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The American University in Cairo

School of Global Affairs and Public Policy (GAPP)

Power Politics and Sexual Harassment in Downtown Cairo

A Thesis submitted to

the Middle East Studies Center

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (M.A.) in Middle East Studies

by Cally Walker

under the supervision of Dr. Martina Rieker

May 2014

The American University in Cairo

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ABSTRACT

Power Politics and Sexual Harassment in Downtown Cairo

Cally Walker

The American University in Cairo

under the supervision of Dr Martina Rieker

This thesis explores how the meaning and experience of space contributes to our understanding of sexual harassment in downtown Cairo. I argue that we cannot understand relationships on the street without acknowledging the various affective discourses concerning space. Experiences of the everyday social, political and economic affect men and women differently, and constitute visible contextual and temporal sites of tension. I argue that the development-esque term of sexual harassment envelopes a wide range of practices that depend entirely on the moment and context of utterance. According to a 2013 United Nations report on Egypt, 48.9% of women believe that harassment has increased since the January 2011 uprising that called for political freedom and social justice. During 2011-2014, a number of violent political events have taken place in and around downtown Cairo that are significant for the area and for the nation at large. These events affect people's perceptions of the area depending on the individual's class, gender, age or political persuasion among other variables. I explore how this particular social, economic and political moment and location affect the interactions between individuals in public. This research suggests that a microanalysis of movement in the street reflects wider social anxieties about social change and politics of power both domestically and internationally. Aside from political events other (although not unrelated) social and economic shifts took place in the flux between local and global. I explore how people make room for each other on the streets amidst conflicts that the neo-liberal city presents. Understanding how people view space and interact with one another reveals negotiations and tensions that are an important conversation for understanding sexual harassment.

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Introduction

Sexual harassment in Egypt has become an issue of scholarly and activist concern over the past few years. Research (Ilahi 2008, Peoples 2008, Rizzo 2014) and non-governmental organization's (Harassmap, Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights, Nazra Institute for Feminist Studies) have sought to quantify, understand and ultimately look for ways to limit this phenomenon. After female journalists and protestors were assaulted during the political protests of 2011-2013, public interest in harassment against women grew both domestically and internationally. Ilahi (2008) and Peoples (2008) argue that sexual harassment emerged as a public concern in 2006 after mob attacks on women took place in downtown Cairo during the *Eid* holiday celebrations. These same researchers suggest that sexual harassment is the resulting tension of swift social change that has occurred in the last 40 years causing conflict between men and women. They continue that sexual harassment first developed in the 1970's when women entered the workforce and education in higher numbers, challenging alleged 'cultural' roles of men and women. Scholars such as Rizzo (2014) also evaluate the role of modern economic changes on men's access to power, sexuality and traditional roles. Men are unable to realize themselves due to a lack of opportunity, which results in anger and tension between men and women. Simultaneously, harassment occurs as a product of sexual frustration. Men cannot raise enough money for marriage, which is the only socially sanctioned space available for sexual relations. This thesis acknowledges the importance of previous work on gender relations in Cairo but also looks to problematize the static cultural explanations for understanding the many interactions that are associated with 'sexual harassment'. Furthermore, the lives of men cannot be seen so distinctly separate from the lives of women who both suffer from different kinds of violence, the relationship between two people is rarely straightforward. Cultural explanations for violence against women often serve as ways to de-politicize and de-contextualize the politics of power that surround the perception and reality of this phenomenon that I will draw on in this thesis.

In comparison to the quantitative data put forward about sexual harassment in Cairo by large NGO studies, ethnographic research from Ilahi (2008) and Nassif (2010) suggests that 'sexual harassment' is actually a nuanced and diverse phenomenon that can depend on context and perception. Actions that fall under the umbrella term of sexual harassment are in reality experienced very differently depending on the context. For example, organized sexual attacks against women in protests may be a different occurrence to the day-to-day cat calls women experience when walking in the street. The multifarious nature of this phenomenon is highlighted by the difficulties in describing and therefore quantifying what should be termed 'sexual harassment'. Some women feel that unwanted physical contact like 'groping' is different from more harmless 'flirting'. One national organization defines sexual harassment as encompassing ''touching, noises (including whistling, hissing noises, kissing sounds etc) ogling of women's bodies, verbal harassment of a sexually explicit nature, stalking, following, phone harassment and indecent exposure'' (ECWR, 2008:15). Yet others have criticised this definition as failing to take into account harassment between men, between generations, and harassment perpetrated by women (Peoples, 2008). Cairo based NGO Nazra Institute for Feminist Studies identifies between different types of sexual violence against women such as rape, assault and harassment that are contextual and come in many different forms. Researchers such as Ilahi (2008) and Nassif (2010) also suggest that women may determine behaviours differently depending on their social class or background. This highlights the subjective, contextual nature of defining harassment and suggests that behaviour deemed 'sexual harassment' is a diverse social phenomenon that plays out in various ways depending on context and moment. In order to glimpse the complexity of social interactions between men and women on the street I look to appreciate how individuals themselves interpret the behaviour of others. I choose to concentrate on the everyday but to also acknowledge and explore the impact of violent events surrounding protests that have occurred since popular uprisings of 2011 and the avenues of social change that came with it. Understanding the discourses of power that surround daily interactions between people on the street highlights how tensions such as sexual harassment are produced and related to other social tensions.

This research places interest on sexual harassment within an understanding of

how different people behave towards one another in an area that holds various meanings. As a resident of downtown Cairo I have come to know and interact with many who spend time here. I have heard diverse accounts of inhabitants and visitors feelings towards the area, its future, its streets, its services and the people that surround them. Since 2011, politically and socially significant events rendered the area tense, yet businesses and daily life go on as normal. If previous research from Nassif (2010) among others finds locale significant for the perception and experience of sexual harassment then what can ethnography of downtown Cairo teach us? I explore daily interactions that exist upon a backdrop of national tensions but are not always reflective of this reality. I seek to record not only causes of discomfort but also the threads of sociability that many express as a great source of joy, the relationships among people that are negotiations, rarely static and necessary for life in many ways.

Many interlocutors suggest that downtown is still the heart of Cairo, what happens here is significant politically, socially, and historically. Others argue that the downtown area is no longer as important due to changes in the city's urban landscape. The idea here is that while the downtown area was created to mark the centre of the modern post-colonial nation, changes in the functions of the cities neighbourhoods, geography and infrastructure mean that the centre has been stripped of some of its role. At the same time, downtown Cairo still holds important administrative functions for the entire country and the symbolism of the centre is personified by the political uprisings of 2011 that were grounded in Tahrir Square. I do not attempt to measure the real significance of this area in comparison to other spaces but just to explore some of the representations that people have of this particular space and how that forms the backdrop of the interactions they have with others. This thesis explores what a study of sexual harassment in downtown Cairo can tell us about wider negotiations of power amidst ongoing national tensions.

Research Questions

This thesis explores how residents and visitors feel about downtown Cairo and why. What can an understanding of space tell us about why and how people interact with one another on the street? How do meanings over space affect men and women differently? Furthermore, how do people experience the street and

day-to-day interactions in downtown Cairo? How, when and why do they feel that harassment occurs? Do the various cafes, kiosks and street geographies hold different meanings and experiences for men and women and form specific sites for tension? This research argues that these considerations bring insight into the study of sexual harassment and relations between men and women on the street. For example, how are relationships (re) made in the street during times of social change more widely? How does contestation over space and meaning result in tensions between different types of people amid social and political negotiations since 2011 and before? This project looks to understand the various discourses, myths, and power negotiations between different people to locate sources of tension but also sources of important sociability necessary for everyday life.

Literature Review

Downtown Cairo: Power and Control in Urban Space

This study is informed by research that views the city and urban space as both shaped from above and below. A flexible relationship, I look to how others have theorized the negotiation between wider structures of power and policy with the everyday practice of life. How do certain interests create a vision of the modern city and how do the inhabitants in turn engage with their own needs and interests? Amar and Singerman (2006) trace the effects of political and economic interests, both global and local, in the determining of Cairo's urban geography. The repercussions of these interests result in a reshaping of the city based on class and consumption practices (ibid p6). Since the 1990's, economic strategies including structural adjustment policies contributed to extenuate existing class differences and increase unemployment (DeKoning, 2009 p556). Those in charge of planning the city pursued economic liberalization at the expense of public claims to space (Amar and Singerman, 2006 p9). These policies become apparent through classed geographies; the rise of gated communities to keep out the alleged 'undesirables' and the cleansing of certain neighbourhoods based on market necessity and elite interests (ibid p11). As a result, urban public space is more often disciplined by consumption practices and therefore segregated along class lines. The impact of which is felt through increasing class tension and contention surrounding the right to the city had led to civil unrest around the world (ibid).

This research investigates how the inhabitants of Cairo view downtown Cairo as a classed space and if so, how and why this is articulated.

The downtown area must be understood in regards to the post-colonial city making of previous regimes. Establishing the centre of the capital can be traced to over 140 years ago when the Khedive Ismail embarked on creating a 'modern' state (Meital, 2008 p956). This new centre quickly became a site to host national events and represent Egypt's 'modernity' to the rest of the world (ibid). All regimes since have made sure to stamp their mark on the area, which has led to the continual renaming of streets, squares and celebrations of the regime-making place within the area (ibid). It is noteworthy for this project that 'Tahrir Square' meaning 'Liberation Square' was actually named as such by the free officers movement after 1952 headed by President Nasser. The appropriation of spaces became symbolic to the interests of the regime and this particular renaming was significant. The new government argued that Egypt was now finally free of outside interference and presided over by Egyptians with Egypt's interests at heart as opposed to those previously ruling under the interests of foreign governments (ibid p866). Compared to the previous rulers who celebrated behind closed doors in elite ceremonies, these new leaders celebrated their regimes with the people in the squares and streets of downtown (ibid). This centre has come to symbolise revolution, witnessing dramatic battles and power struggles during both colonial and post-colonial times (Keraitim and Mehrez, 2012). More recently, Elshahed (2013b) describes how the architectural space of Tahrir Square changed under Mubarak. Once the square was open and served as a meeting space for the public, in the 1980's the square was fenced off into smaller sections by posts and fences in order to dissuade any democratic behaviour (p21). It appears that the meaning and use of the central space of Cairo has been symbolic for many years and it is therefore understandable that controlling it is a main concern for any regime.

The historical and political changes of the area also form the backdrop for understanding the social. After the 1952 coup and the expulsion of foreigners from downtown Cairo the area became less restricted just to the elite only and more accessible to the masses in line with Nasser's socialist vision (AlSayyad, 2011 p241). More recently, many interlocutors suggest that the centre of the city is shifting due to the changing urban landscape, such as satellite cities, and the

increasing functions of other parts of the city. Indeed, the rise of satellite cities started with president Sadat who attempted to move large parts of urban poor to the outskirts of the city and continued even further under Mubarak (Abaza, 2011 p1078). Egypt began to attract large investments to create new 'Dubai-style' upmarket areas away from the urban bustle (ibid). The rise of malls, skyscrapers and hotels along the Nile highlight the intentions of a centre built in elite interests (ibid). In terms of the wider city, Ghannam (2002, p266) describes the making of Cairo 'modern'. Sadat's vision of a modern city comparable to Los Angeles required the demolition of what he deemed 'undesirable' urban areas in order to make way for allegedly more modern architecture and social developments in order to encourage investment (ibid). This project considers how elite or national discourses shape the urban and social life and most especially how these discourses are internalized and become instructive to how Cairenes interact on a daily basis.

Understanding the historical meanings associated with the area of downtown Cairo is also instrumental for grasping the changing dynamics of the centre of the city as a whole and especially the way residents and visitors feel about the area. A number of interlocutors informed me that the area of downtown used to be more class homogenous and securitized before 2011. In the eyes of many and certainly for the political elite, the area of downtown was a haven for the middle classes and tourists. This reality is exemplified by the plans of urban renewal projects such as Cairo 2050 and the Historic Cairo Regeneration Project in order to maintain downtown as a site with a particularly upper class meaning and aesthetic. This upper class mentality and taste is also associated with a political order and the dominance of the National Democratic Party (*Hizb al-Watani*), elitism and nepotism under President Mubarak. The classed meaning of the area will become ever more important when thinking about calls for social change and social justice under the last years of Mubarak's presidency and the resulting battles that took place symbolically in the centre. As I will discuss in chapters three and four, many people that I spoke to used 2011 as a mental juncture to think about how social, political and economic change has affected the area in recent years whether or not change may have actually been taking place before this time. Essentially, many focused on the 'deterioration' of this site as

related to other national political and economic changes. The aim of this project is not to measure how much the area has tangibly changed in recent years but to begin to understand the meanings that middle-class interlocutors give to the area, to the events that have taken place in the last 5 years, and how people feel about one another within this space.

Cairo has long been a city of change and contestation (Amar and Singerman, 2006). An important city both regionally and globally, Cairo experiences the flow of ideas, people, and capital as a regional and global hub (ibid). This project does not suppose the city as one internally conflicted but rather as a complex entity that is shaped from above *and* below. These considerations will be essential in determining how downtown Cairo has changed and how people perceive these changes. Often, the city is narrated only in regards to the intentions of the political elite or the particular political leadership at the time (ibid). Yet for Ghannam (2002), inhabitants of the city are heavily involved in creating their own meanings of what is 'modern'. Ideas, meanings, and symbols flow in different ways between the local, regional and global. In Cairo, labour migration, travel and technology are some of the key routes that information is transmitted (ibid, p39). While we have to acknowledge the various discursive patterns that shape the local and the urban, we must also pay attention to how people take part in shaping both realities and meanings. Political protest and friction between the regime and its people has long played out in the central area of Cairo with *Kifaya* (enough!) and other movements under Mubarak taking to the streets in order to contest the political order. I use these considerations to understand how various local and global discourses inform the meanings people attach to particular geographies and day-to-day interactions.

This research explores the meanings of downtown Cairo for those who live and go there and as a result, an understanding of the practical amenities and aesthetics of the area is important. A decidedly middle classed area compared to other neighbourhoods in Cairo, middle-class shops on famous streets such as Talaat Harb are differentiable from cheaper local market stalls.[1] As a result, the boulevards of downtowns shopping district attract locals and outsiders who wish

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[1] See Abaza (2006) for a discussion on the changing consumer habits of Cairo.

to shop or merely stroll as a form of evening leisure. Both tourists and Egyptians frequent a number of famous bars, restaurants, arts and cultural centres in the area such as Café Horreya, Café Riche, Mashrabiyya Gallery and Makan Cultural Center to name a few. My interview questions investigate how residents feel about the types of establishments present and the kinds of clientele they attract.

Downtown Cairo also contains important businesses, international headquarters and government institutions such as the Mogamma, which is a central administrative body that hundreds of people from all over Egypt visit for processing documents such as visas. Considering these amenities, many Egyptians come from other districts and outlying areas to downtown for an afternoon or day trip. Many interlocutors suggest that downtown has changed rapidly in the last few years. For one, the area has seen little investment in comparison to upper market areas such as Maadi and Zamalek where expensive western-style restaurants appear almost every week.[2] Yet a bourgeoisie intellectual set is also found in downtown Cairo and numerous art galleries, cultural centres and bars cater to this crowd. Cultural symbolism being ever more important for global cities economically (Zukin, 1995). Simultaneously, public discourse suggests that as of 2013/2014 certain areas and landmarks of downtown are synonymous with an undesirable and unwanted class of people. Abaza (2013b p128) describes the street children and poor informal street sellers that continued to occupy Tahrir Square from the beginning of the popular uprisings of 2011. As of November 2013, this area is now cleansed, grassed and repainted. As I discuss thoroughly in chapter one, the political developments of 2011-2014 have had a deep impact on this area. As is the case historically, the meaning and control of this area is of high importance to any political regime. These tensions also play out through the representation and relationships between social classes that are able to inhabit the space.

What result does this 'cleansing' of political meaning and memory have on lived realities and public discourses of space and of class? How do such discourses connect to global conversations on the city and urban space? Denis

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[2] Mohamed ElShahed of the Cairo Observer discusses the relationship between local residents and business interests http://cairobserver.com/post/65619824865/burgers-neighborhoods-and-egypts-non-system#.Utvwjvb8LLY

(2006 p48) suggests that in Cairo, neo-liberal elitist discourses seek to render the urban centre as dangerous, polluted and poverty stricken in order to legitimize new elite lifestyles in gated communities on the outskirts of the city. In recent years, neo-liberal global economic changes that lead to high unemployment and a more stratified wealth and class system allow and encourage these discourses about risk and danger of the street (Amar and Singerman, 2006 p10). Essentially, this structure both creates and maintains urban discourses that lead to and legitimize urban geographies based on social class divisions (ibid). This research investigates whether this is a tension in downtown Cairo in this specific moment; considering how locals assign meaning to certain areas and transformations while taking into account the power of elite discourses of desire. Even understanding the articulation of fears of others is essential to grasp a moment of a city in constant flux.

Indeed, such discourses render certain sections of the Egyptian population such as *fellahin,* or peasants from rural Egypt, and the urban Cairene poor who live in informal settlements as a public nuisance and undesirable (Denis, 2006 p51). The high rates of rural-urban migration started under the pan-Arab socialism of Nasser in 1953 whereby peasants were upheld as national heroes and elite resources were redistributed (AlSayyad, 2011 p245). Of course, these events had an affect on the urban fabric and many tell me today that Nasser's socialist policies are to blame for the lack of economic growth in the area but in Egypt more generally. This idea here is that the poor are portrayed as undeserving, greedy and lack sustainability and innovation; socialism and welfare systems do not work and capitalism is the only option. Furthermore, Elsheshtawy (2006, p237) also uses the work of Sassen (2001) to think about the global city as heavily demarcated by class; the dual city as a playground for those who can afford its leisure at the expense of the many workers required for upkeep. In downtown Cairo, coffee shops range between those that sell tea for 3 Egyptian pounds to Western style cafes that charge up to 20 Egyptian pounds. Does the presence of both establishments in certain areas provide a source of tension between people? Are there certain practices/codes, based on class and gender that should be adhered to? If, as Elsheshtawy wonders, the urban cores of global cities are left to degenerate as gated communities increase, this research questions how inhabitants

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feel about local developments or lack of them. It is this background of trying to understand the complexities of power in Cairo overall that situate my study in one very important part of the city: Downtown Cairo.

Downtown Cairo: Hosting Politics and Violence

This discussion draws from an understanding of the political, social and economic changes that have occurred in Egypt since January 2011 when a popular uprising led to the end of Hosni Mubarak's almost 30-year presidency. In the summer of 2012, a new president and member of the Muslim Brotherhood came to power and was forced to step-down after popular protests and military intervention on June 30 2013. These events were and still are, contentious and potentially divisive for Egyptian society. As of early 2014, negotiations and protests are still ongoing between Egypt's citizens and the state over legitimate political representation and the direction of the country in general. Islamist groups such as *Ansar Bait al-Maqdis* have allegedly set off a number of bombs in civilian and military areas. Some factions of Egyptian society believe that the now-deposed and imprisoned President Morsi is still the rightful president and others regard the military's intervention as justified. The opinions of most people are probably far more complex than these two oppositions. These considerations are important to an analysis of downtown Cairo as for example, my interlocutors suggest that many in this area are supporters of the military take over and against the Muslim Brotherhood and therefore also support the increased militarization of downtown particularly. This may be justified due to the changes that have occurred in downtown that have jeopardised its status as being ordered and upper class. How does this highly charged atmosphere and plethora of political opinions affect day-to-day interactions played out through contestations of space? During the period in which I carried out this research the social and political situation was continuously evolving and undergoing processes of negotiation. I do not seek to draw cement conclusions from these events but to acknowledge the fluctuation that has taken place and how this underscores tension on the street.

The symbolic nature of space with regards to major political and social unrest suggests this backdrop is significant to understanding interactions between people on the street. There are numerous reminders of the political situation in downtown Cairo, such as a strong ongoing military presence, street vendors

selling pro-military paraphernalia and the revolutionary moments captured in the Mohamed Mahmud street memorials. As of August 2013, the main subway station of downtown Sadat was closed amidst security fears. Considering the symbolic location of this station, this may be a conscious attempt to control the area literally and figuratively. The nearby Tahrir Square, a symbol of the first popular uprising, is considered a military stronghold and protests in support of the Muslim Brotherhood or anti-military are unable to enter past security. Abaza (2013b, p125) argues that during and after the revolution people were able to appropriate spaces such as Tahrir Square as a symbol of freedom, yet only very precariously. She suggests that in reality, the military junta are in control of political and social movements through the increased militarisation, violence and restrictions of space (ibid). This process is occurring through the regulation and restriction of areas, specifically in downtown Cairo.

I also want to reflect on the impact of political tension and the resulting militarization of the area. During the summer of 2013 the city underwent a curfew that started at 7pm until 5am and was gently lifted over a number of months. How did this change the practices of a usually 24 hours city? The role of the military has both overt and implicit repercussions for men and women, affecting power dynamics, civilian freedoms and even gender roles. How has the continued presence of police and army officers shaped notions of legitimate law and order? Indeed, if officers are perpetrators of sexual violence against men or women, what does this say about law and order? Does the large amount of male officers change the experiences of civilian men and women day to day? Does the continued militarization of this area affect gendered behaviour?

Downtown remains a site for enforcement and negotiation between competing interests. Politics interplays with classed urban discourses to justify certain restrictions. The zoning of areas through military roadblocks and walls has led to the restriction of movement with severe repercussions for Cairo's informal economy of shopkeepers and street sellers. For Abaza, this tactic serves to also increase local resentment against protestors (2013b p127). Yet through graffiti, Mohammed Mahmud and other streets continue as sites of resistance against a hegemonic top-down political narrative (ibid). How does a pro-military, upper class area deal with the continued revolutionary presence of Mohammed

Mahmud? This project explores how the restriction of bodies affects people's emotions and daily interactions. Significantly, the revolutionary events of 2011 and 2012 saw a massive street politics that was heavily invested in certain spaces in downtown specifically. These political considerations affect how people view one another in terms of desirability but also the very reality that the presence of people supporting oppositional politics can increase the likelihood of state violence and even more securitization. Indeed, Cupers (2005, p735) suggests that any move towards defining an identity in one particular space creates an 'other' and essentially an exclusion. In some ways downtown can be seen to embody the privileged in relation to the have-nots, the desire for stability and maintenance as opposed to a push for more visible change. At the same time, the complexities of urban space include the constant flow of those included and excluded and rarely are these categories so static (ibid). How is downtown Cairo trying to deal with the presence of difference, be it political or social? How does the transitory nature of the area deal with the ebb and flow of difference and disorder?

Downtown Cairo: The Impact of Socio-economic Change

Political realities and discourses lead to changing experiences for men and women. The economic situation has deteriorated due to instability in the country. Changing social conditions affect the day to day realities of men and women but also the perceptions of what behaviour is appropriate for whom and when. Informants suggest that downtown Cairo has become dangerous due to an increase in crimes mainly committed by young men. Indeed, Amar (2011a) argues that the racialization of the young, male, out of control 'street Arab' and general references toward a 'crises of masculinity' surrounding sexual harassment discourse is used in order to justify increased securitization and social intervention strategies. Yet, this discussion ignores the wider structures of power and injustice that contributed to this reality in the first place. These conversations leave out important discussions on power, class and are essentially a form of de-politicization (ibid). Discourses, myths and realities that serve as useful tools of control to the regime come together to shape how people view one another. In terms of the use of space and national economics, tourism has rapidly decreased in Egypt and especially in Cairo as a result of the ongoing political situation. Day-to-day economic worries are now almost at crises levels while many people are

speculating about national resources as electricity and water shortages are occurring even in the cooler months of spring 2014. As the home of the Egyptian Museum, downtown Cairo has historically been a main site for tourism yet foreign informants tell me that they have experienced increasing xenophobia alongside the rise in nationalism since June 30 2013. How has increased daily hardship and fear affected relationships between men and women but also between all people of different class backgrounds, race and even intra-generationally?

Men and women had a diverse experience of the political changes that occurred during and since the popular uprising of 2011. As an objective account of the many that participated in these events is impossible, I only assume to present some of the changing discourses and events as they occurred differently for men and women. These discourses are heavily linked to gender, class, and space. The first revolutionary period calling for the step down of former president Mubarak is often presented in the media as a unified uprising where women participated alongside men and were not targeted for any violence, sexual or otherwise. Later, intimidation appeared on men and women's bodies in numerous ways. Indeed, planned sexual harassment and gang rapes were used against female protestors during the revolutionary protests and in subsequent protests to delegitimize the protestors and Tahrir Square (Abaza 2013a, para 5). Women's rights and the symbolic place of women in society was, and still is, used strategically in competing political factions in Egypt (ibid, para 16). This reality is heavily played out through the attempts to control women's bodies. In February 2013, official government councils suggested that female victims of rape should also be held accountable for their rape, suggesting that they shouldn't have been at a protest in the first place (ibid, para 8). At the same time, the grassroots mobilization of men and women resulted in organizations such as the Tahrir bodyguards, whose sole purpose was to protect women in protests. Debates on the place of women in society and during political unrest allow for continued discussions over the right to public space.

Anxieties expressed though the social should be seen in connection to other structural changes and realities. In another city, Karachi, fear of violence form the backdrop of access to public space for women (Ali, 2012 p594). Taking into account the historical moment of this city, Ali argues that the fear of the 'unknown' must be

situated within other structural tensions such as struggles of ethnic, cultural, gendered, and economic tension (ibid). In Cairo, how and why is fear being currently expressed? Furthermore, risk and uncertainty are linked to apprehensions about the failings of neo-liberalism alongside the despair of modernity and democracy (ibid p599). This project investigates how emotions tied to space highlight complexities about daily life in downtown Cairo. Moreover, how these emotions highlight wider anxieties about social, economic and political change in the city and nation at large. Ultimately, it is no wonder that fear and hopelessness also come to constitute the reality of everyday living (ibid). Thinking about the historical moment of downtown Cairo, Abaza argues that it is only natural that sexual violence would come to constitute everyday realities:

> When the omnipotent authoritarian state that claims to be the spokesperson for Islamic morality, and constitutional defender of Islamic sharia, turns out to be the main perpetrator of sexual violence in the public sphere, then why would the "citizens" not follow the same violent path? (2013a, para 13)

We must consider the reality of a violent and conflicted state that has historically created anger, violence and suspicion among its citizens. However, even against this backdrop I also want to highlight the ways in which community, friendship and comradery is so essential to everyday relationships in downtown Cairo. My own experience and those of many I know attest to the fact that throughout the political turbulence and lack of police on the streets, daily life seems to go on as normal, people go to work and out of necessity, workers and establishments return get back to business as quickly as possible.

Considering this backdrop though, perhaps we should not be surprised that tension exists on the street between different types of people. We cannot approach violence and harassment against women as a separate and detached relationship from other social connections. This suggests that we need a multi-layered appreciation of how men and women deal with life, priority, and negotiation amidst a number of challenges and especially how communities continue to function and co-exist. Research in other conflicted contexts shows that while women express their contempt over gendered violence such as harassment, they are also quick to remind us that they

may have other important daily worries such as over money and health that are felt by all members of society (Ali, 2012 p602). In this way, cities are sites of ongoing "processes of repair and maintenance'' (ibid p586). Certain contradictions also remain within the Egyptian context; a 2013 United Nations study of attitudes about sexual harassment found that 47.8% of women 'did not care' about harassment while 43% were scared to go out on the street again. These statistics, based on a wide variety of women in Egypt in different places, highlight the various methods of interpretation and resistance depending on individual circumstances. Contradictions in statistics and discourse highlight the complexity of everyday life.

Class in Urban Cairo

In Cairo as in all cities, neighbourhoods have meanings that are known to its citizens and are important for understanding the city as a whole. Some suggest that neighbourhoods are representative of class and are all-important for understanding relationships between Cairenes. In *al-Zawyia al-Hamra*, a low-income neighbourhood east of downtown, inhabitants are able to identify between 'locals' and 'outsiders' (Ghannam, 2002 p69). Relationships of fear and trust depend on familiarity and understanding. Informants suggest that there are specific personality and behavioural attributes that belong to inhabitants of certain neighbourhoods. Some neighbourhoods and their inhabitants are associated with being unrefined, lacking in honour and high rates of crime (ibid p71). This suggests that inhabitants of one locale are able to identify others as belonging to another neighbourhood, perhaps by dress, behaviour or other bodily significations. According to her interlocutors, lower class neighbourhoods are associated with noise, bustle and awareness of one another's business (ibid). Upper class neighbourhoods are viewed upon with a mixture of envy, resentment and sneer, symbolising unattainable wealth and simultaneously a modern, lonely detachment from the benefits of friendly lower class neighbourhoods (ibid p80). Social connectivity and support networks found in lower class neighbourhoods often translate into important economic and emotional value for its residents (Elyachar, 2010). Location thus holds a number of functions and values for the people of Cairo with varying degrees of desirability and disdain.

This research also argues that understandings of class and locale are not so straightforward. According to Ghannam, people in Cairo are now more likely to understand the differences in class due to the increased presence of marketing and products through television, work abroad and foreigners living in Cairo (2002 p84). Thus, Cairenes may be more aware of the subtle differences in class that are possibly tell-tale through consumption practices and capital as displayed through bodily significations. This research investigates whether something similar occurs in downtown Cairo where people of various backgrounds are often found living side-by-side. However, Elyacher (2011) also argues that neo-liberal changes in the city have produced a disjuncture for the reading of social symbols. Changes in the city and economics in recent years have produced the loss of a certain intimacy between people who are less likely to understand one other (ibid p92). Considering the transitory nature of this particular space, how do strangers perceive and interact with one another? Indeed, the lack of ability to communicate and comprehend one another may also result in tensions between different types of people.

Gender and Class: The Right to the City?

This section looks at how other theorists understand the intersection between gender, class, and space in Cairo or elsewhere. Ultimately, men and women's experiences differ depending on the practices and discourses of class, which are intimately connected to space. For example, in research on Mumbai, Phadke (2007 p1512) suggests that women can only access public space as consumers and professionals; intentionality and respectability must always be established. Downtown Cairo boasts a number of expensive coffee shops, bars and clothing stores that attract a certain clientele. In a study of Cairene consumption, DeKoning (2009) describes how women create respectability through their dress and behaviour when in public (ibid p553). For DeKoning (2009) this is because upper class women's presence in public space causes tension. An awareness of women exists as they move in public space, others comment, make observations and pass judgement (ibid). My work also investigates how a space that serves different social classes deals with women on the street and suggests that the

expressions of class invoke different behaviours and responses. I explore further some of these class tensions that exist on the streets of Cairo, especially considering the presence of different establishments catering to different types of people in the same area.

This project attempts to join the conversation on gendered experiences of urban space. Some suggest that the anonymity of the city can potentially give women more freedom (Phadke, 2005) while others suggest that women may also be more fearful of unknown areas and people (Nassif, 2010). This suggests that familiarity/anonymity and the resulting vulnerability is important for how people view an area and others within that locale. Locales must be understood for their practical function but also what they represent. As discussed, locales in Cairo are often seen as representative of class. Nassif (2010) finds that the familiarity of a neighborhood is instrumental in reducing fear and risk. Moreover, women feel safer in entertainment areas that are restricted by price, and thus class. Specifically, women feel safer in an environment made up of people from a similar class background (ibid). It may be that people feel safer when they can read and recognize classed behaviors and thus locate intentionality. Women may even feel emotional shame and embarrassment through being in a place that could be associated with moral looseness and thus create suspicions about their own status of respectability (DeKoning, 2009 p553).

In Cairo, suspicion over unknown others in coffee shops are also related to discourses of fear and security. Undercover security forces used to try and gather information covertly and make arrests in lower class coffee shops during the regime of President Mubarak (Ghannam, 2002 p109). According to research by Elsheshtawy (2006, p301), negative connotations are attached to those that frequent traditional coffee shops who are portrayed as time-wasters or down and out. Cafés that are visible from the street are associated with the lower classes and possibly even danger. The fear of unknown others is related to the threat, both real and mythical, posed by these people. On a social level, the presence of the unknown also means that the social order could be disrupted, challenged or questioned (ibid). Thus interactions and representations of certain types of people in Cairo are linked to the spaces and leisure services that they use. State and elite discourses portray the poor masses as dangerous individuals inhabiting certain

parts of Cairo that should be avoided. These discourses also imply a sexual danger for women that translate into fears of certain spaces and people.

According to quantitative reports, harassment against women is most common on the street (UN 2013). DeKoning (1999) argues that Cairene streets are constitutive of male entitlement and as a result women are restricted in their use and enjoyment of the street (ibid). According to her informants, even waiting alone in the street could be read as an initiation to lewd comments from passers by (ibid). Here, we see the links between holding legitimate rights to space and fear of the unknown based on real experiences and myths. DeKoning (1999 p553) suggests that the strict boundaries of space comes from the possibility of illicit sexual relations taking place between men and women of different classes. As the ultimate threat to the social order, this translates into the policing of bodies, boundaries and the unknown. Thus, harassment seems intimately linked to the interaction between class and space. However, this research also acknowledges the fact that many women do traverse the streets of downtown on a daily basis without fear or complication. Indeed, women like men suffer from the street but also take a lot of enjoyment and resources from public space too. Far from traditional models demarcating space as private/feminine and public/masculine whereby women are fearful and men are a threat, women and men's experiences are much more complex and are dependent on various factors.

Theorizing Harassment

I argue that sexual harassment such as indecent exposure and public masturbation is more about power than sex. Harassment occurs as a need or as a result of power, domination and control. A number of axes can exist as a site for power conflict such as gender, race and class and Rospenda et al (1998 p40) suggests that it is essential to look at the intersectionality of identity markers in interpersonal relations. Harassment plays out according to power relationships that are not only gendered but are also classed and racialized (ibid p56). Individuals can draw on a number of characteristics in which to draw informal power that depends upon the specific circumstances (ibid, p42). For example, men may use sexual harassment with women of a superior status in order to equalize perceived imbalances of power (ibid). Thus, the relationship between gender, power, and harassment is not so straightforward. There are a number of different types and routes to power that can

depend on resources, expertise, personal preferences, confidence and even socially desirable qualities such as attractiveness (ibid p45). According to their research, power dynamics in situations of harassment do depend on the socio-cultural context (ibid, p55). For instance, culturally specific perceptions and subjectivities of class, race and gender intersect to form the basis of whether one will be targeted for differential treatment (ibid). This suggests that an exploration of class and access is important for understanding how and why sexual harassment exists. Relationships and interactions between people are shaped by the perceptions of one's status in relation to the other. Women's subjectivities of fear and risk are affected by public discourses about poor men. Poor men, for example, might harass upper-class women in order to feel powerful.

This research seeks to explore the complexity of interactions that exist between men and women on the street. Research on sexual harassment highlights the difficulty in determining what acts are considered 'sexual harassment'. For example, Peoples (2008 p4) describes how harassment also exists on the street between different generations, from the young to the old. There is also often confusion between what is particularly sexualized harassment and what is merely street harassment and whether there is any difference. What one woman interprets as harassment may be friendly banter to another. The work of Van Dalen (2013) describes how dating practices occur between youth in Cairo. Often, young men will catcall or flirt with women on the street and if they reply then further contact might develop such as an exchange of phone numbers (ibid). Here we can see how women who don't understand these practices would identify this behavior as uninvited nuisance or a threat. Likewise in her own interviews, Ilahi (2008, p94) discovers that women would not answer back to harassment for fear of the act being misconstrued as romantic interest which suggests an awareness of actor intentionality. Moreover, women and men of lower class backgrounds may not have any other opportunity to talk to each other or have friends from the opposite gender so this behavior can be seen as just one way to get to know each other (ibid). Thus class seems to be very relevant for the likelihood in engaging in what is deemed 'sexual harassment' and in the perceptions of what this behavior actually is.

Theorizing Bodies

The body is an important site for understanding how power works (McDowell, 1999 p74). Emotions such as fear that we feel as a tangible physical emotion are intimately related to experiences that have occurred in a particular space (Davidson and Milligan, 2004 p424). The body is thus connected in many ways to the meanings given to the urban milieu. This project questions the various practices that make up embodiment to understand more about discourses of power.

McDowell (1999 p66) suggests that bodies in space are shaped by architecture such as roads, buildings and public spaces. What can walk, gesture, eye contact, etiquette and speech tell us about identity politics in downtown Cairo? In ethnographic work also based in Cairo, Elyacher (2011 p86) explains how bodily practices such as gesture communicate signs of identity and status, which are then understood by those around us. For McDowell (1999), attention to space unearths social practices of acceptance and exclusion. Here, it might also be useful to draw on Bourdieu's notion of habitus to think about how significations of class are played out through the body and read by others (ibid p40). Daily practices and significations on the body such as dress and style all inform social codes about class that we normally take for granted (Bourdieu, 1984 p66). According to Bourdieu, the body is inextricably linked to socio-economic status. Desirable representations of class and gender are enacted through the way we move, habits, food, clothes and even exercise to reveal certain types of distinction (Ghannam, 2014 para 8). On the street, Bayat (2012 p120) argues that 'passive networks' are established between people who identify one another through clothes and behavior. What signs are given off by the body and does everyone read them in the same way? These networks and relationships serve as routes of communication and solidarity that can become an almost political connection. These significations may also become sites for tension between people.

Identity markers such as race, class and gender among others intertwine to affect ones encounter with urban space. Therefore, Tonkis (2005) suggests that different social actors will have a different reading of the city. These different experiences will also affect how we share space with others (ibid, p114). For example, sociologist George Simmel theorizes the relationship between individual

and collective in urban space. According to Simmel, bodies learn how to act in urban space to maintain the status quo of mutual aversion (ibid p118). However, the deep anonymity that the collective urban space produces also creates the desire for individuals to draw attention to themselves (ibid). The insignificance of each individual creates the desire to exaggerate one's own individual qualities (ibid). These conceptual understandings of the relationship between individuals and modern urban space urge us to question how we move and act in urban space. Thus, I want to explore how actors notice, read, and interact with one another within an environment that holds it's own particular meanings. How do we choose when, how, and who to interact with? Does the busy and transitory nature of downtown Cairo produce more anonymity or sociability? It is this theory that gives more depth to an idea of how we act and experience the city social.

In a discussion of space in another area of Cairo, Elsheshtawy (2006, p302) identifies the 'dramaturgical' aspect of street sociability. This author likened a particular square to a theatre where much of the enjoyment of a leisure space is taken from the view of others and being seen in return. The surrounding benches served as a platform to watch the ongoing entertainment. Importantly, spending time in Elsheshtawy's square did not require its visitors to pay or buy anything. According to this author, enjoying one's time outside in the company of others is a staple part of Egyptian culture (ibid p306). His interlocutors suggest that traditional coffee shops are noisy and loud, characterized by unwanted social contacts. This particular square allowed for visitors to observe one another and the street sociability without forced conversation. The literal staging of public space leads us to consider how and why we enjoy the street that can also depend on one's socio-economic background. The enjoyment of spectatorship here should be seen with regards to other research that suggests that privacy in leisure and living is a sign of wealth. Eventually and unfortunately, Elsheshtawy's square became regulated and developed into a pass way for tourists. As previously discussed, elite interests and certain types of development have changed Cairo's leisure practices along consumer and class lines.

Sociability on the street is intimately related to class practices. Being outside and street buzz is linked to high rates of unemployment, informal economies and specifically an 'outdoors economy' (Bayat, 2012 p113). Spending time outside

without purpose is linked to failure, the idea that anyone is free to gaze upon you of their own will (ibid). The practice of being on the street is thus decidedly classed. Distinctions of the poor, such as behavior and appearance, continue to monopolize the streets of Cairo and encourage the elite to escape to gated communities on the outskirts of the city (ibid p123). However, as Bayat continues, informal economies and practices have spread to the middle classes and are common even among the educated due to dire economic circumstances. This research explores the various practices and meanings that people give to activities in certain places in downtown Cairo amidst a period of serious social, economic and political fluctuation.

The ability to loiter and gaze over others depends on both class and gender. This phenomenon is intricately related to gendered behavior in urban spaces. The male gaze characterizes the historical picture of the *flâneur*. A roamer who looks upon the city with ease and upon women in particular (Wilson, 2001 p79). The ability to 'wander at will through the city' is a right only available to men. This particular phenomenon may possibly be related to the 'dirty looks' that are a key element of women's experience of the street. Are women able to gaze or let their eyes linger over the bodies of men or others? Does the architecture of the street and male gaze intersect to create an atmosphere of surveillance for women? Are men of any class or background allowed to watch women or call out to them as they walk? Indeed, the *flâneur* is also largely associated with idleness and loitering, crowd watching in the new urban spectacle (ibid p75).

As of Cairo 2014, we must question whether strolling through the city is a lower class activity of the unemployed or practiced by those with leisure time. Is being on the street in any case seen as only acceptable for a certain socio-economic background? Some would argue that the *flâneur* is no longer allowed to exist considering the current emphasis on regulating urban space for commercialization purposes and discourses linking loitering and the urban to crime (Bayat, 2012 p116). Upper class men and women drive cars or take taxis in order to get around and are thus sheltered from the danger of the street. The streets of Cairo are overflowing with traffic and parked cars; those who can afford it tend to drive rather than walk for even the smallest distance. Yet owning a car and driving in Cairo are of course reserved for the wealthy. In this way money buys

the ability to own and control your own space, time and essentially power (Ghannam, 2014 p10). As discussed, these practices of power are instrumental for understanding how sexual harassment plays out for men and women. The intersection between class, gender and the use of urban space is key.

Understanding the Overlooked: Attention to Detail in Urban Space

This research traces the relevance and importance of details of urban geography for resident's daily lives. The symbolism of certain places and areas is important for understanding how we feel towards space and ultimately, each other. The presence of shops and spaces of leisure that people experience differently is also considered. In relation to the street, this project reflects on elements of street geography that change the dynamics of space. For example, how do kiosks on streets and street corners affect interactions between people on the street? How does the presence or absence of sidewalks contribute to emotions attached to space? In certain streets and corners of downtown Cairo, leisure and labor practices spill out onto the street just as behind closed doors. Sidewalks are often crowded with café tables from nearby cafes, mechanics work on cars by the side of the street and *bowabs* (door men/guards) monitor their buildings and the activity of the neighborhood, as do men whose job it is to help car drivers park their cars (*sayas*). This research explores how economic circumstances form a backdrop for the activity on the street that is then experienced differently by men and women.

Ghannam (2002) describes the meanings and practices that her Cairene informants construct through architecture. She finds that certain facets of the street, neighbourhoods, and house carry both classed and gendered meanings for her informants. For example, for those that can afford it, apartment balconies are replaced by metal shutters -- privacy being linked with wealth, the ability to choose when to be seen to the outside (ibid p55). Having the control over when to see and be seen certainly provides a source of power (ibid). Using concepts from Goffman (1959), Ghannam suggests that the balcony is like a stage where families represent themselves and convey their status to the outside world. The balcony quite literally linking the private family home to the public street. As such, I also want to consider how people give meaning to parts of the street, power, and their urban environment.

For Jacobs (2003 p107), the safety of the sidewalk is symbolic of the safety of the city in general. Any successful city has to make pedestrians feel safe among a city of strangers. Accordingly, the safety and peace of the street is not imposed by security systems from above but through "almost unconscious" mechanisms by the people themselves (ibid). Jacobs continues that actually, the presence of shops and restaurants increases the safety of sidewalks and streets through the increase of surveillance and crowds. Practically speaking, owners of businesses are invested in keeping the peace and protecting customers surrounding their establishments (ibid p109). Moreover, Jacobs suggests that people naturally incline towards busy areas and enjoy people watching. Safety exists in numbers for many. However, this is not always the case, various sexual attacks against women have taken place in large Cairo protests. The crowds and anonymity actually increasing danger for women. Unfortunately, in downtown and elsewhere in Cairo, sidewalks are often missing or unusable leaving the smallest of journeys requiring transport (Elshahed, 2013a). This research investigates the presence or lack of sidewalks for perceptions of danger and comfort and explore some of the conflicting discourses that position safety to come from the presence of others but which also creates more likelihood for harassment. Connected to homes, businesses, and cafes, is the sidewalk used and thought of differently depending on the individual?

This research contends that emotions as tied to space and architecture are related to wider social securities. Looking at the gendered experience of the right to the city, Fenster (2006) explores women's commitment, comfort and sense of belonging to their environment. She suggests that women's right to the city and general wellbeing is restricted based on their gender. Not only in the street, women's right to space is also restricted and not guaranteed in what is commonly referred to as 'private' spaces, such as the home (ibid, p220). She argues that an evaluation of how women feel they belong in the city must also investigate the private as well as the public. For example, how do women feel about the location of their homes with regard to the city? Can an evaluation of safety and comfort associated with the home or how we live tell us more about the city? I attempt to understand the relationship between emotions surrounding delineations of space of the home, the sidewalk and the city. How do women feel about their local

community in downtown Cairo that is constituted by everyday living such as small trips to the grocer, pharmacy and other local businesses?

According to Bell (1999) emotions of belonging are created through the ritual of everyday performances (Fenster, 2006 p223). The gendered household divide of duties renders women and men with certain knowledge's about their local communities, for example through food shopping (ibid). Yet class and gender intersect once again; Fenster (2006 p227) finds that women's sense of belonging and commitment to a space increases with her level of choice and opportunity. A feeling of control over eventualities increases women's, or anyone's, positive relationship with their surroundings. To be able to choose your home, what happens inside it and the environment outside it increases efficacy of power (ibid). This reality, of course, is out of reach for most of Cairo's inhabitants whose lives are characterized by a lack of financial and political agency. This research also suggests that power and comfort would emerge for locals through choice and participation in local development and the community.

Methodology

In order to build and investigate my research questions I undertook a number of conversations with friends, acquaintances and those willing to talk to me between 2012-2014 in downtown Cairo. All participants have a connection to the area, either as residents or frequent visitors. Having lived in Cairo for three years I was able to interview a wide range of participants and found each one through friends and contacts. I undertook 22 in-depth interviews with men and women almost equally. Considering that I found my informants through friends and the interviews were mainly conducted in English, I have to acknowledge the middle-upper class background of my participants on the research overall. Like most people, my informant's backgrounds are complex. Most of my informants come from higher socio-economic backgrounds and are educated to university level but each individual has his/her own particular circumstances and some participants were more wealthy/privileged than others in different ways. While the majority were middle-upper class men and women between 25-35 I also interviewed some younger and older people from lower class backgrounds whose narratives also inform my discussion. In this project I choose to concentrate on the upper-middle class discourses that became apparent during the research process

that were informative for understanding relationships in the area. I move away from dismissing these middle class conversations as elitist and unrepresentative of the people and instead look to how the practices of the middle class are important for understanding how discourses of class and national modernity are perpetuated (Bhatt et al, 2010). In order to understand how certain discourses continue and how they affect the relationship between men and women I also detail the discussions of men as well as women. I do not suggest that my sample is representative of the Egyptian population nor do I wish to make sweeping generalizations based on these conversations. I merely attempt to glimpse as some of the complex relationships that play out in the street everyday. The representations put forward in these discussions are not reflective of a whole reality but do give us some indication to the discourses of fear, risk and violence that play out differently in daily life.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen for both practical and theoretical reasons. Considering some people had a time limit for the interview, each conversation had to be approached differently. In order to maintain the privacy and confidentially of my interlocutors all names used are synonyms. Informing my participants that I would be using synonyms also helped build rapport and trust that encouraged many to speak openly. The use of a variety of interlocutors in my sample meant that each individual's experiences, background and interests had to be catered for in discussion. Using semi-structured interviews I was able to allow my informants free reign to discuss whatever they felt relevant but nevertheless, the same general points of departure were used in discussions with all interviewees. However, the actual process of interviews and observation shaped the research aims of this project. Each interview led to the construction of certain fields of interest. In order to maintain rapport, the questions were changed to suit each interview as the situation and individual dictated. This allowed me to maintain a natural atmosphere of conversation compared to a rigid set of questions. As a resident of downtown Cairo and sporadic visitor since 2006 I feel that my own experiences and relationships shaped this study. My daily journeys in and around downtown provided a number of questions and material. While I am aware that my status as a young female foreigner shapes some of my interactions I also spent a great deal of time critically watching others. Open-air cafés in downtown give ample opportunity to observe how others deal with one

another, how they stand, walk and use the road. Again, I cannot suggest that I, like most people, can ever really 'understand' the various experiences that people have in downtown Cairo. I can only look for trends and meaning behind the particular stories my interlocutors choose to tell and how I am able to interpret them.

Downtown Cairo is a large area, the boundaries of which have changed over time. My research looks to understand how people view this area and how they feel within it. Rather than present my interlocutors with specific areas within downtown I left them able to express which areas were of particular interest. However, over the space of each interview some common sites of interest emerged. As a result I am able to discuss these themes in the chapters of this project, most notably; how the area has changed in general, leisure spaces such as cafes and bars, key political sites such as Tahrir square and Mohammed Mahmud street and busy, shopping areas such as Talaat Harb street. These parts of the area became key locations for representing how the area has changed overall and also representing emotions over social change.

Chapter Outline

Chapter two details how informants feel about downtown Cairo considering the political events that have shaped the area between 2011-2014. Most notably, how political changes affect residents/visitors views about what downtown represents and what is should look like/function as. For example, the presence of symbolic sites in downtown such as Tahrir Square, Mohammed Mahmoud Street and the Interior Ministry all affect how people view this area. Changes in security sanctions have also affected people's day-to-day living and increased militarization affects both men and women differently. I record how interlocutors experienced the political moments of the previous years and the resulting restrictions of space. Most importantly, I argue that political and social change has created anxieties over national stability considering the violence and negotiations of 2011-2014. Discourses of fear and risk over the bodies and behavior of poor men for upper class interlocutors reflects anxieties over the currently ambiguous national situation. The uprisings of 2011 called for the removal of President Mubarak, corruption and nepotism but also for social justice. Worries over class and economic positioning is reproduced *vis a vis* changes in urban space and relationships between people in that space.

Stepping away from the overtly political, chapter three also builds on meaning over space. Using political changes as a backdrop, here I discuss contestations over the area socially and economically. Changes in the meaning and function of the area reflect a negotiation in claims to space in the area, especially between social classes, generations and people of different political persuasions. An arts and culture scene, entertainment and tourism venues exist amidst politically symbolic sites discussed in the previous chapter and create a backdrop for various negotiations in the street. An upsurge in informal trading on the street in some areas had also led to alter street practices. Opinions may differ on whether these changes are welcome or not but either way, men and women of different class backgrounds feel these transformations differently and harassment is one such perception and reality.

Chapter four builds on the previous chapters attention to the meanings given to space to consider how men and women use downtown Cairo everyday. This means detailing how people walk in the street and how they feel when they do so. Whether people prefer to use sidewalks or the road. If people choose to avoid certain areas of street geography such as kiosks then why. In a sense, this chapter seeks to place the practice of using space with the (unstable and flexible) meanings associated with these places. This chapter investigates the relationship between bodies in space in more depth with particular attention to theoretical understandings of sense of self and others in urban geographies.

Chapter five: Ultimately, I evaluate how this research has contributed to our awareness on sexual harassment in Cairo and what a study of sexual harassment can tell us about other negotiating social realities. This chapter argues that an understanding of space against a particular social moment is necessary to appreciate the occurrence and perception of sexual harassment. Women's experiences that are both classed and gendered are reflective of wider social tensions about national stability, class and economic realities.

Chapter Two: Negotiating Political Relationships

Introduction

In this chapter I evaluate the effects of political change and violence on downtown Cairo, namely how the backdrop of political discourse and the events of the last three years (2011-2014) has shaped the daily experiences of men and women in this area. Many of my interlocutors suggest that tension and sexual harassment in Cairo, and especially in downtown, has increased in this time period. While many elements of social change discussed in this project were taking place long before 2011 many interlocutors saw this year as a symbolic juncture for politics, economics and society at large. This discussion seeks to understand how political transformations and the surrounding fear, violence and search for legitimacy sets the conditions for people's daily practices. Hostility towards women such as sexual harassment cannot be understood separately from violence enacted by the state in particular locations against both men and women -- political discourse intertwines with notions of gender and class to produce different experiences for both. Here, I look at how the events of the popular uprisings over the last three years have changed meanings of this space such as how the state has generated myths about young poor men as violent and criminally suspect in order to delegitimize their protest and practice. For middle-upper class men and women, these myths feed into discourses of risk, social change and a lack of control over public space. Events that have taken place in Tahrir Square, Mohammed Mahmoud Street and the militarised surrounding area have created shifting experiences for my informants and become rich locations for understanding social change.

As part of a wider project, I acknowledge the importance yet also the limitation of this discussion. For example, I attempt to focus on the temporal nature of relationships, as the people I spoke to indicate, the social and political situation has fluctuated tremendously in the past three years. Fieldwork was carried out between October 2013 and February 2014, a short time, and yet the political circumstances appeared to change almost daily. This project seeks to explore the vibrant, yet complicated nature of downtown's urban geography. Political hotspots such as Tahrir Square and Mohammed Mahmoud Street are only part of a complex and varied urban

space. As the next two chapters will show, downtown Cairo is a conglomeration of different places holding symbolisms that shift in meaning over time. One street or square can be significant to one person, while its adjacent streets might not be. It is this attention to urban geography that highlights the intricacies of urban space and the everyday negotiations that people undertake even just moving from one street to the next. However, the meaning of the area for my interlocutors is important. Many people I spoke to recall how in 2011 and 2012, downtown became an arena for new politics, social expression through art, and remaking social relationships. As downtown became such an important and symbolic meeting place for revolutionary discussions, the space hosted new conversations and an exciting political hope for the future.

The summer of 2013 however, witnessed politically divisive events for Egypt as a whole. June 30th popular protests led to military intervention and the deposition of Muslim Brotherhood president Morsi. This culminated in a sit-in at Rabaa Square in Eastern Cairo that led to open gunfire and the massacre of hundreds of people. After this event, all of Cairo had to endure a curfew for many months while downtown in particular witnessed increased militarization and the loss of it's main subway station Sadat. The meaning and activity of Tahrir Square is important for any regime due to its symbolism as the central point of Cairo but also for functioning as the central point of the uprisings in 2011. Residents suggest that since the summer of 2013 the area has now changed to reflect a despair that many associate with political, economic, and social hopelessness.

Class is also an important factor in understanding some of the conversations that were taking place politically since 2011. According to Khalil, post Jan 28 conversations were characterized by upper class hysteria due to the rise in perceptions of lawlessness and the resulting uprising of Cairo's millions of slum dwellers (2012 p202). While there was some looting, Khalil suggests that the reality was never as bad as people thought and in fact it was the Interior Ministry who were actually responsible for promoting these discourses (ibid pg205). More generally, Tocqueville describes the necessity of repressing social deviants or 'others' in order to define a common collective identity (Sennett, 1970 p43). Describing some as 'terrorists' or 'criminals' allows Egypt to stand together in common identity amidst a period of social change and disorder. This reality is ever more present considering that many

interlocutors compared Egypt to the Syrian or Libyan situations, at some points during 2011-2013 interlocutors worried that Egypt too would go past some abstract line into chaos and disorder.

As of early 2014 residents all over Cairo are witnessing electricity and water shortages that are unusual for early spring but common in the hottest months of the year. Although daily life goes on as normal, tension remains over the political direction of the country as worries over national resources and the economy worsen. Many people in downtown look to former defence minister and army general el-Sisi to bring renewed hope and unity to the country while others (especially among the youth) fear the uprisings took place in vain as el-Sisi's presidency symbolizes the continued entrenchment of military power over the country. Interlocutors suggest that many people still go to the area to take part in political, social, and cultural discussions and projects but that the essence of the previous political moment has passed. Many that I spoke to pointed out that the best part of the 2011 uprisings was the ability to speak openly about politics and finally 'have a say' in society and politics after the fall of Mubarak's authoritarian rule. As of the beginning of 2014, this new openness is still present and allows for conversations and interactions between people that would not have happened before 2011. Yet already, many people suggest that political discussions now need to be treated with caution considering the volatile and divided political landscape. In 2013-2014 many journalists and activists, foreign and national, were investigated and imprisoned by the regime for apparently dissenting views on the basis that they were 'supporting terrorism'. In Cairo 2014 it has become increasingly dangerous to hold reactionary or opposing views.

I did not intend to cover 'politics' so extensively in this project, preferring instead to concentrate on the 'everyday' harassment in the street. However, it soon became apparent that these political conversations were more important than I had realised. As a 'foreign researcher' my interlocutors often assumed that I wanted to hear about the 2011 uprisings. My interlocutors' experiences and thoughts brought together the political events of the past three years, from social change to their everyday experiences in downtown Cairo. Considering the weight and breadth of some of these events, it is no wonder that they are not far from my informants' thoughts. Until very recently, state security dictated whether people could travel, what time they could go out until and where they could go. This political and security

situation underscores the atmosphere of the street and important social relationships. As a result, I have given weight here to the discourses surrounding battles, both physical and symbolic that have taken place in the area since 2011. As I will discuss in more depth later, many of the trends covered in this project started before 2011. Interlocutors also pointed out that political discussions were taking place openly in downtown cafes way before 2011 and the area has changed in many ways over the last ten years. I do not with to quantify these statements but just to use the narratives of 2011 as a centrepiece for understanding social, political, and economic trends. My work does not seek to locate starting points and ending points but to acknowledge how things have changed in the minds of my interlocutors and how they choose to identify their own points of departure. Regardless of the actual importance of the 2011 uprisings politically, using these events as a starting point allows for other, also interesting discussions on social change to take place.

The events that unfolded in Tahrir Square and its immediate areas have been the focal point for much scholarly and journalistic work[3]. Yet what happened in this area is also highly symbolic for the whole nation. I take direction from Winegar (2012, p68), who documents experiences from the uprisings removed from these now-famous spaces. Conversations in homes and in other areas of Cairo are also important for understanding discourses on the street in downtown. Outside of the immediate centre, people's lives also changed drastically that in turn affected their perceptions of the events in downtown. It is worth keeping in mind that the services and spaces of the area are utilized by people from all over Cairo and beyond, the meanings of the area travelling to and fro. Similarly, not every social connection that occurs downtown is defined primarily by the political events of 2011-2014. However, for many of my informants, the calls for social justice that came out of the square affect their day-to-day lives and their perceptions of others. The experiences of those who live and visit downtown Cairo is instructive for understanding social and political change in the everyday.

The meaning of the political in downtown Cairo is very much tied up to experiences of actual events that occurred there. However, as many parts of this

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[3] Many scholars and journalists used the symbolism of Tahrir Square with which to analyze the movement for social and political change, see Gardner (2011), Khalil (2011), Roccu (2013) among others.

chapter will show, political meaning is also etched onto the visual landscape of the walls and buildings of downtown. The military presence, walls and restriction of space are physical and visual reminders of the events have taken place in the square. The urban fabric is also etched with political messages via graffiti, bullet holes, destroyed buildings and nationalistic memorabilia in windows and shop fronts. These visual codes produce emotions that are attached to downtown especially and produce a visual geography that are reminiscent of events that took place in the previous three years. Political meanings are also intertwined with personal experiences and social ideas about what space means and who goes to what spaces, as ''when the physical environment itself becomes disordered and incoherent, the social functions that it harbours become more difficult to express.'' (Mumford, 2003 p94) It is elements of both connection and disconnection that I wish to capture in this project.

Restrictions of Space, Bodies and Meaning

Transport Links

Downtown Cairo has been adversely affected by the political instability and violence of recent years. This emotional and physical upheaval has shaped the lives of both residents and visitors in tangible ways. The popular uprisings started in January 2011, continued in Tahrir Square, and culminated in tense battles between Egyptian authorities and protestors in surrounding areas. As a result, controlling the locale and its meaning became a high priority for both protestors and authorities. Since 2011, different regimes have attempted to control the use and meaning of space through physical restrictions. Depending on the political situation, most transportation links to the square have been sporadically cut. Military personnel, tanks and barbed wire often restricted access even by foot. Some days the square would be closed off completely for seemingly arbitrary reasons and other times it would be shut for only part of the day depending on the 'security' situation. These circumstances have made it impossible to predict travel routes around downtown, a problem that is compounded by the almost never-ending volume of traffic. Many upper class interlocutors pointed out that they had to rely on twitter or facebook to discover how to get around the area at the last minute.

For large periods of the previous three years, moving in and out of downtown has become difficult. Taxis are unwilling to travel downtown due to the untenable

traffic situation and Sadat, the main underground station serving downtown Cairo, has been shut due to security concerns. This creates a difficult situation for visitors who live in outlying areas but work or use downtown for leisure or administrative purposes. According to many residents, this is one way of controlling who can enter the square and thus who can protest there. One young, male, and particularly revolutionary interlocutor suggested that this was also a tactic for deterring the 'masses' or those that can only afford to travel by metro to come downtown and engage in street politics. For those who disagree with the current political situation this control of space is linked to political oppression:

> It is all over now; I don't think there ever was even a revolution to be honest. People are brainwashed into thinking that we have achieved something when there is even less freedom now! I can't go from one end of the street to another without someone checking my ID.

> (personal communication with Mostafa, a 32 year old engineer, Jan 17 2014)

The restrictions on travel have impacted the lives of many residents and also visitors to the area who now have difficulties travelling for work or to visit family and friends. Moreover, restrictions on movement mean fewer visitors to the area and less patrons for downtown's businesses. These circumstances lead to an atmosphere of increased tension for inhabitants of this area and others whose daily activities require them to pass through.

The difficulties of transportation in downtown Cairo affect men and women differently. How to traverse the city space was more of a delicate task for my female interlocutors than for many men that I spoke to:

> I always have to plan my day ahead of time and think about where I am going and what am I doing, I hate the metro when it is so busy and sometimes I can't get a taxi either and so when the schools and colleges open in the afternoon you always feel intimidated by young boys saying vulgar things.

> (Personal communication with 33-year-old marketing associate Dana, Jan 2 2014)

Women suggested that they would prefer to use a taxi during busy times of the day even though it would be more efficient to walk. This is because they felt uneasy and overwhelmed on the street with high volumes of people around. Women expressed increased anxiety about extremely crowded spaces and heightened levels of sexual harassment: many had been assaulted on the metro or on the street during crowded

events. Especially in the mornings and afternoons when government offices and workers left their jobs, women felt that the high numbers of men on the streets coupled with dangerous traffic conditions made it untenable to undertake journeys by foot. Female residents of downtown who live near schools also suggest that they prefer not to leave the house when the school opens or closes. Indeed, they felt intimidated by large groups of young male students who they felt might harass them. The poor traffic conditions also made it difficult to keep to appointments on time, so when meeting friends women also made sure that they could wait inside an establishment rather than 'loitering' on the street, which attracts unwanted attention. Thus, in order to leave the house women have to consider the time of day, traffic situation and the availability of certain types of transport such as taxis; different modes of transport are of course also dictated by financial capability. While rush hour is also very problematic for men too, in general my male interlocutors expressed the ability to switch between means of transport as the situation required, which is both more time and cost effective.

Financial limitations mean that many people prefer to use the underground metro system for longer journeys wherever possible. At the time of writing (early 2014) any one journey to any part of the line is only one Egyptian pound. Many of my interlocutors who live in other parts of Cairo frequently use the metro to come into downtown for social events and gatherings. Since the main station in Tahrir Square: Sadat is closed, visitors to downtown now have two choices: alight the metro at Saad Zaghlool station and walk through the heavily militarized area of the Interior Ministry or at Nasser station, which is often very busy and overwhelming. Moreover, alighting at Nasser means walking through busy areas such as Talaat Harb, which many middle class women tell me is a problematic street for women to walk through alone. Several of my female interlocutors that live downtown like to socialize and receive friends in their homes, especially if they have small children. Women complained that in contrast to other areas downtown lacks facilities such as cafes that are welcoming for children. Many recall playing in the street during their own youth but now point out that the area is too dangerous with too many fast cars and not enough space. More often, they suggested husbands or partners meet friends outside, such as in cafes or bars. These women also prefer to drive than walk or take public transport for safety and ease. So for female residents, the lack of mobility makes it

hard to maintain social connections and undertake everyday duties around the city. Since the political uprisings began, women that I spoke to in the area tell me that their social lives have been adversely affected. Of course, the desire for easy mobility and child-friendly leisure spaces are indicative of the middle class background of the people I spoke to. The majority of people, men and women, using downtown Cairo have no choice to but to get around as quickly and cheaply as they can. The restriction of movement, transportation and the demography of the space all intertwine to create an environment that is challenging for women and men in different ways.

How Cairenes use transport and experience the city also depends heavily on economic status. For the urban poor, using the cities network of minibuses and buses can be a daily hassle for both men and women. The buses are usually overcrowded and hot and several women told me that they have been assaulted on buses or microbuses:

> I was on the microbus once when a man opened his trousers to show me his penis and started masturbating, I was so embarrassed and got off the bus but it has also happened to me in taxis too which is actually worse in my mind because there is no one around to help you in case he does something else.

(personal communication with Marwa, a 26 year old student, Dec 18 2013)

In Cairo only a relatively small percentage of people in Cairo can afford to own their own car. Most use the city's underground metro or small buses while even taxis are out of reach for the majority. Drivers have their own difficulties in downtown, but for the women that I spoke to, it does allow an increased experience of safety. Marwa's family like most have suffered from the deteriorating national economic situation of the past eight to ten years. After a brothers failed internet-café project, Marwa had to sell her car to help her family's finances. Now she has to walk, take taxis or ride the metro where she has experienced a number of negative encounters ranging from verbal to physical harassment. While most suggest that taking taxis is more convenient and safe than walking or taking the metro many suggested that even taking taxis can be risky. Due to the perception of risk and rumours, some informants kept knives or pepper spray in their bags if they were travelling alone or late at night. Although nothing 'bad' (in their words) had ever happened to them in taxis, two informants had been the recipients of indecent exposure and others has been asked

inappropriate, rude or sexual questions by the driver when travelling alone. In these cases, women had felt uncomfortable in the taxi given the form and nature of such conversations and completed the rest of the journey by foot.

As the traffic situation in downtown has further deteriorated, Cairo has also witnessed an upsurge in motorcycle use. More recently, men on motorcycles have become associated with the clashes in downtown from 2011 to 2012. Young men from lower social classes used motorcycles during political battles to carry the wounded from the front lines to safety (Ryzova, 2011 para 6). Cheap motorcycles serve as convenient ways to travel around Cairo and bypass traffic jams for those who cannot afford cars. Yet this form of transportation, like their owners, has also come to be associated with crime and degeneration for many that I spoke to. As of February 2014, the government has suspended the import of motorcycles and tuk-tuks due to their connection with crime (Cairo Post, Feb 2014). Several women I spoke to had had their bags stolen by men on motorbikes. However, these crimes seem somewhat minimal in comparison to the overblown stereotypes of danger that are pushed onto young men in the area. Discourses and images of young 'undesirable' men on motorcycles as largely associated with political resistance, danger and crime are then used to justify military intervention in the area. Revolutionary informants suggest that the regime is able to draw on historical and social stereotypes about the behaviour of lower class men in order to achieve their political goals. Mixed with the recently-deserted streets of downtown, the imagery of young men on motor-cycles play into narratives about the rise in crime and the subsequent justification for increased fear and securitization of the streets. These myths serve multiple ends: justifying political leanings and rationalizing elite and middle-upper class anxieties over the control of urban space. Either way they feed into how people view one another and interact on the street. For some people, young, poor men in the traditionally middle class space of downtown come to represent social change, a challenge to their own power systems and ultimately chaos and disorder. Here, class practices exemplified through transport highlight how space hosts conversations about political and social change.

Myths of risk and danger are conversations that need to be taken seriously. For one, they affect the way people interact with one another and come to produce subjectivities (Wright, 2006 p5). Of course, the line between fact and fiction, myth and reality is never easy, as this research will attest to. As discussed, some informants

had been robbed and others only knew of others that had, many women had experienced harassment on the street, as quantitative studies show (ECWR 2008, UN 2013). But the objective here is not to embark on a truth-finding mission of an ever-changing and complex social reality but to understand who benefits from these discourses and what effects they have on the social everyday of downtown Cairo. Amar (2011) suggests that focusing on the 'crises of masculinity' and the criminal behaviour of young men in discussions of sexual harassment is a form of de-politicization. Wright (2006, p6) refers to Barthes (1972) who stresses that myths too are a form of de-politicization that strip historical nuance from discourses and instead push forward the idea that these stereotypes have always existed naturally since time immemorial. In Cairo, the myths surrounding the activities of the working class in downtown do not acknowledge the history of violence that the urban poor have suffered at the hands of the state and global capitalism; one of the main complaints of the 2011 uprisings in the first place. Instead, the political campaign of the military regime and capitalism co-exist to claim that this section of society have and will always be a social nuisance and that there is nothing to be done about it except securitize further.

Walls

In 2011, large walls and buffer zones were erected in certain parts of downtown to control movement around high-security areas, especially around the Ministry of Interior, where clashes between armed forces and protestors had been taking place. The walls function symbolically as well as practically as a means to regulate the area. As of February 2014, large steel gates replaced some of the walls around downtown to allow traffic to pass through. While for many in the area this is a positive step to help the dire traffic situation and improve access some informants suggest that it also means that the control of space via walls or gate is here to stay. Many residents of downtown feel uneasy that the gates can be opened and shut at the whim of security officers. Thus, the walls and gates are a practical impediment to progress and a symbolic halt in the eyes of many that I spoke to for the aims of the uprisings that called for more freedoms, freedom of movement being one of which.

Since their erection, these walls and the restriction of movement affect the daily life of residents in the area. For example, interlocutors highlight the problems

for local businesses that suffer when normal walkways and access to the shop are prohibited. Residents also complain that they cannot access their properties easily and guests cannot come and go without the security services monitoring them. Due to the restrictions of the wall, it becomes difficult to access whole parts of downtown, especially around the Ministry of Interior. Many suggest that the atmosphere of the area has changed due to the enforced restriction of space. For those who live in and frequent the area, the constant reminders of the security forces through the walls and military presence is overwhelming. For residents, alongside the daily hassles and restrictions, the area has become a 'ghost town' at night:

> It is really very strange how the area has changed, I guess in the mornings it is all normal and busy but now at night and especially on Friday night everything is closed so early! Because it is so empty my family do not want me to go out and are scared and there isn't even any parties on a Friday these days either.

(personal communication with 32 year old unemployed Hala, Dec 6 2013)

The presence of the military, the memory of the curfew alongside the restriction of movement means some streets are used less now than before 2011. In highly populated Cairo, this is unusual, unused streets quickly become the domain of packs of street dogs and trash. Many Cairo residents suggest that the safety of the city and downtown especially comes from the constant presence of others. The restriction of movement from some areas, especially over prolonged periods of time, causes streets to become unwelcoming, unsafe and economically unproductive.

The different experience of urban space for men and women play out through discourses of risk and fear. The ways in which the women I spoke to expressed fears over urban space were often contradictory. Within one interview some would suggest that the quiet militarized areas around the ministry were more intimidating than crowded areas, others suggested the opposite. Female interlocutors pointed out that quieter streets are more dangerous for crimes such as theft, rape and abduction while busier streets are more likely to provide for annoyances such as verbal harassment and grabbing. This highlights how attention to meaning over the use of space is important to understand the multifarious daily experiences that also include negative, unwelcome or even violent interactions. Women had more serious fears over abandoned space while street harassment became part of daily life and systems were put into place to deal with it. I argue that these fears however come from different

discourses, busy areas are associated with informal economic activity and the masses of urban poor, which explains why women see these interactions as annoyances but are able to deal with them in strategic ways. The restriction of space by the military is used to suggest a more sinister danger such as the threat of random acts of violence and terrorism, which also justifies the long curfews, and restrictions of freedom in order to protect the stability of the nation. Even so, it is not the aim of this project to necessarily identify what is 'worse' for women: busy or quiet areas. But to identify that both create their own difficulties, which is a reality that can be extended to men who are also the victims of crime.

The construction of walls in the area occurred almost overnight and in some cases served to restrict movement from one side of a street to another. Streets and relationships change irrevocably as shops and neighbours are no longer local. Shops and cafes that used to serve a whole community and act as a meeting place for all are now only easily accessible to half of the previous community. The security of long term neighbours and friends, who act as important networks for women, is lost. Dana, who lives next to the Ministry of Interior, explains:

> I used to talk in the street with the neighbours and find out what was happening in the area, some mothers used to call in on each other in the day … now we don't stop to chat … all the officers are staring at us so we go in and out as quick[ly] as possible.

(personal communication, Jan 16, 2014)

As Abaza (2013b) notes, the walls and restrictions of space in downtown have brought the livelihoods of many small businesses and shopkeepers to a halt. Such businesses and shops are essential to the fabric of downtown Cairo, especially for those who cannot travel far for goods and services. It is not surprising then, that for many residents' national stability and security is a priority for the area, especially for those whose livelihoods depend on it. Essentially, the force and power of the security services plays out through the restriction of bodies on the ground. The restriction of space is then used to blame the protestors for the shut down of downtown in general and as a way of delegitimizing the uprisings (Abaza, 2013b p127). Bayat (1997 p64) also notes that the passive networks of the street are essential for creating the active networks necessary for political action. The connections and acknowledgment of people who use the same space create networks between them that are important for

social, economic and here most importantly political activity. The disjuncture of the street through restrictions creates a disruption for networks essential to continued political resistance. If the modern city is often associated with superficial relationships, anonymity and a space of transition (Wirth, 2003) then the events of 2011 came in to highlight how important connections and relationships between people really are.

For many residents, women experience the walls and restrictions of movement differently than men. Walls, gates and checkpoints sever the connectivity and sociability of the streets in downtown Cairo. The familiarity of known cafes, shops and street workers that is so essential to women's perception of safety is thus removed. The more familiarity a women has with her area the less likely it is that men will harass her and her perception of risk will be reduced (Nassif, 2010). Not knowing which routes are open and when, creates daily worries for men and women who must undertake essential everyday journeys in streets and areas that are unknown to them. Many women that I spoke to suggested that they are more likely to be harassed when they felt vulnerable such as when they were lost or looking for something. Men used this as sedge way to approach women and strike up a conversation but many women felt uncomfortable being approached by strangers or groups of young men. Marwa explains:

> Sometimes people can be so dramatic over safety and crime in the area, there was fighting in the square in Abdeen the other night and the doorman would not let me out and in other times men have approached me to take me to a nearby 'safe' café because of one made up reason or another, I get so suspicious.

(personal communication, Nov 18 2013)

Suspicions over men's intentions and the genuine seriousness of the situation are questioned after many people get used to living in precarious circumstances. Getting lost and asking for directions in downtown Cairo amidst increased suspicion and militarisation is challenging for all but women that I spoke to felt especially intimidated by soldiers or gangs of youth with whom they have been verbally harassed by before.

My interlocutors propose that the political and social changes in the area have produced greater fear, risk and incidence of sexual harassment. A number of

informants recounted incidents where they had been followed and harassed through dimly lit areas at night. Scholars such as Wilson (1991) wonder whether the anonymity of the city can be a liberating experience for women, and in some cases I do not doubt that this is true. Yet the rise in military presence coupled with the increased discourses of fear over the behaviour of working class men create fears for women about the likelihood of physical, verbal or sexual abuse. Ones experience is again dependent on class, middle class men suggested that they have an easier time around military checkpoints than poor men. Gender and class once again intersect to produce different experiences of changes in urban space that appears to vary almost daily. As discussed throughout this paper, the political situation changed dramatically over several weeks and months during 2011-2014 that heavily affected the practice of everyday life in downtown Cairo.

Curfew

In August 2013 the interim government declared a state of emergency and a curfew was imposed on Cairo between the hours of seven p.m. and six a.m. This came after popular protests and military intervention ended the presidency of Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohammed Morsi. However, supporters of the former President Morsi and his party continued to protest his alleged unlawful removal, which culminated in a violent dispersal that left many dead. The curfew was lifted gradually, in hourly increments, over the next few months. According to my interlocutors, the curfew has changed the practices of establishments and inhabitants of Cairo and downtown especially. During the curfew, downtown became unusually quiet. Long-term residents suggest that they have never seen a curfew or state restriction as abided to as closely. Gaber (2013) suggests that Cairo 'performed' the curfew in order to justify discourses of risk and danger associated with that specific time. Abiding by the curfew meant that there was a real threat to public safety and thus the killings at Rabaa Square in 2013 could be justified. Believing anything else would mean admitting that what took place was senseless killing and part of an arranged political project (ibid). Due to the lack of people on the street during this time, interlocutors suggested that the curfew allowed criminals to operate more easily. Many recall stories of men on motorcycles using the lack of traffic to speed through the streets and rob people. However, no crimes were actually committed against my interlocutors or anyone they knew personally. Some residents point out

that discourses of crime on the area have been circulated to justify the curfew in the first place, especially considering that the curfew was premised on Egypt's 'terrorism' problem. Of course, it could also be just because Cairo is normally regarded as a 24-hour city and safety on the streets is usually linked to the continuous presence of others. When this is no longer the case, perceptions of fear increase. Again, myths of danger are used for political ends under the guise for the need of 'stability'.

Though the curfew ended in November 2013 many argue that even now, shops and bustle die down earlier than before the summer of 2013. Female informants suggested that before the uprisings in 2011 they felt able to go out until one, two a.m. Now they would only walk around alone until approximately 10 p.m. However, the atmosphere and practices of downtown have fluctuated so widely in the previous three years, it is difficult to tell. Dana's comments are indicative:

> I'm pretty sure Cairo used to be crazy all through the night … but now I think of it I can't even remember, nothing is clear about what is 'normal' now. We go home earlier but I don't know if it's because of the winter or what …

(personal communication, Jan 16, 2014)

Political tensions interlink with practices of space to create discourses of fear and risk. Either through an actual rise in crime or just increased perceptions, both men and women's lives are altered. However, the discourses that link crime with young, poor men create tensions over increases in sexual harassment. Many middle class people that I spoke to in downtown worried that the uprisings of 2011 had empowered young, poor men. They continued that somehow, the calls for social justice of the uprising had 'gone too far' and descended into chaos that could only be tamed by the strong fist of the military. Considering the upper class status of most of my interlocutors and the historically upper class nature of downtown Cairo, residents worried about the impact of social change on their own positions, their area and apartments. I believe this anxiety is linked to the precarity of social and economic positions in Egypt that have been so important historically. Several interlocutors explained that aspects of class and identity that dictate how people are to deal with one another guide social interactions in downtown. Anxiety about changing class relations is expressed through discourses of crime and fear. At the same time, increased resistance against old systems of class oppression and power may have

occurred through the political uprisings of 2011 which has led to new conversations on the street and a greater likelihood of interaction and misunderstanding between people of different class backgrounds.

The constant awareness of the possibility of crime and sexualised crime from young men provides a negative situation for women in the street. These discourses also serve to render young lower socio-economic class men as undesirable criminals always looking for opportune moments to commit a crime or violate women. Indeed, it becomes easier for the security services to justify increased safety measures and restrictions of movement amidst discourses of crime, trouble-making and terrorism. These sources of danger can come from the urban poor, the Muslim Brotherhood or the *baltigiya*, which is a name given to young men who are allegedly hired thugs. The cleansing of spaces such as Tahrir Square in downtown Cairo then becomes justified. On power and danger, Douglas (2002 p126) writes that those in established positions of power will be perceived as holding legitimate and controllable sources of danger while others in less explicit positions hold uncontrollable powers that one should be fearful from. The *baltigiya* are often presented as being attached to the state, ready to commit violence at the sniff of a paycheck, yet these men are also presented as lower class brutes. Many that I spoke to suggested that they were most fearful during the uprisings from these paid thugs and looters from outer lying neighbourhoods, which is why neighbourhoods committees were established. Documenting the revolution, Khalil (2012) notes how neighbourhood watch committees set up to protect neighbourhoods mainly challenged poor people passing by who were then attacked simply for being in the wrong area at the wrong time. Contradictions also littered the interviews with my upper class interlocutors who felt deeply committed to the 2011 uprisings calls for social justice and a 'new Egypt' but also for their own lifestyles which sometimes relied on the cheap labour of working class men. These complexities of course also guide interactions on the street whereby people deal with one another with sensitivity but also frustration over social change, or lack of it.

Military Territory and Everyday Life

Due to the political situation and security concerns over 'terrorism' in Egypt large numbers of police, soldiers and military checkpoints are stationed around the Ministry of Interior, which is a ten-minute walk south-west of Tahrir Square.

Depending on the situation, military checkpoints have also been established in others parts of downtown and Cairo more generally. Harassment, political events and the meaning of space are inextricably linked for one informant:

> If I need to come downtown I have to take the metro to Saad Zaghlool now because of Sadat, I hate it … I have to walk past all the walls and the soldiers and the ministry … then they might say something to me or whistle … This makes me really mad, I feel like I might explode back at them … after everything they [military regime] have done already [with reference to violent crimes during the uprising].

(personal communication with Randa, 9 Feb, 2014)

Since the uprisings of 2011, downtown Cairo has witnessed a violent relationship between the security forces and protesters. In some battles, particularly on Mohammed Mahmoud Street, security forces were largely documented as being especially violent with protestors that resulted in the death of many. Several people that I spoke to also considered the military to be behind a number of human rights abuses that have occurred in the past three years. It is no wonder that my informants resented the continued presence of military checkpoints in downtown Cairo considering the 2013 military takeover and many Egyptian's turbulent relationship with the army. At the same time, the deterioration of the area also encouraged many to see the presence in a positive light. Especially for those who regard the military takeover on 3 July 2013 as an illegitimate military coup, the presence of soldiers and restrictions of space serve as a continual reminder of this political reality. Interestingly, residents noted that even though they might be aware of the political affiliation of neighbours, where possible, attempts were made not to discuss politics. The need for an amicable living situation ensures many treat each other with caution and sensitivity. This is especially so considering that residents could often at least sympathize with another's political affiliation. Many suggest that they are not happy with the armed forces but considering the situation, especially downtown, it is the only viable option for stability.

My female interlocutors had an altogether different experience of increased military and police presence than men. Most of them had had negative experiences walking past soldier checkpoints by themselves. As with harassment against women outside of military areas, incidence is highly reduced when walking with a man whom others on the street might assume to be their husband. Most women detailed

the soldiers cat-calling, hissing and making crude comments. Mostly though, simply the presence of often-large groups of soldiers stationed around bases by the Ministry of Interior or embassies intimidated women that I spoke to. Some suggested that the officers targeted them for alleged 'routine' checks over other people in the crowd. They proposed that officers made a beeline for them in order to try and engage them in conversation and illicit information such as their marital status. Others are simply fed up with having forced interactions with young male soldiers and police every time they leave the house. However, a certain amount of understanding and compassion underscores tense relationships:

> I told the soldier about the boys saying things to me and he went to them and shouted, they looked scared … He only did something because I live there and have to pass by everyday … and actually I feel sorry for them, they don't want to be there, they are in bad health and look tired and ill, they have bad training and equipment … they were fighting with the ultras and of course I supported the ultras but also felt sorry for them [Security forces] they are just kids, and people's brothers and sons too.

(personal communication with Dana, Jan 16, 2014)

Often, class and power also intersect with women's experiences with the military. One female resident who drives told me that officers stop her and investigate her for longer periods of time when her husband is not present. Moreover, the same interlocutor has had negative experiences with officers in front of the Ministry of Interior. She described that when she shouted at the officer with other pedestrians around and in her words 'undermined his authority' they attempted to punish her further. Later, when a more senior officer listened to the problem and became aware of the interlocutors social standing and connections they let her go much to the anger of the soldier in question. Phadke (2005, p51) suggests that class allows upper class women to control their interactions with lower class men. Especially with regards to the young conscripts of the security services, the lines are blurred between their authority and entrenched systems of class and gender. The tension between systems of class and gender (which are never static) have to be read with regards to the Egyptian state, who has historically given power and tools of domination to the wealthy and connected.

Interactions between women and the security forces have to be seen against the backdrop of high rates of violence against men and women during the past three

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years. Much of this violence has been directed towards the bodies of men and women in particular ways. For example, military prisons undertook virginity testings on female protestors in 2011 after arrests made in protests (Abaza, 2013a para 6). As of March 2014 no one has been held accountable for these acts. More recently, even though many are still highly critical of the military regime, they still point out that the real calls for reform have always been against the police rather than the military. Interlocutors argue that the police are the ones who are badly trained, ineffective and have made the lives of many, especially the poor, very difficult. One interlocutor even suggested that the police are like 'sissys' who could not control the space around the Ministry of Interior so that the army had to step in to 'take control'. The apparent strength and masculinity of the military underscores many people's perceptions of the army, especially those in favour of their political project.

Symbolism of Downtown's Mohammed Mahmoud Street

Downtown Cairo is marked by the presence of the now infamous Mohammed Mahmoud Street. A major lead way into Tahrir Square and the Interior Ministry, it hosts the old campus of the American University in Cairo among other important schools in the area. More recently, the street embodies one of the main confrontations in the popular uprisings of the previous three years. In November 2011 a fierce and violent battle played out in the street between authorities and protestors that resulted in the death of more than 40 people. Especially with its proximity to the Interior Ministry, it also became a highly emblematic battle over control of the area (Ryzova, 2011). Consequently in the eyes of many the street has come to symbolize the political and social events of the last three years. Artists eulogize the dead in graffiti and murals over the walls. Impressive paintings highlight political and social issues for passers by and even of March 2014 tourists and visitors come to take pictures. In essence, the street acts as a point of remembrance for the past but also as a key reminder of the present. As Abaza (2013b p134) also points out, the street has become a memorial and a central meeting point to discuss the events that have taken place in the last three years. The continued presence of artists painting and repainting highlights the need for continued resistance and debate over the memory and meaning of the street but overall the calls for justice that the uprisings were built upon.

The demographic make up of political protests has also affected meanings over space on downtown Cairo. Ryzova (2011) details the way in which police and security forces brandished the protestors as thugs. For the continued uprisings in Tahrir Square and surrounding areas after the first 18 days, the make up the crowd consisted of women, activists, young men, people from different classes, parts of Egypt, and even families to comprise a 'safe zone' (ibid). The front line of Mohammed Mahmoud though, consisted of almost exclusively young men from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Ryzova (2011 para 6) writes that these same young men are commonly associated with the throngs of masculinity and resulting high rates of sexual harassment that dominate downtown such as on holidays like *Eid*. Moreover, these young men have an 'open account' with the security services having suffered a long history of discrimination, corruption and mistreatment (ibid). I would like to problematize these descriptions somewhat and suggest that the reality was probably more complex and less definable. However, it is easy to see why and how the regime needed to portray these young men as violent, drug-taking criminals from poor neighbourhoods. While most Egyptians that I spoke to were in support of these young men in the battles, these discourses also feed into long-lasting stereotypes about how certain sections of society behave and are easily appropriated by people to justify political campaigns for stability and elite worries over increased danger.

Moreover, while many residents I spoke to were in favour of the aims of the uprisings, many felt intimidated and anxious with how it played out in their own neighbourhood. These fears were intimately linked to the types of people fighting on the front line and their own physical safety. Even now, windows and doorways on Mohammed Mahmoud Street are still boarded up with wood or bricked over. The lack of control over the safety of one's immediate surroundings and loved ones makes the battles of the street even more personal. Those that lived near to battlegrounds recall being unable to leave the house for fear of being caught up in the violence. Marwa explains:

> I didn't want to go out for days … the men went out and got food when it calmed down but not me, we didn't know who was out there and we were hearing such different reports.

> (personal communication with Marwa, Jan 10, 2014)

Yet many women did participate in the activities of the square and surrounding areas as activists and protestors. Fears of the unknown can quickly spiral when aided by state run media, especially for those who have been taught to fear the bodies and practice of young, poor men. According to Ryzova (2011) a symbiotic relationship existed between different factions of Egyptian society in the early days of the revolution that allowed the movement to continue legitimately. For my informants, this social solidarity against Egypt's long history of social injustice is much celebrated. Many detail the relationships they made with people they would never normally meet during these days of the uprisings. Women look back with nostalgia of the safety and comradery of the square. This co-operation and connectivity ties in with what Bayat (1997 p65) calls 'passive networks' which operate as a means of group support and which also allows for united political action. More recently, several informants mourn the loss of that social solidarity due to new divisions based on political affiliation. I argue that the restriction of space also severs such networks and connectivity. Interlocutors suggest that divisions based on support or opposition for the military takeover has bred distrust and animosity between social connections in the downtown area. Anger and frustration also remains for those who supported the military takeover, but not its recent attempts to consolidate power. Those who opposed the takeover in the first place also feel resentment towards those who supported the military takeover for their alleged blind sightedness. While some see hope, others feel hopelessness with the way that Egypt has found itself after three years of political and social unrest. Some residents even try to limit talk of politics to a minimum to placate social relations. In 2013, signs insisting 'no politics' began to hang in the windows of shops. Presumably outspoken political opinions create unwelcome tension for local businesses.

According to my informants, the Mohammed Mahmud Street has degenerated in the last five years. Since the move of the American University, economic deterioration and political and social symbolism of the street, it has become in the words on one interlocutor a 'wasteland'. While this maybe somewhat dramatic considering many still use the street and economic woes have affected levels of trash and practice in many areas of Cairo it is certainly telling. It appears that since the departure of the more formal establishments such as the University, many feel that a vacuum has been created for people from outside areas to engage in informal

economic practices and take advantage of the political symbolism of the street. Young people also still come from outlying areas to take photos with the murals. Parking and traffic can be a significant problem as many businesses do still operate from the street. As a result, women find that they have nowhere to walk and are pushed into either dealing with dangerous traffic or onto the sidewalks, close to cafes and small food kiosks. Many middle-class women I spoke to now avoided the street especially at night.

Gendered Violence

As an important juncture for social change in Cairo, many women and activists wanted the uprisings to allow for wider discussions on the place and treatment of women in Egyptian society. Similarly, discussions about women's issues such as sexual harassment, which started gaining attention around 2006 were part of a rise in activism over social issues in general. Conversations about women's issues, minorities, housing and health in the run up to 2011 helped gain the momentum that erupted in the protests calling for the step-down of long-term dictator Hosni Mubarak. Put quite literally ''the aged President Hosni Mubarak had long embodied the oppressive and institutionalized patriarchy in Egypt'' (Abaza, 2013a para 2). Women called for change alongside other axis of oppression and social injustice in Egypt. For some interlocutors, the absence of real change and feelings of hopelessness with the current political situation also crystallizes the memory of recent events for women. As of March 2014 when the military continues to hold power, many women feel disillusioned. For some female activist informants, soldiers and daily political conversations serve as a reminder of what happened and what has not been achieved. Indeed, in Abaza's (2013a) analysis of the gender symbolism in political graffiti over the last few years, we find many reminders of the events for women written on the walls of downtown. In other instances of activism, men and women have worked together to create even stronger solidarity to achieve their goals. For my informants, these visual symbols and conversations also serve as reminders walking around the city. But as Abaza (para 14) continues, why would sexual harassment not come to define relationships between people on the street when violence and the second-class citizenship of women in legitimized from the top powers of society? The authorities carrying out 'virginity testing' and branding female protestors as prostitutes affects daily relationships.

Concurrent oppositional regimes have sought to delegitimize continuing protests by defaming the participants both male and female. Certain factions of the media and political spokesmen blamed women for being raped because they should not have been outside in the first place. Women were also brandished as low class prostitutes in order to justify violence enacted against them (Abaza, 2013a para 8). The presence of young men and women in certain areas became stigmatized. Women in political hotspots such as Tahrir Square, Mohammed Mahmud and downtown more generally came to be seen as illegitimate, objectionable or outright sex workers. Men were deemed as drug addicts, criminals from poorer areas and as hired thugs. According to my informants, such discourses were used to delegitimize unwanted political activism ongoing in the square. Moreover, those in power created this suspicion over the integrity of the lingering resistance on the streets to create resentment and distrust between different social and political factions. As we will see, meanings attached to people and places also have repercussions for daily life.

It is not a coincidence that many of my female informants reported that even now they feel sexual harassment has increased and particularly in and around Tahrir Square. General anger and resentment on the street coupled with top down legitimization encourages violence against women and men with limited repercussions. Women's issues as usual are used as a political pawn and sources for de-legitimization. Under the former Muslim Brotherhood government, members of the party asserted that Tahrir Square had become a ''hot bed'' of rape and sexual harassment (Ahram Online, 11 Feb 2013). They continued that anti-government rallies should not be held if they cannot guarantee safety for participants. While the concerns of the Muslim Brotherhood may indeed by legitimate, they seek to discredit their political opponents rather than really protect women. During the early days of 2011, the state sought to delegitimize protests by suggesting that men in this area causing trouble were '*baltagiyya*' or hired thugs. These representations also serve to direct attention away from the many male victims at the hands of state violence that occurred directly or indirectly.

Both my male and female interlocutors looked at the first days of the uprisings as almost utopian, men and women of different social classes came together united with a common goal. Accounts indicate that large amounts of women took parts in the initial uprisings, although they were still mainly male dominated. Mehta (1999

p72) analyzes the intersection between gender, violence and fear and suggest that ''the negotiation of danger is in many ways the negotiation of power'' (ibid p79). Often, violence is associated with the masculine while the feminine with passivity and the need for protection. Fear and a lack of control are associated with powerlessness and passivity (ibid p74). Being in charge of the situation and space of downtown generally requires the intervention of a masculinizing project that can regain control, such as the military intervention of possible future patriarch el-Sisi. Increased masculinity in the area has led to the easy dismissal of women-specific goals of the uprisings. Many women I spoke to referred to a change in the 'atmosphere' of downtown Cairo and a feeling that they and their needs no longer belong. Not surprisingly, women have generally indicated that harassment has increased since the revolution. While this is of course due to generally increased levels of tension and hardship overall, it is also due to the increased masculinisation and militarization of the area and public sentiment. Women in the street can be targeted for the appearance of putting themselves in danger and those around them. Interestingly, a number of interlocutors recalled moments when door guards, neighbors and passers by insisted on them staying inside even due to the smallest of street scuffles. The protection of women allows men to stay in control and regain powerlessness amidst increasing chaos. Essentially, the need for control encourages women to fear the streets to justify a need for fear in the first place.

Yet the construction of fear plays out for men and women differently. As noted, many women I spoke to felt that during specific parts of the last three years protests, emphasis was placed upon their protection and safety. At other points when violence escalated, only men of poor backgrounds remained on the frontlines (Abaza 2013b). Discourses of fear would suggest that women have much to worry about on the streets both in and outside of political conflict. While women have indeed experienced many physical attacks, these discourses would also suggest that men do not have anything to fear. While crime statistics are mostly absent and questionable anyway, recent statistics on Egypt by the UN show that 87.8% of homicide victims are men while 12.2% are female. The battles of Mohammed Mahmoud also depict violence as normalized for young, poor men from outlying neighborhoods that have become known in public discourse as slums or '*ashwaiyyat*' (Bayat and Denis, 2000). Through memories and continued memorials, violence between men characterizes a

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number of key sites in downtown Cairo. Violence and sexual violence come to be only associated with male perpetration and women as only the victims. Violence and aggression are the domain of men while women are bystanders, mothers or wives in the need for protection.

The position of women in Egypt now is also linked to the intersection between social relationships, gender, and politics. Hafez (2012, p40) argues that anger and violence against women has to be understood in regards to the various ways men have been denied access to masculinity and been rendered 'feminine' by the patriarchal authority of Mubarak. In order to regain masculinity and disassociate themselves from the feminine, men are led to differentiate themselves by gender from women even further (ibid). These differences allow women to become easy victims considering '' violence toward and abuse and harassment of women are the outcome of masculinity built on hate and deprivation'' (ibid). The entrenchment of gender difference allows men to gain power through victimizing women (ibid). Since Hafez wrote this article, I argue that women's and other voices have been increasingly marginalized by the presentation of two (largely masculine) narratives; the legitimacy of the Muslim Brotherhood versus the stability of the military. In both narratives, women and the issues that predominantly affect them (such as sexual harassment) easily become sidelined when majority male political parties further vie for power. Indeed, the current military control of the country can be seen as a new bargain of patriarchy. The anger of the youth represents that previous fallback into age-old contracts with a national 'father figure'. It is these regressive discourses that underline the hopelessness that many feel in downtown Cairo since 2013.

Struggles for Legitimacy

My informants suggest that recent political considerations have bred forms of tension and mistrust among parts of society. Among certain elite groups of downtown, many informants claim to know people who have been recently investigated by the security forces. As of March 2014, the security forces have arrested a number of Egyptian and foreign journalists and others they believe to be journalists or terrorists. Daily interactions have to be read within a context of heightened tension between different sectors of society overall. Long-term foreign

interlocutors suggest that they have witnessed a rise in xenophobia alongside the rise in nationalist rhetoric. Fuelled by the media and internet sources, western foreign policy was blamed for intervening in Egyptian domestic politics in their own interests or planning to destabilise the country. Day to day this has translated into an atmosphere of suspicion against foreigners who could be either spies or journalists with an agenda. The continued discourses of ''Egypt against Terrorism'' and increased securitization create an atmosphere of suspicion. Indeed, calls for security also play on the transitory and anonymous nature of downtown Cairo. The presence of unknown others or potential 'terrorists' is used to justify the restrictions of movement. However, this discourse is in friction with the view of many people who still view the area as synonymous with the uprisings and calls for social change. While these discourses are still present many foreigners continue to live in the area comfortably.

In a study of conflict in Algeria, Silverstein (2002) points out that conspiracy theories were used to try and understand national conflict and danger amidst deep uncertainty and a lack of transparency surrounding what actually happened. Conspiracy theorizing becomes a form of empowerment whereby citizens are able to access the 'truth' about 'what actually happened'. In Algeria, which is divided by ethnic and linguistic lines, these 'truths' then serve to unite people in common understanding (ibid). In a Foucauldian sense, the perception of holding knowledge is a route to power. I argue something similar happened in Egypt, many people that I spoke to in downtown felt that the US administration had interfered in internal politics to prop up the Muslim Brotherhood and undermine the (in their eyes) people's popular presidential candidate el-Sisi. For these people, the conflict and disruption of the last few years can be seen as the result of outside intervention and hope for the future can be renewed under a new nationalist leader. Silverstein theorizes that conspiracies and rumours serve as a way to understand what is happening in a coherent and logical manner given a lack of press freedom and the circulation of unverifiable information. This process establishes actor intentionality, causality, and thus meaning and an explanation for atrocious crimes (ibid). Actors are then able to regain control over meaning in an otherwise unstable and uncontrollable time which Silverstein links as conflict but also the need for control and power in a late capitalist society (p648). Indeed, something similar happened in Egypt whereby

in the eyes of my interlocutors the massacres at Rabaa can be justified as the Muslim Brotherhood are allegedly terrorists working with foreign interests to consolidate their own power and ruin Egypt. These conversations also work in favour of the military, to justify June 30 2013 when popular protests and the military overthrew the Muslim Brotherhood government and their subsequent continued hold on power, but also to release themselves of any blame. As discussed by social theorists such as Talcott Parsons, communities experiencing social change will often look for something in common in order to define themselves amidst ongoing disorder (Sennett, 1970 p34).

Through conversations with some of my informants, struggles over the meaning of political and social developments since 2011 mark many relationships in downtown Cairo. As discussed, a number of youth centered cafes and hang outs have sprung up in downtown to continue conversations about the development of the country. Some, however, feel that the real nature of the uprisings is being hijacked:

> The kids that come here [a café] grow their hair long … talk about the revolution, Palestine … They don't know what their talking about, they weren't really there, they are just trying to act like revolutionaries to talk to women … because they have nothing else to do.

(personal communication with Samir, Feb 18, 2014)

This highlights the increased fragmentation of experiences and meanings attached to the events of the previous three years and most importantly anger over the apparent appropriation of social capital. Currently, many are attempting to understand the various changes of the last three years amidst security crackdowns and government appropriations of the meaning and memory of events. For Samir, among others, resentment also stems from youth of a higher social class also appropriating spaces of downtown as their own. For while cafes in downtown cater to many different crowds, Samir suggests that the vast majority of Egyptians, drinking tea in cafes all day and talking about the uprisings is only for a certain section of Egyptian society. Young men and women need money to be able to sit in cafes and order drinks and food.

A Generation Game

Many of my informants suggest that tensions exist between different generations on the direction of the country and society. The older generation seek a

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return to stability while the young push for genuine change. According to Singerman (2013 p1), youth in Egypt are particularly disadvantaged; disproportionally reaping the negative effects of high unemployment, repressive politics, increased social stratification and exclusion. Economic inequality borne out of neo-liberal policies created discontent, setting the scene for the political uprisings (ibid). My interlocutors suggest that they feel betrayed by the older generation who are allegedly settling for stability. Indeed, political discourses look to brandish young people as criminals and prostitutes to legitimize a return to status quo. Even during the protests themselves ''the generational conflict between the old generals and the young protesters had to be played out through the mutilation of young bodies'' (Abaza, 2013a para 3). Thus, any possible political activity of the young can be disregarded as 'ill-founded' or even the work of de-stabilising terrorism. In essence, some suggest that older generations have become fearful of 'chaos' in the country, which is also exemplified by new relationships between young men and women. Some blame their elders for putting up with the previous system of Mubarak for so long and for not creating alternative political opportunities. Through the uprisings, downtown Cairo has become a site for the youth to gather and create new modes of resistance. Yet downtown also signifies the bureaucracy of the old order. Emotions over space highlight this discontent nicely:

> I love downtown and always come for a walk, but only in the morning … In the afternoon it's busy with old people in suits on their way to hopeless civil service jobs in old buildings … In the evening, it's alive, fun, full of young people.

(personal communication with Bassem, Jan 2, 2014)

Here, Bassem indicates that certain buildings in downtown are symbolic of the previous regime. Downtown hosts the Mogamma, a large, much-dreaded, administrative office block for visas and other government services alongside other companies. Bassem and many of his friends are either unemployed or volunteer for arts, culture and development-esque organizations. Considering the high rate of unemployment among the youth, it is not surprising that they feel resentment towards the older generations. However, this particular set of middle-upper class youth also sees themselves as superior, they feel that the have the chance to create something new in Egypt, are more liberal, open minded and more educated. Finally, Bassem concluded that he still felt hope. He suggested that soon, a population bulge of young

people will become old enough to vote. If new political systems and opportunities have not already arisen, he suggests that the youth will be able to create real change. As Abaza (2013a, para 23) suggests: ''Egypt's youth subcultures will continue to protest, and to wage their war on an ageing patriarchal regime through the lightness of being of art and laughter.''

According to my informants, one particular street in downtown Cairo has become significant for symbolising the youth of the uprisings. Hoda Sharaawi Street is found in the middle of downtown Cairo and became a meeting point for friends and activists fleeing attacks on the streets in the protests. During the evening even now, groups of young men and women get together to paint graffiti and create music and art. A number of new, cheap and youth based cafes have also recently opened on this particular street and buzz often extends from inside the café to the tables outside to even the sidewalk where people are crowded around. Alongside cafes, the street is another site in which new ideas about society are being expressed through new idioms. As part and parcel of new ideas, many young girls are also hanging out in the street, openly smoking cigarettes and drinking tea which has predominantly been the domain of boys until the last few years. However, these behaviours are largely associated with higher social classes, especially for women. Mervat explains:

> I don't mind hanging out in the street here because I know these boys, we were together in the protests and we are like brothers, it does not matter that I am a girl and they would not hurt me, they think like me

(personal communication, Jan 8, 2014)

Mervat's comments suggest that again, familiarity between people is key to reducing the perception and perhaps even the incident of harassment. Her reference to the similarities between her and her peers suggests that they are of the same background and political affiliation again reducing the perception of difference and fear. What is interesting here is that new social conglomerations are borne out of a particular political space. Many of my informants suggested that the location of downtown as strategic to the uprisings and its connotations of serving the open-minded and intellectual helped to create spaces for new discussion, especially among the youth. However, as is the case with downtown historically, these spaces are also decidedly classed.

Conclusion

Political considerations underpin relationships to space and between people in the street. Considering the fluctuating situation over the last three years and into the future, the social milieu appears defined by a complexity of experience for many residents and visitors to downtown Cairo. Often, interlocutors appeared to hold seemingly contradictory ideas about the future direction of downtown. For example, residents wanted increased security, stability and cleansing of the area while also acknowledging awareness of the danger of such discourses on the Cairene poor and continued calls for social justice. This reality is not so much a 'contradiction' but an acknowledgement of the complexity of the social fabric and the contextual and varied nature of social life. In downtown Cairo, important social connections continue amidst uncertain political and economic trajectories. Residents with widely varying political commitments continue to function as neighbours and even friends. However, discourses connected to political change and economic policies also form the basis for a source of tension between people as they move through the street. As noted, political tensions since 2011 have massively impacted the daily economy of downtown Cairo. Similarly it is only natural that economic policies of recent decades encouraging stricter social stratification through space come to affect how people feel about one another in a strategic location such as downtown Cairo. Ultimately, restrictions over space and the meaning of events and places create different experiences of the street for men and women.

Chapter Three: Gendered Interactions - Social Change in the Everyday

In this chapter I argue that we need to understand the social conditions, which are inextricably linked to space, that form the backdrop for daily interactions in downtown Cairo. Sexual harassment cannot be viewed as a phenomenon separately to the daily negotiation of social ideas, interactions and relationships that take place in this area. These social ideas are also borne out of geographical spaces and as argued in the previous chapter, are also interlinked to political memory and meaning. I use my interlocutors' observations of downtowns present and past to understand how social change plays out in the practice of daily life through discourses of fear, risk and nostalgia. A discussion on the realities and myths that shape my interlocutors subjectivities will serve as a background for understanding the circumstances within which people interact with one another. More importantly, I seek to understand what sort of conditions creates increased realities and perceptions of 'sexual harassment' against women. I look at the rising urban segregation of Cairo based on class, changes in trade and economy, leisure practices, public discourses and generational conflict to understand shifting ideas of how men and women practice in the day-to-day. What can shifting discourses over the direction of a particular area tell us about social change and more importantly for this project, the relationship between men and women?

Neo-liberal city: Urban change and Class (re)configurations

Amar and Singerman (2009 p9) suggest that in the past thirty years, neo-liberal political and economic global agendas have changed the geography and experience of the city, Cairo, as they have with other global cities. These policies include the dominance of individuals and corporations interests for profit coupled with the reduction of state interference and public provision or welfare (Bayat, 2012 p111). As a result, Cairo has witnessed growing and more defined social stratifications and social inequality. One of the main calls of the uprisings in 2011 was for social justice. Elites decide on the use of land and resources while the state removes its services to the vulnerable (ibid). Urban space is then typically utilized for the interests of profit or simply left to deteriorate. For the masses, resentment grew in the 1990's and 2000's over the dominance of elite business interests in the

government. The government sold state owned land to well-connected wealthy businessmen and tax rates were reduced for higher income brackets (Abdelrahman, 2013 p573). The political, social, and economic effects of these developments became the founding calls for the uprisings of 2011. Significantly for this project, scholars suggest that these policies have also led to changes in lifestyles and urban planning, such as the rise of gated communities on the outskirts of the city such as in Sixth of October City and the Fifth Settlement. These new upper-class communities promote desirable lifestyles providing the best in sports, leisure and entertainment amenities (Ghannam, 2014). Of course, discourses of crime and degradation of the urban center are utilized to advance and justify these new suburban centers (ibid).

Neo-liberal economic policies also created high rates of unemployment and a lack of welfare and provision for Egyptians from lower socio-economic backgrounds. From the 1990's, structural adjustment policies, free market economics and the removal of the state from Nasser's socialist policies have affected class relations and reified class distinctions in Cairo (Dekoning, 2009 p536). An urban bourgeoisie can also be found in Cairo, who speak in a globalised cultural idiom, have international connections and consumption tastes, and work in multinational companies or NGOs (ibid). Increased demarcation between the lives and practices of different social classes affect meanings and practices of space. High density urban population and a lack of formal employment opportunities has led to an increase in what scholars call 'informal' economic practices. These activities include providing services, fixing and selling goods and are often played out on the street or at a temporary station/location. Bayat (1997 p55) points out that these practices are not especially destructive and are now necessities of life for huge numbers of people and as of recently even the middle classes too. Dire economic circumstances and the lack of police control in downtown neighbourhoods mean that informal economic activity has increased and that it is an essential lifeline for the income of many families. Even though many interlocutors suggest that this is a trend that has been taking place for some twenty years; in the minds of many 2011 is a key date for things becoming even worse due to the political instability and lack of order. Of course both the business elite and the state (the lines between them often blur) find these informal economic practices dangerous: the state because anyone working beyond it's formal channels is a possible threat and out of their control and the business elite whose own business monopoly is jeopardized due

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to the presence and competition of the poor (ibid). Thus, discourses that justify the cleansing of informal activity also serve to prop up the formal institutions of the rich. As a form of control, the presentation of the urban milieu and poor as disorderly and polluted is also used to justify change in order to 'develop' parts of the populations living practices (Douglas, 2002 p3). In Egypt, order is restored and ambiguity removed through the reification of well-known class and power systems.

Abaza (2011) explores how a neo-liberal agenda is evident in the downtown area specifically. Elites move out from the centre of Cairo into the upmarket satellite cities and gated communities on the outskirts of the city. Indeed the 'gated enclave' is a common urban phenomenon that characterizes many global cities and should be seen as actually a historical technology of spatial power politics and governmentality rather than anything modern *per se* (AlSayyad and Roy, 2006). A 'space war' exists in the central areas of Cairo between the popular masses and elite interests looking to change the image and function of the centre (Abaza, 2011 p1075) Business men in suits make their way to trade centres in skyscrapers along the Nile while parking their cars in low class areas (ibid p1078). Whole communities of urban poor have been relocated in order to make way for international hotels and banks. Visions of the future of downtown Cairo, such as via project 'Cairo 2050', look to cleanse the centre of urban poor in order to create a cultural core for tourism and local elite. As Zukin writes ''the look and feel of cities reflect decisions about what – and who – should be visible … on concepts of order and disorder and on uses of aesthetic power'' (1995 p7). These intentions are contradicted by the presence of the masses of urban poor that are found on the streets of downtown more recently. The area hosts coffee shops, street sellers, beggars, and popular restaurants, and repair services all of which look to make money from the street (Abaza, 2011 p1079). The function of downtown has changed over recent years but many upper class residents and entertainment spaces continue.

I argue that changes in the economic status and function of the area play out for men and women in different ways. Many interlocutors expressed anger over the presence of the urban poor due to the increase of sexual harassment predominantly directed at women. Certain areas in downtown Cairo have become heavily militarized due to the political uprisings in the last three years (2011-2014) but in general, police presence is no longer present on the street as it was before 2011. In fact, the strict and

often unjust practices of the police against the working classes were one of the main complaints of the uprisings. Many recall how officers used to single out young, poor men to receive arbitrary violence, excessively bureaucratic procedures or to try and extract money. The ability to criminalize essential practices of the working class is an important element of authoritarian political project to maintain power and control (Baviskar, 2004 p92). As the police presence has decreased so rapidly, street sellers are able to work on the streets unrestricted. For the men and women that I spoke to, increased street informality is linked to the hardship of the current economic climate and a lack of law and order, but which also leads to an increase of disorder and crime on the streets. According to these discourses, the lack of security means young, allegedly undesirable men can commit crime without reprimand but also that informal economic activity on the street can expand without restriction. These developments have a particular impact for the middle class female interlocutors that I spoke to who also associated the street poor with sexual harassment.

Some residents of downtown suggest that more young, poor men from outer lying areas come to the area now because of its recent history of hosting political discussions and allowing spaces for new communities and connections. Even though some informants suggest that the real political and revolutionary moment of downtown Cairo has passed, the area still holds a meaning of hope and transition with practical spaces available for socialising. The idea here is that the political instability of the last three years has stalled development and the business interests in the area leaving spaces open for people (especially the young and poor) to use and create meaning within. If the area had been highly policed and classed before 2011 then new activity within this area highlights wider national contestations. These practices are still significant and Bayat (2012) suggests that the presence of street politics can be considered a form of resistance against political authority. This makes sense considering that the security regime sought to remove people from the streets by way of restricting movement in the area. Pushing Bayat's theory further, the increased presence of working class people making money on the streets also symbolises resistance against historical systems of class power. Upper class residents recall with nostalgia how the area used to be orderly and clean in contrast to the mess and disorder of the current moment. Now, Cairo has witnessed an upsurge in vendors taking to the streets in order to make money while at the same time centres for the

elite also remain. This mix of entertainment, leisure and administrative services in downtown thus creates a complex social environment within which the presence of different social classes produces perceptions of anxiety, fear and risk among my interlocutors. Fear and risk played out for my female interlocutors over the possibility of sexual harassment from young men on the street.

Discourses of fear over the bodies and practices of young men from poor, informal neighbourhoods translate into heightened fears over sexual attacks for women. In turn, fears about the behaviour of young men also renew justification for urban interventions over space. These conversations are similar to others studied in Delhi, whereby the working classes are also presented as an urban unsanitary 'nuisance' in order to rationalize the restriction of land via class and the increased privatization of public space for profit (Ghertner 2012). The need to 'clean up' the area for middle class residents, tourists and most importantly profit, require the (at least visual) removal of poor men and women and their practices. Of course, it is worth keeping in mind that what is disorder and dirt is socially and historically specific (Douglas 2002). The production of order and disorder must be seen in relation to projects of social control that are justified through the ever-present danger of chaos and pollution (ibid). In a case study of air, water, noise and garbage pollution in Egypt, Hopkins and Mehanna (2003 p25) found that people in poor areas of Cairo tended to blame themselves rather than look towards state or private business failings. Perhaps most importantly, people in higher class districts blamed pollution on the ignorance of the urban poor while the lower classes suggested that they had no choice over where to put their garbage (ibid). Of course bad infrastructure, pollution and over-crowding adversely affect the health and lives of the poor over the more privileged. Yet for many interlocutors, the presence of services such as food stands and shops catering to the lower classes coupled with the deterioration of the area in terms of pollution, garbage and architecture became a visual symbol of the current state of Egypt politically, socially, and economically.

Worries about sexual harassment and the behaviour of poor men reflect a social anxiety based on practices of spatial inclusion and exclusion. Male and female interlocutors suggested that the presence of the poor makes life difficult though increased noise, pollution and inappropriate behaviours such as sexual harassment. As I will discuss later, the complex social environment of downtown means that

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people of different backgrounds interact rather symbiotically and the services of the working class are imperative to the construction of the middle class Cairene. Unfortunately, the 'nuisance talk' that renders the urban poor as useless and simply a public annoyance permeates middle class conversations but most importantly also makes it way into public discourse, the media, and law making (Ghertner, 2012). These discussions make practices and behaviour of the poor 'visible' physically, discursively and politically. Even though middle class consumption practices produce high amounts of waste and pollution, the practices of poor people are seen and discussed in public while the privacy of the middle class creates invisibility for their practice (ibid p1181). In essence, the urban poor are constructed as the source of urban decay rather than a product of it (ibid). Myths that justify the unequal relationship between social classes, or between men and women, or inequalities based on race are often put forward as something so innate and inherent in human nature that we should not attempt to change it (Wright, 2006 p4). Urban decay in Cairo is presented similarly, something that should either be swept away or escaped from; the poor remain poor from their own incompetence, their practices requiring interception, while the upper classes are presented as non-complicit in contributing to urban decay or corruption. In actuality, upper class consumption and the maintenance of class distinctions such as through nepotistic economic and political opportunities are highly detrimental to society and the environment. The presentation of order and a push for a 'modern' Cairo that competes internationally with cities such as Dubai is aspired to among many upper class residents of Cairo.

Discourses that render working class men and women as inferior also serve to justify their social position and thus further facilitate capitalism and the entrenchment of well-known class systems. In fact it is often the distinctions of class systems and aspirational status that allow capitalism and inequality to continue in the first place. Studies on workers in Mexico and China surrounding the alleged 'disposability' of the female factory worker highlight how conversations serve to undermine workers rights and reiterate their status as unimportant and easily disposable (Wright, 2006). These myths are used strategically in order to justify the position of workers and the poor and create a sense of competition and de-politicization among them (ibid). I argue that something similar is evident about the myths surrounding the working class poor of Cairo. Keeping the poor as marginal means that wealth does not have to

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be redistributed. Having a service class is also beneficial for upper class practice that requires assistance for everyday tasks and myths about risk and danger are able to maintain the status quo both socially and politically. Moreover, the perceptions of fear and risk as presented by my interlocutors over the sexual and violent intentions of working class men also help to perpetuate these myths and maintain the control of young men in order to 'protect' women. To a certain extent, I believe that it is possible that young men internalize and then in-turn perform these myths in daily practice. As Wright points out, discourses produce and shape subjectivities (p3). Indeed, Cairo's urban poor have been told that they are worthless, inferior and like the women in Wright's study 'disposable' and 'beyond repair' by society and the state for some time. These conversations intertwine with the highly political moment of the last three years, which called for social justice and end to political, and elite dominance of public affairs. Even though all of my interlocutors were heavily committed to these movements there appeared to be some guilt over their own social status and wealth and even worries over implicitly with corruption and nepotism. This research attempts to highlight the complexity of middle class subjectivities through interactions on the street considering the backdrop of changes since 2011 and just before.

The picture presented throughout this project is a specific story of just some of the conversations that are taking place in Cairo of early 2014 and the reality is, as usual, far more nuanced. I argue that people in the city and in downtown interact more often than some interlocutors or representations suggest and that class boundaries are not always clear. Several of my interlocutors, like the media, lament the deterioration of downtown in contrast to the new exclusively upper class compounds in the satellite cities. I argue that downtown is still a middle-upper class area and that the rise of informal activity and presence of the poor does not constitute a deep divide in the area. The conglomeration of different places and meanings of downtown creates something rather more complex. One street in the area is different from the other and formal upper class shops exist alongside market stalls outside. Art galleries and cultural centres are still found while lower class men and women meet in cheap outdoor coffee shops. The examples in this project highlight sources of tension between men and women based on class and meanings of space yet also for the ways in which people compliment one another and find the area as a source of

essential income and joy. Interlocutors did bemoan the conditions of Cairo and downtown as of 2013 and 2014 but daily life continues; the streets are full, people go to cafes and work where possible, businesses open as usual and friends meet to walk around or attend celebrations. The resilience of Cairo is visible and visitors are often shocked at how quickly life returns to normal after large violent events. But this is not to say that they do not leave their mark; a glimpse of which this project hopes to capture.

Talaat Harb Street: Contested Space?

As with most of Downtown Cairo, my informants held a great nostalgia for Talaat Harb Street, a central and long road situated in the downtown area that hosts shops and entertainment. Coffee shops, bakeries and movie theatres are depicted in famous Egyptian films and novels. As one of the largest thoroughfares running through the centre of downtown, it is usually busy with traffic and pedestrians using the shops, cafes and restaurants. Many remember the 'good old days' when a Friday afternoon was spent strolling through downtown Cairo with an ice cream cone. According to my interlocutor's perceptions, the biggest changes for downtown in recent years are typified through this street. They believe that now due to the social, political and economic changes of recent years, 'hoards' of lower class men have come to appropriate the street in order to simply hang around with nothing to do or sell cheap knick-knacks on the side of the road. Before, middle class interlocutors suggest that the area was cleaner and more controlled and that the influx of young men selling cheap imported goods contributes to the 'chaotic' and even 'dirty' connotations that they now associate with the area. While many did acknowledge the lack of state-sponsored investment in the economy, jobs and public services in the area – many also pointed out that the people, especially men, from outer lying areas and other parts of Egypt were to blame for not behaving correctly and pulling down the image of the area.

Interlocutors recall that in the 1980's and early 1990's the shops on Talaat Harb Street were refined and tasteful serving almost exclusively to an upper class market. More recently, these shops have deteriorated and market stalls line the streets. New areas and malls hosting international chain stores and elite boutiques are now the mainstay of upper class tastes. Owning a private car is usually required for

travelling to these new malls on the outskirts of the city. Yet, one interlocutor suggested that buying from the centre still holds social capital for the majority of Egyptians. For the many that cannot afford the western style shopping malls, buying from Talaat Harb or *Wust el-Balad* (downtown), is perceived as superior than buying from local markets. Shops with western style clothes in the window at higher prices (yet more affordable than the malls) allow for a consumer experience usually out of reach. The import of cheap Chinese goods sold on the street allows even more people to access consumer activity. For those who come from outside Cairo to run errands such as shopping or administration, returning home with inexpensive presents from the centre of Cairo brings certain social capital. For many that I spoke to, these are some of the reasons that they perceive downtown has now become 'overrun' by undesirables and no longer reflects the aspirations of a modern city-making project. The availability of cheap consumer goods now allow for more people to engage in previously exclusive leisure and shopping practices. Shopping in stores, window shopping and rummaging through market stalls now blend to create a more accessible consumer experience. For many that I spoke to, the amount of people that these new activities attracted and the 'market-style' street practices can be overwhelming; Ahmed describes a particular incident in Talaat Harb Street with his wife:

> We were walking through the stalls and someone grabbed Basmas arm [his wife] to try and show her some clothes, but he knows not to do that and at this minute I was walking behind her so the guy didn't know I was with her … I took his arm and started shouting and then all of a sudden all the other vendors came behind him… what could I do?

(personal communication, Dec 22, 2013)

Changes in security and the economy have shaped practices of the street and cause sites for tension and anxiety for middle class interlocutors. As we will see, social stratification based on leisure and consumerism still continue through new mega malls and other districts in Cairo that cater to upper class budgets and tastes. The reification of class dominance is here continued through the re-definition of what should constitute upper class tastes (Bourdieu, 1984 p69). The solidarity of the street vendors as described by Ahmed is presumably an important safety mechanism for the vendors amidst a lack of police security but a worrying trend for Ahmed. Many residents of the area described their anger with the sidewalks being taken over by racks of clothes, leather jackets and imitation sports wear which are an important

source of income and consumption by the lower classes. In essence these contestations over space reflect anxieties about society, class and economic stability overall. Contestations over space often appear as 'landscapes of exclusions' whereby difference is presented as defilement and power over space reflects power over society (Sibley, 2002). Who is allowed to consume what, and where, is reflective of the need for capitalism to control consumption practices through space (ibid p49).

Interlocutors suggest that the rise in 'informal' trade is negative for the area in general and especially so for women. Many of my female informants suggest that they now cannot go to certain areas of downtown alone. In Talaat Harb Street at busy times, young men selling cheap clothes on the sidewalks and the road make it difficult to walk or drive through much to the complaints of residents and long term established shop owners. Some point out that because of the increased competition even shops are now more likely to spread their goods out onto the sidewalk in order to entice more custom. A contradiction perhaps, some long-term residents hoped for the area to become pedestrianized, a move that might be beneficial for sellers, yet many others wanted to be able to drive their cars in the area. The high density and demographic make up of the road combined to create feelings of entrapment for some women that I talked to, especially considering some had been sexually assaulted in busy areas before. According to my interlocutor's perceptions, men now predominantly frequent Talaat Harb Street. Sara, a resident of downtown in her mid 30's noted:

> Because we haven't done anything about it, more men go there [Talaat Harb] which pushes the women not to come, then because men go there, they only sell stuff for men … it's like a circle but it means I won't visit there anymore.

> (personal communication, Dec 28, 2013)

Indeed, my interlocutors suggested that they no longer felt safe in Talaat Harb at all. The attacks of women by large groups of men in *Eid* 2006 is also still reminiscent in the minds of my informants. Although in actuality, families and groups of girls are often found on the street and in cafes and shops. Interestingly, many suggested that they experienced harassment, such as loud comments and catcalls, also in less populated areas. These catcalls were obvious to others around them who did not seem to pay attention, or even joined in. However, the anonymity of bustling shopping areas allowed for men to grab or attack my interlocutors anonymously without fear of

reprimand but which suggests that there may be a difference between verbal harassment and physical harassment. Perpetrators of physical harassment being worried about getting caught suggests that this behaviour is not acceptable while verbal harassment is taken more lightly as part and parcel of the street. This also reflects how men and women experience bustle differently and has implications for possible interventions in public space. Before the revolution, policemen and officials tightly controlled areas such as Talaat Harb Street but now anyone can sell goods on the sidewalk, which added to the subjectivities of fear for my female participants. However, I argue that re-installing the fear of police into the minds of young, urban men in order to stop sexual harassment is not very productive in the long run.

Many people that I spoke to suggested that the increased informality was a negative effect of the recent political and social instability yet they also acknowledged the financial need of many vendors to make a living. This resulted in an apparent tension for many of my interlocutors who were socially conscious but also found daily harassment and it's alleged low class perpetrators to be detrimental to their lives. The middle class men that I spoke to did not recall any particular negative interactions but did point out that they had seen groups of boys fighting. Ahmed's previous quote is also the reflection of a disagreement between two men and subsequently others getting involved. Busy and tense areas produce sources of conflict, violence and aggression between men as well as women. The lack of order in the street means that informal trading can happen but that there are no official rules to turn to in case of disputes between vendors. Finally, this street is still an important economic centre for many, linking downtown to Ramses train station and other busy neighbourhoods. Young men and women, families and workers enjoy a public space that is cheaper, central, accessible to use and that allows for important emotional, physical and economic interactions to take place. The discourses of anxiety and change in the area are instrumental for understanding social change and relationships of power, class, and gender.

Leisure Practices of Downtown

A glimpse at cafes in downtown Cairo show that young people are still re-negotiating social norms – albeit in class sanctioned spaces. Men and women smoke cigarettes, *shisha* and drink tea openly together in a number of open-air cafes in

downtown Cairo. Interlocutors point out that even for downtown the presence of young women wearing a headscarf (*hijab*) and smoking outside is unusual. If this is a trend that has been increasing for around 10 years then many point out that after 2011 it became even more visible which may be related to an actual increase in social change or merely a moral panic about the behaviour of young people and especially young women. The cafes have also become sites for networking and connecting to others. As the price of tea or coffee is still cheap (between 1.5egp and 5egp depending on the café), these venues serve as places to meet and organize social and political messages for men and women outside of their own watchful neighbourhoods. While I sat with many of my informants, friends and acquaintances would stop our table to say hello or relay information about an upcoming event or organization. Certain crowds have their favourite cafes in downtown Cairo. Often, the price or style of café will dictate what type of people start going there. Yet many of the new cafes are also partially run by young people themselves. Spending time in the café to work or for pleasure, young people take a role in the design and development of the café. Networks and connections allow for skills to be pooled for events and activities within the café and outside. Elyacher (2010 p454) also looks at how the coffee shop in urban Egypt is an important place for holding meetings and sharing information. For example, many find information's and opportunities for work through people they know in the coffee shop (ibid). The active networks of an area as proposed by Bayat (1997) links with the work of Elyachar to show how important public spaces are for networking either for political movements or for community and economic work. Elyachar finds that women are also instrumental in supporting these spaces which are largely only for men. More recently in downtown Cairo, mixed gender cafes finds both men and women creating connections that are important for work and political and social movements. The fact that many of these cafes are open-air serves as a visual reminder of social transformations. This connection also extends to the area more generally, through the political uprisings and the freedom of the area, young people are able to create a downtown of their choosing.

The anxiety over changes in the use and meaning of space in downtown Cairo is, for many, attached to a deep-seated nostalgia for a downtown of the past. Interlocutors remember how clean and presentable the area used to be where only refined members of society used to use the bars, cafés and cultural centres in the area.

Abaza (2001, p117) believes that this anxiety is actually tied to the changing class structure and social mobility in Cairo and that ''it has become fashionable in Egypt to talk to about the rampant 'riff-raff' as implicated in one's own declining economic standards and as a defence mechanism''. This is also manifest in calling out the declining moral and social standards of the young, the rise of conspicuous consumption and 'western' fashions (ibid). However, as Abaza makes a similar argument in defence of mall culture, the informalization of downtown has also led to an opening up of public space for all. Even though sexual harassment is one main negative implication for women, as we will see, the liberalisation of space has allowed for new configurations for young men and women which will one day have more positive effects for all. Creating new spaces for youth activity, even on a small budget, are important especially considering the lack of green and public spaces to go in downtown and Cairo more generally. Elsheshtawy also notes how public spaces such as squares in Cairo are also places to young men and women to flirt and get to know one another, especially without financial need (2006 p306). This was acceptable because the space is not so private but also not so public where their interactions were being watched closely. Public areas serve as a platform for visible democratization and continuous negotiation by social actors yet some forms of class segregation are still apparent.

As explored by DeKoning (2009) and Phadke (2005), the 'modern' upper class nature of spaces such as cafes, bars and discos is premised on the protection of the 'good' women that go there. Establishments must restrict the patronage via class to ensure that undesirable lower class men do not harass women and as a result mixed gender company can come and socialize free of fear. Some of the open-air cafes in downtown Cairo are restricted by price and therefore clientele and thereby do not seriously challenge this model, as an invisible line exists between those that can sit at the café and those that cannot. However, the growing number of out-doors cafes that service different groups of people and the increasingly mixed gender patronage are pushing the boundaries of gendered behaviour on the street. The increased informality of café culture that spills out onto the sidewalks and the street blurs the boundaries between public and private: a café that requires money and the street, which does not. But moreover it confuses an (always shifting) binary between the safety of consumer private spaces with the danger of the street:

> A young girl, dressed smart and fashionably in a *hijab*, gets up from her friendship group at the table [in an open air café in downtown] to answer her phone. She moves away from the café to the opposite sidewalk to talk privately all the while continuing to smoke a cigarette … older men in suits take a second look as they pass by but continue on their way.
>
> (field notes, 16 Jan, 2014)

According to my interlocutors, young women's smoking on the streets is quite revolutionary even for downtown Cairo. The plethora of cafes that cater to people from different socio-economic backgrounds and the sheer 'openness' of open-air cafes means that the general public are confronted with the practices of the revolutionary youth. Through a discussion of sexual danger in public spaces, Phadke (2005 p59) suggests that relevant authorities (family, community, state), in a number of different national and cultural contexts, attempt to restrict women's movements within a binary whereby respectable women are presented as being corruptible in public (especially by low class men) or disrespectable women are to contaminate the public. She argues that in actuality these lines are not so distinct and are often blurred. I also argue that something more complex is taking place whereby downtown is hosting social interactions through unrestricted informal practices. This reality has both negative and positive effects, the negative include increased likelihood of harassment. Just some of the positive effects include reformed social relationships and increased economic and emotional connections.

Downtown Cairo hosts private establishments for upper class women that include coffee shops, art galleries, bars and clubs. As my interlocutors discuss, many feel anxious about the change and informalisation of downtown which has resulted in many ceasing to visit the area altogether. Now many only drive to indoor, upmarket coffee shops (DeKoning, 2009) or to the malls and recreation areas outside of the centre. In discussions on Mumbai, Phadke (2007) wonders whether anxiety over the bodies of middle class women in public space are actually tied to national projects. Upper class women in public as consumers and professionals legitimize cities as being globalised and modern (p1511). These women are 'desirable urban subjects' but also 'symbols of national honour' that require protection from contamination (ibid). Gendered leisure practices are ultimately tied to neo-liberal city imaginings. According to Phadke, the ability for men and women from different class backgrounds to meet may mean cross-class sexual relations that are linked to

anxieties over the mixing of classes overall. Lower class men should be restricted in their dealings with and sight of upper class women lest any untoward activity occur. Privacy, power and the control over sight are themes that I revisit in chapter four. The 'westernized' markers on women's bodies that are simultaneously a marker of the urban elite can also be seen to indicate a moral or sexual looseness (DeKoning, 2009 p540) and downtown is particularly fractitious due to the wide range of people that go there. Women have to perform their respectability and intentions when in questionable public space due to these dubious embodied significations. Research from Mumabai (Phadke, 2007 p1513) and from Egypt shows that 'good' or respectable women do not respond to sexual harassment and just ignore it because some men might understand a response to mean that women are interested romantically (Van Dalen, 2013). But this is also tied to the notion that women are somehow to blame for harassment or that they even welcome it (Phadke, 2007 p1513). Perhaps street harassment can sometimes act as a kind of play over the intentions and respectability of women in the street. If, as some like DeKoning (2009) suggest, class and intentionality between people is becoming harder to read then this would lead to more instances of miscommunication and tension between people on the street that erupt in utterances such as sexual harassment.

The increased use of street space and informal economies results in legitimate fears of harassment for the women that I spoke to. In areas such as Boursa, a large area known for the mixed gender use of lively and cheap cafes, my informants felt harassed by the young male waiters that would try and attract them to sit down and eat/drink/smoke. Some even suggested that the young men were only paid through tips, which explains their sometimes-aggressive behaviour. While my informants proposed that these interactions were not always overtly 'sexual' they were still disruptive and essentially negative interactions. Informants recounted similar experiences in major shopping districts such as Talaat Harb Street. More recently, vendors selling clothes and commodities have become more aggressive with customers and residents recount feeling annoyed by the increased use of their streets by these vendors. Especially in very crowded areas, my female informants felt very intimidated by pushy salesmen. Of course the behaviour and style of shopping experiences in a loud and busy market-style street is going to be very different from an upper class antiquated department store. Economic, political and social changes

have all created a situation where harassment may not have increased significantly but the nature of it certainly has. Considering the dire economic circumstances of recent years and increased competition on the street it is no wonder that salesmen are increasingly aggressive. Failures of the state and economy push men and women into hardships that translate into violence between them but which also presents poor men as responsible.

Compared to the traditional male only *ahwas*, or cafes, men and women sit together in the new, young and trendy cafes of downtown Cairo. Whereas the traditional *ahwas* are associated with idleness and having nothing to do (el Sheshtawy, 2006 p206) and a majority men-only space, for my interlocutors the new cafes are for modern and cosmopolitan men *and* women. Certain cafes attract particular crowds and for many that I spoke to the café area 'Boursa' is becoming more and more associated with lower social classes. As this café area caters to the masses, more expensive and cliquey cafes open nearby. A number of informants suggest that Boursa is an area known for dating or meeting women. Young men and women come from outlying neighbourhoods to date anonymously. Trips to the café are more affordable, especially compared to restaurants. Indeed, some interlocutors suggest that as a business model, it is not surprising that cafes work so well in Cairo. Subsidized water, electricity and the price of tea allow cafes to spring up without too much difficulty. As of March 2014 several media sources continue to conjecture about the possibility of removing the unsustainable subsidies on gas, water and electricity. If these drastic changes are made it remains to be seen how small businesses will be affected, let alone the millions of families who cannot afford the bills they have already. Due to the lack of regulation, cafes are easily able to expand onto the sidewalk to make room for more customers, yet this also causes problems for pedestrians and residents. As discussed, the need for economic enterprise is often at odds with the perceptions of comfort for middle class residents.

The safe space of an open-air café allows women to enjoy the sociability of the street and people watching. My interlocutors suggest that the rise in association between downtown cafes and dating has led to an increase in harassment. As the area becomes more associated with freedom, young men from poorer neighbourhoods travel in for entertainment and look to date women. My informants suggest that they would be unable to do this in their own neighbourhoods where everyone knows them

and keeps an eye on one another. According to interlocutors from other poorer and more intimate areas, families and neighbours regulate the behaviour of the young unmarried men and women. Of note, several of my informants suggested that people they 'knew' of had met and dated unknown girls through calling out to them on the street, yet this had not yet worked out for them. It is possible that while there is some evidence of this happening these conversations become myths that are used to justify certain behaviours. Perhaps it is telling that at the same time, quantitative research (UN 2013, ECWR 2008) shows that men think that women like to be harassed. Presumably this finding means that men think women like to be called out to on the street but perhaps not physically assaulted. I suggest that for some, downtown has become synonymous with recreation and freedom. Young people can indulge in socially desirable activities, such as meeting women in cafes, as long as you can afford to. Mostapha, 24 from Ain Shams comments:

> On a Thursday we get out hair cut and styled at the salon … then we will go downtown and go to the café … it's something to do … one of us might meet a girl and have a shisha [tobacco pipe] … at our age we can't keep staying home … what else can we do?

> (personal communication, Jan 27, 2014)

The meanings attached to downtown café inform how people use and think about the space. Enjoyment of the area comes from its buildings, architecture, entertainment, sociability and a wide range of consumer options. Yet a large amount of enjoyment also comes from the ability to simply 'stroll' and enjoy the architecture. Aside from the fact that women cannot 'stroll' alone without harassment, women also feel the effects of men's enjoyment of the city. Many of my female informants suggested that they felt intimidated by men in cafes sitting and 'watching the world go by'. For the women, the cafes spread onto the sidewalk allowed for men to survey them at their own pleasure. For some women, it appears men 'strolling' around the city can have negative connotations. Samia, a woman with small children in her mid-30's suggests:

> Young boys who have nothing to do are hanging around making a nuisance on the streets and looking to call out to people… the problem is, no one is making them work … they come here from other areas just to make trouble and harass people, especially women and young girls.

> (personal communication, Jan 28, 2014)

In some cases then, in the perceptions of middle class interlocutors, people spending time on the street are unwanted and possibly even criminals. These worries are profoundly related to the myths about young, poor men that serve to justify political interventions that seek to restore a monolithic version of law and order. Especially given the high rates of unemployment, young men hang out on the sidewalk or in squares increasing fears for the people that I spoke to over high rates of (in their words) 'undesirables' causing crime and as a sexual threat to women. However, my interlocutors suggest that men of higher social classes who spend time in conversation and reading in outdoor cafes are also a source of tension. Indeed, research from NGOs such as HarassMap shows that harassment is found in upper class areas and perpetrated by upper class men too. This highlights the contradictions and ironies of simply blaming lower class men for unwanted behaviour. This reality also highlights how important discourses are in shaping subjectivities. Nevertheless, women find the 'watching' of men in cafes to be intimidating and essentially a source of 'harassment'. Outdoor café culture, the pull of downtown and the nature of observation of others in Cairo all create the conditions of harassment and intimidation for women. Given the age and social background of men in particular cafes, theories of harassment as stemming from only the lower social classes who are deprived of jobs, marriage and sex do not suffice.

Feeling at Home: Satellite Cities versus Downtown

    At Home

Men and women's experience of the city is not only limited to the street. Fenster (2006) uses women's experiences of the home in relation to the city to understand how women feel about their rights to space and the wider community. Several interlocutors that I spoke to lived in downtown Cairo while others lived in outer lying neighbourhoods. Many argued that especially more recently, they preferred the sanctuary of other neighbourhoods to live in and visit, which also held better amenities. In terms of leisure practices, many female residents I spoke to tended to stay at home more than men, as Rehan recalls:

> Sometimes Amr and his friends will go to Stella bar but there the toilet is not good and I don't feel comfortable there as it is too loud with many strange people inside. I only like lotus bar because it is more relaxed and calm but

generally my friends are coming to my home more these days because we cant be bothered with the outside.

Also, men often suggested that they came in and out the house with greater ease and less surveillance than women. Women placed greater emphasis on creating security and comfort from their living situation. Negative interactions with the environment such as sexual harassment, the fear of sexual attacks, pollution, noise and dirt were some of the main reasons why. One male interlocutor also suggested he did the same due to the 'hecticness' of the street and traffic. The ease of moving between house and street also depends on time of day, day of the week and occasion for leaving. Especially those with children, many women that I spoke to took more care over the interior and details of their apartments. This often meant moving to another area in order to secure an apartment in a good condition especially due to the disrepair of many downtown apartments. For women staying at home while their husbands worked, an apartment in poor condition means an increased negotiation of workmen and servicemen, which in their perceptions comes with its own risks and worries. Many women, and men, for that matter also suggested that they wanted more control over where they lived, their home and community. Choice and participation in the community characterized the wants of many in choosing where to live.

Fenster (2006) argues that people's sense of comfort and belonging to a city depends on the ability to participate with decision-making processes. During the last three years, events have occurred that have dramatically changed peoples ability to be involved in the community. Many recall that on streets in downtown and in certain areas, neighbours and proprietors came together to protect the area. This created stronger emotions and attachment to the particular street or area in question. Although, as previously mentioned, one corner, building, street, area of downtown Cairo can host a completely different community than another. The idea of the 'unknown' safety of other parts of downtown is just one example of how relationships to space and others within that space can be made and remade. One middle class female interlocutor recalls how the men in her street barricaded anyone from entering their street during clashes of 2011 and 2012. These men warned other residents that they could not protect them in other parts of downtown where they did not know anyone or where the situation could change quickly and drastically. The need for control and thus safety was also a discourse largely pushed by the military's

securitizing project of 2013-2014. The lack of control and participation in one's area also extends to elite interests in the city. Not having a choice in what businesses are supported or able to operate in the area means not having any choice in the amenities close to you. This extends to housing prices and availability, jobs and education. Indeed, the deterioration and anger between different classes breeds a lack of disunity and the reduction of community spirit that are essential for collaborative living.

The Deterioration of Downtown?

Some long-term residents that I spoke to suggested that the mesh of people and the disjuncture and transitory nature of downtown meant that people were not as committed to the areas as with other neighbourhoods in Cairo. The high turnover of residents such as foreigners and those moving out of the area creates a reduction in community spirit and assistance between neighbours that is so crucial to life in Cairo. Wirth (2003 p100) writes that ''the close living together and working together of individuals who have no sentimental and emotional ties foster a spirit of competition, aggrandizement and mutual exploitation'' highlighting the necessity of constructing bonds within a community and in the case of downtown Cairo, how the fragmentation of public opinion affects daily life. Neo-liberal realities encourage women and men to move from the centre for new lifestyles, discourses about the danger of urban poor and crime feed into this conveniently. In a vicious circle, the more people that leave the area and the longer it is left to deteriorate, the more men and women's experience of the city will also decline as one interlocutor points out:

> Now everyone has moved away from downtown so there is no one to hang out with as much anymore… Also its too hard to find anywhere nice to live and there is always something wrong like maybe a bad doorman or the elevator is not working, no water for days… I have a job you know I cant cope with this. Nobody cares about the area anymore kalas and everyone just wants money.
>
> (personal communication with Nada, Jan 15 2014)

Moreover, the alleged rise in crime and degeneration make it difficult for women to come and go from their homes safely and with ease. Broken down elevators and locking/unlocking doors become a nuisance for all but women expressed their worries about the possibility of sexually violent crime that has appeared with the rise of discourses on the danger and criminality of the downtown area.

Emotions of fear and risk are intimately related to daily practices such as leaving and entering buildings and attachments to the home and the street. In comparison to more residential areas in the city, many interlocutors and even residents of downtown suggest that downtown is 'not for living in'. Among other reasons, the lack of control and security has also led to a degeneration of architecture and buildings and such changes affect the experience of living or visiting the area. Abeer, a middle aged woman who grew up in downtown but now lives in one of the new communities outside Cairo, told me that she no longer enjoys strolling around:

> I remember going on long walks as a child in downtown … now all the buildings have vulgar advertisements on them, political slogans are hanging on the walls, everything is dirty … you can't even walk anywhere because all the cafes and shops have their stuff on the sidewalk.

(personal communication, Jan 24 2014)

From an aesthetic point of view, the beauty and nostalgia for how downtown used to look like is contrasted to the current discourses of degeneration. Abeer interestingly links this degeneration to the imposition of unregulated advertisements, consumerism and political campaigning, Abaza concurs (2011 p1081) ''façades and public spaces such as corridors, floors and steps have become visually chaotic with advertisements, cables, bursting air conditioners and so on.'' It appears that rampant signs of capitalism on the street are only acceptable when considered in some form of good taste. Here, lower class attempts at entrepreneurship are unwelcome. It may also be worth pointing out that the long-term neglect over buildings and equipment also means that people have to be employed to fix them, which provides many with an important source of income. The neglect of the area is also tied into conversations about the general degeneration of Cairo in the last years of Mubarak even though his politics dominated the area. Many residents feel let down by the lack of realized investment in the area by the previous government. Interlocutors pointed out that the corruption of Mubarak and his cronies meant that no money was leftover for the city, which in their minds should be enjoyed by all. I want to point out that many people I spoke to did enjoy spending time and living in the area for the meanings it holds for middle class interlocutors but that the economic uses of the space are also a site of power. The legitimate use of space for profit is tied to ongoing social negotiations of the present moment over the right to the city.

Indeed, Abaza (2011 p1079) also documents the sense of loss over the downtown area that many grew up in, people lament that the city has 'lost its soul' which I suggest is related to a nostalgic grief over the stability of the previous regime and the failings of the neo-liberal modern city to provide order overall. Contradictions seemed to appear within the perceptions of my interlocutors between support for the aims of the 2011 uprisings, social justice for the ordinary people of Cairo, and a desire for downtown to remain orderly and essentially middle class. I argue that it is possible to hold conflicting ideas and that this tension is a normal result of any social change. One can clearly uphold values of progressive social movements but also feel uncomfortable about it's impact one one's own status. Yet conversations that are based on the pollution, disorder and degradation come together with state discourse of security to form perceptions of social realities (Ghertner, 2012 p1163). These perceptions are very much spatial, forming the basis for what activities are considered appropriate and whether that should take place in public or private (ibid). Classed behaviour is very much tied into meanings of space and generational differences between those who remember the past in different ways.

As another point of both generational and class friction, many suggest that the degeneration of buildings and general infrastructure such as roads and public spaces is due to the system of 'old rents'. During the 1950's and 60's, rents were set low for two generations in line with Nasser's socialist principles (AlSayyad, 2005 p253). According to a 2013 UN habitat report, median rent for apartments falling under the old laws are 30egp while the new rent laws of 1996 are around 200egp. As a result, many residents sourly point out that because rent is so low residents and owners are uninterested in paying for the upkeep of the buildings or pooling resources for redecoration. Some might even keep their apartments in downtown and move to another part of the city keeping their old apartments empty. As a result, these apartment owners would be even less interested in developing the building, area or street. These discourses contribute to the feeling of urban decay in downtown Cairo and justify elite development intervention. Residents highlight the tension between those paying little with those paying higher rents. The low rents also mean that in their view 'undesirable' families have continued to live in the area for many years. Some residents suggested that they felt uncomfortable living next to people with 'vulgar' manners. This sentiment was also expressed at the cheap restaurants that

have popped up in the area, some residents feel that the type of people that these places attract endangers their safety and the values of their homes. Old-school socialism is associated with the masses and decay while elite capitalism is associated with modernity and cleanliness. Again, these discussions are related to Wright's (2005) discussion on myths of social inequality that are based on the idea that the poor have always and will always be poor from their own making without acknowledging how the property owning upper classes also benefited from low rents. Indeed, urban intervention and redevelopment could be very important and helpful for areas in Cairo such as downtown but caution should be taken when these same discourses are used for socially destructive projects.

Many suggest that now, downtown is not a residential area but simply a place to visit. The nature of the services and functions of downtown attracts many to visit and gives the area its atmosphere of cosmopolitanism. For the most part, people go about their daily business without friction. However, the vacancy and anonymity of the area also draws its own problems. Long-term residents suggest that people from other areas view downtown as 'a playground'. As a result, cars and motorcycles can drive erratically through small streets without regard to the residents. Crimes can be committed more easily and people throw their trash on the ground. For these reasons, many residents are also thinking about leaving their family homes to move to other areas. Rent prices continue to rise and many hope to get a good price for their homes. Of course, after the uprisings, economic deterioration and inflation, living costs are still high in downtown compared to other residential and popular areas. The attraction to foreigners, tourism and the arts/culture community result in a gentrification of the area and the departure of long term residents. The atmosphere of the area is enjoyable for residents and visitors, however the transitory nature of the space, coupled with political and social changes mean many would prefer to live in other neighbourhoods.

Suburban bourgeoisie lifestyles are justified through discourses of the degeneration of downtown that are exemplified by a focus on aesthetic and environmental deprecation but also the bodily practices of the urban poor. Interlocutors pointed out how that area now looks 'shabby' and is riddled with trash, noise and bad smells. Eating at kiosks and socialising in the street or in outdoor cheap cafes are contrasted to expensive restaurants and exclusive cafes. The tension produced over the use of public space is actually also indicative of a wider struggle

between then encroachment of middle class private property and private space without risk with the burgeoning cities need for public space for all citizens (Ghertner, 2012 p1170). In Cairo, sexual harassment and crime are presented as some of the reasons behind a need for urban and social intervention. In a study of Delhi, Baviskar (2004) finds that bourgeoisie environmentalism and discourses of urban decay and pollution were instrumental in validating urban projects to clear slums and criminalize poor workers. These discourses were also related to upper class desires to create a modern city as part of a national project (ibid, p90). As related to Cairo, many of my interlocutors were looking for political stability in order to help Cairo to in their words, develop and modernize. Certainly a good 'image' of the city and current political project is necessary in order to represent the modern nation on an international stage. According to Baviskar, the need to control urban space and the poor in India has roots in colonial methods of power. Middle class interlocutors that I spoke to who agreed with the political aims of the military since June 30 2013 also tended to agree with the repression of political or social unrest against the military. For these people, disorder and decay in the street is linked to political, social and national instability.

My interlocutors suggest that downtown is now, and has historically been, associated with freedom and new conversations. Cafes, bars and buildings have been home to some of Egypt's most famous artists and scholars. This has led many people to view the activities of downtown with great suspicion especially considering its association with elite liberalism. Some that I spoke to suggested that while downtown is seen as a respectable area there are many rumours about the illicit activities that occur in cafes, bars and other establishments. This could be anything from rumours about political activities and discussions to even the stereotypes of liberal thinking and easy sexual relationships between men and women or between just men specifically. Especially since the revolution, interlocutors comment that the area has hosted new discussions about politics and society such as religion and sexuality. Now, several suggested that people are more open about being an atheist or homosexual in specific circles downtown. Others suggested that more openly homosexual men now meet in downtown bars and cafes that they didn't do before. Perhaps it is not surprising that the changes of the previous three years have allowed

for new discussions to take place in downtown Cairo. Perceptions of the area changes as the practices of the area transform.

Flight from the Centre

A number of scholars suggest that Cairo is now more socially fragmented by way of socio-economic class. Ghannam (2013) points out that for Cairenes neighbourhoods are important to ascertain the background and typicality of people they meet. My interlocutors concur; one suggested that he could recognize people as belonging to an area based on their dress, physical appearance, and mannerisms. Elite projects such as the fifth settlement and 6th of October, which boast clean air and upper class lifestyles have impacted relationships to downtown Cairo. Practices of living and consumption attempt to demarcate social class in order to construct itself as an aspirational status (Bhatt et al, 2010). But the flight of many middle-upper class residents of downtown to these new developments means money, resources and general concern for the area diminishes. The race to suburbia leaves even more degradation of the urban in its wake, vital resources and connections of middle class residents are lost when long term residents move to a new community. However, many still continue to make the long journeys from these outlying areas into downtown for recreation purposes:

> I bought a nice apartment in 6th October for when I get married, it's nice and all my friends who are married are there too… But I work downtown and my studio is there, I'll go to the café in the morning and there's usually something going on at night too, an exhibition or something … or I'll meet some friends in the Greek club for drinks.

> (personal communication with Nora, Jan 20 2014)

While communities still appear to use downtown for entertainment and recreation the departure of many ex-residents to the outskirts affect the lives of the remaining residents.

In homogenously upper class areas such as the Fifth Settlement most drive from home to western style shopping areas, in fact it is rare to find residents walking. In downtown Cairo, the restrictions on movement, untenable traffic, parking and the view of the area as one for 'strolling' all combine to increase the amount of pedestrians. My female participants of upper class backgrounds in downtown all own

cars but often find it impossible to drive in downtown Cairo. However, the idealistic lifestyle of upper class young Cairenes is often at odds with living in downtown Cairo:

> Sometimes I want to look nice, wear a dress, heels … but I can't do that here, how can I walk somewhere looking like that … do you know what people would say to me? It's not fair on Hamza [her husband] either, he gets so angry with these people and I don't want him to start a fight … Anyway, we will move soon, I am tired, life is too hard here now.

<div align="right">(personal communication with Dana, Jan 17, 2014)</div>

There are many places in the city centre that attract people of a certain class such as bars, cafes, art and cultural centres. However, women that I spoke to only go to these places in revealing or tight, fashionable clothing if they drive. Otherwise, women often wear more conservative (also fashionable) clothes such as long tops and trousers that cover up their arms and legs. Even though quantitative studies suggest that all women, regardless of dress, are targeted for harassment (UN, 2013) the women in this research suggested that they felt they received more attention when they wore revealing, tight clothes and make up or when they had 'made an effort' with their appearance. Quantitative data often leaves out important nuances of men and women's daily lives. For example, women who wear revealing clothes to discos, parties and clubs will be more likely to be travelling by car than on foot. As a result, women who walk on the streets in conservative, modest clothes will be harassed more but perhaps only because there are more women who dress this way on the street and coming into contact with others. Rather than about sexuality per se, harassment targeted towards women in revealing clothes may be more about that fact that these outfits are unfamiliar and are obvious expressions of class difference. Female interlocutors suggested that men would look for any reason to hassle them on the street. It also appears that the political moment of 2011 has led to social changes that mean that now more than before, anyone can talk to anyone.

Paying attention to space and place, many interlocutors also suggested that the rise in crime in and around Tahrir Square has led to a rise in prostitution. Some of my male informants did suggest that they felt a woman wearing tight or revealing clothes, flirtatious body language and in/near downtown was probably a prostitute. Understanding practices of space here is essential, environments host meanings for

those who go there. Women (or men) wearing unusual attire in spaces that hold meanings about the bodies of young men and women are vulnerable to conjecture and harassment. In other research of gendered spaces in Cairo, men and women preferred to socialize in class homogenous spaces so that no one could cast aspersions on their reputation (DeKoning, 2009 p543). If a woman was in a place with other women who could be suspected as prostitutes then people could also suspect them. Now, more that ever, people feel able to ask one another outright about their political and social intentions.

Expressions of class through the body are important for establishing and reiterating status; class like gender is a continual practice of 'becoming' rather than a static position (Butler, 1990). As with Dana's desire to look good in the previous quote, women as middle class consumers are both responsible for ensuring their sexual safety but also of their sexual desirability (Phadke, 2005 p48). Expectations of fashion and style in Cairo like elsewhere, my interlocutors would not dream of leaving the house without their normal smart attire, make up and hairstyles. In fact, some women even suggest that they are harassed more when they do not look their best – indicating this sense of vulnerability and diversion from the norm increases the likelihood of harassment on the street. Studies from elsewhere also suggest that vulnerable men are also likely to be the victims of harassment such as men who are not financially capable or men who do not adhere to hetero-normative gender roles (Uggen and Blackstone, 2004). Indeed it is not just women, or not even all women, who are most likely to be vulnerable to harassment from others or from the state. Interlocutors suggest that class and power have dominated social relations between people in Cairo for many years. As Bourdieu (1984) suggests, what happens on the body such as via appearance and practice is indicative of class and thus power. The distinctions between these practices are one way of ensuring class difference, social control and the continuation of privilege for some rather than for all even amidst neo-liberal claims for equal opportunity for all (ibid). As with the new forms of cheaper consumer activity on streets like Talaat Harb in downtown, lower classes gain access to global products. As discussed, many middle class residents that I spoke to regarded the shopping in this area as 'cheap tat' in comparison to the trends and shopping of other upper class areas. In this way, new modes of (and always out of reach) aspirational consumption are produced to reiterate distinctions between social classes

in Cairo. One young man that I talked to told me that even though even lower class young people make a lot of effort with their appearance, in fact they make 'too much' effort with their appearance and there are obvious differences between classes based on these bodily significations. He continued to (dryly) point out that the older generation also still buy into the significance of appearance, wearing ill-fitting suits to make-believe jobs (his words) to try and appear powerful. Anger between social class groups, despite the calls for social justice in 2011, is played out between the relationship between men and women, class groups and generations. This is not surprising considering that many feel that the aims of the 2011 uprising have been sidelined or even forgotten.

In an analysis of middle class identities in India, Bhatt et al (2010) suggest that the presence of low class workers is essential to the construction and practice of the middle class. The status of being middle class is put forward as a national aspiration which means that low class workers aspire to the wealth and consumption practices of the new Indian middle class, which is very similar to the production of desiring consumer subjects studied in other contexts (Ngai, 2003). These identities are put forward as being attainable when in reality this is rarely the case. If anything, this discourse only serves to mask a retrenchment of class systems under the guise of freedom, social justice; the economic situation in the global North and South being so precarious. My interlocutors believed in the right to political and social justice for all Egyptians but appeared to worry about putting these ideas into practice considering the uncertainty of global capitalism and thus the future-stability of their own positions, the dangers of others are actually often reflective of worries about one's own ''lapses of righteousness'' (Douglas, 2002 p3). According to some social theorists, the definition of others is important to the establishment of ones self and borders are established in order to decrease ambiguity (Sibley, 1995). In the Egyptian context, the overhaul of the previous three years and vagueness can be seen to create a need for the reification of social divisions.

Driving out to the new satellite cities such as the Fifth Settlement and 6th of October, huge billboards advertise the latest fashions of US and European high street stores. According to Ghannam (2014) gated communities on the outskirts of the city are promoted to elites as a superior, international lifestyle as opposed to the polluted, dangerous and crowded urban of Cairo. Class is intimately linked to expressions of

the body and advertisements of the new developments emphasis the many health benefits that come with the new community (ibid). This is also true of exercise clubs and restaurants, as Ghannam (2004) continues, everyday practices of the body *vis a vis* exercise and food are also indicative of class and hold social and cultural capital for the individual. Other upper class areas such as Maadi and Zamalek are inundated with restaurants serving international cuisine, health centres for yoga, exercise and dietary training whereas downtown is lacking. Those that aspire to the international elite lifestyles promoted by consumer advertisements and building developers cannot easily reconcile these desires with living in downtown Cairo. As one interlocutor suggested, people who desire to wear certain clothes and dine in expensive, upper class style restaurants cannot do so in downtown however many also lamented the lack of public space and the ability to walk around that is synonymous with downtown and not with satellite cities. Here, the upper class practice of strolling around the city centre and going to cafes might be relegated to nostalgia as the pull of satellite cities increases.

Significantly, a number of informants suggested that they are looking to move away from downtown due to the lack of facilities. There are no gyms or health spas for women in downtown that will allow them to practice and create a desirable appearance, female residents that I spoke to travel to upper class neighbourhoods to visit the hairdresser or beautician. Residents of downtown worry about the rise in pollution that comes with increased traffic to the area. The rise in unrestricted informal activities such as car workshops also emits chemicals and pollutants into residential streets and buildings that many see as harmful to health. Due to the lack of supermarkets and health-choice restaurants in downtown, many interlocutors and especially those with children cited health as a main reason to leave the area. The continued degeneration of the area also feeds into the discourse of degeneration of the body. Some people suggested that older apartments in downtown can give you diseases such as bed bugs or lice. The shabby exterior of the buildings (which often do not reflect the state of the interior apartments) come to represent the area as unhealthy and poor. It seems that rather than diversifying the economy and establishments in areas such as downtown Cairo the pull of satellite communities is entrenching neighbourhoods on class lines ever further through the gendered and classed body. Discourses of fear and risk for women in urban areas such as downtown

Cairo compliment the division of the city through class and are played out through practices of the body.

Thus, for many of my informants, moving to new satellite cities is becoming the norm and increasingly justified. Families with enough money seek to move to these new developments in order to achieve a desirable lifestyle but also for the health benefits and education of their children. New and expensive private schools can be found all over these communities and many of my interlocutors felt that the services, pollution and crime of downtown had become too risky, especially as there was now an alternative. The urban fabric of downtown has also felt the impact of urban to suburban migration. The now-older children of long-term residents who have decided to leave for the new developments leave behind a large network of support. Similarly, the family that stay in the area feels the loss of their children moving far away, the area loses generational connectivity and elderly relatives lose the support of the young. The demography of downtown Cairo also changes with this migration, young people of higher social status groups leave the area but as rents are so high, many people cannot afford to move to downtown Cairo. This leaves many flats empty or filled by the high turnover of foreigners coming to study for short periods or work through limited contracts. The area as transitory and lacking community cohesion and commitment affects the daily lives of the remaining residents and thwarts any attempt at building a sustainable urban fabric. However, Abaza (2011, p1080) also points out that satellite cities have not become as popular as expected and have many units free. Either way, Cairo is still becoming decentralized whereby the upper classes move to quieter areas such as Garden City and Mohandaseen that host their own communities and amenities (ibid). Changes in the city overall create new experiences and meanings of downtown for residents and visitors.

The lack of mobility in urban Cairo and downtown in particular is also used to justify the cities rising spatial demarcation. Communities and housing projects on the outskirts of the city cater to an almost exclusively upper class sentiment. For those who can afford it, the new developments signify wealth, health, and western lifestyles. According to Ghannam (2014), a major part of this discourse is mobility and time. New areas on the outskirts of the city are less populated; there is less traffic and more effective regulation. Like suburbia anywhere, the wide villas, roads and

lack of resources mean that most get around solely by car, which is in of itself a marker of class distinction considering the vast majority of Cairenes do not own a car. If time is money, then the most important and powerful people need to keep their time free for business rather than be stuck in traffic with the masses in urban Cairo (ibid). Neo-liberal discourses are thus linked to practices of class in Cairo as they are elsewhere:

> In an age when predictability, efficiency, flexibility, and control are key to the global economy, securing unhindered movement between different spaces and places becomes key to one's success and distinction. (Ghannam, 2014 para 12).

It is not hard to see how women's experiences of mobility and safety also tie into these discourses. DeKoning (2009, p549) argues that the car is the ultimate symbol of gendered modernity. Women are saved from unwanted attention and the possibility of defilement through the touch and gaze of lower class men (ibid). As discussed, many of my interlocutors also wished to be able to drive in the city for safety reasons and particularly because of sexual harassment in the urban centre. Both driving and living in a class homogenous space allows men and women to a certain amount of freedom. Again, this leaves those who cannot afford to simply move out of downtown Cairo with little options and a degenerating living space.

Gendered and Classed Communication

This project hopes to understand the daily realities of some men and women in downtown Cairo at a particular historical moment. I do not seek to make sweeping generalisations about the situation for *all* men and women. I acknowledge the middle/upper social classes of my informants and argue that their experiences and practices give us insights into some of the realities and discourses on the ground. I do not suggest that women have a necessarily 'worse' experience than men in downtown Cairo (mostly because this cannot be quantified) but that they have a different experience than men that is also characterized by street harassment. For example, in this project I point out that women have difficulties in accessing transportation. Yet men also have problems accessing affordable transportation. As many point out, governments, police and security have long made the lives of the poor very difficult punishing and arbitrarily punishing men from lower social classes and neighbourhoods as a form of control. In her study of masculinities in urban Cairo,

Ghannam (2013) points out that daily struggles such as using public transport and finding work are exceptionally hard for lower-income men. Moreover, men's positions within their family and community depend on them accessing work and money. In many ways, the state has failed both men and women in providing security and basic needs for its citizens. As I hope to argue, we cannot view harassment as an aside to other forms of violence and discrimination that are taking place in Cairo in the everyday. The daily hardships of a young man who is targeted randomly by state violence and discrimination is linked to the violence he then perpetrates against others (Abaza, 2013). The streets of downtown Cairo are a constant reminder of the violence inflicted on the bodies of young men and women by the state in the last three years.

The presence of class works in interesting ways for gendered interactions in Cairo. Informants suggest that class affects the powered dynamic of interaction on the street but in different ways for men and women. For example, most female informants suggest that they receive less attention on the street when they have a male partner with them such as a friend or husband. If the male is of a high social status then even less attention is directed towards the female. According to my interlocutors, in situations with the military or police officers, much more respect is given to men of a higher social class. My informants suggest that officers are able to identify between people based on appearance and body language and deal with them accordingly. DeKoning (2009 p88) suggests even now Egyptians can read the bodily signs of one another and differentiate based on bodily practices. She identifies the difference between the 'people' or majority of Egyptians who are identified as eating *fuul* (fava beans) and use public transport with the upper class or privileged Egyptians who have connections, wealth and power which is embodied through their appearance, mannerisms and transport choices. Some suggest that officers might be wary that the individual is well-connected and powerful and so officers do not want to risk getting themselves into trouble. Of course, men and women of higher social classes will be more likely to drive and thus be less likely to even suffer from the daily harassment of those who have to use crowded public transport or the street.

Boutros, another male informant, also suggested that social class defines interactions between men and women in the street. The way men and women interact with one another is dependent on significations of class through the body and place:

> For example, in downtown anyone is allowed to talk to anyone … unless it's a younger boy asking a younger girl. I could ask a grandmother for the time but not someone my own age, as they would think I wanted something else and actually I could ask girls for the time in zamalek but not in downtown.
>
> (personal communication, Jan 4, 2014)

Here, available interactions are dependent on the specific area and the meanings attached to the area. Boutros continues that in Zamalek, which is an upper class area full of expensive restaurants and embassies, men and women are allowed to talk to each other because those that frequent the area are assumed to be of the same socio-economic background. People in Zamalek are automatically assumed to be 'decent' as opposed to the suspicion viewed on young men in downtown. Moreover, Boutros among others suggests that social class defines how men and women behave towards one another. In Zamalek, the schools are better and teach a mixed gender educational environment which allows for men and women to get to know one another and get used to a mixed gender environment. Due to the changes in downtown Cairo and its transitory nature, placing people is more difficult and their intentions become harder to read. The mix of people in this area makes for a tense situation where often, suspicion and unfamiliarity stumps interactions before they even begin. Indeed, some social theorists suggest that the first thing people look to recognize in social relationships is about the intentions of others and more so the mutual awareness of one another's intentions (Burt, 1992 p45). However, Boutros's anecdote does not reflect the realities of all. Many women I know have been verbally and physically assaulted in Zamalek and some others have not registered harassment in downtown at all. I would suggest that Boutros's fears over 'who is allowed to talk to whom' based on area and class is a strict version of something that in reality is more fluid. His fears are also very significant for highlighting his anxiety over his own class background and his relation to women of higher social classes considering that Boutros is from a poor and popular neighbourhood. Finally, Boutros's anxiety is reflective of the tensions of high-class areas changing due to the presence of working class men who are portrayed in the media as a social threat and a sexual threat for women.

My interlocutors suggested that in some cases miscommunications can result in the perception of harassment. They suggest that men from lower social classes flirt with women when they walk by calling out '*ya asl*' (hey honey) which sometimes is a welcome interaction and returned with a phone number. This confirms research on

dating in lower income areas by Van Dalen (2013) where young men and women have little opportunity for contact apart from walking on the street. In areas where everyone knows one another, open interactions between men and women can affect ones reputation. 'Harmless' interactions that a lot of women would characterize as harassment are the vehicle for getting to know one another and gauging interest. My research also suggests that confusion erupts through people from different areas and social classes meeting in downtown Cairo. For many foreigners and Egyptian women, street flirtations such as cat calling are a daily annoyance and contribute to unease on the street. Thus, one's interpretation of other's movements depends on one's own background and the particular relationship between two people.

The misreading of symbols and signals expressed through the body could be the result of a number of changes in the city. Elyachar (2011 p94) suggests that Cairo has actually experienced a new type of disconnect between how people understand and connect with one another. Changes in urban geography such as displaced communities, coupled with the rise of the megacity, overpopulation, travel and different discourses such as from the Gulf states mean that the small connections between people are lost. Economic and political connections deteriorate because as Goffman would see it, social interactions are how things in the world get done (Burns, 1991 p17). One must also consider other structural changes such as the impact of globalisation and neo-liberal economic changes. Of Mumbai, Phadke (2007, p1510) writes ''these changes and the fissures they have created have manifested themselves in a politics of morality and a deep suspicion of those seen not to belong''. Others argue that in fact, increased mobility for young people around the city, media and technology mean people are more aware of each other and where they come from (Ghannam, 2010). I suggest that a little of both might be true. In recent years, economic woes have cemented differences between social classes even further. Daily hardships of work and a lack of resources and infrastructure amplify even small frictions. Furthermore, political tensions have bred suspicion and distrust between parts of society based on their political affiliations. Young men from lower social classes are branded as criminals and young people more generally are viewed with suspicions for pushing boundaries. Downtown Cairo hosts people that come in from many different neighbourhoods and while they recognise one another, they do not always share or appreciate the same behaviours. Many comment that the access to

globalized products allow many to take on the tastes of other classes such as cheap and disposable fashions, mobile phones, footwear. Others disagree and suggest that there are still clear demarcations of style and awareness of people's backgrounds depending on style. Style and fashion are, of course, also used as another platform for discrimination and the constant flux of which is used to demarcate class difference and desire (Zukin, 1995 p8). Either way, many of my interlocutors suggest that post-2011 in particular social life has experienced dramatic change.

My male participants all expressed anxiety about relationships with women in public space. Since around 2006 and especially the revolution, public discourse and development has taken a keen interest in 'sexual harassment'. A number of activist groups solely work on reducing sexual harassment in Egypt and in Cairo in particular. For a class of people with access to technology and certain public debates, ending harassment against women is now at the forefront of social change. While these groups and debates are essential in both awareness and intervention they also create a heightened sensitivity for some men who are aware of these discourses. Bassem, a 25 year old male working in the arts, felt unhappy that his intentions were sometimes viewed with suspicion:

> So you have one guy and he touches a girl in a crowded place and then she looks around and it could have been any of them, so all of them could be guilty … You can't blame them [women] really.

(personal communication, Feb 5, 2014)

He continued that when in public places where he did not know anyone he was careful not to look at women in the eye or touch anyone by accident. For Bassem, location was essential to the establishment of his integrity. Bassem only goes to a certain few cafes that are also frequented by people 'like him'. There, he feels able to talk to women without any suspicions of sexual interest or 'harassment'. Of course, the cafes that Bassem goes to are restricted by price. Only a certain section of Egyptian society come to these cafes and many know one another. These people are of a higher social class and are used to spending time in a mixed gender group. Bassem can relax when others around him are aware of his background, his education and his interests that are all indicative of his social class. Again, these perceptions are related to discourses that view only young, lower class men as harassers. Here, the

perceptions of harassment depend on class, but also on they type of people associated with a particular space.

Research cannot easily quantify whether foreign women experience sexual harassment in downtown Cairo more than Egyptian women. Some foreign women, especially with unusual features for Egypt such as blonde hair, insist that that they receive more frequent and aggressive types of violence than other women. Either way, as with other systems of power in Egypt, the experiences of foreign women have to be seen in context. For example, the rise in xenophobia against non-nationals in 2013-2014 must be understood in relation to the forms of nationalist rhetoric circling in Egypt as the result of political events. Many Egyptians felt that the foreign media and government represented or understood the political events in Egypt wrongly. Discourses of espionage targeted towards foreigners, however misdirected, cannot be seen separately from the harmful historical interventions that foreign governments have made in the region overall. Elyachar (2011 p87) points out that historically; the status of 'foreigner' came with a number of material, social and legal privileges in Egypt. Connections with foreigners meant that Egyptians had access to power and wealth (ibid). Even now, the global imbalances of power and the need for tourism means that foreigners are held in high esteem and are given daily privileges that Egyptian nationals are not. Perceptions of foreigners are of course gendered and the violence they suffer is also related to the gendered body. Many foreign and national female journalists were sexually assaulted as they tried to report from Tahrir Square in 2011-2012. Several interlocutors also suggested that Egyptian films and televisions portray foreign women, especially blonde women, as being sexually loose. These are just some of the wider discourses that highlight wider systems of power and privilege and how they play out in everyday life for men and women.

Conclusion

This chapter suggests that we must understand the meanings associated with an area to understand the experiences of people within that space. I argue that the way we feel about the space, comfort, fear, connection, and ease provide greater nuances for daily life. For example, changes in the city and economics affects that way we practice daily life and interact with others around us. Similarly, the impact of political change and the meanings of downtown shape how people think of the space and those

within it. This affects social relationships between men and women, which are interwoven with other axis of identity such as class. The use of space and the resulting anonymity and familiarity also provides for different experiences for men and women. Mostly, this chapter realizes the multitude of different interactions that take place between people that depending on the individual circumstances. Gender as a category of analysis cannot be understood as separate to class, race among other social axis (Brown, 1993). Public discourse also interweaves with the practice of daily life to create the backdrop of gendered relations. Scott (1986 p1055) reminds us that we cannot understand women's history without understanding men's history – as this chapter shows, taking seriously men's experiences is also important for understanding 'sexual harassment' which is an issue often forwarded as pertaining to women only. This discussion highlights the backdrop of tension that creates sexual harassment but also how through a discussion on sexual harassment we can understand discourses of national, political and social change.

Chapter 4: Walking in the Street - Negotiating the Everyday

''The necessary frequent movement of great numbers of individuals in a congested habitat gives occasion to friction and irritation'' –Wirth 2003 p101

This chapter will explore the gendered experience of walking in the street in downtown Cairo paying attention to street geography and informal politics. I attempt to understand interactions between people on the street considering the meanings attached to space as previously discussed. These meanings are also dependant on the intersection of how people actually use space. For example, cafes, shops, kiosks, crossroads and pavements all provide different experiences when walking that can tell us more about phenomena such as sexual harassment. This chapter will also take a more detailed approach to how people use their bodies in the street such as their emotions, body language and appearance. What happens on the street exposes important interactions between people and becomes a site in which to reflection on other phenomenon and conversations taking place in the city. Patterns of movement such as surveillance, watching, talking and moving around one another allow for a more nuanced understanding of how men and women interact with one another. Yet we also find another rich location for understanding the interplay between class, gender and space. Looking at 'sexual harassment' allows us to understand the various relationships of power continuously made and remade in the everyday.

I look to Erving Goffman's work on social interactions (1959, 1971, 1983) to think critically about the way people behave on the street. These connections, as discussed in the last two chapters, cannot be seen aside from other cultural and identity politics that also consider space and historical moment. Goffman's ideas of public space suppose a theatrical stage in which performers transform how they interact and present themselves to one another. Members are simultaneously audience and performers, playing with social roles and conventions throughout daily life and giving off impressions to those around us both knowingly and unintentionally. This also speaks to the work of Butler (1990) who presents identities such as gender as never being fully whole or even achievable but merely a process of ongoing performance and becoming. For Goffman (1959), people in public space read one another according to 'body idiom', which in relation to Bourdieu's seminal (1984)

work, is heavily linked to class and known behaviours of social ceremonies. I argue that interactions between people on the street are reflective of tensions in society overall and that a micro-sociology of the street allows us to understand how these tensions arise but also how harmony is maintained. Observations of the street and subjectivities of my interlocutors allow us insights into how people interact with one another and what that produces for them emotionally. I do not attempt to assume that there is a monolithic form of public behaviour, conformity or 'order' in downtown Cairo but rather to use these tools to look closely at what people are doing and how certain discourses travel. I seek to understand how street practice relates to patterns of consumption, work and politics but also to the social and what we gain or lose personally from interactions with others.

Gendered Street Politics: Familiarity, Anonymity, Surveillance

This project explores the physical and emotional perceptions of interlocutors in downtown Cairo. I use other research and theoretical considerations of bodies in space to understand how and why men and women interact with one another differently. Economic necessities underpin practices of the street that contribute to a different experience for men and women. For example, female informants recalled an experience of street surveillance that men did not. The increasing amount of (predominantly) men working informal jobs on the street creates unease for the women that I spoke to who worried about the possibility of harassment. Conversations about the undesirability of young poor men on the street are related to anxieties about political and social change that translates into emotions of fear and risk. A number of my informants often felt overwhelmed with an awareness of being watched as they walked in the street. For example, many buildings in Cairo have *bowabs*, or men paid to guard the building and run errands, who usually come from Upper Egypt or the Nile Delta. According to upper class interlocutors, people from these areas are often typified as being unrefined and uneducated peasantry, more suited to working the fields than living in a modern city. The presence of these workers means that there is always someone nearby to watch who enters or leaves the building and will be aware of neighbours and other workers in the street. With regards to their own homes and neighbourhoods, this can work in both positive and negative ways for women:

> I know that Salah [her *bowab*] watches who I talk to outside the building, what time I leave and come back and even who visits the apartment … If he knows Amr [her husband] is away he will bring my guests up to the door to make sure I know them … he won't let workers into the lift with me either … to be honest though, I am glad he is here.

> (personal communication with Abeer, Feb 6, 2014)

Abeer suggests that even though she finds her *bowab* intrusive she prefers the feeling of safety to not having him there at all. When I probed many informants about what they meant about safety, several referred to the rise in crime in downtown since the uprisings of 2011 such as robberies. Many also suggest that these criminals might target women more because they are vulnerable. This fear also translates into fear over attacks and harassment of a sexual nature. The surveillance and restriction of women's bodies is justified through the discourses of danger and risk. As Abeer's case highlights, women also rationalize the need for their own security and so a complex arrangement arises whereby poor street workers are both a source of tension and provide important services at the same time.

The presence of informal economic practices also intersects with men and women's daily experiences differently. As discussed, the amount of informal activity on the street is often overwhelming for women. However, men and women both utilize the services of the various workers. One interlocutor explains:

> When I don't feel like leaving the house I will ask Ahmed to go to the store for me, he is grateful for the extra cash we give him and likes to feel useful … Although sometimes he does not do what I ask him quickly and I feel it is easier if I say 'Sherif [her husband] wants you to do so and so…' then he will do it, he is from Upper Egypt you see and not used to taking orders from women.

> (personal communication with Dina, Jan 9, 2014)

The amount of sociability on the street can be difficult for women, but upper class men and women use these services for their own benefit and in large part depend on the assistance and co-operation of the community. As Ali (2012) reminds us, cities are sites of ongoing "processes of repair and maintenance'' (ibid p586) whereby tensions exist alongside the need to create social relationships that work and are enjoyable.

Familiarity and anonymity in urban areas are important factors for the perceptions of risk and danger in Cairo. A study by Nassif (2010) finds that women

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feel safer and the likelihood of harassment decreases in women's own neighbourhoods. In certain neighbourhoods and streets downtown, women and men know one another; workers in the street know where women live, their husbands, families and friends. Even though downtown is on the one hand an anonymous and transitory space, by building, street or area it is still a community. Interlocutors both young and old lamented the loss of the good old days when communities were tighter and more familiar with each other. However it appeared that many of the people that I spoke to did indeed have good relationships with their neighbours, which suggests that it might only be that the perceptions and discourses of safety have changed encouraging middle class people to look towards a brighter yet illusionary past. Like in other neighbourhoods where most in the community are known to one another, the incidence of harassment in these areas decreases. Men are less likely to verbally or physically harass women for fear of reprimand and as it is more likely that a victim could be a friend's sister or mother.

Women that I spoke to felt safer in areas where they knew people and were known to others. However, as suggested above, many women felt overwhelmed with such surveillance. Young women were aware of this surveillance and practiced discipline of their appearance and activities as a result. In a discussion on Mumbai, Phadke (2005 p45) also suggests that ''concerns over reputation and honour are much more pressing among lower-middle-class women, particularly those who live in localities where their arrivals and departures are easily visible to neighbours.'' Phadke continues that women are socialized into a generalized fear of the street but also of community censure that is important for their status and future marriagability. Perhaps this is stricter in locales where most are still known to one another yet the anonymity and more diverse and changing landscape of downtown creates more worry and tension about the activities of young women. The sense of a lack of control and increased social change create more anxiety and surveillance over the bodies of women. This speculation and conjecture over the activities of young people in downtown might serve to reiterate stereotypes of lax sexuality practices and also sexual harassment. As noted, the increase of alleged undesirables and poor people coming to the area increase risk, fear and surveillance for women. My female interlocutors related numerous practices of respectability such as wearing conservative clothes as they left the house and asking male friends to pick them up

elsewhere. While safety is important, as it is in any large city, the increase in security rhetoric since 2011 creates a tense situation for many women that I talked to.

The sociability and structure of the street contributed to a sense of surveillance for many of my interlocutors, avoiding areas where they were more likely to be 'stared at'. A lack of control and the rise of more informal trade practices have led to increased uses of the street. Cafes, street sellers and small businesses can expand or open without regulation. As a result of the downturn in the economy in the past ten years or so and the impact of political unrest, more people are turning to informal ways to earn a living. Consequently, businesses and their patrons take up more of the sidewalk and street. Aside from less space to walk and move freely, this also increases the likelihood of surveillance of women walking in unknown areas. A number of workers and *bowabs* [doormen/guards] sit outside shops and or their buildings respectively, watching the area may keep the residents safe but largely makes unknown women feel uncomfortable. Moreover, cafes and food vendors attract a high turnover of visitors on foot or by car, which adds to an already difficult traffic situation. Due to the various functions of the area, downtown is largely considered a transitory space. Large groups of people sat eating, drinking and smoking and observing the street and passers by create a situation of surveillance. Indeed, many cafes in downtown Cairo are blended with the sidewalk, tables and chairs face outwards toward the street. My female informants suggested that they felt especially intimidated walking past these cafes in particular, especially if they were known to have a male-majority clientele. This visual dynamic also contributed to a heightened sense of awareness of ones own appearance and movement when walking. This surveillance is also arguably a part of the many experiences that constitute 'sexual harassment'. For many women, constant 'watching' constitutes the experience of using public space in downtown. A number of informants suggest that even though they mostly feared physical attacks such as grabbing that they also deeply resented the constant visual attention, Marwa, 27, suggests that:

> I wear my headphones so I don't have to hear any comments but I do feel
> their eyes on me when I walk, you can tell because they turn their bodies
> towards you and stare at you … it makes me feel really uncomfortable. Also,
> you can't even confront someone for staring … what will they say?

(personal communication, Jan 7 2014)

Interestingly, in a study by the United Nations on sexual harassment in Egypt in 2013, one of the most unwanted daily behaviours was actually to be stared at by men in the street, which suggests that this is a particularly negative interaction for women and is actually seen as constituting 'sexual harassment'.

Women's experiences of normal daily activities, especially foreign women, highlight the way sociability of downtown works in practice. Foreign interlocutors have to learn how to 'get things done' in Cairo that many Egyptians take for granted. Small daily errands such as getting light bulbs fixed or paying bills requires several sets of relationships and interactions that can be difficult to navigate. Especially for women, being forceful with workmen or others responsible for getting things done (especially quickly) can be tricky. Foreign females that I spoke to found it difficult to complete daily tasks in Cairo, which often relies on having good personal relationships with people in one's area. In downtown, the best workmen, butchers, shops and sellers are usually provided through recommendations from neighbours and friends. Once established as a regular customer, good prices and products can be negotiated. Some women often stated that they were 'not in the mood' to have small chats with *bowabs*, kiosk attendants and grocers but that the continuation with them was essential. While with women there is always the risk of joviality being taken the wrong way, this street sociability is even greater for my male interlocutors who were also required to stop and talk for longer. These anecdotes are reminiscent of the work by Elyachar (2010) who points out that the networks created by women in Cairo hold important economic value as connections for communities. Without relying on the usual Arab stereotypes of *wasta* (connections/influence), which has negative connotations of corruption and nepotism, Elyachar highlights the importance of women's networks in securing important economic functions. Visiting friends and relations around the city provided for information and networks that could not be found otherwise (ibid p 453). Elyachar also notes that these social visits and taking care of the house took up large part of women's days. While upper class women that I spoke to did benefit from being able to employ others to do some small errands, these tasks are time consuming for both men and women especially when the social relations needed to undertake these tasks must be well oiled.

The transitory nature of downtown Cairo means people come from outlying areas to create a space of anonymity, for some this brings fear and for others,

freedom. However, in smaller areas and streets where residents predominate, members of the community in downtown do indeed know each other well. Shopkeepers, workers and guards work long hours and are often stationed on the street. As a result, they are able to observe the activity of the street, the comings and goings of residents and visitors. Many of my informants suggest that the *bowabs* (building guard, doorman) and *sayas* (men who help you park your car) are actually paid by the police or interior ministry to keep tabs on the actions of the street and residents. They are then responsible for checking in with the appropriate officer to inform them about of untoward activity, any foreigners that live there and any possible anti-regime political activity. While I cannot validate this claim or not, such discourses that are widely believed contribute to an air of suspicion on the street. Of course, this also breeds resentment between residents and the people, predominantly men, who make their living through working in the street. Street workers from lower social classes effectively become regarded as willing to do anything for money, which undermines social solidarity. Similarly, street workers may suspect residents of getting involved in illegal activities without good reason. Like Wright's (2005) disposable workers, these myths are used to justify the social position of the street workers as easily corruptible and untrustworthy.

Practices of consumption in downtown are also classes and gendered. The presence of diverse practices allows for a difference experience for men and women in the street. Several wealthy interlocutors had their food shopping delivered from supermarkets or by hiring help. The majority of Egyptians, even in downtown, go to the many market stalls to choose and buy their own groceries. For the interlocutors that I spoke to, women usually undertake grocery shopping and the food sellers in the area are usually men. In the dual city as put forward by Sassen, one needs high skilled workers to enjoy the amenities and poor workers to be able to provide services at a low cost (Elsheshtawy, 2006). The small, more informal economies in downtown attest to this reality, whereby one can find tailors, shoe shiners, cleaners, people to iron clothes and prepare food very cheaply. This produces a complexity of those who require these services and the poor men and women to provide them, producing its own sites of tension. These encounters can be amiable but also awkward: Amy an American 27-year-old student and resident of downtown:

> When I first lived here I used to go to this one kiosk and I would make small talk with the owner, he was about 50ish … over time we got to know each other more as I frequently used the kiosk but then the guy asked me for my phone number, I made up an excuse and left and have had to avoid the place ever since … it made me feel weird and now I never know whether to smile or talk to anyone, I usually don't.

(personal communication, Feb 8, 2014)

Amy's experience highlights the different relationships people can have with one another on the street. She continued that her Egyptian friends told her that she should not have made small talk and that it may be because she was foreign. These interactions become sites that have a possibility for confusion and the misreading of intentions between different social actors especially for those who are foreign to known appropriate ways of contextually specific behaviour.

In an analysis of middle class identities in India, Bhatt et al (2010) suggest that the presence of low class workers is essential to the construction and practice of the middle class. The status of being middle class is presented as desirable for low class workers. Class demarcations are used to define oneself with regards to others and as Bhatt (2010) argues, the promotion of a desirable middle class status as aspirational and accessible to all legitimizes middle class status. The perceptions of the 'dangerous' element attached to service men as just discussed by interlocutors is strikingly similar to Wright's (2006) disposable women who are deemed to be worthless when in reality they were creating something of value. It is an interesting paradox to note that the services of the working class are essential and helpful in various ways yet they are also represented as being disposable, worthless and even criminal in order to justify their status. At the same time, foreign and national upper class interlocutors both marvel at the fact that life is so easy in Egypt where you can get anything delivered to your doorstep at any time of the day or night. These exclamations rarely acknowledge the economic reality of why labour is so cheap and plentiful. These conversations link nicely to findings from India where middle class Indian migrants to the US returned in order to 'improve their lifestyles' through practices like being able to hire cheap and flexible domestic labour within the home (Bhatt et al, 2010 p81). At the same time, especially since the uprisings of 2011, the status of working class artiste/revolutionary is the fashion among young people in

downtown that creates a site for internal tension, complexity and contradiction for many people that I spoke to.

For middle class interlocutors, the services of poor Egyptians are particularly useful, serving both a practical need and a symbolic one. My interlocutors also suggested that the high amounts of delivery services including everything from foodstuffs to medicines are incredibly helpful. Of course, the class and background of these workers brings its own sets of anxieties for the women, especially considering these men come to deliver to women at their houses. Some women complain of negative experiences with deliverymen, which range from being inappropriately friendly to mild sexual assaults. Others also complain that the *bowab*, being from predominantly poor, rural backgrounds, do not understand the upper class activities of the residents of downtown Cairo. Drinking, wearing tight or revealing clothes and having music parties with mixed companies, some complain of negative situations with their *bowab* from their (in their eyes) perceived lack of morality of honour. At the same time, upper class residents are often asked to provide a little extra payment to these street services which supplies much needed income. One interlocutor told me that service men on his streets will say '*kull sana wa inta tayeb*' as he passes by which is a well know friendly expression or blessing roughly meaning 'may your years be well' which in street code is a polite request for a small tip. The same interlocutor also said that these expressions are only directed at him and not his wife who makes a point to ignore the workers on the streets and directs all news and inquiries to her husband.

A Micro-sociology of Street Practice

Male and female interlocutors did not enjoy or experience the street in the same way. On the one hand, the women that I spoke to did enjoy using the facilities of downtown such as the cafes, kiosks and grocers. Women, like men, enjoyed the buzz of people watching and the joviality of the street that many suggest is characteristic of downtown especially. Yet a number of female informants suggest that they do not feel comfortable walking in the street in downtown for various reasons. Mostly, aside from militarized areas, men did not express the same anxieties. Wherever possible my female interlocutors took taxis and did not walk for long distances. A number of reasons were given, mainly that they did not enjoy walking

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due to the lack of safe walking space or weather, pollution, trash but mostly due to harassment. On walking in the street, all my participants suggested that they felt anxious over their safety but women expressed this sentiment more than men did. Many women I spoke to have experienced crime in downtown Cairo such as robberies and forms of sexual harassment like groping and catcalls yet I also want to highlight that women still enjoyed living here, using the amenities and walking in the area. Men and women, young and old, come to the area for the businesses, education centres, government offices and as the (now not so much) central area of Cairo, a meeting point for those from outside. Even though many people that I spoke to considered that the area has degenerated, it was still held in esteem and the area continues to attract varied audiences for the plethora of services and meanings that this space hosts.

Certain elements of the street such as intersections, kiosks and cafes provided for particularly tense locations for the middle class women that I spoke to. The presence of crowds of people around kiosks and food stands for example allowed for a higher incidence of overt harassment such as whistling or lewd comments. Women also pointed out that even if they had not experienced 'overt' harassment such as touching or name-calling, these were still sites for staring, which is also one of the main complaints of women in quantitative surveys on Egypt by the UN (2013) and the ECWR (2009). Many women suggested that this was largely due to the clientele that cheap food stands attract and that the presence of large groups of men allowed for more 'showing off' or the likelihood of intimidating behaviour. Indeed, scholars (Ghannam 2013, Ilahi 2008, Rizzo 2014) and studies (UN, 2013 ECWR, 2009) have all explored the idea that performing masculinity is an important site for understanding harassment against women and especially when in a group and in front of others. The idea here would be that for lower class men, the ability to perform harassment against women would reflect their power and identity as a man. As tied to conversations in chapter three, for some middle class residents in downtown cheap food stalls and kiosks are the domain of poor Egyptian men who are largely demonised as a social threat. Economics also impacts the level of service industry and street behaviour in downtown Cairo. At just one intersection, several young delivery drivers wait outside a well-known fast food restaurant on their motorbikes opposite a kiosk that now sells cheap sandwiches and next to a fruit stall and an open-air café

frequented by older men. As a busy road with cars coming both ways and parking, it is also important to be alert and aware for men and women; for example to look around and check that drivers and pedestrians know you are there. The busy spaces of downtown Cairo require its users to be alert and aware of one another. The myths and experiences that propose young working class men are more likely to harass means that women are more likely to be fearful when in reality, safety should require people to be making more eye contact and not less.

Elyachar (2011) looks at the anthropology of movement such as walking and bodily practice and argues that 'what we do' on the street (aside from overt practices of politics or religion) should also be an important part of social analysis, just as learning to walk and walking in urban space are actually very social acts (ibid p85). Female interlocutors point out that in downtown Cairo they are aware of their own body as they move, what they wear and those around them. Women wrap their shawls around them as they walk or hold onto their bags while men walk with more confidence. In terms of body language, women wore sunglasses and looked down or straight ahead while men were more likely to make eye contact or look at others around them. Men are more likely to linger at kiosks and make small talk with the workmen on the street, listening to local news. As a way to limit experiences of harassment, almost all of my female participants used headphones when walking in the street. This was used as a way to move around without listening to unwanted attention such as catcalls and insults. However, given the high levels of traffic and lack of safe spaces to walk this puts women at a higher risk of accidents and other crimes such as robbery. They still felt that listening to music was more important than being completely aware of those around you even though many had been robbed and so also take care to hold their bags away from the road. Even so, women could still sense men directing comments towards them, either through lip-reading or an awareness of eyes as one interlocutor points out:

> I can feel their eyes on me when I walk down the street and my face gets hot, why can't they not look at me or notice me? Are they that bored? I know they are just trying to make me feel uncomfortable but in actuality I would rather they said something so I could respond and start a fight.
>
> (personal communication with Riham, Dec 27 2013)

Many visitors and residents resent the lack of security and control in downtown Cairo. One of the main concerns for both the middle class and for women is the takeover of public space by young men and informal economic practices. Fears of the presence of lower class men in historically upper class spaces are also exemplified by the problematic parking system in downtown Cairo. Informants reminisce of the past when systems were in order to deal with parking and traffic that were upheld by policemen. Now residents or visitors suggest that have nowhere to park and anyone can come along and take their spot. In certain parts of the day and night, streets are lined with cars, sometimes even two abreast on either side. Men, women and children walk into oncoming traffic or on the sidewalks when it is available. Of course, parked cars, café tables or street sellers also often take up the sidewalks. If the sidewalk is available then it is often in disrepair and much caution should be taken when walking. On the road, pedestrians walk in a narrow space to avoid cars coming from either direction. However, with pedestrians going in either direction, women often find squeezing past men to be a problematic interaction. Many informants suggested that they felt that young men squeezed past them on purpose or purposefully tried to infringe on their personal space. The increase of traffic and lack of parking space also brings more *sayas*, or men whose job it is to help you park your car, which my interlocutors also found to be a source of tension. According to them, the rise of young men from lower social classes hanging around on streets and observing their daily activities is an uncomfortable situation. As discussed, the lack of control over space is a source of anxiety about who is in what space and why.

Interestingly, women suggested that having limited access to walking space could have a negative and positive effect on street harassment. For example, some road structures mean that individuals have to walk single file to pass by cars or roadblocks, or that multiple routes can be taken to 'shake free' a potential harasser. On the other hand, the lack of space to walk in some areas also increased feelings of powerlessness and reduced the ability for some women to avoid potential harassers. A lack of sidewalks and safe space to walk often means that pedestrians have a narrow corridor in which to walk. Walking single file, even when with family and friends, women become alone and vulnerable to passers by. While poor road infrastructure and traffic is a negative experience for everyone, the elderly are also

negatively affected by having to walk on dangerous pavements and in the face of oncoming cars. Women with small children going to school have trouble walking on the street safely and the lack of public transport means driving or taking a taxi becomes a necessity. Indeed one resident pointed out that before, children used to be able to play out on the street but now there are too many fast cars around and not enough space in the road. The lack of public spaces such as green areas adversely affects women who are often in charge of taking care of the children. Here we can clearly see how the geography of the street provides a different experience for men and women but also different types of people dependent on age and class.

Almost all female interlocutors were mindful of crime and harassment when walking in downtown, keeping a constant awareness of who was around them and how close they were. Many women suggested that they just 'knew' when someone was walking too close to them and changed their pace or direction. Walking with friends and talking while enjoying the city is not easy. At certain moments, the street geography pushes one to have to walk in single file and then weave through a number of street cafes. One must be aware of oncoming traffic from in front and behind, cars trying to park, cyclists, buyers and sellers camped on the pavement when walking. Rather than a constant fear or suspicion of harassment and men, I suggest that these practices are also just part and parcel of everyday negotiations of the street. People must make way for one another amidst poor pedestrian and driving conditions. As polite courtesy anywhere, residents should know who is around them to say hello or to peruse any of the merchandise that is for sale. With enormous amounts of bustle at busy times of the day, many women stated that they simply the ignore the 'chat' of the street which includes street sellers, arguments, traffic and jeers aimed at them or others around them. This may come some way in explaining statistics by both the UN (2013) and ECWR (2008) that women 'do not care' about harassment or that it does not bother them. There seems to a big difference between verbal forms of harassment and other physical encounters of sexual violence. Indeed, older interlocutors suggest that downtown Cairo has always been busy but that more recently the lack of control has allowed, in their words, 'anyone to come and do anything'. These worries reflect anxieties about the changing nature of the area, the project of the modern city and ultimately the direction of the country overall.

My informants expressed a number of different behaviours as unwelcome, negative forms of 'sexual harassment'. These behaviours range from more commonly unwelcome and vulgar comments to physical displays of flashing and grabbing. However, some of these interactions highlight a subtlety that is difficult to define or detail. Women suggested that often, men would use the sociability of the street and the poor street conditions to make them feel uncomfortable. For example, some women suggested that men would 'bump' into them accidently on purpose or squeeze past them when it was not really necessary. Others said that they would challenge a harasser who would deny it or say he was talking to someone else. Some men might make lewd suggestions down the phone, which were actually directed at the passing women. Similarly, Omnia, a 25 year old student, suggested that she finds it most uncomfortable when a man slows/speeds up to walk closely beside her and glance towards her intermittently. She argued that in this instance she was unable to confront this passive behaviour but found it aggressive and uncomfortable regardless. While my informants suggested that physical attacks were rare and very traumatising they also felt that day-to-day less confrontational interactions left them anxious, confused and angry in public space. Khadija, a 32 year old development consultant describes her experiences:

> Last week, I was running errands in my area [Abdeen, a well known area in downtown Cairo] when I noticed a young man following me … well, he had groceries too so I was not sure he was definitively following me but he was coming to exactly the same places that I was going and he kept on looking at me … I could not say anything because what could I say? People would think I was mad! But I knew what he was doing.

> (personal communication, Jan 17 2014)

This would suggest that this behaviour is intentionally intimidating. Of course, the sociability of the street in some cases may contribute to women, especially foreign women, misreading certain interactions. Most women do believe though that these 'games' (their words) are intentional and are played out on the street due to boredom, the acceptability of such practices and that young men simply want to be noticed. The middle class men I spoke to did not suffer from the same behaviours and also acknowledged that they see it happening to women on the street. I argue that this 'talk' as an aside to aggressive sexual harassment is still meaningful and serves a purpose for the enactor and his/her environment as a practice of power negotiation.

Goffman discusses how social norms can be violated through bodily interaction (Burt, 2991 p78). Interlocutors suggest that Cairo has its own rules of engagement, rituals and even patterns of speech that can identify intricate social systems that are always being re-negotiated. It is possible to suggest that the social organization hosts more negotiations recently due to the changes since the uprisings of 2011. Worries about such transgressions and the intentions of those around reflect the need to restore stability. However, I can also suggest that some foreign and upper class interlocutors may perceive some 'transgressions' to take place between men and women such as harassment when in reality, they are only different modes of behaviour. Such street talk and sociability is something that is perceived as unwelcome for people who are more used to upper class environments of private, quiet space and personal distance which is again a reflection of class practice. Similarly, the expectation that interactions with working class men are going to be negative is a stabilizing product of subjectivities that typify the behaviour of social classes. In a number of conversations I asked interlocutors whether they felt they could misinterpret certain interactions or whether there was a certain 'talk' or sociability of the street that should not actually be deemed 'sexual harassment'. Yet most men and women disagreed and said that there was a difference between situations that calls for an exchange and others that are characterized by unwanted rude, vulgar or aggressive behaviour. I argue that this 'talk' is a different phenomenon than other violent interactions that also fall into the category of sexual harassment such as unwanted/forced touching of the sexual organs, exposure, public masturbation and attempted rape that my interlocutors also mentioned having experienced.

Sociability of the Street

Visitors and locals to Cairo often point out the sociable, busy and noisy nature of Cairo and especially within the downtown area. Both men and women enjoyed this sociability and many associate the feelings of safety to the amounts of people who are on the street. Moreover, this sociability takes on a particularly visual characteristic as shops owners, workers and café patrons often sit outside, greeting passers by and talking. People suggest that in the last few years Cairo and downtown have become increasingly crowded. For Bayat (2012), the sociability of the street and vast numbers of people present on the street is intimately related to economic necessity. The onus

on profitability and the removal of the states responsibility to provide public services has irrevocably changed the urban fabric, indeed ''one cannot but notice the astonishing presence of so many people operating out-doors in the streets: working, running around, standing, sitting, negotiating or driving'' (2012 p113). If some urban theorists suggest that characteristics of the urban such as high population density create negative conditions for living, others such as Jane Jacobs (2003) suggest that large numbers of people on the street and sociability brings life, cohesion and safety to the urban milieu. Jacobs argues that streets are often safer without police presence because people organically create their own systems of interaction ''by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves'' (Jacobs, 2003 p116). I agree that something similar has occurred in downtown Cairo whereby even though the rise in discourses of criminality have increased many people have not noticed any real increase in crime. Interestingly, a global UN report on homicide rates recently published (2014) showed that the murder rate has tripled in Egypt since 2009 which is not surprising due to the changes in security and political violent situation. However, the homicide rate is still lower in Egypt that in many other countries in the world putting subjectivities of what is 'safe' into question.

Men and women also experience the relative 'sociability' of the street differently. By sociability, I mean a high level of interaction between people on the street depending on the time of day. Nearby amenities also affect this buzz, the location of schools, businesses and food operators serve as points that increase the amount of people and interaction. For example, one street in downtown Cairo, Fahmy Street, contains a church, a carpark for local businesses and its guards, a bank, an outdoor café, two car workshops , a *makwagi* (master of ironing), a take away for grilled meats and in the mornings a foul cart serving Egypt's staple fava beans (*fuul*). The lack of control over small business ventures creates a situation where different practices are ongoing side by side. This gives plenty of opportunity for encounters between patrons:

> A man on his back fixing an engine glancing up to see a young couple on a
> date eating chicken at a nearby table while people stream out of the church
> nearby. Security guards for the nearby car garage sit watching a political talk
> show with the *bowabs* from nearby buildings. Outside the kiosk the owner
> and his friends sit on chairs talking politics, drinking tea and smoking

cigarettes taking up the majority of the narrow sidewalk. People mill around
waiting for each other outside businesses or buying from the woman selling
bread, the man selling fish or buying cigarettes from the kiosk.

(field notes, Jan 27 2014)

For many, these income-generating ventures are a vital source of income. The guards
of these buildings, the workers and those that live here all have relationships with one
another, residents, and pedestrians on the street. At any given time, conversations
could be taking place across the street between a guard on one side of the street and a
worker on the opposite side of the street. These areas are especially busy in the
mornings and afternoons when schools, shops and businesses open. Sociability and
business interests also go hand in hand as Jacobs (2003, p117) suggests that ''the
sight of people still attracts other people'' and so the bustle of the street attracts more
people and more custom, the safety of others also translating into safety for
businesses. Interlocutors maintained that they would not like downtown to change
and that they did enjoy its vibrancy however both men and women admitted that it
could sometimes be overwhelming. As discussed in previous chapters, myths of risk
and danger both real and imagined characterize middle class women's experience of
the area. These women also noted that they find the sociability to be uncomfortable at
times and lead to interactions that could be considered harassment simply because the
street geography encourages surveillance and chat.

In research on a public square in urban Cairo, participants suggested that they
much preferred staying outside and sitting in the square because *ahwas* were noisy
and busy and others forced them into interactions, while in the square people could
mind their own business or chat as they saw fit (Elsheshtawy, 2006 p306). Public
spaces like squares, parks and the street allow people to sit and watch without having
to interact with others, be forced into conversations or most importantly perhaps, to
buy anything. Elsheshtawy uses classical urban literature such as Jacobs (1961) to
consider how public space is a vehicle for seeing and being seen (2006, p306):

> The separation of actors and spectators was achieved since the street was wide
> enough to allow for people to distance themselves from each other and watch
> what was going on without appearing to be too intrusive. The ledges acted as
> excellent seating, and the performance tended to occur in the middle of the
> street. (ibid, p307)

Moreover, the events of others provided an excuse for people to talk and to get to know one another (ibid). In theorizing of behaviour in busy, urban space, Simmel suggests that the anonymity of the city encourages people to want to draw attention to themselves and to be noticeable to others (Tonkis, 2005 p118). If Ghannam (2013) suggests that masculinities are a performance that are played out on the street in front of others, we can also suggest that the conditions of the global city creates the conditions for certain types of behaviour. It seems that the 'showing off' that many middle class female interlocutors mentioned about working class men are tied to the act of 'seeing and being seen' in social exchanges. Unfortunately Cairo like many other neo-liberal global cities are witnessing the removal of public spaces to make away for different types of leisure activity that usually require capital. I argue that spending time in the street and watching people pass by is a form of entertainment for many people that should not have to require money and the lack of spaces provided for free entertainment contributes to the misreading of encounters in other spaces. As we now see, those that loiter or sit outside of cafes are often presented as people who cannot afford to go somewhere else and their gazes upon women are a form of harassment.

The street as a stage is a trope that rings true for many of my interlocutors too. However many associated the ''showing off'' and loud interactions in the street to be a performance of lower class vulgarity. Practice and interaction in the downtown street are read differently depending on the actor and audience. Ghannam (2013) argues that young men's masculinity is practiced through their knowledge and mastery of the street and those around them in the street. This sociability is then one form of access to power and identity for working class men who cannot realize other avenues. This research has argued that discourses suggesting poor young men are drug-taking criminals are used to serve political, economic and social purposes. However, this essentialist discourse also renders them as anonymous, worthless and without a voice. Street politics and practice have to be seen in relation to the last three years whereby the majority tried to make their voices heard both socially and politically. Behaviour of young men on the street in 2014 has to be seen in relation to the various ways that the state and society tried to silence and criminalize them in previous regimes. The anxiety of this street sociability for my interlocutors is related to the anxiety over the changing meaning of the space and their own social positions.

The deaths of working class men during the uprisings are symbolized in lower and upper class circles in Egypt as the ultimate and legitimate sacrifice for the uprisings that occurred in 2011 but in reality their behaviour is still viewed upon with suspicion for middle class interlocutors.

Like the traditional *Flaneur*, my male participants noted their enjoyment of the city when walking in the street. Amr, a 50 year old professional, noted how much he enjoys listening to people in Cairo as he goes about his daily errands. Urban theorists such as Jacobs (2003 p117) argue that the pull of cities in many ways is the almost natural predisposition and enjoyment people have from watching one another. Goffman (1959) would seem to agree, arguing that interactions in public life is a continual process of seeing and being seen. Amr continued that he enjoyed listening to people talk to each other about their personal lives and the general sociability of the street. Amr also spends time talking to the workers/businessmen on his street. He catches up on both local gossip and national affairs, which is important for his social standing in the area. Other male participants expressed joy at taking long walks around the city, finding new places and meeting new people. Here, men seem able to enjoy the city in ways that my female participants were simply unable to. While my female participants also enjoyed the city they were less likely to 'loiter' and more likely to run errands rather than just going for longer leisurely strolls. Not spending time in the street could certainly be a classed practice as most of the women I spoke to were upper class but even lower class women that I spoke to did not walk around so much either; they were busy, had to run errands and socialized with friends in other places.

Elyachar (2011) argues that connectivity and sociability between people on the streets has an economical benefit. Social relations and signs on the body are crucial for everyday interactions that have an economic function. Asking for directions through the open windows of cars is just one example of a daily interaction that allows people to get where they are going. These interactions are crucial for those who earn their living through taking journeys in Cairo quickly and efficiently. Visitors and locals to Cairo always point out how eager people are to give directions to strangers, no matter how valid these instructions may be. Elsheshtawy (2006) suggests that the sociability of public space in Egypt is also embedded in the cultural norms of space in Cairo. This author suggests that the concept of 'going out for

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recreation' and the 'dramaturgical nature of the street' are constitutive of urban Cairene street sub-cultures (p301). Moreover, the idea of leisure and having fun is wrapped up in simply 'being outside' which is a fresh alternative to the now-overused dichotomies put forward about gendered public space in the Middle East. Abaza (2001, p110) reminds us that historically *ahwas* have been a 'crucial front-stage' in neighbourhoods that serves as a place to socialize, keep up on information and most importantly here: to comment on passers by. Indeed, also even as a cultural stereotype ''the coffee house as a locus for commenting on the physique of passing women, is a repeated theme in novels and Egyptian films.'' (ibid) Any observer notices the many cafes and most especially the male dominated old *ahwas* that line the streets of downtown. These cafes literally 'line the streets' whereby tables and chairs are arranged facing outwards so the customers can watch the street as they leisurely drink tea and smoke a *shisha* (waterpipe). Women that I spoke to suggested that this street sociability coupled with surveillance made them feel intimidated as they walked past. However, perceptions of leisure practices cannot be seen separately from the stereotypes of café/*ahwa* visitors as time wasters (Bayat, 2006). These discourses also creep into middle class women's subjectivities while they walk leading to an anger between themselves and their 'watchers', an anger that appears to be present over the ability of poor men to consume middle class women as they walk by; even a small interaction that in their view should normally be out of bounds.

Many women I spoke to were unhappy with the staring and fixed gazes of men as they walked through the city. For many these stares were an aggressive act meant to intimidate and scare and were more likely to occur as they walked past kiosks or cafes where large groups of men were present and feeling confident to make others uneasy. However, I argue that it maybe telling that the only tool of aggression, violence or access to power that someone has is a stare. I suggest that some of the interactions from working class men against middle class women can be theorized against the backdrop of classed spatial segregation in the city. According to the social rules of engagement suggested to me by upper class female interlocutors, working class men are unable to approach women and especially upper class women in most settings. Spending time on the street is free for all and 'staring' becomes one route of anger or affection, surveillance and watching, who can see who, are glances of power. Upper class women's anxiety over poor men 'staring at them' is a tense expression

over the empowerment of the masses after 2011 and the following lack of order in the area. As DeKoning (2009 p544) suggests '' the undeserving male gaze was experienced as a defilement of physically and symbolically pure and respectable female bodies.''. The 'who can look at who' is a power dynamic played out between men and women of different backgrounds.

The power dynamics of class and gender are exemplified through this visual possibility. In terms of leisure practices, Elsheshawy (2006) also suggests that middle and upper class Egyptians do not use public space in the same way. Ceremonies, parties and leisure of the rich are performed behind closed doors. More recently, the urban poor are also trying to emulate these practices (ibid, p303). Indeed Ghannam (2009) among others suggest that the practices and meanings from the Gulf about seclusion and privacy affect Egyptians through migration, the media and money. However, fees are high in hotels and restaurants and many who cannot afford to continue to use public space (Elsheshawy, 2006 p205). Both Ghannam (2002) and DeKoning (2009) think about the idea that space in public and private is related to class. In an analysis of poor urban living Ghannam suggests that privacy is associated with the upper class and power, those that overlook (literally oversee) others and can decide when others see them are the ones in control (2010, p264). This is associated with power, knowledge and control (ibid). This is especially so when one considers that many Cairenes share rooms with other family members (UN habitat report 2013). These classed practices of urban space are an interesting caveat to how gender plays out in public space and the idea that the visual aspect of 'sexual harassment' is here intricately linked to power, class, space and historical moment.

The importance of discourses that present young men as sexually frustrated criminals is exemplified by perceptions of what behaviours actually constitute sexual harassment. The idea here is that an interaction that anyone could perform is judged to be welcome or not based on some apparent criteria such as class significations. Such perceptions are also shaped by practices of the street, age and class. Sara explains:

> It always depends on my mood and what has happened that day, but I always
> think there is a difference between some 18 year old following me and saying
> horrible things and other men, like my neighbours *bowab* [door man] who is

always sat outside and he is so old and harmless, when I walk by he always says 'ya asl' (hi honey) and I can't help but smile at him.

<p style="text-align:center">(personal correspondence, March 1 2014)</p>

Older men who sit on the street are of less threat than young men who are presumably more likely to inflict physical violence. Yet in other conversation women also suggest that the surveillance from older men sitting on the street is also overwhelming. Some interactions that are deemed as less threatening simply become 'talk' of the street as do calls from street vendors for the most part. It becomes apparent here how myths about the nature of young men particularly shape the subjectivities and experience of women in what is perceived as harassment.

The sociability of the street creates both negative and positive experiences for women and men. For example, many men that I spoke to (especially older residents) also expressed discomfort about the rising pollution and noise in downtown Cairo. The male middle class residents felt that the rising informality and crime in the area created an almost untenable living situation that included street fights, street vendors calling out loudly in the day and the night and engines revving from cars and motorcycles. Many also suggested that they were frequently annoyed by the loud and vulgar accents of the poor that lived, worked or visited downtown. This also extended to loud fights in the street that continued for many hours. Men also felt intimidated by these fights and powered dynamics of the street. For example, if they were with a woman and another man harassed her they felt like they should say something but that this could also lead to a violent interaction. If other men or neighbours were fighting in the street it also led to them feeling like they should join in. Orientalist discourse often presents women in Arab countries to be the ultimate victim, indeed women have different experiences in the Arab world like anywhere else depending on their backgrounds and context. However, it is worth noting that in a 2014 UN study on homicide globally found that in Egypt 87.8 of homicide victims to be men and women's statistics were 12.2 (p150). While statistics often leave out more than they highlight, it is worth challenging stereotypes of who are presented as the criminals and victims in middle class discourse. In a low income urban area of Cairo, Ghannam (2013) finds that intervening in disputes can be a desirable practice of masculinity as is sticking up for ones family, neighbours and friends. The presence of women also affected other relationships on the street. One interlocutor suggested that when he

<p style="text-align:center">117</p>

interacted with the security personnel on his own it was usually fine but when he was with his attractive wife the interaction was overly tense and aggressive or alternatively overly friendly. Either way her presence shaped his relationships with others.

Watching and surveillance, cat calls and crude remarks are the most common of interactions women face. Many of my interlocutors suggested that they felt these interactions were in general the most frequent and the most detrimental for everyday life. Physical attacks took place less frequently but were seen as more legitimate to complain about. Women that I spoke to were often told by men to just 'ignore' these interactions and they are just poor kids from poor neighborhoods having 'fun'. Aside from the dismissive nature of these comments, it is instructive to take seriously the way in which practices are considered as between play or harmful. Quinn writes ''play functions as both a source of fun and a mechanism by which gendered identities, group boundaries and power relations are (re)produced'' (2002, p393). Here, harassment is also attributed to the urban poor male and the reduction to 'fun' is also indicative of his perceived powerlessness even further. Ironically, in the first place the poor's powerlessness comes from larger systems of power and control such as Egypt's social class system and the neo-liberal state.

Essentially, the onus is on women to prove their respectability in public space. As noted in numerous reports on Egypt, men justify their behavior by suggesting that women want to be harassed. Phadke (2005) notes how men will argue women want to be harassed when they re-use routes to work/school that they had already experienced harassment on even though the women have no choice about which routes to take. These discourses are justifications that are available due to the nature of women's place in public space. For example, this respectability is also linked to the need to establish their 'protection-worthiness' (ibid p47). A conversation by Ghannam (2013) on masculinity in urban Cairo links the role of protector and helper as essential to the construction of masculinity. Interestingly one woman's call for protests in Egypt which led up to the uprisings in 2011 called on the men of Egypt to be 'men' and protest against the government and moreover to go out and protect any women protesting as part of this masculinity also (p1). However, as we have seen in the previous three years, whether someone should be worth protecting or not can swiftly change. Normally women are unable to 'loiter' in the street like men are. Due to ideas

of women on the street as sexually easy or just unrespectable women have to show their respectability. A study by DeKoning (2009) also finds that women have to establish their intentions and respectability when using public space. Many of my informants described increased amounts of harassment when waiting on the street alone, being lost or looking for somewhere. The expressions of vulnerability while being lost invite assistance from those around that might not always be welcome or might have ulterior motives. Female informants preferred to wait for friends inside an establishment such as a café when alone. Phadke (2005, p424) argues that women cannot use public space for pleasure and only when they have a goal or purpose, she links these discourses to assumptions made by 'communities and state structures'.

Vulnerability, Power and Harassment on the Street

Ilahi (2008) found that women who 'stood out' were targeted for increased harassment – such as those who are very light skinned and those who are very dark skinned. Women report being called *abd* (slave) and other racialized Arabic slang as part and parcel of daily street harassment and women suggest that were seen as prostitutes simply because they were black. This author links to other theorists who reiterate how people of disadvantaged groups suffer a different reality on the street than privileged groups – I also add that this depends heavily on other marks of distinction such as class and location. In thinking about power and appearance one interlocutor suggested that she has noticed a change in levels of harassment depending on the clothes she wears. Basma noticed this change in downtown and other areas due to her changing status from student to professional woman. She noticed that wearing suits, even with heels reduced the amount of harassment she received, when she wore baggy or casual clothes she elicited more negative responses from those around her. She suggested that her suit connoted power and her casual attire vulnerability. Other interlocutors also explored this theme. For example, some comment that especially due to the meanings associated with downtown, the majority are expected to dress well in this area. People from outlying poorer areas will put on their best clothes to come for a day out or to use the amenities. This might mean young women will wear color-coordinated outfits and young men sport freshly ironed shirts and jeans. Wearing sloppy or casual clothes is not seen as the norm. Indeed, Goffman suggests that appearance and non-verbal cues are the most important in social interactions and relay the most information, people are at least half aware of

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the way that there bodily cues will be read and amend them accordingly depending on situation (Burns, 1991 p38). In this way people are aware of the social cues they give off and any difference is taken to be a transgression and vulnerability.

Significantly, the idea that men do not see harassment as unwanted and fail to empathize with the victim is a finding from studies on sexual harassment in many contexts (Quinn, 2002 p386). In the reports by the UN (2013) and EWCR (2008) alongside other research (Ilahi, 2008) men often suggest that women want to be harassed and/or that they deserve it. Moreover, that some types of behavior such as ogling or verbal harassment are not 'harassment' at all. Rather than dismissed as a form of denial on behalf of these men, these statements have to be taken seriously. Indeed, many of my own interlocutors felt very uncomfortable about being 'stared at' or 'watched'. 'Girl watching' or sexually evaluating passing women, usually in front of other men – is intimately tied to masculinities (Quinn, 2002). 'Girl watching' is seen as a normalized activity for men and may be used to establish power over the woman or women in question (ibid). For Quinn, this also serves as a way to build masculine identities and social relations between men on the street. As Butler among others reiterate, masculinity is not a static category but one that must be continually practiced (ibid p394). Misunderstandings between men and women over what actually constitutes sexual harassment are due to socialized gender roles that suggest men are sexually and socially confident as opposed to women's indirectness and coquettishness (Quinn, 2002). Presumably this means that men do not realize their behavior is inappropriate because they deem their behavior as normal and women's responses of indifference as natural. With regards to the 'playful' practice of 'girl watching' Quinn (2002) argues that women are not considered with empathy but rather as objects to be used to create masculine identities among men (p391). Masculinity as depended on displays of power and heterosexuality thus interweave to create interactions against women that are unwanted and out of their control.

While many reports on sexual harassment have been to keen to reiterate that ''all women'' regardless of appearance are targeted for harassment my research tends to disagree. While I acknowledge the political importance of pushing this discourse I suggest that interactions such as harassment can occur due to any number of one's identity markers. For example, women may perceive what actually is harassment differently depending on their class, age or location. Men may harass a woman due to

his immediate surroundings, background or the power dynamics between him and his harassee. Of course, appearance as related to class and stereotypes also go a long way in defining relationships. Harassment cannot be seen as an interaction devoid of resulting from or creating power structures. Within the social milieu Mehta and Bondi (p70) look to understand why people choose to act in certain ways and most importantly, to highlight that people do not act alone but in relation to others. For example, they seek to understand hegemonic discourses and the costs and benefits of acting in certain ways in relation to these discourses. In other words, benefits come from behaving in a certain way or taking up a certain social position and how they are practiced through the body and capital. Different types of class and taste are expressed through dress, style, expression, food and so on.

Interestingly, all of my female participants suggested that expressions of confidence were necessary to reduce the likelihood of harassment. Sally, a 32 year old teacher, believed that harassment reduced when she wore a business suit. Feeling even more confident wearing high heels, she suggested that walking with determination and power made others cautious about saying something to her. She suggested that others caution might be related to the fact that she appeared important or at the very least knew someone else important. While others suggest that social life has become more fluid or even 'chaotic' since the 2011 popular uprising, these interactions of power are a remnant of the Mubarak days. Many suggest that the corruption, nepotism and power of life under Mubarak was felt the most on the street. *Wasta* or 'influence' through cronie connections allowed some to rise quickly at the expense of others. Police and connected individuals were able to criminalize the popular classes at a whim. Even now, all informants suggest that what you wear and body language are instrumental for deciding how others interact with you based on your social position. Regardless of gender, social class shapes rules of engagement in the everyday.

Conclusion

This work highlights how wider discourses about class and politics affect the micro interactions between people on the street but also how these everyday modes of communication contribute to build larger theories, as Goffman (1982, p4) suggests ''each participant enters a social situation carrying an already established biography

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of prior dealings with the other participants''. Conversations about class, power and national stability permeate the interactions that people have with one another on a daily basis. Tense encounters such as sexual harassment and all the things associated with this phenomenon are reflective of power that has historical and global roots. The need for order and stability in the centre of the city are intimately tied to upper class imaginations of public space.

Chapter Five: A Moment for Conclusions

Myth-making, Social Anxieties and Ordering the Global City

Sexual harassment on the street is a tangible problem, as many of my interlocutors will attest to. Many of my close friends and interlocutors have had their body parts groped by young men on the street, been followed home, and assaulted physically. On a more daily basis women that I spoke to complained of being stared at and intimidated, men saying crude and rude things to them as they passed by. While men that I spoke to did complain about daily hardships such as jobs, transport and militarization, unlike my middle class female interlocutors the class background of the men that I spoke to generally staved off harassment as they walked through the city. The concentration in chapters three and four over myth and rumours about harassment holds true while nevertheless acknowledging that this behaviour does actually happen. Like all cities in the world, dire economic circumstances and often harsh living situations produce a number of sites for tension, some of which are more visible that others. As I suggest in chapters three and four, public discourse over symbolic and physical violence on the urban poor and especially poor men, often goes unnoticed. The idea of this argument is not to prove whether harassment is actually happening or not but to highlight how discourses are created and travel to inform classed and gendered subjectivities. However, middle-upper class men and women's narratives were also characterized by rumours of the crimes committed by young poor men that have a social and political function. These narratives have to be understood amidst a changing urban milieu that also finds various conversations about the undesirability of poor people in an upper class space and the dirt, crime and 'nuisance' that it brings.

The uprisings of 2011 called for social justice and the end of corruption, nepotism and stale political power of elder generations. People came out onto the street to end arbitrary violence against the poor and start new political conversations. The meaning of downtown Cairo also changed with these movements that became heavily associated with Tahrir Square and its surrounding areas. New movements were borne out of a particular historical moment and place. As the political situation changed in the summer of 2013 when popular protests and a military government

gained power, the meaning of the area changed with it. For one, interlocutors suggest that a generational divide appears over a desire for stability versus the possibility of real change. Many downtown residents want stability for economic reasons considering many violent battles took place within the area. People suggest that now, more young people from outer lying areas are coming downtown now due to its association with anonymity and freedom. At the same time, informal economic trade practices continue as a new freedom in the streets increasing street sociability. Yet anxiety exists over the presence of lower class practices in downtown Cairo that reflect wider anxieties over social and political change. Myths about the criminality of the service classes justify their positions and therefore the wider social order.

Interaction between people on the street has to be seen in relation to wider sources of injustice and complexity. The subjectivities of my many of my interlocutors were shaped by the desires for a classed ordering and policing of the city. It is worth noting that many of my interlocutors travelled internationally and often talked about Cairo in relation to their travels in other global mega-cities. However, these cities and neo-liberal politics are for the most part failing young people, which is one of the reasons that people came out en masse in the 2011 uprisings in many countries of the world. As Ali suggests: discourses of fear, risk and uncertainty are linked to apprehensions about the failings of neo-liberalism alongside the failings of modernity and democracy (2012 p599). As I have argued, the social anxieties about sexual harassment and a rise in crime of the area are linked to worries about peoples own positions in Cairo's new social order. Many of my interlocutors have expressed angst over the unpredictability of the political, economic and social situation of the country at large. The lack of verifiable information over national events has encouraged even further speculation and conspiracy about marginalized groups and foreigners, which again form the backdrop for how people behave towards one another in the street. As Silverstein (2002) also mentions, the desire for stability, the 'truth' and a general sense of order is characteristic of a late capitalist society. The work of social integrationists such as Goffman (1959) help us to bridge the gap between the everyday and these wider sources of power. Harassment against women has to be seen in relation to state violence against all and certain kinds of class rage that are easily directed towards upper class women rather than upper class men.

Questioning Sexual Harassment

This project argues that sexual harassment is a highly nuanced phenomenon and the perception of what constitutes harassment depends on class, locale, age among other factors. Although it may be a worthwhile political project to push for an end to all types of violence and negative behaviours against women under the banner of 'sexual harassment' doing so also serves as a form of de-politicization in of itself. As Fraser (2009) suggests about feminism and development more generally, using feminist goals without critiquing wider frameworks of neo-liberal inequality even serves to reiterate the very systems of power that are responsible in the first place. Using Fraser's argument, concentrating on the cultural context of harassment as opposed to political and economic inequality leaves out more that it provides. This research alongside other ethnographic work by Nassif (2010) and Ilahi (2008) highlights how insufficient that quantitative data is provided by big organizations such as the UN (2013) survey, which contradictions and complexions within their own statistics attest to. This research builds on these works by showing how context is all-important for understanding peoples perceptions of one another and their behaviour. For example, even though I believe sexual harassment to a big problem affecting women's lives negatively in many ways men are also victims of inequalities of power, crime and violence both physical and symbolic.

This research alongside the work of others highlights the trouble with defining what behaviours is sexual harassment or not. Indeed my own research suggests that people experience unwanted contact or harassment differently depending on the situation. For example, in chapters two and three I pointed out how the perceptions of what is harassment depends on the context of space; a boy asking a girl for the time is perceived differently in downtown than it is in Zamalek. The behaviours and practices as related to class are also important for understanding what is harassment. Moreover, I suggest that one specific interaction between people on the street can depend on any number of different axes of identity or information. For example, a man may harass a woman for her status as a foreigner, of being from a certain class, wearing certain things, race or any combination of these factors at one time. The work of ECWR (2008) also appears to acknowledge this complex reality choosing to group 'harasser's into different groups depending on why they harass in the first place. They find that people might fall into several groups such as those who harass

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to assert their masculinity or for a sexual need or to gain power (p14). Interactions between people on the street can find their locations in a number of different discourses that provide information about the specific social situation. Of course in reality, interactions are far more complex than these categories alone.

Interlocutors suggest that there is a difference between the anger of violent and small interactions of the everyday that might be experienced differently depending on the person and the context. Qualitative research suggests that interactions are extremely varied between people and that a multitude of different behaviours can be deemed as 'harassment'. This is also evidenced by the emotions that come with harassment, for example a report by the ECWR (2008) also suggests that a large number of women felt angry and hurt from harassment while others said simply 'they did not care'. As Ali (2012) shows in Karachi, women continue their everyday business but also understand the plight of men who are their husbands, brothers and fathers. Sympathy arises between people who both experience daily violence and understand that daily life must continue regardless and that neither men nor women are simply passive victims of such injustice. The UN (2013) report on Egypt shows that in relation to responses to street harassment over 46% of women will continue on walking and just over 20% will actually insult the perpetrator. Far from being passive women appear to play an active part of these interactions. Not all men are guilty nor all women victims.

Drawing on and Departing from Theory

In this thesis I used a conglomeration of different studies in order to explore the questions I asked throughout the project. Coming from an interdisciplinary background myself I hoped to create a much more nuanced background to the phenomenon commonly known as 'sexual harassment'. This means looking towards the politics of power that create these tense street negotiations and also the way these discourses highlight other national tensions and travel to create even more locations for violence. As many of my interlocutors suggested, the increasing conversations about sexual harassment shape the way that people see one another on the street and also legitimize political projects. Sexual harassment has become much more of a hot topic in recent years and while any amount of studies on this important will never be exhaustive care should also be taken to make sure it is carried out in a sensitive and

contextual manner. It is the project of this thesis to insist that sexual harassment is much more than a development-esque check list of behaviours that could happen at any one give time but should be understood in the manner of utterance both contextually and based on historical moment. Paying attention to context in terms of understanding relationships to space, politics and different types of violence shows how what is known as 'sexual harassment' can vary widely.

In terms of understanding space I looked to how other scholars have discussed the relationship between class and the use of urban space. This is not to say that sexual harassment is not taking place in rural areas but simply to try and understand more about the various factors that create the likelihood and experience of sexual harassment in the urban. Looking towards the work of Ghannam (2002, 2013, 2014), it was important to understand how people assign their own meanings to space and the community. Although the work of Amar and Singerman (2006) and Abaza (2011, 2013) highlight how important it is to understand the classed and neoliberal elements of city making in the current time, we must also appreciate how people make sense of their own space and enact daily negotiations and social change. Ghannam (2014) points out how the rise of the gated communities and aspirational lifestyles have entrenched social class systems in Cairo even further. While I tend to agree with this statement it must also be considered how flexible and uncertain these trends are and that as my research points out, young people especially are creating new forms of social change and political dissent. Class considerations and the vision and order of the modern global city as discussed by Sassen (1996) and AlSayyad and Roy (2006) gave ample discussion to the classed practices as discussed through this research and the ways in which many articulated difference between social and urban change. For many, the need for order and stability as opposed to the disorder and pollution of the lower classes heavily shaped their narratives and subjectivities surrounding sexual harassment. It is these considerations of space and urban form that give more weight to understanding what is sexual harassment but also how discourses about change and people in any urban setting intertwine. The neo-liberal elements of city-making are also instructive for thinking about order, difference and vulnerability which is a factor that has been shown to matter for the incidence of sexual harassment in many contexts. The idea here is that taste and consumption practices are regulated through space in order to create aspirational class systems. When men and women are not

seen to 'fit in' with the locale, area, fashion, political persuasion or carry a certain social or cultural capital then a location for tension results. Social interactions carry power and acting in certain ways with certain people should not be seen as separate to what actors gain or lose from doing so.

In order to understand the plethora of behaviours such as sexual harassment I looked towards other urban theorists to think in more depth about how the city creates certain patterns and ways of thinking. Other research on harassment in Cairo such as by Ilahi (2009) and Nassif (2010) indicated that the very perception of what harassment is depends on context. Not only that but that experience of sexual harassment can be very situational and women's experiences of safety and fear depend on spatial emotions such as familiarity of any particular location. These studies also underlined why I chose to study a specific area such as downtown which is both a community and a transitory place holding a number of meanings for those who go there. The various meanings that this space hosts became one of the most interesting facets of the project and came to highlight how friction between people in the form of sexual harassment happens in the everyday. A number of different urban theorists cited in this study suggest that there is a freedom associated with anonymity and a certain 'dramaturgical' aspect of public space in Cairo. I wanted to investigate this further within my own project to think about the class aspect of certain street practice and behaviour contributes to the complexity of what is sexual harassment: namely the difference between street sociability and other more serious sexual assaults.

In order to investigate a fuller picture of the often de-politicized and de-contexualized idea of sexual harassment I look to both grander ideas about society and social change with a micro-sociology of the street. Thinking about economic, social and political policies allowed insights into why certain people felt about one another the way they do. In this instance I looked towards the work of Amar (2011) and Silverstein (2012) who both try to look beneath the surface of why some conversations are taking place and why others are not. Why some discourses are visible and become dominant and others do not and what political end this services. A conversation not many people want to have in Cairo 2014, a study on sexual harassment highlights anxiety's about social change but has also served the purpose of legitimizing securitization projects, casting aspersions on lower class men and

maintaining status quo. While I have taken a lot of these narratives and themes from conversations and interviews with people in downtown between 2012-2014 I have also been pushed forward to think about what happens on the street through looking at the smaller interactions that take place between people on the street. Looking at the work of others such as Elyacher (2011, 2012) who also takes small interactions seriously to think more deeply about social connectivity and political economy, observations and watching the street have allowed me to discuss daily interactionism alongside political and economic realities. In this sense, the political backdrop forms quite literally the staging of how men and women in downtown could go about their daily lives. Elyacher also successfully highlights how social connections that are often simply referred to as 'cultural' habits are actually a rich source of economic and emotional value. Likewise looking towards the work of Ali (2012) I wanted to show that daily life is not characterized just by violence, tension and assault but that life continues as normal and is a process of negotiation – rarely stable. I was also able to use this work to avoid focusing on the long dismissed dichotomies about gender and violent men in the Middle East, which without a fuller discussion on how social life in Cairo operates, studies on sexual harassment usually become.

I was able to look towards a number of sites within the urban milieu such as the street, the cafes, the market and the home in order to discuss sexual harassment and social change. While many studies usually only focus on one aspect such as the street or protests especially in Egypt I feel that looking towards and asking questions about how people felt about their home in relation to their area, their café and local services allowed me to see how people viewed many aspects of their lives and the flexibility and instability between them. For example, understanding how people feel about their home is instructive for thinking about how they feel about outside their home and vice versa. Emotions such as fear, familiarity, sociability and social value all underpin how interlocutors felt about themselves, other people and on a more national level.

Implications for Future Research

Drawing on this research and that of others (Ghannam, 2013) suggests that more work needs to be done on the creation of gendered subjectivities in Cairo. For example, while this work gives some indication it would be interesting to take a more

detailed study on how discourses of sexual harassment and masculinity affect, and are affected by, daily lives and how men and women see themselves. For example, I only drew on a mainly middle class sample and as the discourse of sexual harassment permeates and is contested through more and more mediums it would be interesting to see how lower class men negotiate and contend with these conversations. A more detailed map may also be drawn between where and how this discourse originates and what effects it has along the way and to what (or perhaps more importantly whose) end.

This research looks towards the spatial elements of sexual harassment that is also used by NGO's such as HarassMap who seek to highlight to communities that harassment *is* happening in their areas and it is not just something that happens elsewhere. Likewise other organizations such as the ECWR strategically look to focus on the idea that 'all women' regardless of race, class, context and background are being harassed in order to confront the idea that women should be blamed for their own harassment. While this is true in many ways it leaves out more nuance than it provides. I argue that any intervention on behalf of 'sexual harassment' has to take into consideration and first combat state violence, violence enacted by both global and local economic systems, inequality and social injustice. Harassment against women cannot be seen separately to violence against men that carries through into the relationship between men and women and in fact all aspects of social life.

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