mass media.[136] In 2009, Cairo University's study found that only 10.7 percent of television programs addressed issues of community violence such as rape, while an even less significant 2.3 percent included the exposure of women to verbal harassment.[137] Only one program at this time, *El Kessa We Ma Fiha*, noted the increased sexual harassment of women and girls on public transportation.[138] Although no studies have been conducted on the portrayal of sexual harassment in television post-2011, the ministerial committee tasked with combating the issue planned to utilize television's popularity during Ramadan to draw further attention to harassment. In June of 2014, the committee proposed a competition to choose the best TV series for its promotion of women's rights and tolerance.[139] It is yet to be seen if series producers will achieve this goal for Ramadan 2015, and discussion of the competition has not surpassed the proposal.

As defined by Gamson, "success in gaining new advantages in cultural terms is measured by changes in relative prominence of the challenger's preferred frames compared to antagonistic

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[134] Youseff, 28.

[135] Rizzo, Helen, Anne M. Price, and Katherine Meyer. "Targeting Cultural Change in Repressive Environments: The Campaign against Sexual Harassment in Egypt". Retrieved from Egyptian Center for Women's Rights: www.ecwronline.org

[136] Youseff, 25.

[137] Ibid, 23.

[138] Ibid.

[139] "Egyptian Cabinet Introduces Plan."

or rival frames."[140] In the case of the A-SH movement, the media's minimization or dismissal of sexual harassment has served as the relevant rival frame in this context. However, three traits in media reporting demonstrate the way the A-SH movement has gained new advantages for its members and constituents. First, the adoption of the term "*taharosh*" when discussing this type of violence against women in the mass media is novel and rewarding in the way it separates the behavior from rape, which reflects more of an extreme along the sexual violence continuum, and from flirting, which is a minimization. Continuing on this point, the second advantage gained is public discourse on a topic that was previously considered taboo in Egyptian society, and accounted significantly for radio programs' former lack of acceptance.[141] The media's shift from dismissal to pursuit of stories on harassment has helped open Egyptian society to the topic as something demanding of discussion. Third, former media frames of dismissal or minimization have received backlash within the mass media forum whenever they surface, as discussed in Chapter One. In illustration of the A-SH movement's frame prominence within media, journalists and news presenters are now pressured to treat incidents of harassment with appropriate severity and concern, or risk losing their job and tainting their reputation.[142]

Innovations in Local Artistic Expression

Public discourse in the context of the A-SH movement refers to public communication about sexual harassment and women's place in the public space. It is not limited to the circulation of information through mass media, but also includes images, performance, and audio. This section discusses these alternate forums for public discourse within the category of

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[140] Gamson, 70.

[141] Youseff, 16.

[142] "Egypt's Sexual Harassment Scandal and a TV Act."

localized artistic expression. As discussed by Gamson, image production is significant because it is a more subtle form of meaning construction that is at the heart of measuring social impact.[143] Image production has proliferated under the A-SH movement in the form of public graffiti. Female artists such as Mira Shihadeh and Hend Kheera are responsible for many iconic images that have come to symbolize the movement. They stencil images on public walls and in doing so create meaning not only through their imagery, but also by symbolically re-labeling public space as non-threatening to women. Shihadeh and Kheera, among other artists, have produced images that explicitly target the phenomenon of harassment, and they often caption their stencils with statements like "No to harassment!" or provocative warnings such as "Don't touch! Castration awaits you," respectively. *Rolling Stone ME* profiled Kheera in 2013 for her work on Egyptian graffiti art where she attested to the power of public street art by stating, "a wall is more powerful than a media channel, for example, because you can't ignore it."[144]

Also beyond news, print, radio, and television media communication regarding the harassment phenomenon are the messages disseminated through Egyptian music. Egyptian artists Zap Tharwat and Abo consecutively released songs in 2014 addressing harassment on public transportation and harassment as a societal problem, respectively.[145] The song "Flirting Yes, Harassment No" by Egyptian artists Sadat & Fifty was paired with an internet video "Creepers on the Bridge," which covertly filmed the harassment encountered by women walking on Cairo's Qasr al Nile bridge. The video, as part of a larger documentary project, quickly circulated the internet and attained "viral video" status by being featured on popular English-language websites

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[143] Gamson, 59.

[144] Michael Downey, "The Writings on the Wall," *Rolling Stone ME,* August 30, 2013. Web. http://michael-downey.com/gallery/closeup_hendkheera/

[145] Ahram Online, "VIDEO: Independent Musicians Take on Sexual Harassment," Ahram Online, August 14, 2014. http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/5/33/108259/Arts--Culture/Music/VIDEO-Independent-musicians-take-on-sexual-harassm.aspx

such as *Egyptian Streets*, BuzzFeed, *Huffington Post*, CNN's *New Day*, among others.[146] Public

consumption of these words and images on such a massive scale coupled with criticisms of

harassment by locally famous musicians are critical to the A-SH movement's aims of achieving

societal shifts in understanding of the phenomenon.

The movement has produced observable cultural innovations through other forms of

artistic expression as well. Described as "a way to connect with the changes taking place in the

country,"[147] magazines and books featuring comics and satirical cartoons have proliferated since

Mubarak's ouster in 2011. The first issue of *Shakmagia* (Jewelry Box), a new feminist comic

book in Egypt, focused on sexual harassment and violence against women and featured a dozen

stories depicting the phenomenon as endemic of a broader societal problem.[148] Another Internet-

based comic strip follows a hijab-clad superheroine named Qahera who saves women from

situations involving sexual harassment and violence,[149] and has garnered significant domestic

and international attention. On a more local scale, Egyptian plays, theatre, and spoken word have

also reflected the impact of the A-SH movement, as sexual harassment has increasingly become

the subject of these forms of expression. Actors trained at Cairo's Center for Artistic Creativity

have performed tragicomic sketches that tackle sexual harassment and women that "are crushed

by poverty and a patriarchal society,"[150] while spoken word performances have utilized the

narratives of women and men in their discussions of what women endure and how society should

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[146] Anti-Harassment Documentary: The People's Girls, https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/tinnevl/anti-harassment-documentary-the-peoples-girls (January 18, 2015).

[147] Sarah el Deeb, "New Egypt Comic Artists Push Limits of Expression," *The Associated Press*, Nov. 14, 2014. Located at http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2014/11/21/world/middleeast/ap-ml-egypt-comics.html?_r=0.

[148] Ibid.

[149] Manar Ammar, "It's a Bird…It's a Plane…It's Qahera!" *The Daily Beast,* Sept 22, 2013. http://www.thedailybeast.com/witw/articles/2013/09/22/meet-qahera-egypt-s-hijab-wearing-comic-superheroine.html

[150] May Selim, "Theatre Play After the Night: A Tragicomic Mirror of Egypt's Pains," *Ahram Online,* Dec 8 2014, http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/5/35/117484/Arts--Culture/Stage--Street/Theatre-play-After-the-Night-A-tragicomic-mirror-o.aspx

address it. These innovations in society's approach to discussing the issue demonstrate notable

progress from a time in which sexual harassment was a publically taboo topic. The framing and

recognition of harassment as an overwhelmingly negative societal ill is a positive indication that

the A-SH movement is achieving cultural change.

These examples of mass media involvement and local artistic innovations have created

the potential for long-term social impact that results from establishing new facts on the ground,

motivating new lifestyles, and creating "new modes of thinking, behaving, and doing" that can in

turn acclimatize the Egyptian state to new social trends.[151] Asef Bayat refers to this process of

society influencing the state as *socialization of the state,* whereby the state is "conditioned to

social sensibilities, ideals, and expectations."[152] This process is only achievable if the A-SH

movement is able to remain sustainable within the context of an authoritarian regime, and is able

to overcome challenges posed by the possibilities of repression, cooptation, and manipulation.

Challenges Within the Authoritarian Context

As examined in the previous discussion of social movement theory, little attention is paid

to the interplay of movements and state power. Although definitions of Egypt's regime type have

fluctuated with the various shifts in power holders since Hosni Mubarak, it is generally

considered to be an authoritarian state. Since the military deposed democratically elected

President Mohamed Morsi, Egypt's Freedom House designation, based on an annual global

report that assesses the real-world rights and freedoms enjoyed by individuals,[153] digressed from

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[151] Asef Bayat, "The Politics of Presence," in *Making Islam Democratic: Social Movements and the Post-Islamist Turn* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 204.

[152] Ibid.

[153] Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2014 Methodology," 2014. https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology#.VSQWDxPF-ho

"Partly Free" to "Not Free."[154] Freedom House's 2014 report on the Middle East and North

Africa states that this digression took place due to the military government's direct role in

"killing over 1,000 demonstrators, arresting practically the entire Brotherhood leadership,

coopting or intimidating the media, persecuting civil society, and subverting the rule of law."[155]

On a scale of 1-7, with 7 defined as the worst, Egypt scored a 5 in civil liberties and a 6 in

political rights.[156] These examples clearly demonstrate how the Egyptian state adopts strategies

in order to manage groups, organizations, and movements like the Muslim Brotherhood.

Demonstrations, a free and open media, and the presence of an active civil society are aspects of

'normal politics' that are taken for granted in liberal democracies. The A-SH movement, in turn,

has adopted strategies of collective action to avoid repression on the level of the Muslim

Brotherhood.

During the years 2005-2008 the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights first contributed to

the budding A-SH movement in a similar authoritarian context under Hosni Mubarak.[157] Helen

Rizzo et al argues that ECWR's activity was possible due to the organization's use of the state as

a mechanism for their campaign rather than directly challenging its authority. As is indicative of

New Social Movements' focus on achieving cultural change, strategies of the anti-sexual

harassment campaign initiated by ECWR centered on raising consciousness of the issue and on

changing public opinion through education. Although the ECWR did target the government for

policy changes, the organization framed their argument for legal reform in a way that resonated

with the government's ambitions. By presenting the need for a law criminalizing harassment in

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[154] Freedom House, "Middle East and North Africa," 2014
https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Middle%20East%20and%20North%20Africa%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf
[155] Ibid.
[156] Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2014: Egypt," https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/egypt-0#.VL8Lvy7F-ho
[157] Ibid.

order to benefit tourism and women's productivity in the workplace, the ECWR avoided antagonizing the government, or blaming it for the social ill.[158] Another reason the ECWR was able to mobilize during its period of activism was because of its innovative repertoires of contention that avoided traditional street protest in favor of portrayal of the issue through refined art, music, and workshops held at a local cultural center.[159] The A-SH movement as it exists today has adopted, developed, and expanded upon these tactics in order to continue the work initiated by the ECWR. Despite the increase in the movement's criticism of the government's role in perpetuating or poorly policing harassment, the Sisi administration has continued to vocally encourage the eradication of sexual harassment. Because the movement is not perceived as a direct threat to the authority of the government relative to the way in which organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood have been, the movement has been able to continue to promote the cause without fear of repression. Despite the immediate benefits of this relationship, the association is dangerous to the movement's autonomy and introduces the threat of cooptation.

The organizational structure and multitude of groups that compose the A-SH movement are causes of concern for state manipulation and cooptation of the movement in Egypt. With no formal leadership, it is difficult to hold organizations accountable for the way they represent the cause, and unification rests on the assumption that everyone within the loose social networks of support are working towards the same goal of harassment eradication. The National Council for Women (NCW) has been a particular source of controversy within the movement due to its heavy presence as a source in print media as well as its historical affiliation with Hosni Mubarak and the old regime. The Council was established in 2000 under presidential decree by Mubarak

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[158] Rizzo, 17.
[159] Ibid.

and was subsequently spearheaded by his wife Suzanne Mubarak.[160] Heavy criticism of the

Council began in 2012 when a lawsuit was filed demanding that the organization reform into an

elected body that "truly represents Egyptian women."[161] In response, the ruling military council

appointed 30 new members in a decree that strengthened women's rights groups' opinion of the

council as more illegitimate.

Beyond its state affiliations on an organizational level, the council has also been

criticized by women's rights organizations for responding to issues of harassment with actions

"too meek for the level of violations against Egyptian women."[162] Within the A-SH movement,

organizations have gone so far as to withdraw from collective protests because the NCW was

listed as a contributing organizer. In June of 2014, a number of withdrawals from a scheduled

protest succeeded the NCW's announcement of participation, in addition to accusations that the

Council was attempting to improve its image by "taking advantage of the wave of anger against

the abuse of women's rights."[163] Other organizations advocated the importance of participation

in order to distribute flyers that would counter the "state-led rhetoric adopted by the NCW."[164]

The accusations of these organizations are founded in relevant concerns. Following the

widespread video of assault during President Sisi's inauguration, the NCW reacted as an

extension of state rhetoric by labeling the incident a "Muslim Brotherhood-led conspiracy to ruin

the Egyptians' joy and celebration with the inauguration of a new president."[165] Additionally,

the council's historical attempts to take full credit for laws originally championed by multiple

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[160] "The National Council for Women (NCW)," *State Information Service: Your Gateway to Egypt,* July 20, 2009
http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Templates/Articles/tmpArticles.aspx?ArtID=2267#.VL8asS7F-ho
[161] Steven Viney, "The Embattled New National Council for Women," *Egypt Independent,* March 18, 2012.
http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/embattled-new-national-council-women
[162] "Solidarity and Division in Response to Egypt's Endemic Sexual Violence
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid.

women's rights organizations is threatening to the A-SH movement in the way that achievements by civil society could be misattributed to an achievement of the state if the NCW comes to be recognized as the face of the movement.

State-sponsored feminism presents the opportunity for government manipulation of the A-SH movement in order to strengthen their domestic and international image. Internal crises and societal discontent have compelled other authoritarian regimes in the Middle East to make concessions to women in an attempt to maintain the power of their state, and governments have financed civil society groups on the condition that they "organize exclusively under the jurisdiction of the state."[166] These actions have indirectly forced women's groups into alliances with the state and have tempered their criticisms and moderated their goals. If the Egyptian government pursues a similar strategy and organizations within the A-SH movement concede to the state's conditional funding, the movement runs the risk of losing its agency and halting its development. In addition to improving the state's public image, the state may also engage with the movement in order to detract attention from other societal, economic, or political ills, or may utilize the movement to pursue another agenda. In Egypt, Sisi's proclamation of support for victim's of harassment and his formation of committees to address the issue not only improved his image among some local women and international observers, but also distracted the local population from issues of politics, increased repression, and economic decline.

Despite the existence of these threats, the most disturbing trend of Egyptian state involvement is the way it has utilized harassment and the movement to pursue its own political agenda. As discussed in Chapter One, supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood and the current Sisi administration have used incidents of harassment and assault to play a political blame game. In

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[166] Saher Naumaan, "The Empty Promise of State-Sponsored Feminism in the Arabian Peninsula," *Jadaliyya,* May 28, 2014. http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/17905/the-empty-promise-of-state-sponsored-feminism-in-t

an examination of the four previous governments, those of Mubarak, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, Morsi, and Adly Mansour, "court cases brought by survivors…have been prosecuted only when the government could achieve some political gain…usually when government adversaries could plausibly be blamed for the assaults."[167] Women right's campaigners and organizations within the movement have objected to the idea that recent attacks are politically motivated however,[168] and argue that these forms of accusations minimize the violence to singular incidents that lift responsibility from society's perpetuation of harassment. Additionally, as examined by Paul Amar, the administration has used the A-SH movement's call for increased security to protect victims to arbitrarily arrest youth protestors of the regime. This concern is especially grave due to the fact that in the past, security forces have been "equally the perpetrator's of violent crimes and harassment of women."[169]

In light of the prospect of cooptation and manipulation, organizations within the A-SH movement have made a discernable effort to separate their activities from state involvement. The organizer of the protest in June of 2014, Dena Elshabba, explained that in avoiding confrontation with the NCW she was attempting to "remove the event from another context of political struggle."[170] In contrast to pushing for political representation that would promote the cause, the movement has focused on addressing harassment in policies that target the realms of education, health, and employment. In addition to these efforts, the movement must continue its disassociation with the regime by finding independent means of finance, and obtaining higher visibility in the media and international community. As the current regime becomes settled in its position of power, the movement will face new challenges to promoting the eradication of

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[167] Langohr, "New President, Old Pattern."

[168] Hazel Haddon, "Egypt May Finally Face its Sexual Assault Problem," *Global Post,* June 14, 2014
http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/middle-east/egypt/140614/sexual-assault-video-arrests

[169] Elboubkri, "Why Do Women Want to Be Men?"

[170] Adam, "Solidarity and Division."

harassment. Laws of repression have already halted the work of organizations like Tahrir

Bodyguards, as the crackdown on most forms of street-level organizing has affected its ability to

coordinate teams to rescue women from assault during gatherings in Tahrir Square.[171] Civil

society organizations have also expressed concerns over a recently passed "terrorist entities" law,

which vaguely defines terrorist entities as "any association, organization, group or gang that

practices, aims at or calls for destabilizing public order, endangers society's well-being or its

safety interests or endangers social unity by using violence, power, threats or acts of terrorism to

achieve its goals."[172] The ambiguous nature of expressions such as "public order," "endangers

national unity," and "social unity" opens the door to possible oppression if the administration

becomes uncomfortable with the movement's criticism of government responses to harassment.

The concluding remarks of Asef Bayat's book *Making Islam Democratic* are particularly

relevant to synthesizing the Anti-Sexual Harassment movement's societal target, and its

relationship with an authoritarian state. He states: "It would be naïve to romanticize "society" at

the expense of demonizing the state. Just as states may be oppressive, societies can be divided,

individualized, authoritarian, and exploitative. Feminists have long taken issue with "society" for

its patriarchal disposition in the organization of the household and family life, in private

relations, in science and technology, and in everyday language."[173] Socializing the Egyptian state

to accept the values of the movement is one small step to succeeding in the eradication of sexual

harassment. The primary target of transforming society is the ultimate challenge, and the

network of victims in alliance with the NGOs that comprise the Anti-Sexual Harassment

movement have increasingly become the agents in achieving this change.

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[171] Langohr, "New President, Old Pattern."

[172] Ahmed Fouad, "Egypt Passes New Law on "Terrorist" Entitites," *Al Monitor,* Dec 10, 2014 http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/egypt-law-terrorist-entities-muslim-brotherhood.html

[173] Bayat, *Making Islam Democratic,* 204.

Conclusion:

Threats of Foreign Involvement

In an increasingly globalized world, it is easy for the particular to be erased in assertions of universality. Indeed, in the case of sexual harassment and Violence Against Women, it is much easier to find one set of solutions to one overarching category of problems, rather than find individual solutions for each particular form of violence within each particular context in which they occur. But beyond the threat of irrelevancy, universal solutions to contextually specific problems pose other dangers. Particularly in the case of authoritarian contexts like Egypt, certain solutions which emphasize increasing security and policing powers can be detrimental not only to solving violence against women, but to the liberty of populations in general. As international organizations and agencies become increasingly involved in their support of Egyptian women, the negative aspects of their contributions should be recognized and understood. In these concluding thoughts, I will discuss potential problems that may arise out of foreign involvement in the Anti-Sexual Harassment movement in Egypt, and reiterate the benefits to be gained from remaining a localized and contextually specific initiative.

Inappropriate Solutions

Women's rights gained its critical position on the international human rights agenda in 1992, when the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) formulated a broader recommendation, which defined gender-based violence as a form of discrimination.[174] This designation made it obligatory for states to eliminate violence "perpetuated by public authorities and by private persons."[175] In 1994 the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women was appointed by the UN Commission on Human Rights, and was

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[174] Merry, 78.
[175] Ibid, 79.

mandated to collect information on violence against women across the globe, recommend solutions to eliminate violence, and work closely with the Commission on Human Rights.[176] The first Special Rapporteur, Radhika Coomaraswamy, prepared several reports on her investigation of manifestations of violence against women around the world, and emphasized the duty of states to "exercise due diligence" in efforts of prevention.[177] Six years later, the Security Council took this focus even further in the adoption of resolution 1325 on women and peace and security. This resolution provided the mandate for foreign intervention on the grounds of protecting women in conflict areas from sexual violence.[178]

Although the Special Rapporteur's investigations reflected variation in manifestations of violence around the world, Coomaraswamy's solutions were not equally reflective of varying political or state security situations. In 2006-2007 groups within Egypt began to expose and expand their campaign against the sexual harassment committed by members of the police force. As stated by Amar, harassment at this time was defined as a "particular perversion practiced by the repressive security state."[179] After the numerous occurrences of sexual harassment and assault that were reported during Eid al-Fitr in 2006, the international human rights regime and some groups within Egypt failed to note that police had permitted and even encouraged the attacks in alliance with state objectives. In addition, most of the male attackers in this situation were proven to actually have been cops in plain clothes, imposed by the state to deter female public presence.[180] Despite these facts, the result was a mobilization of groups inside and outside Egypt, which called for an extension of the solutions proposed by the Special Rapporteur

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[176] United Nation Commission on Human Rights resolution 1994/45, *Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences* (4 March 1994).

[177] Merry, 79.

[178] Security Council resolution 1325, *Women, Peace and Security,* S/RES/1325 (31 October 2000).

[179] Amar, 313.

[180] Ibid, 309.

through an intensification of security-state powers.[181] Consequently, the years following the invocation of a universal solution were characterized by increased security and police interventions. In 2009, UNSCR 1325 was being cited in Egypt "as a precedent for deploying…state-of-emergency powers"[182] in the name of 'protecting women' and 'upholding international standards.'

Thus, internationally oriented organizations in Egypt pose two threats to the A-SH movement in regards to their adoption and promotion of international women's rights rhetoric and solutions. First, these organizations, due to their advocacy for solutions that are inappropriate in the current authoritarian and repressive state context, could isolate themselves from other locally oriented groups and cause a disjuncture in the social movement. This kind of separation and distinction between groups has already been observed in the demonstrations on March 8, 2011, also known as International Women's Day. As recounted by Amar, two massive demonstrations were set to take place on this date, one set involving students led by young women as well as the youth branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, and the other set involving an interfaith union of Coptic Christian and Muslim anti-police brutality groups. Many local Egyptian feminists groups wanted to support one of the two sets of pre-determined demonstrations, but the internationally linked feminist NGOs insisted on a distinct march for Women's Day.[183] This insistence implied that "one could separate out an 'international' level of feminism from the national…and the distinction seemed to be projected onto the binary of elitist versus popular…"[184] This potential for disconnect among groups within the A-SH movement is the lesser concern however. The second threat lies precisely in the implementation of the policies

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[181] Ibid, 314.
[182] Ibid, 302.
[183] Ibid, 321.
[184] Ibid, 322.

these internationally driven organizations propose. If state security powers are expanded continuously in response to cases of sexual harassment, organizations within the social movement may actually become the victims of police and state repression, which will lead to a disbanding of the organizations and social movement entirely.

Perceptions and Risks of Foreign Involvement

Egyptian organizations that promote international agendas demonstrate the danger of universal solutions when other factors are not considered, but how do actors within society and other localized organizations view these associations and interventions? Lila Abu-Lughod, in her discussion of 'universals', notes "what is universal seems neutral in that it belongs to everyone and anyone, not to someone particular. The opposite would be something partisan that favors one group or grows out of interests or traditions…the universals…therefore lend tremendous authority to those who claim them."[185] Accordingly, there has been an increasing aversion to claims of universality due to the tendency of Western governments to "appropriate human rights discourse and to proclaim themselves the sole and legitimate proponents of it."[186] This tendency has confused international efforts at upholding human rights with an imposition of Western moral influence. This has in turn created a cultural specificity backlash in which Egyptian actors have begun to view international human rights agendas as 'the cultural expansionism of the West'.[187]

The understanding among some Egyptians of the international human rights regime as a form of Western imperialist discourse has caused several disadvantages and frustrations among

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[185] Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 86.
[186] Al-Ali, 208.
[187] Ibid, 209.

local Egyptian women's groups. Activists face internal accusations of, as stated by anthropologist Nadje Al-Ali, "collaborating with 'western imperialism' by importing alien ideas and practices and propagating them throughout society."[188] From the state and other actors, women's initiatives have the potential to be criticized for creating a gender divide between males and females that is detrimental to solving economic or political issues that require national unity. Externally, some secular Western feminists have labeled violence against women in Egypt a result of the inherently barbaric nature of Egyptian customs and traditions.[189] In the face of such unsupportive claims, groups like those that work on sexual harassment within the local context likely feel a pressure to disassociate with western discourse in an attempt to preserve the Egyptian-ness of their initiative. They must work to include men in their eradication of sexual harassment to avoid a 'gender war', which is difficult considering the gendered nature of the problem. In light of Western criticism, Egyptian women want to bring out the best of their cultural heritage and reject essentialist claims, while still acknowledging that sexual harassment is a problem that needs to be addressed. Reactions to these internal and external accusations can often lead to a conflicting position for those women involved in local efforts, and a subsequent internal divide among members of the A-SH movement. Thus, those groups that associate too closely with international and 'Western' forms of discourse and support are increasingly viewed as detrimental to the credibility of the local initiative to eradicate harassment.

Sources of Funding

In Egypt, funding sources for local organizations are understood by Egyptian women activists as being one of three types: 'good' foreign funding, 'bad' foreign funding, and self-

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[188] Ibid, 47.
[189] Ibid, 211.

funding. Sources of funding are one of the key weapons of denunciation within women's

organizations and wider NGO community, so it is critical that these are analyzed in order to

understand the continuation of acceptance of the A-SH movement in Egypt. 'Good' and 'bad'

foreign sources are distinguished primarily by the host countries from which the money arrives,

i.e. if the organization sending money is based in a country perceived to be "politically 'less

threatening', 'less imperialist' and 'more progressive' in their politics towards the Third World,

they are labeled as 'good'."[190] Another distinction between 'good' and 'bad' is the extent to

which foreign organizations impose controls on the receiving organization. Those groups that

grant Egyptian organizations relative freedom in the use of their funds are seen as 'good'

because they allow funds to be used in a contextually appropriate way. In contrast, 'bad' foreign

funds are characterized by Western organizations that provide gender-training packages that lack

local relevance. An example of one such package is that which was proposed within the

International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA) to the United States 113th Congress.

Although not enacted, a significant part of the bill called for U.S. training of foreign military,

police, and judicial officials on violence against women and girls.[191] Positioning the military as

the problem solvers of sexual violence against women is extremely problematic in the Egyptian

context, wherein security and police forces have themselves often been the perpetrators of these

problems.

Some Egyptian activists do not believe that the distinction between 'good' and 'bad'

funding should exist in respect to donor nations. In her research on the subject, Al-Ali

interviewed one woman who stated that making a distinction between Dutch versus American

versus British donor organizations is a fruitless discussion. She noted that internally, individual

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[190] Ibid, 202.

[191] Lauren Chief Elk, "No IVAWA," *Model View Culture,* June 30, 2014. https://modelviewculture.com/pieces/no-ivawa

organizations within donor countries could vary considerably and contain people sensitive to Egyptian concerns as well as people from intelligence agencies with a foreign agenda. Although she championed groups that refuse foreign funding, she recognized that these groups are also often the least active.[192] Thus to this Egyptian woman interviewed by Al-Ali, the problem lies not in accepting foreign funds, but in discrediting other groups for accepting funds based on the arbitrary label of 'good' versus 'bad' source.

In an attempt to avoid being discredited for accepting foreign funds, women's groups and initiatives in Egypt have turned to the Egyptian community for financial backing. They believe that asking the community for money may convince wealthy Egyptians of the urgency of their cause.[193] Keeping money flow and organization output within Egypt also promotes accountability within these organizations due to the close proximity of their donors. Most importantly, Egyptian funds are more likely to come with requirements and conditions that take the Egyptian context into concern, and may therefore add to the group's efficiency and productivity. Despite these benefits, some activists have qualms about the source of local funding due to their antipathies towards the big local businesses that are likely to donate. Egyptian women activists perceive businessmen and women in Egypt to be corrupt and greedy, and "the epitome of exploitative capitalism."[194] Nevertheless, many feel that this is the lesser of two evil options when it comes to local versus foreign funding, and organizations are increasingly turning towards local options in an effort to increase their legitimacy.

Funding of the Anti-SH Movement

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[192] Al-Ali, 201.
[193] Ibid, 203.
[194] Ibid, 203.

As discussed in the preceding chapter, it is difficult to name and define every participant within the A-SH movement due to fluctuating membership and latent networks of support. In Chapter One, I provided a table with some of the organizations that have played a significant role in the movement, as determined by the frequency by which media reports and news sources have referred to them. The funding of these organizations varies widely, and has been significant in determining the discourses promoted by certain organizations as well as their respective legitimacy and credibility within the larger movement.

It is unsurprising that the two organizations that receive significant foreign funding, the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights and Nazra for Feminist Studies, both promote a discourse associated with the international rhetoric of 'human rights are women's rights'. Nazra for Feminist Studies grants come largely from the Global Fund for Women, an organization founded by three American women who wanted to fund women-led organizations directly.[195] The Global Fund's criteria for application includes a "clearly reflected" focus of "advancing women's equality and human rights," and an organizational structure in which women fill all or most leadership roles, and in 2010-2011 it granted $23,800 to the Nazra initiative. The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights receives funds from a wide variety of foreign sources including The Global Fund for Women as well as the United Nations Democracy Fund, the World Bank, The National Endowment for Democracy, among others. In its external and internal strategic goals as well as its note on 'Opportunities', the ECWR makes clear its commitment to upholding the international emphasis that women's rights are an integral part of human rights, and international conventions are primary commitments.[196]

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[195] "Mission and History," *Global Fund for Women,* 2015, http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/who-we-are/our-mission

[196] "Egyptian Center for Women's Rights," *Cairo Urban Initiatives Platform,* Accessed March 2015, http://www.cuipcairo.org/en/directory/egyptian-center-womens-rights

Although both these organizations promote ideas that are fundamental to those of their donors, the ECWR has received significant criticism for its affiliations while Nazra for Feminist Studies has not. Amar has negatively referred to the ECWR several times in his works as an example of how foreign funding leads to an "NGO-ization affect" whereby local organizations become extensions of foreign ideological interventions.[197] Despite this charge, the ECWR has played a prominent and positive role in the A-SH movement efforts, most significantly through its survey in 2008, which provided the foundation of evidence upon which the A-SH movement was able to grow.

Tahrir Bodyguards, Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment (Opantish), and HarassMap are three organizations within Egypt and the A-SH movement that are self-funded. Tahrir Bodyguards, and initiative where men and women make sure women are not targeted in protests, relies on its members to volunteer both their time and their resources to achieve success. Opantish volunteers directly intervene in cases of assault and harassment, provide victims with psychological and medical resources, and raise awareness on sexual violence and assault through distribution of pamphlets and flyers.[198] HarassMap is a volunteer based operation that primarily involves an online and mobile reporting system whereby incidents and locations of harassment can be recorded and avoided by other potential victims. Although primarily self-funded, the organization received a research grant from Canadian research center IDRC, and used these funds to conduct research on crowdsourcing.[199] These organizations differ from their foreign funded counterparts in that their missions must focus on a bottom up approach to ending the social acceptability of sexual harassment. By involving Egyptians on a volunteer basis, their

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[197] Amar, 310.

[198] Stephanie Gaspais, "Success Story: Operation Anti Sexual Harassment – Opantish," *Gender and Sexuality Resources Center,* Accessed March 2015, http://www.gsrc-mena.org/successstories/SuccessStoryEgypt.pdf

[199] "HarassMap Frequently Asked Questions," *HarassMap,* Accessed March 2015, http://harassmap.org/en/news/press-kits/harassmap-frequently-asked-questions/

work is inclusive of the community and therefor more recognizable as something that represents Egyptian interests.

Beyond facing credibility issues within the A-SH movement and Egyptian community in general, international and local organizations must also continuously be concerned about state reactions to their funding sources. In 2012, 43 NGO workers were arrested and jailed for one year and a half in what internationally came to be deemed the "foreign funding case." The actions against these NGOs, in addition to the crackdowns and "terrorist laws" examined in Chapter Two clearly reflect the predominance in Egypt of political agendas over legal arguments, and represent a threat to the A-SH movement that is far more immediate and tangible than that of inapplicable solutions, Western cultural expansion, or the risk of being discredited for accepting foreign funding.

Concluding Thoughts

Although the concern for Western encroachment and imposition of ideas is legitimate to a certain extent, Asef Bayat warns against the overstatement of this type of threat. He notes:

"The widespread view in the Middle East has long been infused by a strong nationalist discourse, often at the cost of externalizing internal problems and losing a balanced sense of self. By exclusive attention to the evils of colonialism and external intrigues, the prevailing dependency paradigm in the Arab region has for decades contributed to a debilitating nationalist and populist politics in which a critique of self, of patriarchy, and of authoritarian

polity, as well as reaching out to the world, have been lost to defensiveness, political self-indulgence, and conspiracy theory."[200]

The organizations within the A-SH movement have so far been able to find adequate balance between adopting aspects of transnational discourse, accepting foreign aid, and remaining primarily concerned with sexual harassment as it occurs in Egypt's context. Beyond the ideological and financial, these organizations and individual members of the movement face other political, physical and psychological challenges as they continue their work to eradicate this form of violence from their society. Moving forward, the social movement must continue to engage with the Egyptian community and reformulate societal discourse on the issue. It must continue to produce extra-institutional means of protest through media presence and artistic expression. It must maintain its dialectical relationship with the state, while remaining autonomous from the manipulative agendas of authoritarian contexts. Most importantly however, the A-SH movement must remain open and accepting to all 99% of Egyptian female victims of sexual harassment and their allies, and grant them the space and resources to become the power that achieves societal change.

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[200] Bayat, 33.

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