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**Education and the Production of
Citizenship in the Late Mubarak Era:
Privatization, Discipline and the
Construction of the Nation in Egyptian
Secondary Schools**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in Politics and
International Studies

2012

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Declaration for PhD thesis

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ABSTRACT

This research is about the production of 'lived' and 'ideal' citizenship in the late Mubarak era. It examines the ways in which national secondary schools produce students as gendered and classed citizens and how national identity and citizenship are constructed and contested in schools within the prevailing authoritarian, neoliberal and Islamist projects. The thesis draws on extensive research in six technical, general and private secondary schools catering to different social classes in Cairo between 2008 and 2010, and an analysis of the relevant nationally unified textbooks. It highlights the ways in which schools serve as examples of the corrosion of state legitimacy, the weakening and informalization of state institutions and the associated patterns of repression, corruption and contestation.

The research shows how informal and extralegal privatization had nullified the state's commitment to free public education and undermined various aspects of discipline, attendance and examination in the system; contributing to more violent and arbitrary forms of punishment, especially in public schools. It details the different forms of almost compulsory tutoring and arbitrary beating, humiliation and gender control by teachers that structured and undermined the citizenship entitlements of working as well as middle class students.

It draws out the lines of citizenship and national identity projects as presented in official textbooks; discussing their prominent use of Islam and Islamist morality and the place of neoliberal citizenship and constructions of the 'bad citizen' in them. It shows how schools attempt to promote feelings of love and belonging to the nation through school rituals and discourses. It describes the ways in which these official nationhood and citizenship projects were appropriated or subverted by school actors, and their use of themes of poverty, corruption, humiliation and injustice in reflecting on both the state and love of the nation.

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

I have used the system of transliteration for Arabic set by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, except for the use of diacritics. In reported speech and commonly used terms, I have used the “g” to transliterate the hard “g” sound as used in the Egyptian dialect; e.g. *majmu‘at* (groups) in classical Arabic appears as *magmu‘at* in transliterations of reported speech.

NOTE ON ‘THE SCHOOLS’

Throughout the thesis, for purposes of convenience, I often refer to the *public* technical schools as simply the technical schools, to the *public* general schools as the general schools and to the private general schools, as the *private* schools, using the article *the* to indicate *the schools in which the research was concluded*. For example, I refer to ‘the girls’ public general school in which the research was conducted’ simply as: the girls’ general school. I sometimes refer to school administrators and teachers as a whole simply as: teachers or school authorities, distinguishing between administrators and teachers when this is relevant for the analysis.

In order to protect respondents from any form of harm or embarrassment that may arise due to the information they discussed, I have not used the real names of respondents nor stated the names of the research schools. I have also not stated the names of the neighborhoods where the schools were located as this may make it easy to deduce which secondary schools are being referred to and which principals or teachers are being referred to.

CHAPTER ONE: EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE LATE MUBARAK ERA: THE REGIME, THE MARKET, DISCIPLINE AND IDENTITY

INTRODUCTION

Bourdieu wrote that “the sociology of education lies at the foundation of a general anthropology of power and legitimacy” (Bourdieu 1996, 5). The assumption that schools shape both national identity and student subjectivities is the very premise and purpose of the creation of modern mass schooling systems and remains central to their concerns. On the other hand, it is not textbooks or state desires but the larger social forces, social relations and young people’s daily experiences in schools and communities that affect their emerging senses of themselves as civic beings (Rubin, Hayes and Benson 2009). School relations, norms of behavior, modes of control and means of punishment are the key ways in which students learn their ‘different’ places in society, the ‘correct’ behavior for them and what it means to become nationals and citizens of the state. Written and unwritten codes of conduct in schools are “sites of knowledge production, fashioning normative, gendered citizens, and marginalizing those who do not easily conform” (Raby 2005, 71). Therefore, the school as a disciplinary institution (or its ‘hidden curriculum’) tacitly teaches students unspoken lessons about their race, class, and gender and often manifests in how schools regulate their students’ bodies (Anyon 1988, Orenstein 1994). “In this way, schools produce students who not only learn specific subject matter, but also “learn how to embody raced, classed, and gendered realities” (Morris 2005, 28).

There is an overwhelming sense of crisis in Egyptian education; in fact of absence, dysfunction and total failure. As many Egyptians say when they discuss educational issues, “there is no education”: *mafish ta’lim*. Given the widespread forms of corruption and extralegal practices and the unregulated and informal nature of privatization, the education system reflects some of the key features of the decay of state institutions and rule of law that defined the late Mubarak era. Secondary education has a special place in these concerns about the privatization and cost of education and the larger issues relating to the construction of citizenship. Exploring the everyday world of different types of schools provides a rich arena for understanding the nature of the state and its social contracts with different classes. While there are important works that deal with some aspects of the production of lived and imagined citizenship in Egypt, there is great need for work that examines concrete institutions of the state and how they reflect and are shaped by dominant governance projects. Given the very limited literature on education in Egypt, this research hopes to begin to bring together and reflect on some of the key issues in Egyptian education in this historical juncture.

This research is built around extensive observation and discussions in six secondary schools catering to different social classes in the greater Cairo area between 2008 and 2010. It explores the ways in which secondary schools produce students as gendered and classed citizens and how national identity is constructed and nurtured in the schools within the larger neoliberal, Islamist and authoritarian projects of the late Mubarak era. In response to themes that presented themselves throughout the fieldwork, the research approaches the production of citizenship in relation to three interlinked topics: the privatization of education, modes of discipline and punishment in the schools studied, and the discourses and rituals of the nation and state. It attempts to draw out the lines of national identity projects as constructed in official textbooks and the ways in which schools attempt to promote feelings of love and belonging to the nation. It situates constructions of Islam and Islamist morality in these citizenship and nationhood projects, and examines the appropriation or subversion of these official discourses by school actors. In other words, it investigates both ‘lived citizenship’ or actual access to protective, provision and participation rights; and ‘ideal citizenship’ as

constructed in official textbook discourse and as articulated in student and teacher discourses.

The thesis falls in seven chapters and a conclusion. The current chapter is made up of three parts. The first part describes the main features of the Mubarak regime that frame and inform an exploration of citizenship in the late Mubarak era. The following part discusses two key themes of the research: privatization and punishment as central themes of 'lived citizenship' entitlement in the schools. The final part of the chapter discusses discourses of the nation and Islam as key themes in the construction of 'ideal citizenship'. Chapter Two details the research's approach to studying these issues in the schools, building on the literatures on discipline and subjectivation and the sociology and anthropology of education, and describing some of the key issues surrounding the way the research was conducted. Chapter Three provides an overview of key issues in Egyptian secondary education, paying special attention to issues around quality and privatization. It surveys the available official data and background information on education in Egypt that sets the stage for the discussion in the subsequent chapters, in terms of enrolment, tracking and achievement across the system, quality, teacher pay and public expenditures on education. It discusses private tutoring as they key feature of privatization across the three tracks in a comparative perspective. It surveys the available data on tutoring enrolment, costs and household spending; and the links between tutoring, quality, increased competition and corruption and their impact in the different tracks.

Chapters Four and Five are aimed at introducing the everyday world of the schools in its concrete discourses and practices. They are concerned with the 'lived' citizenship across the different schools and how the legal and constitutional rights of free education and protection from harm are translated and experienced in the schools. Chapter Four analyzes the features and impact of private tutoring across the schools catering to different social classes and its relationship to assessment, curriculum and, pedagogical policies/practices. It brings to light the discourses and practices of students and teachers in relation to privatization, highlighting the issues of discipline and

punishment across the schools surveyed and the links between privatization and future job or university enrollment opportunities. Chapter Five examines some of the ways in which classed and gendered citizenship is constructed and enacted in the everyday life of the schools. It presents an image of the use of physical and emotional violence in schools, the gendered and classed dimensions of the violence, and students' discourses about it. It expands the discussion of the breakdown of school control and regulations by exploring student "noncompliance" with school and classroom rules, especially in its gendered dimensions. It sheds light on the most pronounced strategies of gender surveillance in schools, how these strategies are linked to concerns about sexual harassment, and the preoccupation of school actors with these issues.

Chapters Six and Seven attempt to draw a picture of how the nation and state were articulated and enacted in the schools, in terms of official textbooks, in Chapter Six; and in student and school level rituals and discourses in Chapter Seven. Chapter Six traces the evolution of citizenship and nationhood discourses in national textbooks since Nasser and details the citizenship and nationhood discourses of the late Mubarak regime. It explores constructions of national identity and citizenship across a sample of the nationally unified 2009/2010 general and technical secondary school textbooks. It analyzes constructions of the nation and the citizen and the ways in which they intersect with the neoliberal directions of the regime as well as its complex relationship with different forms of Islamism. Chapter Seven discusses the key themes in student and teacher discourses of nationhood and citizenship and discusses the morning assembly ritual as a key practice and concrete example of the production and performance of nationhood in the schools. It discusses student, teacher and classroom discourses that relate to feelings of national belonging, constructions of the 'Egyptian' self and the place of Islam and neoliberal citizenship in these discourses. It looks at the ways in which student and teacher discourses appropriated or subverted textbook and dominant constructions of nationhood and citizenship.

The concluding chapter brings together the main findings of the research; reflecting on their links with broader political, educational and theoretical issues in terms of

privatization, discipline, nationhood and citizenship. It looks at how the Egyptian case can nuance our understanding of neoliberalism and privatization in It reflects on realities of discipline and punishment in the schools and how they relate to Foucauldian discussion of discipline. education It revisits the popular discourse of *mafish ta'lim* (there is no education), highlighting concrete examples of what this means for students across the system. Finally, it reflects on constructions of nationhood and citizenship and how they may be linked to the events of 2011.

CORRUPTION, INFORMALITY AND REPRESSION IN THE LATE MUBARAK ERA

The key features of the political and economic landscape in Egypt at the end of the Mubarak era include: the intensified application of neoliberal and pro-business economic policies and political arrangements, deteriorating real wages for most sections of the population and pervasive corruption and informality, large and widening income disparity, poverty rates of 40-50%, soaring inflation, deterioration of key public services, widening rural- urban disparities, and a growing population of almost 83 million people¹; all coupled with selective repression by a strengthened police state and growth in opposition movements and media.

While Chapter Six describes in significant detail the citizenship and nationhood discourses of the late Mubarak regime as reflected in official textbooks, this section focuses on the main features of the regime in terms of clientelism and pervasive corruption, neoliberalism, privatization and income polarization and selective repression. The almost exclusive focus of the thesis on domestic issues and dynamics does not deny the general context of the increasingly close alliance of the regime with U.S. and Israeli interests and how this has framed its 'security' concerns and economic policies.

¹ Total population in 2009 was estimated at around 82,999,000 (UNICEF 2009).

AUTHORITARIANISM, NEOLIBERALISM AND CRONYISM

The position of the president as the ultimate source of power and authority has remained intact from Nasser to Mubarak, where “[p]ersonal authoritarian rule in contemporary Egypt has become institutionalized” (Kassem 2004, 167). What most distinguishes Mubarak’s rule is probably the corrosion of the power and authority of the state and the rule of law. It is the pervasiveness of informality and corruption that have accompanied the state’s withdrawal, not only from the provision of social services, but also from the most basic policing and regulatory functions.

In the early years of his rule, Mubarak relied on the elite configuration and general political direction he inherited from Sadat. He cemented and consolidated Egypt’s alliance with the United States, the slow adoption of economic liberalization policies, token measures of political liberalization and rapprochement with Islamist groups. “Inward-looking crony capitalism, coupled to the military economy and the leviathan government with its still large public sector, generates the patronage and provides the controls required for the regime to retain its support within the state, while contemptuously ignoring or repressing what little autonomous political life remains” (Henry and Springborg 2001, 155). The limited bureaucratic capabilities and reach of the state are more evident in its increasing withdrawal from its bureaucratic and governance functions. Dorman has characterized the Egyptian state as a “Lame Leviathan” that combines durable autocracy with state incompetence in a context where state-society relations are “characterized by a logic of neglectful rule, entailing state-society disengagement; patrimonialism and clientelism; and risk avoidance” (Dorman 2007, 247).

The hegemonic party that emerged from the earlier period of liberalization—the National Democratic Party—acted as a “steering committee of Egypt’s private sector” by serving as its conduit for getting access to state largesse (Bianchi 1989, 15-16). Parliamentary elections served as “the regime’s most important device for the distribution of rents and promotions to important groups within Egypt’s politically

influential classes including family heads, businessmen, and party apparatchik” for the selection of those individuals who will be allowed to extract state rents in the future via both legitimate and illegitimate channels, shielded by parliamentary immunity (Blaydes 2008a, 1). Patrimonialism and clientelism were furthered through the ‘democratic’ structures of elections and political parties; and within neoliberal policies, this contributed to the intensification of corruption within the regime’s mode of governance. The regime had therefore arrived at a formula for maintaining its hold on power while offering selective benefits to a changing configuration of elites, especially after 2003. This has translated into the further deterioration of public services and real wages for vast segments of the population across the country.

While continuing to court and strengthen the elite created by Sadat’s policies, Mubarak tried for long to court other important constituencies. Diane Singerman has described the ways in which, in a political system that is more repressive and polarized, citizens come to participate by consuming and the government maintained its legitimacy through distribution (1995, 245). The regime has periodically courted three important constituencies: public sector employees, farmers, and the urban poor with tangible effects including election-year inflation, a pre-election drain on reserves, and even a higher level of per capita calorie consumption in election years (Blaydes 2008b). This politics of consumption was premised on the massive depression in real terms of public sector wages throughout the Mubarak era. The various forms of subsidies around which the politics of redistribution and consumption revolved were part of a social contract where “the government is in effect saying to wage earners: you will be paid partly in cash and partly in services and commodities” (Harik 1992, 486).²

The social contracts implied in these practices of distribution and consumption have been changing with the intensification of neoliberal policies. The process of neoliberal reform initiated in 1991, with its roots in Sadat’s Infitah policies of the 1970s, has

² While rationalizing the subsidy system is widely discussed as an important policy goal, the overlooked fact is that subsidies are “supplementary wages and cannot be removed or reformed without overhauling the whole structure of prices and wages and the type of management the state has used to run the economy” (Harik 1992, 497).

resulted in significant changes in both the Egyptian economy and the nature of the social contract between the state and society (Alissa 2007). It entailed a massive retrenchment of the state from its provision and social protection functions. This was manifested in pervasive forms of privatization [formal and informal] across social and economic sectors, and a deterioration of the quality of the key social services of health and education as well as the state of other public services such as transportation and public safety. Accompanied by rising prices and consecutive waves of inflation due to currency devaluation, this has resulted in pervasive poverty and widening inequality. These, coupled with widening forms of corruption, extralegal and informal practices, undermined the rule of law and further structured access to protective citizenship rights along class lines.

The most recent wave of pro-business liberalization and privatization came around 2003/2004 with the devaluation of the Egyptian pound and the appointment of the Nazif cabinet, which was removed by the January 2011 protests. The appointment of the Nazif government not only indicated an intensified neoliberal direction, more overt forms of corruption and conflicts of interest, but also the intent to pass on the 'presidency' to Mubarak's son, Gamal, as signaled by the 2005 constitutional amendments, paving the way for his succession. In March 2007, the Constitution was finally purged of references to socialism and replaced with the declaration that "the economy of the Arab Republic of Egypt is founded on the development of the spirit of enterprise." These changes were finally pushed through in response to international pressures and within a corresponding change in the political elite. Changes in the political landscape involved a significant reshuffling of the so-called "Old Guard" of the ruling elite, and the rise of a new guard associated with Gamal Mubarak. His selected associates from the business community were installed in the ruling Party's Policy Secretariat and eventually into the key ministerial positions. "Under sweeping privatisation policies, [Mubarak and the clique surrounding him] appropriated profitable public enterprises and vast areas of state-owned lands. A small group of businessmen seized public assets and acquired monopoly positions in strategic commodity markets such as iron and steel, cement and wood" and "local industries that

were once the backbone of the economy were left to decline” (Ismail 2011a). Under structural adjustment and neoliberal reforms, levels of growth and job creation have not have not been high enough to balance these negative patterns. Further, the government has not been able to successfully achieve the chief aims of these economic policies in terms of lowering its levels of debt and expanding its exports (Henry and Springborg 2001, Abo El-Abass and Gunn 2011).

UNEMPLOYMENT, INFORMALITY AND WAGE POLARIZATION

be maintained only because the salaries remained below a living wage (Mitchell 1999). The continued decline of public-sector employment coincided with the rise of the informal sector and the withdrawal of women from the labor force. The increasing precariousness and informalization of public sector employment [glaringly evident in a major employer such as the Ministry of Education- as detailed in Chapter Three] signaled a significant shift in the strategies of the regime, albeit one moving at the slow encroaching speed characteristic of the Mubarak regime. While public servants were still courted with annual bonuses and raises, an increasing proportion of public sector employees was being hired on differentiated ‘temporary contracts’, that offered varying pay structures and minimal wages below the poverty lines [most receiving monthly wages of 100- 350 EGP; i.e. 15- 50 USD]. Such trends largely remained below the public radar and were reported in small scale oppositional media (see Al-Marsad al-Naqabi 2007). There is little official data available about the actual pay structures in the public sector, whereas a commonly discussed figure in recent (post-‘January 25 Revolution’) public statements is of half a million public sector workers hired on temporary contracts. Furthermore multiple patterns of wage polarization within the public sector were occurring at once. Take-home Salaries in the higher echelons of the administrative structure were expanding based on mechanisms that were legal but lacking in transparency and based far less on any measure of merit than direct patrimonialism [rewards for serving on various committees, travel expenses, percentages of contracts executed]. Salaries increased for employees working directly or indirectly with donor agencies or in departments of key ministries that were

upgraded to attract more qualified employees; and where adequate pay was offered, but the pay structure across the ministry remained the same. This was over and above normalized forms of corruption across all levels of public administration, which benefitted some public sector employees exponentially more than others, as discussed below.

Informality is also critical for understanding the labor market and the fundamental problem of unemployment among youth, which shapes their perceptions, investment and engagement with education. The most pronounced impact, especially on youth, of neoliberal policies and diminished rule of law has been increased unemployment and informalization, informing distinct forms of exploitation and inequality of opportunity, especially affecting women and secondary school graduates. Informalization has increased in the Egyptian labor market during the 1990s (McCormick and Wahba 2004), where the informal sector has been estimated to employ about 55% of the Egyptian labor force (Radwan 2007; World Bank 2003, 81). The “informal sector” involves employment activities linked to industrial and service work in formal settings in which job-holders are not “recognized, supported, or regulated by the government and even when they are registered, and respect certain aspects of the law, they are almost invariably beyond social protection, labor legislation, and protective measures at the workplace” (Mokhtar and Wahba 2002, 133). In fact in addition to these practices, most medium and large “formal” institutions also resort to a range of serious violations to Egyptian labor laws, such as the dominant practice whereby employees are required to sign their resignation when they are hired so that they can be terminated without notice, are seldom given copies of their contracts and their social insurance documents are falsified, stating lower salaries so that firms pay lower social insurance contributions.

Youth in Egypt continue to be the most disadvantaged group in terms of higher rates of unemployment, lower earnings, and limited job security and stability, with the majority of new entrants finding jobs in the informal economy (Assaad and Barsoum

2007).³ Over the period of neoliberal reforms, while 7.5 per cent growth rates are proclaimed by the government, real unemployment was estimated at around 26.3 per cent (Shatz 2010). Because jobs are so scarce and of such low quality, a large proportion of youth have had to stop searching for work (counted as ‘out of the labor force’) and are therefore not counted among the ‘unemployed’. A shocking 80% of those aged 22 to 29 were counted as ‘out of the labor force’ in recent figures, the majority of them women (UNDP 2010). Technical school graduates suffer the highest rates of unemployment, lowest earnings and a devaluation of their educational credentials, and are concentrated within the informal economy’s poor-quality jobs and precarious working conditions (Assaad and Barsoum 2007). By 2006, first employment in the informal sector represented half the jobs obtained by female commercial school graduates, a phenomenon that was virtually nonexistent three or four decades earlier (Amer 2007). More alarming, however, is that this informal sector is not a temporary situation and that those whose first job after graduating is in this sector will be unable to transition into formal-sector employment; 95 percent of those who were employed in informal jobs in 1990 were still in those or similar jobs in 1998 (Mokhtar and Wahba 2002, cited in World Bank 2003, 83). Young people are among the lowest-paid workers, often taking poor quality jobs in which they receive few benefits, such as medical insurance, union representation, and paid vacations, and do not earn enough to start families and complete their transitions to adulthood (Assaad and Barsoum 2007).

Because of the very large number of applicants, employers resort to accepting ‘recommendations’ for specific candidates in order to avoid a long and time-consuming selection process. Personal recommendations and connections are invaluable for obtaining informal and private sector jobs and Barsoum (2004) points out that *wasta*/connections is indispensable in securing a government job. This clearly shapes and exacerbates the sense of injustice and inequality of opportunity articulated in student and teacher discourses, discussed in Chapter Seven. Along with unemployment,

³ From 1998-2006, there has been: a decrease in female labor force participation; and substantial increase in unemployment rates among post-secondary and university graduates who have become the most vulnerable group towards unemployment (Amer 2007).

informality and low job quality, job seekers also face various forms of exploitation and fraud, such as being hired for long periods ‘on probation’ and released without pay after completing certain tasks, not being paid the agreed upon sums, not being paid regularly, and female applicants may also respond to advertisement that have intentions of sexual exploitation (Barsoum 2004). As Elgeziri (2010) notes, for women working in small shops and offices with few coworkers and staff members, sexual harassment is a genuine risk, which partly explains why they are reluctant to work in such places despite the limited availability of opportunities. Therefore, the breakdown in the rule of law manifested in increasingly corruption and informality has severely impacted young people and their feelings of injustices and may have exacerbated unemployment in the country.⁴

CORRUPTION AND INFORMALITY

Key to understanding the regime’s distributional paradigm is not only how subsidies are essential to the state’s contract with wage-earners, but in fact how corruption and informal privatization have also become fundamental to the wage structure of state—and even private—employees. For Amin (2009), rampant and systematic corruption in the Mubarak era was a direct result of the state being both weak and totalitarian (*rakbwa wa shumuliya*). Dorman portrays the informal neighborhoods themselves as “both a consequence of an authoritarian political order and embedded in the informal control stratagems used by Egyptian governments to bolster their rule” (Dorman 2009, 419).

Corruption intensified in all layers of public as well as private institutions, especially during the last 10 years of the Mubarak era. From the larger patterns of crony

⁴ While it is often believed that informalization is driven by widespread unemployment, it has been argued that informalization also drives unemployment. Boughzala and Kouki (2003) argue that unemployment persistence in countries like Tunisia is not caused only by labor market rigidities and by population growth. The size of the informal sector and the low level of investment within the formal sector and in public infrastructure and services are other important factors. They show that the larger the size of the informal sector the more persistent unemployment will be, and that the larger the share of investment allocated to the formal sector, the lower and less persistent unemployment will be (Boughzala and Kouki 2003).

capitalism at the top to everyday petty corruption, Galal Amin (2009) portrays corruption under Mubarak as “inseparable from the regime itself” (Amin 2009, 58).⁵ According to Transparency International’s 2007 Corruption Perceptions Index, Egypt ranked 105 among 163 countries, with a score of 2.9, on a scale of 0 (“rampant corruption”) to 10 (“least corrupt”) (Alissa 2007). An opinion survey conducted by the Egyptian National Center for Social and Criminal Research revealed that 94% of respondents agreed that corruption has become a big problem and 70% felt that corruption had increased over the past year alone (Salih 2010). Another survey also concluded that “the majority of Egyptians do not feel safe in their country, due to increasing crime rates and escalating corruption and abuse of power and the hegemony of capital and the aggravation of the phenomenon of disregard to the law” (Al-Iraqi 2011). This was facilitated by the lack of interest on the part of authorities in combating it: corruption cases rarely reached the courts and when they did, those in power were able to disregard court decisions. Under generalized and systematic corruption, the police also engaged in extortion and offered their services to private interests, while “thugs became an arm of the police” and “practices of thuggery have been adopted by the regime to maintain itself and protect the interests of the ruling elite for decades” (Ismail 2011a). Importantly, the pervasiveness of corruption and informality has led to a sense of vilification of the citizen based on his or her everyday complicity in illegitimate practices, where the citizen has to engage in illegal or extralegal activity simply to make a living. This complicity, fundamental to reproduction of the system, is also critical to discourses that malign, silence and disentitle the ‘bad citizen’, as elaborated in Chapters Six and Seven.

Discussions of informality in Egypt have significantly focused on informal neighborhoods (Singerman 1995, Elyachar 2005, Ismail 2006, Dorman 2007, Sabry

⁵ The rapid population increase in itself, with the relaxation of development efforts and the decrease in the rate of increase of income beginning in the mid-1980s, after the ebbing of the wave of migration [to the Gulf States], and therefore the raising of unemployment levels, the increasing inflation since the 1980s and rising food prices, the increasing overcrowding of people in poor quarters and the growth of informal housing, the growth of the phenomenon of street children all pushed people to break the law, as there was a continuous increase in the numbers of people who cannot stay alive without breaking the law (Amin 2009, 62- 5).

2010), where housing is constructed without official permits, key services are accessed by ‘illegally’ tapping into the official means of provision; and this is all done with the complicity of officials of the state, typically in return for direct payments, bribes and favors. There is a thin line between informality, extralegal or illegitimate practices and corruption; in a reality where they all feed on each other. Informality/corruption is also a key feature of the functioning of critical public services and almost normalized as means of supplementing the salaries of public sector employees. This has implied very uneven access to such forms of additional income among public sector employees. Simply, not all employees work in departments that control critical services to the public, nor do all departments across the country cater to wealthier citizens from whom greater sums can be extracted. In the education sector, this is visibly paralleled for example in the ability of public school teachers of ‘core’ subjects to make an adequate—and sometimes massive—income from tutoring [unregulated, untaxed and outside the formal schooling framework], whereas teachers of subjects that do not enter student totals like art or music, do not have access to such informal markets; resulting in large shortages in teachers for those subjects and the eventual shrinkage of that aspect of education altogether (see Chapters Three and Four). The massive profits available on the informal market are the best engine for its survival, perpetuation and deepening. Corruption has been tolerated by the regime since it ensures the long-term loyalty of its influential political class because there is “little doubt that the majority of these individuals would do worse under a democratic system where increased accountability would limit opportunities for graft and corruption” (Blaydes 2008a, 26). As Dorman puts it, informality “opens the door to the kind of clientelism in search of public services upon which the micropolitics of many Cairo neighbourhoods revolves. It thus links them to the countrywide networks of devolved patronage that have long underpinned the political order. Hence informality, again ironically, allows Egypt’s rulers to achieve a considerable degree of state–society integration by other means – despite a political order grounded in elite privilege” (2009, 435). Emerging research on developing countries has suggested that not only do informality and corruption grow together and feed on each other, but they may be both driven by increasing inequality (Mishra and Ray 2010).

REPRESSION AND PROTEST

Since Mubarak came to power in 1981, Egypt has been ruled under a declared “state of emergency” by which the regime “has rationalized the outlawing of demonstrations, the use of indefinite detentions without trial, and the endowment of presidential decrees with the power of law” (Brownlee 2002, 6-7). Mubarak acquired substantial liberty to have his opponents convicted in military trials, to shut down newspapers and professional syndicates, or to jail human rights activists (Brownlee 2002, 6). This was consolidated through “the use of a legal-constitutional framework to curtail the influence and powers of institutions, groupings, and individuals, the distribution of state patronage to create a dependent clientelist network, the presence of electoral malpractice, and the use of state coercion to control perceived challengers” (Kassem 2004, 167).

This deteriorating political, economic and social situation has not been met with silent approval. Protest and opposition movements and media have been growing over the past few years, especially since 2003. According to labor historian Joel Benin (2011), since 1998 well more than two million workers have participated in some 3,500 strikes, sit-ins and other forms of protest, with major strikes in nearly every sector of the Egyptian economy.⁶ Importantly, in the 2000s, unlike in the 1980s and 1990s, the government did not routinely repress workers’ protests through massive use of violence and typically offered limited concessions to protestors, so that people sensed that protest brought about significant gains (Benin 2011). The growth of independent and citizen media has been critical in this regard, where since 2003–04 some two dozen newspapers and magazines independent of the regime have appeared, which along with the Arab satellite stations and the Internet, offer access to information that was

⁶ Workers’ collective actions over the past decade “have usually targeted bread-and-butter issues—the failure of owners of newly privatized enterprises to abide by the terms of the contracts in force before privatization, as the law requires; failure to pay long-overdue bonuses, incentives and other wage supplements; failure of public enterprises to pay workers their share of profits; fear of large-scale firings before or after privatization; and low wages” (Benin 2011, 8).

unimaginable a decade ago (Benin 2009, Meital 2006). News and videos circulated about police practices or other state practices and forms of corruption played a critical role in exposing and deterring state repression and mobilizing for protest.

Opposition has generally been met with different forms of repression from the state, ranging from the imprisonment of well-known oppositional figures such as Ayman Nour, to the extension of State Security oversight to every sector of society and every school. The repression of opposition in these local contexts was carried out with the use of intimidation, torture and other extra-legal measures. Several scholars have shown patterns of de-liberalization throughout the Mubarak era (Brownlee 2002, Perry 2004, Singerman 1995) as well as increasing use of blatantly coercive tactics spiraling cycles of violence (Kassem 2004). It has been argued that participation and pluralism in the early 2000s were at lower levels than at any time since Mubarak assumed the presidency, with a tenuous period of political opening in the 1980s and very early 1990s (Brownlee 2002). Oppositional action that ‘takes to the streets’ and organized action of ‘oppositional Islamism’ (see below) were the critical ‘red lines’ that defined the “freedoms allowed” by the regime. State Security officials reportedly told one detained secular activist who inquired about ‘the ground rules’: no street, no Brotherhood (cited in Kassem 2004, 175). While the regime’s Islamist opponents were the main focus of repression in recent years, secular political activists, human rights activists, workers and voters have all been targeted. This has been viewed “as an indication of the increasing insecurity of an authoritarian regime determined to maintain its monopoly on power” (Kassem 2004, 187).

Different levels and forms of repression were applied to dissenting voices, whether they were protesting administrative decisions or irregularities in schools, organizing workers from medium-sized institutions (such as state-owned or even private factories), or exposing larger forms of corruption. Repression was more likely if dissent was related to the vast networks of allies and members of the ruling party or to the regime itself. State repression varied greatly based on class position as the poor received the largest share of a wide range of repressive policies. Importantly however, violent and

humiliating treatment by police and other state officials permeated the daily lives of citizens, regardless of whether they were engaged in forms of dissent or resistance or not (see for example, Ismail 2006; Chapters Four and Five). As Hani Shukrallah, editor of an independent newspaper, pointed out, “the regime has pursued a deliberate policy of selective repression based on class... The middle-class professionals in Kifaya can chant slogans like “Down with Mubarak” because they risk, at worst, a beating. But most Egyptians live in a world where anything goes, where they’re treated like barbarians who need to be conquered, and women are molested by the security forces. The average Egyptian can be dragged into a police station and tortured simply because a police officer doesn’t like his face” (cited in Shatz 2010). Humiliation and physical punishment for such ‘average’ Egyptians was therefore an increasingly common feature of state-society relations and a regular pattern in their everyday interactions with the state.

Education has been a key arena of struggle with oppositional forces, especially in the 1990s when thousands of teachers were purged from teaching positions under ‘security pretexts’ and accused of propagating ‘extremist’ views and practices. Education was seen by the regime as an arena where identity struggles could be won or lost. Children could be exposed and ‘schooled’ in Islamist discourses and practices and develop Islamist orientations and loyalties. The so-called ‘war on terror’ has fuelled an expansion of the U.S. government’s work to improve schools overseas with the hope of combating Islamic fundamentalism (Herrera 2008a, Zehr 2004, Essam El Din 2003). In official pronouncement, education was frequently articulated “as a matter of national security”.⁷ This terminology gained special currency after the wave of terrorist attacks in the 1990s and confrontation between the state and Islamist groups. This was translated into two main areas: on the one hand, within a neoliberal framework it emphasizes developing a ‘competent’ workforce that is an asset for the economy and

⁷ Political security, according to a Ministry of Education (MOE) publication, is achieved through democracy and ‘social peace’ (*al-salam al ijtima’i*), whereas economic security is to be achieved through the growth of human capital and the economic productivity of individuals, and military security is achievable through the kind of scientific and technological progress that can be achieved only through an information technology ‘revolution’ linked to education reform (See Sayed 2006, 29).

helps attract foreign investment; a task in which public education almost entirely fails. On the other hand, it is linked to creating 'loyal' citizens, reflected in periodical attempts to control the growth of Islamist influences across the nation's schools and classrooms, along with the standard measures for controlling any form of potential dissent in the schools.

Protest- and repression- had also extended to the education sector. Teachers, administrative staff, students, and parents have engaged in various protests and demonstrations. Teachers resorted to techniques similar to those used in the wider protest movement, from demonstrations to hunger strikes to litigation.⁸ For example, in 2008, technical education teachers filed a case against the minister of education for excluding them from the Teachers Cadre [new improved pay scale, see Chapter Three]. Other teachers and administrators have since successfully fought for the legal right to be included in the Cadre; periodically staging protests in front of MOE. They had been repeatedly promised that they would be transferred to the higher par rate of Special Contract system. After the protests that brought down the Mubarak regime, thousands of teachers, especially in Mahala Kubra Governorate continued to protest demanding the disbanding of the Teachers' Syndicate and investigations into its financial violations. Teacher demonstrations and strikes continued with sizable strike action by newly formed independent syndicates in the beginning of the 2011/2012 school year, demanding better pay and conditions.

Parents and students, in both urban and rural areas, have also protested decisions that they deemed to have a significant negative impact on their children: such as a change in the location of the school or being joined with another school into a double shift system. The most visible protests were in elite schools immediately before the events of January 2011. In December 2010 and January 2011, students of a number of the quasi-private National Institutes and their parents initiated a successful wave of

⁸ For example, a large group of technical education teachers in Ismailiya who had been working for five years under the minimally paid Reward System demonstrated and threatened to enter into a hunger strike demanding a change in their contractual arrangements (Mu'alimu al-Ta'lim al-Fanni fil-Ismailiya 2008).

demonstrations and sit-ins, especially in Alexandria, against a ministerial decision to convert their (formally nationalized but largely independent) schools into public Experimental schools. While the formal justification was allegations of corruption in the management of the schools, there were also claims that the ministerial decision (by Minister Badr, referred to in Chapters Five and the Conclusion) was partly motivated by the desire to divide the schools' assets, including large plots of land, and sell them to well-connected businessmen. These different types of protests were all faced with the standard forms of typical levels of intimidation and police intervention, including police intimidation and measured repression of the upper-middle class protests of the National Institutes.

As highly securitized spaces, schools were closely monitored for oppositional behavior. To ensure that all school discourses—including every teacher's exam questions, and every student's answers—were devoid of any oppositional themes, especially under the banner of combating terrorism, educational officials and state security personnel retained tight control over political and religious expression in schools. The 1990s especially, saw literally thousands of teachers transferred from teaching jobs on 'security' grounds. Then-Minister of Education Hussein Kamel Bahaa Al-Din declared that he has expelled thousands of extremist teachers (Bahaa Al-Din 2004).⁹ In fact, any form of protest on the part of teachers could be dealt with through the security apparatus of the ministry or State Security officials. State Security officers "responsible for the educational file in each district or governorate" quickly get involved if there is any sign of collective action in the schools (see Badr Yu'akid Istimrar 2010). Those who praised the regime, specifically the president, and later his wife and son, were rewarded and promoted. In fact, Bahaa Al-Din, the regime's longest serving education minister, issued a new series of educational reports named "Mubarak and Education", praising Mubarak's 'achievements' in the educational field. The numbers of schools given Mubarak's name was the greatest under his tenure, reaching 388 schools across the

⁹ Bahaa Al-Din pointed to the security reports received in this regard; ongoing reports from the supervisory apparatuses of the [Education] Ministry, and from the authorized bodies, and publications from the media.

country, with an additional 160 schools named after Suzanne Mubarak (and one after Gamal) (Tawfiq 2011).

In sum, a number of key features characterized the mode of governance of Mubarak's authoritarianism. These features have shaped the distributive patterns and style of governance of the Mubarak regime. Within the overall neoliberal and authoritarian setting, this include: the pervasiveness of cronyism and corruption in the everyday functioning of the state; the widening reach of informality—as fundamentally linked to privatization and state withdrawal from service-provision—in the functioning of various state services; and the selective repression of dissent and harassment by police and state agents. These features were heightened by the intensification of 'crony capitalism' in the 'late Mubarak era,' coinciding with the rise of Gamal Mubarak and the accompanying shift in elite configuration. The remainder of the Chapter focuses on the related themes of exploring lived citizenship contracts and ideal citizenship and nationhood discourses, especially in terms of privatization, punishment and Islamization.

CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship is a contested concept that can be defined in different ways and with varying levels of complexity and comprehensiveness. "Broadly conceived, citizenship emphasizes the legal relation between an individual and a national state" (Berezin 2001, 95). As defined in the classic work of T. H. Marshall, citizenship is understood as the civil, political, social and economic rights that define the relationship between individuals and the state (Marshall 1992). Although many scholars continue to build on it, "Marshallian citizenship has been subject to extensive criticism over the last two decades and the social model of citizenship has been expanded and deepened by approaches that emphasize the flexibility of social membership, the limitations of citizenship merely as rights, and by perspectives that emphasize identity and difference" (Isin and Turner 2007, 5). There are critical emotional, cultural and symbolic

dimensions to citizenship. Citizenship signifies “a field of struggle: an arena in which relations linking individuals to their wider community, social and political contexts are continually discussed, reworked and contested” (Hall, Williamson and Coffey 2000, 461).

In educational research, citizenship is often discussed in more limited ways with a focus on developing citizenship textbooks, media, programs, and activities, especially with the aim of promoting multicultural citizenship. This is distinct from the focus on the school as a site where citizenship projects are lived and experienced. Citizenship here is used as a tool to articulate and differentiate themes and experiences that emerged across the schools. This is mainly carried out along the lines of protection, provision and participation rights. This is used to organize and compare official and student discourses of citizenship as well as ‘lived’ citizenship in the schools. Different citizenship contracts and realities also necessitate corresponding citizenship discourses that legitimize them. Such discourses of ‘ideal’ citizenship also have implications protection, provision and participation rights.

As Isin and Turner (2007, 6) put it, “investigating citizenship... inevitably involves the comparative study of the rights and duties of citizens across diverse states”. This work is concerned with exploring the comparative rights of citizens within the same state and across different social classes. Citizenship rights may be divided into categories of protective, provision and participation rights (Raby 2008). *Protective* citizenship rights address safety from discrimination, abuse and injustice, while *provision* rights include access to services such as health care, education and recreation (Archard 2004). *Participation* rights include rights to speech, representation, information and participation in decision-making (Lansdown 1994). Free public education is fundamentally about a clear ‘provision’ right, but other citizenship rights are relevant to the school contexts. Rights to ‘participation’ and freedom of expression in the schools can be examined by looking at different school activities from wall journals and student elections, to the freedom students and teachers perceive for deviating from mandated state discourses and narratives in the classroom, to in-school activities, essays,

assignments and examinations. Rights to ‘protection’ can be examined in terms of equal and fair opportunity in assessment and judgment of student work) and freedom from physical and emotional harm and discrimination, as well as the right to voice complaints and grievances. This is fundamentally linked to issues around discipline and punishment in schools.

PRIVATIZATION AND NEOLIBERAL CITIZENSHIP

Free education is a constitutional principle, necessary for maintaining social harmony.

Hussein Kamel Bahaeddin, Former Minister of Education (Cited in Tadros 2001).

Greater efforts are being exerted to broaden the scope of private funding of education, and to relieve the state budget of major financial burdens.

Gamal Mubarak, Head of National Democratic Party Policy Secretariat (Cited in Essam El Din 2003)

The construction of citizenship in Egyptian schools cannot be understood without reference to the pervasive informal privatization of education and its varying manifestations across schools catering to different social classes. Examining the state-market nexus that structures the educational field enables the tracking of “persistent yet transformed understandings of the relationship between private and public through which the meanings and functions of education and citizenship are debated and struggled over” (Lukose 2005). The Mubarak regime periodically claimed education as a ‘national project’ and priority for Egypt. Official statements frequently affirmed the inviolability of the constitutional right to free education and often voiced criticism of private tutoring and even declarations of its illegality. This was accompanied by little concrete action to deter tutoring and the encouragement of the expansion of the role of “civil society” and the private sector in the provision of education.

The privatization of education is a phenomenon that has swept across much of the global North and South under neoliberalism. “Privatization is not just neoliberalism’s strategy for dealing with the public sector”, but “a consistent element of its particular form of governmentality, its ethos” (Read 2009, 35). Under neoliberalism, the objectives in education are the same as those that guide neoliberalism’s economic and

social welfare goals. As Michael W. Apple puts it, neoliberal reforms promote expansion of “the free market; the drastic reduction of government responsibility for social needs; the reinforcement of intensely competitive structures of mobility both inside and outside the school; the lowering of people’s expectations for economic security; the “disciplining” of culture and the body” (Apple 2004, 15). The key components of neoliberal reforms in the global North have included efforts to implement standardized tests in order to hold students, teachers and schools accountable, to increase ‘school choice’, and to privatize education provision.

However, despite the significant literature on these issues in the North, educational neoliberalism and privatization take on very different meanings and scope in Egyptian education. The basic conditions in these contexts are radically different. At one level, per student expenditures on education in Egypt stand at USD 129.6 per student per year, compared to USD 289.5 in Tunisia, USD 1,337.6 in Saudi Arabia, USD 4,763.4 in America, and USD 6,959.8 in Japan (Essam El Din 2003). The key differences are not only in the resources, training and daily functioning of these systems, but also that privatization takes place differently. No educational system in the North is characterized by the level of de-facto privatization witnessed in Egyptian secondary education, where most students obtain most of their education on the market. Beyond the general meanings of privatization as the growing involvement of the private sector in the provision of education; and the inequality this creates, privatization has occurred through very different mechanisms and patterns than those described in the global North. This has shaped a distinct- and more acute- crisis of state legitimacy and far more fundamental changes in schooling relations, as explored throughout this research. This is critically premised on poorer resources as well as the extralegality¹⁰ and informality of the practices around privatization. A context where privatization happens through private tutoring that is not entirely legal, or through practices such as teachers and parents having to pay school cleaners directly because the state does not do so, is very different from the sub-contracting of cleaning services in some schools or the

¹⁰ Many practices described throughout the thesis are not strictly punishable by law, but are in violation of official regulations or have an ambiguous legal status.

introduction of school vouchers described in the literature on privatization in the North. The research explores the concrete ways in which privatization takes place across the schools and how this reflects available citizenship contracts across the system.

What is particularly relevant to Egypt and understanding citizenship contracts and discourses is the way that the neoliberal program has increasingly come to be “represented in ‘cultural’ terms as concerned with the attitudes, values and forms of self understanding embedded in both individual and institutional activities” (Keat and Abercrombie 1991, 1). Underlying the neoliberal notion of the autonomous chooser, is a more general vision that every human being is an entrepreneur managing their own life, and should act as such (Olssen 1996). In this sense, it has profound implications for citizenship. As Henry Giroux puts it, “citizenship is portrayed as an utterly privatized affair whose aim is to produce competitive self-interested individuals vying for their own material and ideological gain” (Giroux 2001, 30). As Lukose puts it, privatization is accompanied by “a shift from an understanding of citizenship as building the nation to one in which one ought to be free to consume the nation” (Lukose 2005, 522).

The withdrawal of the welfare state and the spread of neoliberalism across the world have led to the promotion of what are articulated as successful neoliberal subjectivities and a change in the conception of the ‘ideal citizen’. In Britain, the concept of ‘active citizenship’ introduced in 1988 “employed the language of citizenship explicitly to help legitimize the shift towards the citizen as entrepreneur rather than state dependent” (Faulks 2006, 124). As Faulks notes, the concept of active citizenship was consistent with the commodification and individualization of social relations associated with Thatcherism at the heart of which were different forms of privatization (Faulks 1998).¹¹ Citizenship is re-conceptualized away from a ‘rights’ focus towards a citizen who adapts

¹¹ At the heart of the neo-liberal redefinition of citizenship is the idea of *market rights*. These rights, such as property ownership, consumer rights, and choice between service providers, were seen as more empowering than collectivist welfare rights. They were promoted through such policies as the privatization of public utilities, the introduction of market forces into the public sector, and the selling off of council houses (Faulks 2006, 125).

to a new precarious labor conditions and exploits market opportunities. Critically, neoliberal citizenship necessitates a different conception and relationship to social services, poverty and the poor. The ideal neoliberal citizen is “a law abiding, materially successful individual who was willing and able to exploit the opportunities created by the promotion of market rights, while demonstrating occasional compassion for those less fortunate than themselves – charity rather than democratic citizenship was to be the main instrument of ‘active citizenship’” (Faulks 2006, 125).

In 2006, the mission of Egyptian pre-university education explicitly included the notion of active citizenship:

The Ministry of Education fosters equal opportunities for all Egyptian students to realize a quality education that empowers them to become creative, life-long learners who are tolerant critical thinkers with strong values and a wide range of skills for active citizenship and dynamic participation in an ever-changing global society (MOE 2006, 76).

Therefore, this research examines whether and how similar notions of ideal citizenship are reflected in secondary school textbooks, and the extent to which these concepts of citizenship take hold among students and or successfully ‘discipline’ new neoliberal subjectivities. Given the pervasiveness of marketization, the research explores the ways in which themes of successful neoliberal citizenship are appropriated and employed in student and school level discourses.

PUNISHMENT, SURVEILLANCE AND GENDER

Punishment has had a special place in the evolution of schooling and its production of subjectivities, as it did in the discourses of students and the observable practices in the schools. The manner in which discipline, punishment and codes of conduct in schools are “organized, justified and presented to students” is part of the processes by which certain kinds of students “are assumed and created, particularly in terms of citizens and future workers” (Raby 2005, 71). As Deacon has pointed out, corporal punishment

loomed remarkably large in criticisms of educational practice in early modern educational institutions, which “were perceived as poorly regulated, arbitrarily managed, abusive, ineffective, generating resistance” (2006, 179). Their lack of regulation was associated “with a poor economy of coercion”; that is, “the concern was less about inhumanity or violence per se and more about the *kind* or degree of violence that might best mould particular individuals” (Deacon 2006, 179-180). Studies of school punishment in countries of the North portray a general progression from ‘negative’ to ‘positive’ forms of discipline. Schools increasingly resorted to other methods such as codes of conduct, suspension and teachers’ management of student behaviors inside the classroom to maintain safe and orderly environments that are conducive to effective teaching and learning (Cameron 2006).

On the other hand, while physical and emotional punishment is clearly prohibited in official regulations in Egypt, it is reportedly practiced widely across the system. Cases of severe beating of students by teachers have received significant media coverage and visibility in recent years. The prevalence of this phenomenon may not be surprising as physical and emotional violence are common features of social relations in the home, in the workplace and in the public sphere. Abdul Hamid (2000) has argued that the dominant means of social control in Egyptian society are reflected in the means of control in the boys’ general secondary schools he studied, in terms of lack of dialogue, authoritarian relations, absence of freedom of expression and dissent, and forms of exclusion and symbolic violence against disadvantaged students. Salwa Ismail has described, in her study of the production and control of social space in new urban quarters of Cairo, the humiliation of young men in encounters with the everyday state, which is “embodied especially in such police tactics as roughing up, beating, and slapping” (2006, 123).

In his ethnography of state-owned textile companies in Alexandria, Shehata (2003) has also described the absolute concentration of power and repression in the hands of the top manager and the regular use of humiliation, intimidation and even physical violence in highly delineated hierarchical relations within the factory. Shehata (2003, 2009)

describes the existence of an ideology justifying inequality and authoritarian social relations within the factory, where managers as well as many workers believed that superiors needed to be tough and distant and, in some cases, abusive and condescending to be respected. This expression of social distance and hierarchy recalls the ways in which Foucault linked punishment with the superiority of the sovereign. Punishment, as Foucault put it, is “a ceremonial by which a momentarily injured sovereignty is reconstituted ... by manifesting it at its most spectacular” (Foucault 1977, 48).¹² In the pre-modern state as well as the modern day household, corporal punishment is deployed as a means of avenging perceived contempt for an authority figure (Westlund 1999).

The research explores modes of discipline and punishment in the schools and the ways in which they are linked the maintenance of hierarchies of respect and authority and with the gender and socioeconomic location of students. The research explores the dynamics around practices of punishment in the schools in their relationships to the neoliberal project of the state in education. It explores the modes of verbal and physical violence directed at students and how these are understood and explained by students and school authorities.

In exploring the issues around discipline and punishment in the schools, the research also looks at the seeming increase in noncompliant behavior on the part of students. A number of works have linked working class students’ perceptions of job opportunities to noncompliance, the rejection of the values and knowledges of the school and the appropriation of more ‘traditional’ gender discourses, practices and identities. This increased ‘gender traditionalism’ means that boys tend to gravitate towards more rough, challenging and ‘macho’ discourses and practices, while girls give great importance to expressions of femininity and concerns with romance, relationships, marriage and

¹² The punishment “is carried out in such a way as to give a spectacle not of measure, but of imbalance and excess; in this liturgy of punishment, there must be an emphatic affirmation of power and of its intrinsic superiority”. The superiority in question, moreover, is “that of the physical strength of the sovereign beating down upon the body of his adversary and mastering it” in an “exercise of terror” that makes clear the asymmetrical relation of power between “sovereign” and “subject” (Foucault 1977, 48).

motherhood. The research explores the links between noncompliance and the construction and performance of gender identities across the schools, in light of dominant gender discourses informed by Islamist morality as well as requirements of fashion and social distinction.

Schools obviously and importantly discipline students into gendered citizens; an area that deserves its own detailed analysis as a key feature and function of school life from early childhood onwards. The construction of gendered subjectivities or ideal femininities and masculinities in and by schools is not however a major focus of this work. I did not explore in detail, for instance, the ways in which “students’ mundane and day-to-day practices—including bodily deportment, physical games, linguistic accounts, and uses of clothing, hairstyles and accessories—are implicated in the discursive constitution of student subjectivities” or the construction of heteronormativity (Youdell 2005, 249). In looking at key themes of discipline and punishment in the schools, I do however devote attention to the most pronounced gender surveillance strategies in the schools and some of the ways in which the schools actively reinforce the good girl/bad girl (virgin/whore) dichotomy; drawing the contours of femininities that are required of students across the different types of schools and ‘rewarded’ within prevailing gender constructions. This role of the school parallels systems of control in local communities and on the streets that have accompanied the rise of Islamist piety. “Techniques of enforcing moral rule in space include the monitoring and surveillance of gender mixing, of women’s comings and goings, of women’s attire, and of their conduct in public” (Ismail 2006, xxxviii). The research explores whether and how such techniques were reflected in the schools; looking at how state regulations, idiosyncratic school-level practices and student preferences interacted to shape some of the overall dynamics of gender control in each school.

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND ISLAMISM

The thesis treats citizenship and national identity as fundamentally interlinked themes; not only in terms of discourses of imagined and ideal citizenship, but sometimes more powerfully in terms of lived citizenship. That is, the way the nation (and the citizen of the nation) is constructed and talked about in official narratives is critically linked to the available citizenship contracts and discourses. Furthermore, unofficial and everyday discourses of the nation arguably are linked to lived citizenship contracts and entitlements. The research explores the linkages between nationhood and citizenship, both in official discourses, as well as in student and teacher discourses in the schools; and looks at the use of emotion and ritual in cementing and elaborating these discourses.

THE NATION IN THE SCHOOL

The use of publicly funded mass schooling to create and promulgate a national identity and to cement geo-political units as nations has been one of the key processes associated with the rise and consolidation of the modern nation-state. The state accomplishes the task of creating a nation through key mechanisms; including “setting up national school systems that impose a single linguistic standard and a cobbled-together “national” history, and by establishing conscript armies that throw young men from all over the country together and forge affective links among them” (Cole and Kandiyoti 2002, 196). The emergence of mass public education systems is tied to different purposes of state; from the control of urban populations due the changing structures of the economy (Katz 1995, Jones and Williamson 1979, Hunter 1996) to the construction of modern armies, the consolidation of nation-states and the crafting of new unified national identities. Mass schooling has been used as a vehicle for intensive state formation in response to internal or external threats to stability in many nations (Green 1997), such as France (Bell 2003), India (Advani 1996), and others.

National identity and its ongoing redefinition are manifested in schools through various discourses and practices; key among them are official textbook discourses and other

school rituals and activities. The “intellectual and emotional relationship between a nation’s present, future and past is shaped through the selection, manufacture and transmission of powerful narratives promoting a sense of history and identity based upon a mixture of myth, remembrance and official knowledge” (Crawford 2004, 10). Nationally unified official textbooks in Egypt represent the clearest expression of official nationhood and citizenship projects in the schools. The research analyzes the official narratives of nationhood by examining at a sample of current nationally unified textbooks, as well as tracing the evolution of citizenship and nationhood discourses in national textbooks since Nasser. Textbook discourses are taken to reflect official discourses on national identity and citizenship. They arguably signal to students the boundaries of accepted and sanctioned discourse on the nation and state. Students’ own discourses of nationhood and citizenship are approached as reflecting the degree of deployment with official discourses, the appropriation of alternative registers and discourses, and how these are linked with students’ daily concerns and experiences. The research also looks at the morning assembly as the key daily ritual through which the nation is meant to be revered in the schools.

The promotion of strong nationalist devotion, especially in schools, is a key technique of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. “In authoritarian states, political elites use state-sponsored historical memory to foster feelings of paranoia, xenophobia, and distrust” (Davis 2005, 6). Devotion to the nation and focus on its external enemies is critical for legitimizing violations against any form of opposition. “[S]uccessive Egyptian regimes have managed to justify a national security state with all the restrictions on liberty that go with that” (Kienle 2004, 79). Maha Abdelrahman (2007, 297) has shed light on some of the ways in which the Egyptian state has “made strategic use of nationalism as a mechanism for survival and for shoring up its failing legitimacy”. The state has typically used claims of foreign/ western affiliation to malign opposition forces and the human rights campaigns that attempt to protect these forces from the violations the state inflicts on them. The research pay special attention to how secondary school textbooks deal with the theme of external threat and relate it to the importance of love and sacrifice for the nation.

Promoting love and belonging to the nation is one of the key goals of Egyptian education. The research also looks at these two key themes of 'love' and belonging as promoted in the textbooks, in school rituals and as discussed by students and teachers. Recent studies in social and political sciences have emphasized that emotions are fundamental to political identity and its concomitant issues of citizenship and national identity (Goodwin, Jasper, and Poletta 2001; Nicholson 1999; Marcus 2002; Marcus, Neuman and McKuen 2002). Emotion is “fundamental to the formation of borders, nationhood and citizenship”, and the nation-state plays a key role as a mobilizer of political emotion (Zembylas 2009, 370). In approaching nationhood in schools, some scholars such as Veronique Benei (2008) have focused on how children—through morning liturgies in (Indian) schools—create their physical selves while enacting and embodying the nation into existence. Significant literature has focused on ritual and other school activities in the construction of collective identities (McLaren 1999, Bjork 2002, Bekerman 2003, Ben-Amos and Bet-El 1999, Adely 2010). The daily morning assembly (*tabur*) in Egyptian schools is meant to be the primary means through which a physical and emotional experience and embodiment of the nation is performed. Like other public rituals, it is meant to serve as an arena “of identity, bounded spaces, where collective national selfhood is enacted” (Berezin 2001, 93). This enactment may not however be smooth or straightforward. Given the general dysfunction of schools, this work focuses on how secondary school students may avoid or subvert these rituals; or may receive them with boredom, nonchalance, ridicule, anger or insult: sets of emotions and bodily procedures that no doubt constitute modes of pronouncing the nation. Therefore, instead of asking, “how does the nation become this natural object of devotion” (Benei 2008, 72), it is important to ask as well whether and when the nation ceases to represent an object of devotion.

The focus on schools is not premised on an assumption that they do shape national identity, but that they are locations for the expression of different identity projects and more importantly, lived citizenship and concrete day-to-day experiences of state institutions. Schools are not the only sites where students are exposed to official or

alternative constructions of the nation and state. Young people learn about themselves and the nation in popular and widely viewed soap operas, religious satellite channels, music videos, cassette sermons, youth magazines, internet chat rooms, and Facebook. Strategies and discourses of governmental apparatuses in schools tell only part of the story; and “it is equally important to look at the unrecorded but resourceful improvisations of everyday life”, especially including the impact of popular media (Donald 1992, 2–3). It has even been suggested that the media have become an even more powerful locus of education and identity formation than schools (see Levinson and Holland 1996, 36). The reach and diversity of mass media and their insertion deep into daily life of most segments of the populations of contemporary societies seriously undermines the role and *raison d’être* of the institution of mass schooling in producing student subjectivities. It may even partly explain the wide-scale withdrawal of the state from the provision of schooling. Clearly, other technologies of political communication, from television to the internet, compete with ritual [and textbooks] in the production of national identities (Berezin 2001). Indeed, as Lila Abu-Lughod has argued, “television is a key institution for the production of national culture in Egypt” and has been used by the government as a tool of citizen education since the 1960s (2005, 7-10).

Arab Satellite television, news channels, and private Egyptian television play a major role in shaping the political discourse of Egyptians. In fact, over the past few years, a number of studies have highlighted the role of Arab satellite channels in youth political ‘socialization’ in Egypt and the shaping of youth political priorities and perspectives (Abdullah 2007, Al-Tukhi 1999 and Mahmud 2004). The focus on the school acknowledges, however, the ongoing centrality of formal schooling in the socialization of youth, as well as the romance between states and schools that constitutes one of modernity’s central features (Green 1997). The point, of course, is not to judge whether schools or the media are more powerful resources for constructing identity; but rather to examine what kind of power they have (Levinson 1999) and to look at them as arenas for the expression of different identity and citizenship projects.

ISLAM AND ISLAMISM IN EGYPTIAN EDUCATION

In its exploration of the discourses of school textbooks, the research looks at how Islamist discourses articulated with constructions of both citizenship and nationhood. Religious instruction and discourse have been at the heart of modern education since its inception under Muhammad Ali and under British occupation. Islam has always been an integral component of the Egyptian state's nationalist discourse, and a critical pillar of regime legitimacy. It has been argued that the current modes of attachment to religious values in Egypt are the result of the functionalization of Islam in religious instruction since the inception of modern education (Starrett 1998). However, the nature and extent of the use of Islam in the crafting of Egyptian national identity and in the broader cultural and moral canvas has varied considerably over time, as well as in educational discourses and textbooks. Current levels of Islamization can be traced back specifically to the Sadat era (1970-81), who emphasized religious identity and symbolism, called himself the Faithful President (*al-ra'is al-mu'min*). Sadat consciously promoted the positioning of Islam at the center of moral and political identity; primarily to replace the centrality of Nasser's Arab Socialism. This was gradually accompanied by the granting of far greater space for various Islamist discourses.

Rushdi Sa'ïd has argued that the Islamist control over education was the product of an actual deal brokered between Muslim Brotherhood leaders and Sadat, whereby Sadat handed over the control over teacher institutes to members of the Brotherhood so that Islamism not only dominated teacher preparation, but that these institutions enrolled greater numbers of their members of Islamist groups, especially in Upper Egypt (cited in Khalil 2009, see also Adli 2001). The Mubarak regime's accommodation with Islamists also included the recruitment of numerous Islamists on university campuses, in schools and as social workers putting them in direct contact with the public, especially in Upper Egypt (Roussillion 1998, 387). Imad Siyam has documented some of the ways in which Islamist groups have set out to Islamize the educational process in Egypt over the past four decades. Based on court cases where Islamist organizations were involved, he collected lists of tens of thousands of teachers and students

belonging to Islamist groups of various kinds; citing a Ministry of Interior report for 1992 which indicates that schools controlled by extremist groups in Cairo and Giza alone had reached 78 schools (cited in Khalil 2010). Many of these groups, argues Siam, intentionally targeted educational institutions, either to recruit for violent groups or to infiltrate state institutions for bottom-up intellectual and political control. These groups also spread religious discrimination and a form of religious chauvinism, in fact targeting poorer areas and areas with larger Christian communities, focusing on Upper Egypt and popular quarters in larger cities. Siam also documented the numbers of Islamist parliamentarians who work in the educational field and their membership in education committees for the purpose of forestalling alternative policies under the pretext of resistance to cultural invasion and attempts to destroy Islamic identity and culture. This was combined with the influence of tens of thousands of teachers who went to work in the Gulf and returned with Wahabi ideas to Egyptian classrooms (Siyam 2010 cited in Khalil 2010). Many Egyptian teachers preferred to work abroad, where salaries were higher and classroom conditions better. During the 1980s, the government granted 30,000 exit visas a year to teachers who had contracts to teach in Arab countries (Metz 1990). The outcome has been a pervasive Islamization of education, especially outside of Cairo. The interest of Islamist groups has been not only in reaching school and university students and education parliamentary committees, but included a strategy of urging members to join faculties of education and teacher institutes and training them on how to spread their ideas in these educational institutions.

The Mubarak regime engaged in combinations of accommodation and repression with different Islamist groups; depending on the historical phase and the group in question. Roussillon has argued that the trial of Sadat's assassins and Asyut rebels in the beginning of Mubarak's reign provided the opportunity for the regime to send a clear message of appeasement to the Islamists through acquittals and reduced sentences (1998, 385). In fact, he has argued that for Sadat, Islamization of legislation was mere gesturing, whereas for Mubarak, Islamizing the framework of Egyptians' daily lives was perceived as the means of quelling Islamism itself (Rousillion 1998). This included the informal integration of "moderate" Islamists into the formal political scene through

parties and professional associations (Roussillon 1998, 385). The tolerance for “Islamic resocializing” included tolerance of the activities of Islamic investment companies, Islamist control over numerous mosques and sporting and youth clubs, de-facto prohibition on the distribution of alcohol and de-facto gender segregation in universities in certain governorates (Roussillon 1998, 386). In this way, Mubarak sought to use the Islamists as intermediaries between the regime and ‘real society’; and the failure of this attempt is what constitutes the framework of later confrontation and the differentiation between “moderates” and “radicals” (Roussillon 1998, 391). The embracing of the Islamic referential was also “instrumental in Egypt’s alignment with the petro-monarchies” and well suited to the expanded labor migration to the Gulf (Roussillon 1998, 393).

While a detailed discussion of ‘Islamism’ is beyond the scope of this work, there may be a need to briefly clarify the sense in which ‘Islamist’ and ‘Islamism’ are used in this research. Islamist of course is not used to indicate ‘Islamic’, or something that is ‘true’ to Islam. It is certainly not used to imply ‘militant’, ‘terrorist’ or ‘extremist’. I use the term ‘Islamist’ to refer to the wide variety of groups and discourses that place Islam at the center of their political, national or civic identity. More concretely, this refers to discourses that adhere to and promote the ‘Islamist Creed’ that only the faithful adherence to ‘Islam’ can bring about power and prosperity for Muslims (see Sobhy 2009). The character and focus of this ‘adherence to Islam’ is defined differently by different groups, so are the means for achieving such greater adherence and ‘return to Islam’. Clearly, a wide range of groups and ideas fall under this umbrella, and I sometimes refer to them in more specific terms or qualifiers wherever relevant. Many of these terms are in common use in Egyptian public discourse or scholarly literature; including Salafis, extremist/terrorist Islamist groups, or referring to the name of an Islamist grouping, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. As will become clearer in the subsequent discussion and throughout the chapters, the main distinction I make is between non-oppositional Islamism/mainstream Islamism and strands of more politicized and oppositional Islamism.

Especially in its later years, the regime encouraged and gave space to versions of Islamism that commanded legitimacy, but did not destabilize its hold on power. These discourses were allowed to operate as counter-balance to more oppositional or militant Islamism. This increasingly dominant mainstream Islamism retained the ‘Islamist Creed’ (Sobhy 2009) that Islam was the route to power and prosperity, but de-politicized Islamism by ignoring the role of the state in applying sharia or in bringing about a better more just society, while emphasizing personal morality and ritual performance. This is articulated in the emphasis on personal morality, chastity, charity/ volunteer work and industrial and business entrepreneurship (see Sobhy 2009 on the discourses of Amr Khaled as an example of desirable mainstream Islamism). ‘Islam’ is redefined around these (personal) qualities; and it is through the cultivation of these qualities by each individual, that the real goals of Islamism can be achieved: power and prosperity, or ‘renaissance’; which can be roughly understood as being as ‘advanced’ or ‘developed’ as the powerful ‘West’. It is in this way that non-oppositional ‘Islam’ revolving around personal morality and charity is constructed as ‘the solution’. This vision cohered—unintentionally by many of its faithful—with U.S. [neoliberal and geopolitical] projects and interests in the region and was often hailed and promoted as ‘moderate’ Islam (Sobhy 2009).

The regime further tolerated and gave space to more conservative ‘Salafi’ (as they have come to be known in Egyptian politics) groups and preachers. These groups also emphasized individual morality and stricter controls on modesty and gender mixing. They forcefully condemned protest (and often democracy itself as removing sovereignty from God and placing it in the hands of the people), propagated obedience to the ruler and were frequently promoted in opposition to and in competition with the more oppositional groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, especially in mosques and university campuses across the country, as well as cassette sermons and later in numerous satellite channels. Both the popular Salafi trend and the more ‘elite’ Islamism (Wise 2003 and 2004, Haenni and Tammam 2003, Sobhy 2009) cohered with the state’s citizenship projects and were allowed far greater margins of freedom than other Islamist trends, despite periodic repression and limitations. Roussillion has also pointed

out that since the earlier stages of the inclusion of Islamists in the 1980s, in the professional syndicates for example, these syndicates were not foci of opposition; but rather enjoyed the most “relaxed” relations with the regime; and their political involvement centered on foreign issues, such as supporting the Afghan jihad and solidarity with the Palestinian Intifada (Roussillion 1998, 383).

Although this is critical background for the issues discussed throughout the chapters, this research is of course not about Islam or Islamism in the schools. It discusses critical areas where religious discourse was deployed in relation to the themes of punishment, surveillance of female modesty and national identity. Apart from highlighting the use of Islam in constructions of citizenship and nationhood in textbook and student discourses, various other facets of Islamization in the regular functioning of schools are not explored in this research.

The research acknowledges the pervasive growth of Islamization across schools in various forms and intensities. However, the mainstream school should not be seen as a key source of religious discourses for students who are exposed to a wide range of religious and Islamist discourses. The sermons, satellite channels programs and discourses of concrete preachers that many students listened to, or a visit to the Cairo Annual Book Fair, would be a far better ‘fields’ to study Islamization and dominant religious discourses than mainstream schools. In fact, my own experience conducting field research with early childhood education providers across Upper Egypt indicates that a study of charitable, public and private pre-school textbooks, rituals, interactive CDs, computer-based instruction programs and teacher discourses would reveal not only the extent of Islamization, but the powerful Wahabi and Salafi influence in the education of the youngest children across the country (especially outside the capital region). Many public schools, apart from private ‘Islamic’ Schools (see Herrera 2006), where school actors and authorities have taken far more active roles in placing Islam at the center of school rituals and discourse. As Youssof Ahmed Saad (2006) found in his ethnography of a mainstream public school in Cairo, the Ministry of Education-sanctioned daily morning assembly program was altered and infused with an Islamic

Flag salutation, repeated by Muslim and Christian students, starting with: “Allah is my God, Islam is my religion, Mohammed is my Prophet, the Quran is my book, and good deed is my path” and continuing: “Salute this flag with me. *Allahu Akbar* (God is great), *Allahu Akbar*, *Allahu Akbar*” and ending with the officially sanctioned flag salutation: Long Live the Arab Republic of Egypt (Saad 2006, 97). There are therefore schools where Islamic symbolism and identity is raised to a very distinct prominence.

Other researchers such as Hala Tal‘at have studied the spread of different forms of ‘extremism’ and discrimination in schools and concluded that religious discourse dominates all aspects of the educational process in schools. This ranges from the organization of the school day to sciences which are classified into religiously-sanctioned or forbidden (*halal* or *haram*) up to exam questions where religious questions are inserted out of context, even in applied sciences (MARED 2010). Tal‘at surveys common school practices such as schools taking pride that its most important achievements is winning a Quran memorization competition; Quran recitation and memorization being at the forefront of school “activities”; school radio resembling a religious sermon; flag salutations are followed by religious prayers (*ad‘iya*) and school celebrations are centered on Islamic occasions only and teachers incessantly pressuring non-veiled students and teachers to compel them to wear the hijab, even spreading malicious rumors about them until they succumb.

The schools in which the fieldwork was conducted did not show such levels of Islamization and seemed to be less saturated with Islamic symbols than other social and public spaces in Egypt. For example, there were no stickers on the walls emphasizing the importance of hijab and the performance of prayers, nor was there constant airing of religious sermons or Quran recitation as in other public and private buildings across the country. There were of course various other signs of Islamization in the schools. For example, promotional material advertizing the vision and mission of one of the schools (a requirement under new accreditation rules) were made in the form of religious prayers (*athkar*) and Ramadan calendars. Posters and artwork in the different schools also reflected religious themes, but only if they did not include oppositional

themes or meanings, focusing primarily on rituals and relations with ‘the other’, such as the artwork in Figure 1 from the corridors of the technical school, where the large text reads: the sad al-Aqsa [mosque] is calling unto Muslims.



Figure 1: Artwork in the Boys’ Technical School

During its prolonged confrontation with Islamists, specifically after the wave of terrorist attacks in the early 1990s, the state took multiple measures to loosen the hold of different Islamist groups on educational institutions (Sayed 2006, 34). The crackdown included closing down private tutoring centers run by Islamist organizations, under the pretext of a campaign against private lessons and imposing more stringent controls on private education and Islamist NGOs that had established charity schools and private tutoring classes. The Ministry of Education also removed large numbers of school teachers accused of advocating religious fundamentalism from their teaching jobs and transferred them to administrative jobs. In fact, state security affiliated “political communication” representatives are present in every educational

district to ‘monitor’ teachers and receive any reports about oppositional discourses in the classrooms. This partly explains why this study finds less expression of alternative Islamist views than previous works.

Finally, constructions of citizenship and nationhood have strong gendered components, whether implicitly or explicitly. This is particularly so in light of the Islamization of the public sphere and the focus on female modesty in contemporary Islamist discourses. The modesty and chastity of women are constructed as central to the power and prosperity of society and the Muslim nation in almost all popular Islamist discourses (see Sobhy 2009). Where young women are consistently condemned for violating the norms of chastity and therefore undermining the nation, their citizenship status may be rendered more precarious as a result. Kandiyoti has indicated “the extent to which elements of national identity and cultural difference are articulated as forms of control over women and which infringe upon their rights as enfranchised citizens” (1991, 429). The construction of women as “privileged bearers of corporate identities and boundary markers of their communities has had a deleterious effect on their emergence as full-fledged citizens of modern-nations states” (Kandiyoti 1991, 441). Although these issues are not explored in depth in the research, there is an interest in investigating the gendered differences in the articulation of the nation and the gendered experience and discourse of citizenship among students. The research looks at gender differences in emotional expressions around nationhood and the links between constructions of citizenship and constructions of masculinity and femininity.

Similarly, while the research does not focus on the citizenship rights and status of Christians per se, it acknowledges the fundamental concerns about full citizenship for the Coptic Christian minority in light of pervasive forms of Islamization in the education system. The lived citizenship of Christian students and teachers across different interactions is a critical area for future research. There has been some research on textbook discourses on Christians and non-Muslims and the promotion of “tolerance” or “extremism” in Islamic Religious Education textbooks (see Toronto and Eissa 2008, Starrett 1998, MARED 2010 and Groiss 2004). For example, Toronto and

Eissa argue that Islamic education textbooks exhibit “the inherent contradiction in promoting tolerance and respect for other religions and at the same time including material that instills an exclusivist, triumphalist attitude by emphasizing the pre-eminence of the Muslim community” (2007, 49, see also Groiss 2004).¹³ It should be noted however that the discourses of the textbooks are actually more tolerant than many variants of public discourse in the country. They do therefore signal to students and teachers the ‘official line’ and the parameters of sanctioned discourse on Christians and Muslim-Christian relations.

CONCLUSION

The research approaches the production of citizenship in Egyptian schools as being defined by the four key elements dealt with in this chapter and developed throughout the thesis. The first element is the nature and particular style of governance of the Mubarak regime, especially in its final years coinciding with the rise of Gamal Mubarak, characterized by pervasiveness of cronyism and corruption, informality and selective repression of dissent. The second element is neoliberalism and privatization as critically shaping official citizenship discourses, the actual provision of education and the everyday realities of the schools. The third element is modes of discipline and punishment in the schools in a context of precarious citizenship rights, informality and

¹³ In his detailed report on the content of Egyptian school textbooks of all grades and subjects, Groiss (2004) documented the passages that relate to Jews, Christians, war, peace, the Palestinian problem, jihad, terror and tolerance. Groiss, who has conducted similar studies on Saudi Arabian, Iranian and Palestinian Authority textbooks, surveyed 103 Egyptian textbooks for use in primary, preparatory and secondary state schools and 16 textbooks for use in preparatory and secondary schools within the religious Azharite school system, published between 1999 and 2002. His conclusions can be summarized as follows: Judaism and Christianity are both respected as monotheistic religions and despised as unbelief; The Christian West is not presented as a rival as such, but the Crusades and modern Imperialism, are vividly described, using hostile language; Egyptian textbooks endeavor to foster a positive attitude among the students towards the Copts, who are depicted as an integral part of the Egyptian nation (but incidents of strife are not discussed); the image of the Jews, both historically and at present, is very negative; Zionism is portrayed negatively; the Middle East conflict is depicted as a usurpation of Palestinian land by foreigners with the help of Western Imperialism; the solution of the conflict depends on the attainment by the Palestinians of their rights; the 1973 war is depicted as a major Egyptian victory; martyrhood for the nation is exalted; jihad is portrayed in its military connotation only; there is a rejection of terrorism in principle, but a support of Palestinian operations in Israel.

lack of effective accountability. The fourth element is the use of constructions of the nation and Islam in legitimizing and framing these citizenship projects and patterns of governance. The main parameters that define the citizenship projects embodied in the schools are therefore shaped by general authoritarian context and nature of the regime, privatization, pervasive extralegality and informality and Islamist and nationalist discourses.

The following chapter explains the research's approach to studying citizenship in the schools. It lays out the approach of the study and its theoretical and methodological underpinnings, building on the literatures on discipline and subjectivation and the sociology and anthropology of education. It describes key features of the research sites and the context of conducting research on education in Egypt and elaborates on how the research was carried out.

CHAPTER TWO: STUDYING THE PRODUCTION OF CITIZENSHIP IN THE SCHOOLS

Apart from its analysis of national textbooks, this research approaches schooling ethnographically in the first instance. School-level observations and discussions are employed to arrive at the school's role in the production of classed and gendered subjects and in the production of the 'state' and state-society relations. The assumption is that students "know the state through its public discourses ... and through their direct interaction with its officials, institutions, and agents" (Ghannam 2002, 173). "Subjects' understandings based on daily experiences of interaction with agents and institutions of the state enter into the construction and making of the state" (Ismail 2011b, 846). Mundane and repetitive experiences in the school play a key role in the students' understanding of their relationship with the state. Such experiences range from practices of punishment, preoccupation of school actors with appearances to the appeasement of supervisors while not insisting that teachers enter classes in the first place. For example, student everyday experiences in the schools would include knowledge that resources are made available to paint the walls and write the common slogan "My School is clean, beautiful and developed" but funds will not be allocated to hire cleaners, but in fact students themselves may be compelled to clean the school in some cases.

The research assumes that citizenship and subjectivation are rendered visible in such everyday experiences of institutions of 'the state'. The research builds on other key approaches in the study of how institutions construct individuals as subjects. It builds on Foucauldian approaches to discipline, punishment and subjectivation and their implications for the use of violence. It draws on the sociology and anthropology of education in understanding the different schooling experiences of students across different social classes. This chapter details the theoretical and methodological approaches that guide and define this study and explains how the study was conducted,

how the schools were selected and what this research can or cannot say about Egyptian secondary schooling and citizenship.

SCHOOLING, SUBJECTIVATION AND DISCIPLINE

Different approaches have employed notions of culture, habitus, identity, personality, the hidden curriculum or subjectivity in order to understand the relationship between institutions and the shaping of the discourses and practices of subjects who are subject to their power. The notion of an internalization of social control is present in the work of many authors such as Bourdieu, Norbert Elias, Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault. Notions of subjectivity typically place greater emphasis on indeterminacy and multiplicity (with their associated assumptions regarding power and “truth”) and allow for individual ‘agency’ drawn on the multiple discursive resources available to actors in different situations (see Ortner 2005, Blackman et al 2008). In particular, *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1977) and *History of Sexuality Volume 1* (Foucault 1990) “show how the subject is subjected to relations of power as she/ he is individualized, categorized, classified, hierarchized, normalized, surveilled and provoked to self-surveillance. These are technologies of subjection brought into play within institutions that... improvise, cite and circulate discursive frames and coterminous technologies that render subjects in relations of power” (Youdell 2006b, 518).

The school for all of these authors is one of the key institutions in which the disciplinary techniques of subjectivation are exercised and where the self is constituted. Schools are places where one learns what can be said and what must be left unsaid, what is acceptable to do and be – and what is not. “Once the individual comes to know what to expect as ‘normal’ through the dominant regimes of truth that circulate in schooling, she actually *constructs herself* – and is constructed – through particular speech acts that are the *effects* of these dominant discursive practices” (Kohli 1999, 323). Most approaches to subjectivation and schooling focus on facets of school relations and not on more explicit rules and textbook content. In examining the performative power of

the schooling process, the manifest content of syllabuses matters less “than the cultural rules embodied in what is taught and how it is taught: those implicit rules that define what is true, what is relevant, what is normal, what is valuable, and who has the right to give voice to a particular discourse” (Donald 1992, 46). In Butler’s words, not only are schools places of/for official discourses, but they are sites where ritualized production occurs “under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism” (Butler 1993, 95). For example, “[T]he racialization of the subject or its gendering or, indeed, its social abjection more generally is performatively induced from various and diffuse quarters that do not always operate as “official” discourse (Butler 1997, 157).

On the other hand, it has been argued that Bourdieu- and other scholars in the sociology of education- “afforded children little social agency and portrayed them as primarily passive in the face of the inculcation they receive (Reed-Danahay 2004, 63-66). In this research, students are certainly understood as having ‘agency’ in the face of school discourses and practices. This is not to suggest that either “people make society” or “society makes people”. The relationship is neither a one-way determination, nor even a dialectic; but rather “it is characterized by oscillation, slippage and unpredictable transformations” (Donald 1992, 2). As Foucault puts it, individual practices are not invented by the individual himself, but “are models that he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society, his social group” (Foucault 1997, 291). Butler explains it as follows: “to claim that the subject is constituted is not to claim that it is determined; on the contrary, the constituted character of the subject is the very precondition of its agency. For what is it that enables a purposive and significant reconfiguration of cultural and political relations, if not a relation that can be turned against itself, reworked and resisted” (Butler 1995, 46)? Agency here is not “some natural or originary will; it takes shape as specific desires and intentions within a matrix of subjectivity – of (culturally constituted) feelings, thoughts, and meanings” (Ortner 2005, 34).

Putting it differently, these discussions suggest that ‘resistance’ imbricates within power not outside of it (Young 1990), as distinct from philosophies of consciousness, where resistance was posed as outside of power, and specific acts of will were “privileged as if individuals were sovereign agents responding to universal categories and universal claims about emancipation” (Popkewitz and Brennan 1997, 312). The purpose is not “to deny the existence of hegemonic processes in schools but, rather, to problematize their assumed coherence and point to their inherent ambiguity” (Reed-Danahay and Anderson-Levitt 1991, 546). As Deborah Youdell puts it, “[s]ubjectivities are not the stable, interior possessions of a self-knowing subject, but are instead artifacts of discourses that produce these subjects as though they were pre-existing.. These constituting processes are deeply implicated in social and educational exclusions” (Youdell 2006a, 55).

Foucault and studies informed by his work have used the vocabulary of ‘discipline’ in their accounts of the ways in which schools and other institutions produce subjects or shape subjectivities. In this view, the production of docile citizens is embedded in the disciplinary technique of mass schooling. “Discipline ‘makes’ individuals,” argues Foucault (1977, 170). “It is the specific technique of power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise. The success of disciplinary power derives no doubt from the use of simple instruments, hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment and their combination into a procedure that is specific to it, the examination” (Foucault 1977, 170).

There is also a sense in Foucault’s treatments of the subject that ‘disciplines’ or ‘disciplinary mechanisms’ began to displace sovereign power in the ‘modern era’. There seems to have been for Foucault a “point of junction of the monarchical, ritual exercise of sovereignty and the hierarchical, permanent exercise of indefinite discipline” (Foucault 1977, 217). Foucault has contrasted the disciplines to the power of the sovereign in several instances, in that the former extract time and labor, not wealth and commodities from bodies (Foucault 1977, 239). The functions of disciplinary institutions therefore shifted from attempting to neutralize dangers to positively seeking

“to increase the possible utility of individuals” (Foucault 1977, 210).¹⁴ Along those lines, Foucault therefore establishes, in *The Subject and Power*, a distinction between a relationship of violence and a power relationship:

A relationship of violence acts upon a body or upon things; it forces, it bends, it breaks on the wheel, it destroys, or it closes the door on all possibilities... On the other hand, a power relationship can only be articulated on the basis of two elements which are each indispensable if it is really to be a power relationship: that “the other” (the one over whom power is exercised) be thoroughly recognized and maintained to the very end as a person who acts; and that, faced with a relationship of power, a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may open up (Foucault 1982, 789).

The distinction is between repression and violent punishment on the one hand, and on the other, institutionalized power relations, which employ punishment in a measured (and typically codified) manner as part of its disciplinary project and techniques, and as means of carrying out its key function of ‘normalization.’ Punishment within a disciplinary power relationship aims neither at expiation nor at repression but ‘brings five quite distinct operations into play: . . . [it] compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it normalizes’ (Foucault 1977, 182-3).

While This research does not approach discipline in schools in the broader sense of understanding the very organization, architecture and normalizing judgment integral to the institution of schooling. The interest is not in ‘modern schooling’ as a fairly homogenous phenomenon or disciplining technique that produces a particular kind of citizen or subject. Rather, the focus of this work is on how these disciplining mechanisms work in different school contexts reflecting different material realities and producing different kinds of subjects.

¹⁴ Foucault argues that during the 17th century, schooling was justified in terms of its presumed capacity to prevent ‘ignorance’, ‘idleness’ and ‘. . . public disorder’ (Foucault 1977, 210); but by the time of the French Revolution, the aims of primary education had become ‘to “fortify”, to “develop the body”, to prepare the child “for a future in some mechanical work”, to give him “an observant eye, a sure hand, and prompt habits” (Foucault 1977, 210–11). The disciplines also take the perennial enterprise of sovereign power, of seeking to inculcate obedience in, and make use of, their subjects, to a new level through “the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful, and conversely” (Foucault 1977, 138).

THE SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY OF EDUCATION

This research clearly privileges class differences and material conditions in attempting to understand schooling and subjectivity. In this regard, it has been argued that “[o]ne of the major differences between [Bourdieu’s] approach and that of Foucault and Elias is Bourdieu’s focus on social class and stratification, showing that socialization processes and educational institutions work in different ways for different segments of the population” (Reed-Danahay 2005, 63). Bourdieu’s and other key work in the sociology of education therefore provide invaluable insights for the study of schooling across different classes. “The tradition of critical sociology of education has been underpinned by concerns about the role that schools play in the reproduction of inequitable social relations along axes of class, gender, race, and, more recently, sexuality” (Youdell 2005, 250).

There are different ways in which schools are seen to be “reproducing” class relations, dominant discourses, and inequalities within society. For example, by the mere fact of integrating students into a credential market and a system of urban segregation, they roughly reproduce a hierarchically organized labor force (Collins 1979, Ogbu 1978, Bowles and Gintis 1976). Furthermore, Bernstein (1977), Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), and others have argued that the organization of knowledge, the form of its transmission and the assessment of its acquisition are crucial factors in the cultural reproduction of class relations in industrial societies. The argument therefore is that, as students are hierarchically ordered- an ordering generally based on the cultural forms of dominant groups- different groups of students are taught different norms, skills, values knowledge, and dispositions by race, class and sex.

Some of these studies of social stratification and student achievement relied on “external” and “objective” data that in some sense did not allow them to treat schools as more than as a black box, in ways that did not capture “what is actually taught, what is actually learned, what is rejected, and how the lived experiences of class, race, and

gender actors mediates the outcomes so well studied” (Apple and Weis 1986, 17). Scholars such as Michael Apple, Lois Weis, Peter Woods, Geoff Whitty and others have provided important insights for surpassing the more rigid models of cultural reproduction of earlier studies. They emphasized that reproduction is contested and not always successful (Apple 1982 and Apple and Weis 1983) and more attention began to be paid not only to content but to the form and organization of knowledge, pedagogy, and evaluation and the principles that underpinned them and to the ways all of this was actually experienced by students and teachers (Apple 1982).

Ethnographic programs of analysis were seen as more appropriate in aiding the understanding of what schools actually do (Foley, Levinson and Hurtig 2000, Sewell and Hauser 1980, Weis 1982). Studies of domination had to be mitigated by the study of class conflict and student resistance within the school. In essence, analysis of schools had to be more speculative, less ‘determined’ and conceiving schools as part of the contested terrain where day-to-day struggles at the level of curriculum and teaching practice are taking place. “The notion of the educational system as assisting in the production of economically and ideologically useful knowledge points to the fact that schools are *cultural* as well as economic institutions” (Apple and Weis 1986, 11).

Schools are appropriated as organic institutions within society, within ‘culture’. They are populated and operated by people, not by an abstract entity named ‘the state,’ or ‘the dominant classes.’ The people that make up the school are near or far from the gaze of those other people we identify more closely as: the state, officials, central ministries and inspectors. Any state aim imprinted onto education may act as a constraint, desire, or structural pressure upon the school, but by no means determines the actual schooling experience or its impact on students. Working class students, for instance, often expressly reject the credentials, the overt and hidden curriculum, and the norms that are purportedly taught in schools (Apple 1982, Willis 1977). Therefore the school “can serve as a site for the production of alternative and/or oppositional cultural practices which do not serve (at least not in any straightforward manner) the

accumulation, legitimation, or production needs of the state or capital” (Apple and Weis 1986, 11).

Ethnographic description however may not help in the further task of understanding: “how and why reality comes to be constructed in particular ways and how and why particular constructions of reality seem to have the power to resist subversion” (Whitney 1974, 125). Apple and Weis (1986) have emphasized the importance of attention to class, gender, race and a general historical element, so that ethnographic work can be linked to changes over time in the division and control of labor, to ongoing alterations in class composition, and the historically changing functions of the state in education. The ethnographies of youth culture and schooling produced by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural studies and its followers had a major impact on educational sociology during the late 1970s and 1980s. Despite this invaluable contribution, important theoretical and methodological problems emerged in their treatment of class, culture and resistance (Watson 1993, Davies 1995). This thesis draws upon such works considerably (especially in discussions around school discipline, control and noncompliance). Nevertheless, it is still clear that—as with the literature on educational neoliberalism in the North—although some concepts may be applicable, the underlying realities they are applied to may be divergent indeed.

Scholars of the political economy and the sociology of education have emphasized that public schools (at least in industrial societies) make available different types of educational experience and curriculum knowledge to students in different social classes (Bowles and Gintis 1976, Bernstein 1977, Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, and Apple 1979, Anyon 1988, Da Silva 1988, Hempel-Jorgensen 2009, Ivinson and Duveen 2006). The argument is that students are differentially processed in schools according to social class and this, in turn, predisposes them to fit into certain positions in the occupational structure. Children of the subordinate classes are taught, through the manifest and hidden curricula of school, the virtues of compliance and submission to direct orders. Children of petty-bourgeoisie and bourgeois origins are socialized in school to be independent, autonomous and to internalize control.

While the latter receive a cognitive content of higher status, the former are either taught knowledge of ‘practical’ nature, or none at all. Focusing on school knowledge, Basil Bernstein (1977), Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron (1990) and Michael W. Apple (1979), have argued that knowledge and skills leading to social power and reward (e.g. medical, legal, managerial) are made available to the advantaged social groups and withheld from the working classes, to whom a more ‘practical’ curriculum is offered (e.g. manual skills, clerical knowledge). Anyon (1988) concluded that the “hidden curriculum” of school work is a tacit preparation for relating to the process of production in a particular way. Differing curricular, pedagogical, and pupil evaluation practices emphasize different cognitive and behavioral skills in each social setting and thus contribute to the development in the children of certain potential relationships to physical and symbolic capital, to authority, and to the process of work.

Such patterns are clearly visible in the organization of the tracking system in Egyptian secondary education as detailed in Chapter Three, where the different tracks of schooling have different curricula with an emphasis on occupational skills for lower tracks (technical education). However, boys and girls in technical schools showed plenty of assertiveness and initiative in both educational contexts and outside the school. Many technical school boys showed not only initiative but entrepreneurship in undertaking small business operations in addition to their continuous efforts in searching for and securing jobs (often multiple) and apprenticeship opportunities. While studies that emphasize the role of school in reproducing social classes through the impact of educational tracking would apply to the highly tracked system in Egypt, they do assume that such practical, less mental or managerial skills are actually delivered to working class students. Most working class youth in the technical schools felt that they are not taught, asked or expected to learn any useful skills (practical or otherwise) at all (see Chapter Three). The students’ very entitlement to respect, as well as knowledge and skills, was clearly undermined in the public schools.

Similarly, insights about class reproduction, cultural capital and “symbolic violence”¹⁵ (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990) are quite relevant for different educational contexts. Here the focus on how figures of authority may treat and value students differently based on an ‘internalized’ habitus that privileges and rewards certain forms of symbolic capital. However, the idea of students being systematically humiliated, beaten or intimidated at school simply does not come up in education research in the North. Therefore, working class students may ‘benefit’ at different levels from schooling contexts based on how much their learnt and acquired cultural capital corresponds with that of teachers, and dominant classes. However, there is little consideration in these studies that teachers in poor schools may teach differently or not at all, have different training and qualifications- or none at all, vastly different resources or receive below subsistence wages; issues all too basic and familiar to educational scholars of the South. A question which arises then is: do these theoretical articulations have relevance for Egyptian schools where the symbolic, emotional and corporal violence facing public school students is of a different magnitude and nature? While this is indeed ‘symbolic’ of power relations and citizenship contracts across social classes, it is not the ‘symbolic violence’ that Bourdieu and Passeron explain.

Finally, while this body of research provides rich grounding for this study, I do not of course look at the schools from an educational or pedagogical lens. Despite the rich field data and exposure to modes of instruction in the schools, my focus was not on the content of education, or the knowledge and skills it hopes to impart to students (except in relation to nationhood and citizenship). In this sense, the research does not cover

¹⁵ Bourdieu and Passeron argued that in any given social formation, the dominant mode of inculcation tends to correspond to the interests of the dominant classes. Key to Bourdieu’s theory of *social/economic* reproduction is how *cultural* reproduction occurs and, for subordinate groups, the disconnect between the cultural capital they obtain through child-rearing (*primary pedagogical work*) and cultural capital implicitly valued in formal schooling and the mass media. The ‘legitimate addressees’ of pedagogical work (primarily in schools) are those groups who already have acquired the dominant habitus through childrearing and other early cultural experiences. In fact, according to Bourdieu and Passeron (1990, 4), it is the very invisibility of the operation of symbolic power that makes it so effective: “Every power to exert symbolic violence, i.e. every power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force, adds its own specifically symbolic force to those power relations.” Bourdieu and Passeron continuously remind us that these micro (home, classroom) and meso-level (school) practices of symbolic violence (cultural reproduction) produce macro-level outcomes as they “contribute to the reproduction of the relations between the groups or classes (social reproduction)” (1990, 54).

key aspects of the production of classed citizens in relation to the actual knowledge and skills of schooling. It also does not cover the learning processes or skills intended in each educational track. Instead, it focuses on general aspects of the latter and its relationship to issues of citizenship. It is primarily interested in the related modes of discipline and social skills that are part of these processes. It acknowledges that schools offer different skills to students from different social backgrounds, through the explicit curriculum and programs of the schools, as well as school relations and modes of discipline and punishment described as the ‘hidden curriculum’ of schooling.

Therefore this literature constitutes invaluable foundation for the current study but may not present sufficient tools to understand contexts where education has reached such a level of dysfunction (where as Egyptians say: *mafish ta‘lim* / ‘there is no education’). Teacher paid sub-subsistence wages, students who do not come to school, a system that has almost been completely privatized in an informal manner and teachers who beat and humiliate students systematically simply do not appear in this literature. Combined with notions of discipline however, it helps provide a framework for understanding the production of citizens in the schools.

THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

The contribution of any research is critically dependent on the literature it recalls and enters into dialogue with. In addition to the issues discussed above in terms of approaches to studying education and lived citizenship, this research has confronted significant difficulty due to the very limited literature on Egyptian education, especially of ethnographic or qualitative nature and in the areas of subjectivation, discipline and even national identity. Only a limited number of ethnographic studies conducted in the global South have approached schools and education and their entanglement in the production of political subjectivities and the construction of citizens (Levinson 2001, Lulyx 1999, Benei 2008). Only few works in English have studied schooling, citizenship and the political socialization of youth in Latin America (Astiz and Mendez 2006). This

research should be considered as an initial step to detailed analyses of the notions of citizenship, the everyday construction of national identities, educational marketization and gendered and classed modes of discipline and punishment in Egyptian and Arab schools.

RESEARCH ON EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP IN EGYPT

The intersections of education, class and nationalism have been little studied in many areas of the world, especially in the global South, including the Middle East. In the wider Arab world, Fida Adely's (2010) ethnographic work on schooling and national identity in Jordan almost stands alone in contemporary studies that relate to national identity and schooling in the English language, although there are several works that discuss education in relation to Islam, 'extremism' and youth (Hefner and Zaman 2007, Nelson 2008, Talbani 1996). Key works on these issues in Egypt in English include the work of Linda Herrera (1992, 2006, 2008a, 2008b), Gregory Starrett's (1998) work on religious education, the collection on *Cultures of Arab Schooling* (Herrera and Torres 2006) including the work of Kamal Naguib and Ahmed Youssof Saad; and Fatma El-Sayed's *Transforming Education in Egypt* (2006). Sarah Hartmann is also currently completing excellent ethnographic work on private tutoring centers in Cairo (see Hartmann 2008). Donor reports and publication constitute a key source for any data or analysis. Therefore, a significant part of the available literature is focused on donor areas of interest and formal aspects of the system, such as enrolment rates and teacher training programs. There is some historical analysis on Egyptian education either as part of colonial history or general social history or of official discourse, some of which discuss the class dimensions of educational content and purposes for boys and girls. This includes works by Lisa Pollard (2006), Timothy Mitchell (1998) and Mona Russell (2002).

There are significant published and unpublished works on related topics in Arabic as referred to throughout the thesis, notably including the work of Tala't Abdul Hamid (2000) and the MARED 2010 Collection. Without oversimplifying the available

literature, works on contemporary education and citizenship in Egypt tends to be divided between traditionalist (mainly Islamist-influenced), critical and 'liberal' commentaries, with some overlap especially in the latter two categories. A significant subset of the literature in Arabic is concerned with strengthening the teaching of Arabic and Islam. Other studies are concerned with the ways in which education may be breeding intolerance and extremism (see MARED 2010). A smaller subset of the literature is more concerned with patterns of oppression and exclusion in education, especially in poor schools (see Herrera and Torres 2006).

Several scholars of Arab education have focused on school relations and pedagogical relations in schools as manufacturers of submissive and uncritical students and causing the persistence of authoritarianism in Arab societies, without always distinguishing between schools for different social classes (Sharabi 1987, Barakat 1984, Watfa 1999, Naguib 2006, Radwan et al 1970). Leading Arab intellectuals such as Hisham Sharabi (1975, 1987) and Halim Barakat (1984) have criticized Arab culture, home-rearing practices, and schools as barriers to democracy. Sharabi focused on the patriarchal structure of Arab society, and identified child-rearing and schooling practices that reflect and maintain this society, while Barakat identified many traditional values reflected in schools that are in dissonance with democratic values, attitudes and habits of mind. Watfa (1996, 1999) has emphasized how the authoritarian culture is reflected in, and maintained by, family and school relations and practices. Watfa (1999), additionally, reviewed a diverse literature in the Arab States that addresses these issues and concluded that authoritarianism is closely related to the patriarchal structure of Arab societies, and that Arab culture emphasizes obedience of the young to the old, that schools train students to become obedient and submissive by embodying these values in student-teacher relations.

In reference to Egypt specifically, it has also been argued that the despotism inside schools is based on a monopoly of decision-making processes, relationships of dominance and submission, and the negation of difference or alternative points of view. Based on an ethnographic study of classroom and school culture in preparatory

schools in Alexandria, Egypt, Kamal Naguib concludes that “the public-sector school represents a microcosm of the authoritarian state”; arguing that “the values that dominate classroom culture- authoritarianism, dominance, control, suppression and submission- permeate school social organization, and society as a whole” (2006, 68). He concludes that schools clearly reproduce a despotic personality, which is characterized by values of passivity, servility, fear, resentment, impotence, lying and cheating (Naguib 2006). Radwan et al (1970) explain the expected outcome for authoritarian schooling in terms of disinterest or even hatred to the school, a tendency for rebellion whenever possible, a spirit of cowardice, selfishness, passivity, hypocrisy and backstabbing among members of the school community; as well as training them for absolute submission to superiors and limiting innovation, discussion, sound scientific thinking or cooperation amongst them to solve their problems. In essence, the student is characterized with obedience, passivity, fear, fatalism; and becomes a slave to the text received from a higher authority, incapable of scientific thinking, experimentation, doubt, measurement, proof and criticism; thus with a deadened capacity for discussion, dialogue, creativity or desire for change (see Bilawi 2000, 178-9).

More recently, this debate has been framed in terms of student versus teacher-centered pedagogies. This was partly influenced by ideas of critical education, especially Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970), whose work has been very influential in many countries of the South. In Egyptian policy discourses, child-centered pedagogy has already become a panacea and policy recommendation to deal with all sorts of ‘problems’ in the system, from the quality of education to religious tolerance. This research departs from some of these arguments by privileging the role of material and structural conditions of the school in shaping school relations (see Chapter Five) and understanding subjectivation as more contingent and indeterminate, without crediting schools with the production of stable ‘personalities’ or fixed identities.

THIS STUDY

This research is primarily based on extensive field study including interviews and classroom observation over a period of over two years. Most of the fieldwork was conducted in six schools in the greater Cairo area between 2008 and 2010. The main research schools included two public technical secondary schools, two public general secondary schools; the latter four in an informal neighborhood, and two private general secondary English language schools, in predominantly upper-middle class neighborhoods. There was one boys' school and one girls' school of each category of public schools. However, middle and upper range private boys (only) schools are not common, as most boys enroll in mixed schools. Therefore I conducted interviews in a girls (only) school and a mixed school. In order to protect respondents from any form of harm or embarrassment due to the information they discussed, I have not used the real names of respondents or stated the names of the research schools. I have also not stated the names of the neighborhoods where the schools were located as this may make it easy to deduce which secondary schools are being referred to and which principals—and sometimes individual teachers—are being referred to. This was combined with numerous individual interviews and discussions with teachers, students and school staff from different schools across the city and different educational stages.

In each one of the research schools, in addition to classroom observation, I conducted group and individual interviews with teachers, students and the principal of the school, and sometimes other administrative staff. In sum, I have conducted extensive one-on-one and group discussions with: 6 school principals, 33 teachers (and 1 social worker), and 109 students. In terms of classroom observation, I spent the school day inside different classrooms in each school for an average of two days/per week over a period of one semester for each school (amounting to about 480 hours spent in the schools altogether). I have also carried out analyses of textbook material, policy documents, recent press coverage, commentary and reports on relevant issues, and a number of expert interviews. I reviewed 2009/2010 textbooks for the three years of secondary education in all tracks (specializations) with a focus on sections impacting production

of national identity and citizenship. Due to the lack of scholarly/academic sources, press coverage and investigative reports on key educational issues offered an invaluable resource for this research. The recently-thriving national press, with a number of more independent newspapers, pays considerable attention to key issues in education including curricula, assessment issues, school conditions, teacher practices and physical beating of students.

Despite the peripheral quasi- rural geographical location of some schools, these can still be considered *urban* Cairene schools well under the control of the centralized Ministry of Education bureaucracy. This has implications for the daily functioning of the schools and the space school members may perceive for ideological diversity. It may also impact the orientation of teachers, families, students and administrators in a less conservative urban setting. In sum, this research is focuses on a very limited number of Cairene schools in a system of 17 million students across a vast country, although there is an attempt to contextualize different patterns wherever possible.



Figure 2: Informal Neighborhood- Remaining Green Fields near the General Schools



Figure 3: Informal Neighborhood- Weekly Market



Figure 4: Informal Neighborhood- Busy Streets

Although I have classified neighborhoods in terms of social class, this glosses over the specific conditions, composition and trajectories of the neighborhoods. For example, to call one of the neighborhoods informal, may imply that it is a predominantly working class, understating the middle class presence in parts of the neighborhood. To state that it is in the Greater Cairo area, ignores its strong rural background. Furthermore, this “working class” neighborhood should not be simply assumed to be like ‘any other’ working class neighborhoods in Cairo, and the differences with other places can be pronounced and constructed by the residents themselves to be quite significant. Class is “not the same everywhere;” class meanings are “inflected by culture and place,” and importantly, “Schools themselves are classed places, within which some students feel at home and others can be distinctly uncomfortable” (Ball 2006, 7). This is clear not only in manifestations of differences in ‘taste,’ clothing or other symbols of ‘distinction’ that could be noted among students, but also among teachers; and importantly: between teachers and students. Furthermore, the technical and general schools, although existing in below-average educational district, have been the object of significant upgrading efforts by non-governmental bodies. In fact the general schools are newly built schools, with funding provided by a donor agency (see Figure 5). The private school and the mixed school are considered some of the best schools for upper middle income families.

This research is primarily concerned with the production of classed citizenship in ‘national’ secondary schools. By focusing on secondary schooling under the national system, it looks at the system that incorporates the bulk of students, but can say very little about ‘international’ schools for the elite and very little about the poorest children. Although this work refers to ‘working class’, ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘poor’ students, these students—despite their diminished citizenship entitlements—should not be mistaken for the poorest of the poor or the most disadvantaged children. As detailed in Chapter Three, secondary schooling is a far more urban phenomenon in the first place, as many villages, towns and small rural centers do not even have any secondary schools, and certainly not general secondary schools. This research is not about the schooling of the ‘poor’ (certainly not the poorest of the poor) who are less likely to enroll in secondary

education or live in urban centers in the first place. These youth and children never make it to secondary education. According to one estimate, only 29% of children who come from the poorest households complete technical secondary education, whereas the rest of the children never enroll in school or drop out before completing basic education (UNDP 2010, 44). At least one fifth of all children do not access secondary education in the first place according to official figures (MOE 2007). These disadvantaged children include street children and homeless children, who have been estimated to reach over one million children in Egypt (see Zu'bi 2007). They also include children with disabilities and serious illnesses or children who are residents of care institutions. The research not only primarily relates to the bulk of youth in the mainstream 'national' system, but also focuses on urban Cairene youth.



Figure 5: Brand New Schools- Girls' General School

For purposes of convenience, I often refer to the public technical schools as simply the ‘technical’ schools, to the public general schools as the ‘general’ schools and to the private general schools, as the ‘private’ schools, using the article ‘the’ to indicate ‘the schools in which the research was concluded’. I sometimes refer to ‘school administrators and teachers’ as a whole simply as ‘teachers’ or ‘school authorities’, distinguishing between administrators and teachers when this is relevant for the analysis.

CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH IN ‘THE SCHOOLS’

Access of researchers to public schools is severely inhibited by the need for formal approval- essentially from the highest echelons of the Ministry of Education involving a number of security approvals- in order to even enter schools, and more so for the purpose of conducting research in them. It took months of waiting and lengthy bureaucratic procedures, before I was finally able to obtain the formal approval to conduct research in public schools. As I later came to appreciate, this was no small victory and has indeed fully enabled me to enter schools and engage the school community.

Like many researchers, the schools chose me as much as I chose them. Guided by specific criteria, I studied the schools where I was able to gain access through existing personal connections. I wanted to study mainstream schools under the national system; that is not religious schools, which represent about 8% of the system. I wanted to look at ‘urban upper middle range private schools’, ‘urban public general secondary schools’ and ‘urban technical schools’. Although I wanted to study private schools, catering to about 3% of secondary schools, I did not want study elite schools catering to the most affluent strata of societies. My focus was on schools from the bulk of the system: general secondary schools (25% of the system) and technical schools (60% of the system).

I made use of the usual ethnographic methods of interview, observation, and collected other material given or made available to me. I also took numerous photos in all of the schools. In separate interviews and discussions with different groups, I asked them

directly to describe the school, to describe what they like or dislike about it, to describe relations between students, teachers and administrators, modes of discipline and punishment in the schools, their involvement in private tutoring and its causes, costs and implications. I asked them about love and belonging to the country among their generation and for themselves. I asked them about their reflections on educational curricula, examinations and about their hopes for the future and current employment or future employment aspirations. The students and teachers I interviewed were not necessarily the ones I attended class with during my observations within the schools. These initial interviews were invaluable in adjusting my research focus when I actually started to attend school. In my observations in the classrooms, I refrained from asking direct questions and tried to see how issues arise within the everyday context of the school.

I did not devote most of my time to one classroom in each school followed over a long period of time, as some school ethnographies do. Instead, I moved between different grades and different classes. My attempt at classroom ‘observation’ was also frequently futile. Many times, the attention in the classroom was turned to me and the ‘observation’ turned into a group discussion. This happened for two main reasons. Many teachers simply did not show up to class, especially in the public schools. Other teachers showed up but decided not to teach or enter the class when they saw that I was inside- although I explained to them that I had no desire to speak with the students and only wanted to attend with them. They either did not feel like teaching the class or had something else to do and could use my presence as an excuse- sometimes stating this explicitly, and/or they did not want in fact to be ‘observed.’ This meant that after many classes [in the class time of the subsequent class], there was ample time to engage with students about what had happened, as well as discussing other contextual issues about the school and student experiences. It also meant that students got more familiar with me, asked me many questions about my own life and experience and we formed bonds more rapidly. In the end, this proved incredibly enriching to my own understanding and sense of the schools, at least as articulated by students. It is obviously a testament of some of the things student meant by ‘*mafish ta’lim*’ (there is no

education), as there was frequently, literally, no education going on in the classrooms. In the private schools, teachers entered classes far more regularly (if students came to school), although many also allowed students to chat, sleep, listen to music on earphones or do as they please.

Most of my time in the schools was spent with students, whether in their classrooms or accompanying them to labs and the playground. Most of my fieldwork was not in the school at large; not in teachers' rooms and not in the principal's office; areas where further research would be very fruitful. This means that as in-depth as my classroom involvement may have been, I came and went from the schools with only a passing knowledge of the religious/political gatherings in the library in one school, interactions of principals with education authorities or teachers or how teachers and staff used the school and spent their time in it, the saving schemes organized by women in another, or the interactions around circulating Chinese and Egyptian salesmen and saleswomen.

I have often been occasionally invited many times to have tea and a chat in the teachers' room, especially during break time. In several instances, I waited in the principal's office while other business was attended to. This provided me with 'a feel' for certain dynamics in the school. My work, however, is not on the vast world of the "micropolitics of the school"¹⁶ in social and work-related teacher-teacher relations, teacher-principal relations, or school-district and school-Ministry relations. This also means that despite long interviews with teacher and principals, I became far more familiar with and 'closer' to student perspectives, discourses and concerns.

There is no assumption that any of my interlocutors had a stable, previously-developed, and/or coherent articulation of their position on such complex and emotional issues as nation and state, humiliation and physical punishment or privatization. As all of us do, students were continually picking up and incorporating themes they felt resonated with

¹⁶ These can be understood as the strategies that individuals and groups use in a particular organization to gain control of it and achieve their interests (Ball 1990, 7). Micropolitics of the school can be studied in terms of power, goal diversity, ideological disputation, conflict, interests, political activity and control (Ball 1990, 8).

them, with their sense of self, their needs and concerns, and served their purposes. What I understood from these discourses is what fit into my own register of meanings and experiences. My own expectations and assumptions about classroom functioning informed what I considered normal and expected and what was ‘different’ or ‘interesting,’ or more worthy of noting or comparing. My findings and analysis are, as Deborah Youdell puts it in reference to her work, “wholly constrained by my own discursive repertoire – the discourse that I see and name – and my capacity to represent these... I am not seeking to describe the nuances of the context and tease out what is happening within it. Rather, I am seeking to construct compelling representations of moments inside schools in order to untangle the discursive frames that guide meaning there” (Youdell 2006a, 56).

Furthermore, I only heard those who spoke up and I only engaged with those who engaged with me. I cannot claim to be writing about students who were too shy to speak to me; or the one who were uninterested, or the ones who were crowded out by those who gathered around me. Sometimes I tried to engage these students intentionally, but I cannot claim that their voices are as present in my story as other voices. I have struggled with my desire to retain the voice and intensities of the actual people I am writing about. Every articulation, even of similar ideas carries its own idiosyncrasies, subtleties and intensities. I have had to accept however that because I am not focusing on these idiosyncrasies and subtleties per se, I was going to be able to reproduce only some of what students expressed and that in the end I am writing my own discourse and interpretation of what I saw and experienced. I frequently use student and teacher quotes however to preface many sections of the chapters as well as throughout the analysis itself, as they usually provide the most succinct idea and flavor of the discussion at hand.

In addition to discourses, I tried to be more attentive to the feelings in the classroom- my own and the students’; silent and permeating discourses. For example, the anxiety, outrage or shame I felt when a student was being physically or verbally abused, I noted were not always- or certainly uniformly- shared by students. I noted how I too learned

to put a brave face, composure and even nonchalance, until the “silly” performance passed. My ‘bias’ in the concepts and meanings I use (“abuse” in this case) as clearly classed and otherwise socially/culturally felt and constructed, have not yielded a complete abandonment of these concepts. But I do not hold the same understanding and feeling about ‘abuse’ as I did without such a critical awareness. To move beyond a simple rejection and emotional distance from a set of behaviors is also to be open to receiving and understanding the different ways that these behaviors are enacted, their goals and the multiple modes of reception to them, as well as their ever incomplete ‘normalization.’

Like many researchers, I have struggled with the expectation that I can render “the social more real, more orderly, more predictable than it is” (Ball 2006, 4). The world as it is, is “complicated, confused, impure, uncertain” (Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron 1991, 259). In approaching student, teacher and textbook discourses, I am cognizant that I have imposed on those discourses categories and labels that are not organic to them, although in some areas more than others. I constructed and organized their words as discourses on concepts and themes like “privatization”, “punishment” and “citizenship”. Discourses deployed by students and teachers (and researcher) may be both intentional and unintentional; and discourses intentionally deployed may escape or exceed the intent of the subject who speaks or acts, and/or the subject may unwittingly deploy discourses whose historicities and/or intersections assert unanticipated meanings (Youdell 2006b). Discourses do not need to be explicitly cited in order to be deployed (Butler 1997a). Indeed, discursive practices may entail the deployment of complex combinations of intentional and unintentional discourses and their discursive effects, which assumes multiple degrees of both intent and understanding among subjects in terms of the embedded meanings and effects of discourses. In fact, “[u]nderstanding the researching and researched subject to be perpetually but provisionally constituted through discourse means that research practice is wholly implicated in processes of ongoing subjectivation (of both the researcher and the researched) even as these subjectivities form the objects of study” (Youdell 2006b, 514). “This cannot be factored out, overcome or otherwise neutralised. Instead, it

means that the research and the researcher must proceed from a recognition of how it (s/he) is implicated in constituting subject and an acceptance that analysis can only ever be a set of interpretations of the discourses the researcher imagines s/he can identify” (Youdell 2006a, 64).

INFLUENCING THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

I have shaped and created my own findings in many important ways, from defining and redefining my research focus, to the way I posed certain questions or inquired about issues when they happened, to how respondents may have adjusted their discourses and practices depending on who they thought I was. Every researcher enters a research site with their own gendered, classed and theoretically influenced viewing “glasses” and can only see the classroom from behind those glasses.

Researchers influence the contexts in which data are gathered (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995) not only because their presence changes the dynamics of relations in the setting, or because participants may act or respond differently in the presence of the researcher based on the researcher’s ‘apparent’ identity (gender, class, religion and nationality) as well as their perceptions of the researcher’s views, attitudes and power. I can never know what or how much was concealed from me or adjusted in my presence, but I assume that the general outcome was that I was not shown the uglier realities of the school, nor became exposed to the full oppositional discourse of students on the state. However, I do not believe that an unrealistic portrayal was shared with me, due to trust and complicity with students and the significant period of time spent in the schools. Therefore, as shocking as many of my observations may seem to some readers, especially in terms of the scale of physical and emotional abuse that occurred in my presence, as well as the lack of any instruction in so many classes I attended, they should be seen with this background in mind.

Just as participants may have adjusted theirs in my presence, I consciously and unconsciously adjusted my behavior in the research setting. Like most researchers, I

engaged in forms of ‘impression management’, through dress, speech and demeanor, as well as the presentation of ‘different selves’ (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995, 83-87) appropriate to different research contexts. I- almost unthinkingly- attempted to downplay the social class difference between myself and respondents in the informal neighborhood. I also attempted to control many of my emotions and actions, ending up in many class a witness to humiliating physical and verbal abuse of students without even uttering a word of protest. I had been made to collaborate in the normalization of abuse in the schools, no matter how this may have been balanced in subsequent discussions with students, or complicit glances and my facial expressions during episodes of abuse. I also adopted various aspects of the gendered comportment I understood was expected of me. I dressed very modestly and maintained greater distance with male students and teachers.

A number of concrete elements about my insertion into the schools arguably affected the kind of “results” I obtained and patterns I was able to witness. This includes perceptions of nationality, class, gender, religion and power position. The exposure we receive is no doubt influenced by the trust and complicity that occurs in research sites and is critical to ethnographic work. I made it clear to students that I had no power to ‘change’ things in the schools; and many students were visibly disappointed to hear this and may have had less incentive to explain the issues that ‘need fixing’ in the school. In general however my presence was warmly welcomed by the students across the schools (but not always by teachers and administrators). Many students were very eager to speak with me and to seize this opportunity express their opinions, in a sense simply ‘to be heard’. Being a woman meant much easier access and ease in talking to girls and perhaps more curious attitudes from boys.

Being in the school with an official permit was a matter which had contradictory implications. On the one hand, it conferred legitimacy and assuaged ‘security’ fears that may relate to ‘foreign’ researchers, who are almost always suspected of being foreign spies. However, even if I was a confirmed Egyptian, as someone studying in the West, I was faced with the common concern about ‘tarnishing the image of Egypt abroad.’

Some students visibly censored others (and arguably themselves) for this purpose when negative aspects of educational processes in the school were discussed; and frequently asked me about this explicitly: ‘will you tell them this “abroad”?’ Arguably, this reduced the amount of negative issues discussed in my presence. On the other hand, a perception sometimes developed among the administrators that I had some ‘supervision’ role in affiliation with the Ministry of Education (henceforth MOE). This was invariably conveyed to students and it was clear that they were reserved in the initial interviews and attempted to portray a largely positive image of the school. However, spending time in the schools usually reversed this attitude.

Expectedly, I was classified in terms of religion. This information was always solicited at the onset quite candidly by asking about my “full name”. I later learned to present myself using my longer full name, which is unambiguously Muslim. The majority of students were Muslim, although there was a visible Christian minority in several classes. Students placed a symbolic importance on this issue; and I imagine that many of the Muslim students were more open with me after inquiring about my religion, at least in initial encounters. This may have also meant however that Christian students and teachers could not feel at great liberty to speak with me relating to aspects of their own lived citizenship entitlement in the schools. The lived citizenship of Christian students was not only beyond the scope of my exploration but was also hardly discussed in my presence in the schools. This in itself reflects the silence of students and teachers in the schools on these matters, and perhaps the legacy of silence within the Christian community, especially in the presence of a Muslim researcher and speaking typically in a collective context that would expectedly be very hostile to discourses that depart from the rehearsed assertions of ‘national unity’ and the ‘normality’ of the saturation of the public space with Muslim symbols. I also did not wear a headscarf and this arguably had an impact for how students saw and dealt with me. It is safe to say students did not feel that they had to express adherence to mainstream piety and could for example more easily discuss their relationships with me. It may have also meant that more conservative students may have not been as interested in talking with me. Recent research in Cairo has suggested that Muslim women, especially younger, poorer and less

educated women, indicate that they are more religious and adherent to Islamic cultural norms when interviewed by an enumerator donning the Islamic headscarf; while Christian women tend to downplay their religious identity to avoid appearing antagonistic to the dominant, Muslim majority (Blaydes and Gillum 2011).

Finally and importantly, the schools are ‘securitized’ spaces as argued throughout this work. This meant that I could not put forward oppositional or overtly political issues, certainly not in my research permit request to MOE, nor in my discussion with students. I was always aware that my actions were being monitored and the students were asked by school authorities what I talked with them about. When their discourses became too oppositional or discussions on the regime were too extended, I (pretended to) censor them and tried to change the topic back to ‘education’. I truly feared this might jeopardize my research permit and access to the schools. As I had not hit the boundaries of appropriate discourse (I was never warned or questioned about the types of issues I raised with students), I am not sure if I simply managed the balance well, or actually failed to exploit spaces that were indeed available to discuss more controversial issues, not only around politics and protest, but also around the politics of the school in general, and issues of corruption especially. Despite any trust in me or rapport between me and the students, they were frequently voicing their opinions in front of other students, sometimes including sons or daughters of teachers or school administrators.

CONCLUSION

The research approaches the production of citizenship in the schools in a number of different ways. It relies on the available quantitative data, secondary reporting and analysis relating to the main themes of the literature (Chapter Three). Beyond this general image that frames the realities of Egyptian education, the research relies on analysis of nationally unified secondary education textbooks as they relate to the themes of the research. It focuses especially on subjects (Nationalist Education and Arabic Language) that have received little or no analysis, but are key for illuminating the

official state project of nationhood and citizenship in the late Mubarak era (Chapter Six). The bulk of the research and its primary approach is qualitative and ethnographic (Chapters Four, Five and Seven). Guided by the relevant theoretical and applied literature from different contexts, the research approaches the key themes of the literature by exploring the concrete realities of a small number of schools catering to different social classes. It hopes to arrive through school-level observations and discussions at how the schools, as institutions of the state reflect the different citizenship contracts available to boys and girls from different social classes.

I have tried in this chapter to explain in some detail how I went about doing the research and the kinds of limitations and opportunities this approach may have. I have also explained the theoretical and methodological literatures I drew up, including the literatures on discipline and subjectivation and the sociology and anthropology of education. I have also discussed some of the potential limitations of their use in the Egyptian context. I revisit some of these issues throughout the thesis and in the final chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: *MAFISH* *TA‘LIM*: FAILED EDUCATION AND INFORMAL PRIVATIZATION

We will take further steps to expand access to basic education and upgrade its quality. These include, but are not limited to, the development of technical education and vocational training centers, promotion of Public- Private Partnerships, and involvement of the civil society in the educational sector. We will also enlarge the scope of decentralization in managing the educational process at governorate-level and beyond; and we believe that we are taking the right way towards goal attainment.

Hosni Mubarak, on the Occasion of Promulgating the Teachers Cadre’s Law (Cited in MOE 2007, III).

The Ministry of Education (henceforth MOE) has acknowledged this profound failing of quality in general secondary and across the system and articulated them around three major factors that reflect quite well the key concerns of students: 1) the prevalence of obsolete teaching methods that focus on the traditional rote memorization approaches; 2) the prevalence of the traditional assessment system that measures student’s memorization skills; 3) the prevalence of the culture of the school textbook, which is the unique source of knowledge for students; a situation that has led to private tutoring, and reveals the absence of the equal opportunity principle in education, as well as the “Free Education for All” right according to the Constitution (MOE 2007, 278).

This chapter provides an overview of key issues in Egyptian education, especially secondary education. It surveys the available data and background information that sets the stage for the discussion in the subsequent chapters. It describes the basic features of the Egyptian education system especially in terms of secondary education and key issues relating its declining quality, teacher pay, expenditure levels, marketization and the issue of emotional and physical punishment. It charts the key features of the state-market nexus that constitutes the basis of contemporary secondary education in Egypt in terms of the formal and informal privatization of education.

SECONDARY EDUCATION: DECLINING QUALITY, PRIVATIZATION AND EXTRALEGAL PRACTICES

The pre-university education system in Egypt includes the primary; preparatory and secondary stages, in a huge system of over 39,926 schools and close to 17 million students in 2005/06 (MOE 2007, 32). The Basic Education stage encompassing the six years of the primary stage and the three years of the preparatory stage is free and compulsory constitutionally guaranteed right for all children aged 6-14. Those who successfully complete the basic education leaving exam can enroll in secondary education. Secondary education comprises a three-year general secondary education track, from which successful students can go on to study at post-secondary level; and a technical secondary education track. In the eleventh and twelfth grades of general secondary track, famously known as *thanawiya 'amma*, students choose concentration in the humanities, mathematics, or the sciences, or combinations thereof. There are two types of technical secondary schools. The majority of technical schools are the three-year technical secondary schools leading to a formal qualification (*diblum*) as 'Technician'; but there are also five-year advanced vocational secondary schools leading to qualification as 'First Technician'. Students in the technical schools study industrial, agricultural or commercial studies. Tourism is sometimes available as a specialization, there are a few military schools across the country and there a number of more specialized technical schools as well as a small number of elite technical schools that focus on technically advanced areas.

In 2007, students enrolled in industrial education accounted for 50.6 percent of all students enrolled in technical education and agricultural and commercial education accounted for 11.4 percent and 38 percent, respectively (MOE 2007, Annexes, 104). Technical secondary degrees are 'terminal' degrees that can be used as qualifications when applying for formal jobs, whereas a general secondary degree is- currently- only a route to university and higher education. Tracking into technical schooling and determination of specialization within technical education is determined by student scores on the basic education leaving exams. MOE identifies the cutoff point beyond

which students cannot enroll in general secondary schooling every year. This is currently set between 60 and 70%, so that the highest scoring 30% of students have the right to enroll in general secondary, while other students can only enroll in technical education and are allocated to specializations within their schools based on their scores, regardless of their desires or aptitudes. It is of course very significant for students that they had little choice over what subjects they studied, especially that grades were dependent on cheating and other variables. They are well aware however that there is little practical difference between the specializations in terms of career or job prospects, and that *mafish ta'lim* applies across the system; expressing that in any case, they will just receive a '*diblum*.'

According to MOE figures, the enrolment rate in secondary education (including enrolments in all sub-tracks) amounts to 78.4 percent, so that 21.6 percent of the age cohort outside secondary education (MOE 2007, Annexes 77). There are very large disparities in access to general secondary schooling. General secondary students living in rural areas account for only 24.2 percent of all secondary education students, compared to 75.8 percent in urban areas (MOE 2007, Annexes 79), even though approximately 55 percent of Egypt's population lives in rural areas (ElSaharty, Richardson and Chase 2005). In Cairo, opportunities to enroll in general secondary education in 2006/07 were available to 46.8 percent of the age group concerned, while in Fayoum, opportunities to enter general secondary were available to just 13 percent of the age group (MOE 2007, Annexes, 80). Of course, schools for all types of secondary education, as well as special education, are more numerous in urban areas (MOE 2007, 32).

DECLINING QUALITY

The Egyptian education system has been expanding massively in terms of enrollment numbers while investment in teacher salaries, hiring and training and school construction have lagged behind. This has had a devastating impact on the quality of education in the system, through low teacher qualification and training and poor

resources, very high teacher/student ratios, and short school days in double –and triple- shift schools. While enrollment rates increased significantly over the last 20 years, Egypt has not yet reached universal primary education and suffers low adult literacy rates of around 70.4% in 2007 (UNDP 2010), although other estimates have placed literacy rates at around 50% (see Metz 1990 and Antoninis 2001).

Rising enrollment has translated into class densities of 60 and even 80 students in primary schools in urban areas, conditions where learning becomes virtually impossible. The average class density in Cairo’s primary schools is 53 students per class in 2007/2008 (UNDP 2010, 265) with many classes reaching 80 students per class.¹⁷ There are currently three types of shifts in Egyptian schools in addition to the full day: morning (four to five hours), evening (four hours), and double (four hours each shift). Full day schools represent only 24% of technical secondary schools, but 63% of general secondary schools. They represent 39% of primary schools and 37% of preparatory schools (MOE 2007, Annexes, 36). Secondary schools are also overcrowded, with more than 49 percent of general secondary classes and 35 percent of technical secondary classes having a density above 41 students per class (MOE 2007, 277).¹⁸ The quality of secondary schooling and of education more generally is very low indeed.

According to MOE analysis, technical education is inadequate to meet the needs of society, and of internal and external labor markets; weaknesses which have translated into lack of respect for technical education (MOE 2007, 278). In addition to its chronic problems of poor-quality education due to outdated curricula and poorly trained and paid teachers (European Training Foundation and World Bank 2005; Richards and Waterbury 1996), most schools lack the basic equipment and maintenance needed for functioning even on the outmoded curricula and programs of the 1960s. Although in

¹⁷ Classrooms in some governorates like North Sinai typically have lower densities; and secondary schools have lower densities than primary schools, so the national average is usually around 40 students per class (MOE 2007, 45). According to official statistics, 30% of state-run classrooms have 70 or more students at any one time (El-Sayed 2005).

¹⁸ A significant number of classes have very large density over 50 or even over 70 students. The average class density in all types of public secondary schools reached 38.6 students/classroom in 2005/06. There is of course significant variation across governorates (MOE 2007, 277).

recent years it became increasingly obvious that technical education was superfluous and no longer serving any need (Elgeziri 2010), the government continued to steer students toward it merely to limit demand on general secondary education and universities- to such an extent that technical education is now described as merely serving as the government's safety valve for young men and women of poor socioeconomic backgrounds (Antoninis 2001, Gill and Heyneman 2000). Even among educational officials, it is now common to refer to technical schools qualification as no more than a proof of literacy (*mish akhtar min shihadat mahw ummiya*).

Teacher qualification and training are obviously the most central issues in relation to quality. In addition to low and nominal salaries discussed below, many classrooms remain without teachers possessing the most basic types of instruction and content competencies. According to the 2005 Egypt Human Development Report, only 46 % of employed teachers are graduates of Faculties of Education (UNDP 2005, 64). In technical schools there is a massive shortage of teachers in academic subjects, workshops and labs. The shortage in teachers is estimated at 13,596 teachers, affecting Industrial specializations for the most part (MOE 2007, Annexes, 106). An MOE report pointed out that “technical education lacks specialized technicians to provide regular maintenance of the schools’ equipment and devices. Most of the teachers employed lack skills, which may be attributed to a lack of adequate training. This situation has affected the quality of technical education graduates and has decreased their opportunities to find suitable jobs in the labor market” (MOE 2007, Annexes, 106). Indeed, in most of the workshops in the boys’ [industrial] technical school, less than one third of the machines were operational and only one or two students would be allowed to use them ‘so that they do not spoil them’. Those trusted students were the ones who already worked in the same trade outside the schools (and in fact sometimes used more advanced versions of the outdated equipment in the ‘modest’ workshops they work in). However, as part of its strategy to deflect criticism of the very poor quality of technical education and perhaps as an attempt to provide competent technicians for businesses and industries, there has been a direction towards the establishment of elite technical school. As John Waterbury’s observed concerning

higher education almost thirty years ago, “There is a tendency to let the crisis worsen because, it is felt, whatever its dimensions it is no longer susceptible to reform. The standard tactic is then to seek a solution outside the afflicted institutions” (1983, 240-241). Some of these Specialized Technical Schools are of even higher quality and equipment than private schools and even universities, and they are frequently displayed to Ministers and foreign assistance consultants in organized visits.¹⁹ They require very high entrance scores (sometimes enrolling the very highest scoring students in the basic education leaving exam who would otherwise enroll in general secondary education) and typically strong *wasta* (connections/ personal recommendations by connected people).

Weaknesses in secondary education can only be understood however by examining the quality of basic education. In most disadvantaged public schools and many low end private schools, primary schooling remains unable to provide children with even basic literacy skills, which obviously fundamentally cripples their progress in higher stages of education. Surely not all basic education public schools graduate illiterate students, especially that a large proportion of students end up enrolling in private tutoring. However, the quality of basic education is so poor that it has been estimated that over one third of those who complete the nine years of compulsory primary and preparatory education remain effectively illiterate, concentrated in public schools, poor areas and rural governorates (see for example, Maat 2009). The result of this very poor quality can be seen in the prevalence of both private tutoring and cheating in its various forms, as key mechanisms for passing students from one grade to another. In fact by the time they arrive to secondary school, many students, especially from disadvantaged schools,

¹⁹ The Specialized Technical Schools include: (a) The Advanced Technical School for Information Technology in Ismailia, which offers specializations in computer technology, information system, and programming; (b) The Technical School for Maintenance Technology in Nasr City, which is associated with the advanced maintenance techniques; (c) The Advanced School for Hotel Affairs and Tourism Services, which prepares first-class technicians in hotels and in tourism services and provides them with opportunities to learn English and other languages. The schools have advanced language training laboratories, multiple disciplinary laboratories, and computer laboratories; (d) The Advanced Technical Secondary School, Sultan Al-Awees, in the 10th of Ramadan City, which includes several modern specializations such as maintenance of medical equipment, elevators, and electronics; and (e) The Advanced Agricultural Technical School for land reclamation and agricultural mechanization in Ismailia (MOE 2007, 280).

are considered by teachers (and students themselves) to be “too used to cheating,” needing to adjust to the very idea that they actually need to study and almost incapable of ‘studying’ independently, especially without tutoring support.



Figure 6: Being Allowed to Work the Machine in the Boys’ Technical School

For general secondary education, even with huge costs incurred on tutoring, the MOE National Strategic Plan (MOE 2007, 278), acknowledged, as highlighted in the introduction of this chapter, the low performance of the secondary education level as well as its inability to interact with economic and technological changes; leading to a high unemployment rate among secondary education graduates. Probably due to rising unemployment and its high tutoring cost, demand for general secondary education has actually decreased by 20-40% over the past few years according to official figures;

increasing from 2001/02 to 2005/06 by 23% in Cairo for example and 43% in governorates like Beheira (MOE 2007, Annexes, 79).

Low quality and high unemployment have led to two distinct patterns in educational assessment: increasing leniency and increasing competitiveness. There are different worlds of assessment in Egyptian education. In public education, easy examinations predominate in the basic education years. Teachers and students frequently observe that children are passed from one year to the other with little scrutiny. This is importantly facilitated through cheating- as well as legislation whereby schools are required to pass children by law if they had already repeated the year once. In lower end private schools in the basic education stage, students also expect great leniency (so long as they write ‘an answer,’ they will get the grade for the question) or significant scope for cheating. This leniency is perpetuated and intensified into the technical secondary stage, as explained in Chapter Four. The very low academic requirements and assessment “leniency” in technical secondary have almost become necessary based on the realization that if assessment were ‘real,’ most students would fail; a politically unacceptable outcome. In general secondary on the other hand, exams are considered very difficult and requiring very rigorous preparation- and extensive tutoring. Therefore in secondary education, there are two vastly different worlds of assessment. The strict and stressful general secondary testing, which filters students into university and the completely permissive theatrical technical secondary testing, where graduates receive jobs entirely independent of their schooling, through connections, and based on competences obtained through work experience typically obtained while studying. The paradoxes involved in lenient examination, cheating and predominant private tutoring are explored in greater depth in Chapter Four.

Finally, while, it is difficult to find alternative measures of student literacy, knowledge or abilities, official data on student achievement does paint a vivid picture of the disparities in quality of education across Egyptian schools, where socio-economic status and family background are the main predictors of educational achievement (UNDP 2010, 44). The poor consistently perform poorly in education, having low enrollment

rates, leaving school early, or being tracked to programs that have second-rate learning and labor market outcomes. According to the national Survey of Young People in Egypt (SYPE), those who come from the poorest households are distributed among three main groups: those who never enrolled (29%), those who dropped out before finishing basic education (24%), and those who completed technical secondary education (29%) (UNDP 2010, 44). Those who come from poor households constituted 5.3% of achievers in the primary education stage, 3% of achievers in the preparatory stage and only 0.5% of achievers in the general secondary education stage, implying that the presence of students from poor families is at its highest rate in the primary stage (UNDP 2010, 44). Children whose families are in the middle and upper wealth quintiles are more likely to perform better in certificate examinations and to join the higher education system. There are also pronounced urban-rural difference in achievement, where school achievers predominately come from urban areas. Rural students have their lowest presence among achievers in the general secondary completion exam and their highest presence in the primary education stage. In terms of school type, while the majority of achievers come from government schools (90% in the secondary stage completion exam), the likelihood of being an achiever increases exponentially if a student is in a private school or in a governmental experimental school. More than 50% of those in governmental experimental schools are achievers, compared to 9% of those who come from regular governmental schools (UNDP 2010). Among students in private schools, 35% were among the high achievers. School type is of course a proxy for socio-economic background, with private and experimental government schools charging relatively high fees compared to regular government schools. The link between achievement and poverty is of course not unique to Egypt. However, the degree of income polarization and the quality of public schooling arguably have an impact on the gap between the high and low achievers (for a comparative example, see Croxford 2004).

TEACHER SALARIES

As detailed in Chapters Four and Five, teacher salaries have a clear impact on quality across the system, as well as patterns of private tutoring and discipline and punishment in the schools. Detailed data on teacher salaries are simply unavailable however and the system is highly tracked and differentiated. On the one hand, there has been a highly publicized increase in teacher salaries called the Teachers' Cadre, approved in 2006 and implemented over several stages. On the other hand, most teachers in the system, especially outside of Cairo and in disadvantaged regions and governorates, are simply not hired on the Cadre system.

The historical evolution of teacher pay is of course critical for understanding the current quality of the system. While it is understood that teacher's salaries, like other government employees, eroded greatly in real terms since the 1980s, there is virtually no tracking of the evolution over time in real wages of teachers, especially in light of the divergent hiring arrangements and pay scales. In sum, teachers hired on temporary contracts receive pay as low as 2 EGP/class (amounting to 60 cents/day), while full-contract beginner teachers receive a basic salary that is typically equivalent to the rent of a modest dwelling in a low income neighborhood. In 1996, starting base salaries for teachers were 100 EGP/month, while about 900 EGP was needed to provide a decent living for an average Egyptian family (World Bank 1996, Annex 2, 1). The Cadre was effectively a 30% increase in the salaries of contracted teachers. However, even with the Cadre system, a beginner teacher receives a salary of around 500 EGP/month, which increases throughout her career to reach 2000 EGP (Leila 2008); whereas only an income of around 1200 EGP would put a family of 4 above the poverty line of 2 USD/day²⁰. As many teachers agreed, a salary of 500 EGP/month (after nine years of service) is enough to meet one week of household expenditures. While pay levels for experienced tenured teachers would place those teachers (back) into middle class incomes (especially in rural areas), for beginner teachers they remain inadequate for

²⁰ It should be noted that many Egyptian households are single income, due to high unemployment rates and low female labor force participation rate, 'officially' estimated at 18.5% (UNDP 2010, 7).

meeting middle class demands including the cost of private tutoring for their own dependents.

Unfortunately however, most teachers are not on the Cadre system. Teachers who are not on the Cadre are hired either on the Reward System (*Nizām al-Mukafāʾa*, or *Nizām al-Mukafāʾa al-Shamila*) or on the Special Contract System (*ʿAqd Mumayyaz*). Pay on the Reward System is 120 EGP/month (and can be as low as 105 EGP in some cases with deductions) plus 1600 EGP annual Reward, while teachers on the Special Contract receive around 360 EGP/month (which can be as low as 325 depending on deductions). While data on teacher pay rates are considered sensitive and not circulated even among educational district personnel²¹, there is credible indication that teachers receiving the two lower pay scales constitute 30-70% of all teachers in the system, but are disproportionately allocated to rural or poor areas, to technical rather than general education and to lower educational stages rather than the secondary stage. For example, in the early childhood sector, teachers on the Cadre system constituted no more than 30% of teachers in most educational districts. Therefore research in the capital would not reveal the real proportion of Reward System teachers. However, in Fayoum for example, a rural Governorate, a recent report indicated that out of over 13,000 teachers, 2,936 were hired on the Cadre system and 8,254 remained on the reward system “until they become transferred” to the intermediate Special Contract System (*Taʿyin 3 Alaf Mudaris 2011*). Not only are teacher hiring arrangements predominantly precarious, their chances of being chosen to the Cadre do not follow clear guidelines; and especially in poorer provinces, are fraught with ‘irregularities’ and favoritism. For

²¹ Because these teachers perform almost identical jobs and get widely divergent pay, their pay and hiring status need to remain vigilantly segregated. For example, educational district officials explained to me that they had to be very careful to end the contractual agreement with the lowest paid teachers at least one day before they renewed them for the next year, to ensure that the teachers could not make any claims that they are continuous or permanent workers of the ministry and claim entitlement to any additional financial benefits. Moreover, even with gaps in the contracts, teachers had to be prevented from demanding that they move to the higher scale after two years of working at the low pay scale, which seemed to be mandated by a regulation that was not put into effect by most educational districts. It was understood that only very strong personal connections (*wasta*) and effectively being from an urban middle class background (especially working in an Experimental School) could help a teacher arrive to the Cadre. Unfortunately, it was even reported that there are violations even of such low pay, where more than one teacher was being hired on the same per-class pay scale contract, in order for the Governor to claim that he had generated more work opportunities.

other teachers, the Cadre serves as an illusion they are repeatedly promised as the key means of attracting them to accept jobs they were effectively financing from their own savings with pay that only covered their transport costs, or that they had to supplement with private tutoring.

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION

Inadequate financial resources obviously have very negative consequences for the functioning of the system. According to available official figures, education spending has been declining since 2003 both as percentage of GDP and as a percentage of government spending.²² Moreover, three important features characterized public education spending : 1) most spending (over 80%) goes to salary costs²³; 2) salary costs include a very large proportion of non-teachers and at all levels of the system; where non-teaching staff constitute up to 50% of education staff²⁴; and 3) free university education continues to take up one third of education spending. In 2004, close to 1.5 million full and part-time teachers and administrators were employed by the Ministry of Education (UNDP 2005, 69). However, like data on teacher salaries, data on public spending is similarly ambiguous. According to MOE figures (UNESCO 2009), expenditure on education as a percentage of total public expenditure, and as a percentage of GDP, has been declining since 2000. Spending declined to 10.4% by

²² Public education expenditures had reportedly increased by 80 percent in real terms from 1990 to 2000; and according to official figures, the Education share of the Government budget increased from under 10% in 1990-91 to 17% in 1999-2000 (Ammar 2006). In absolute figures, the total budget allocated to the whole system increased from less than 3 billion EGP in 1992 to about 26 billion EGP in 2006, while school and university enrolment has risen from 6 million to 18 million students (Ammar 2006). Overall expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP has grown from 3.9% in 1991 to 5.2% in 2002 of which 27.3% was allocated to higher education (Selim 2008). It had declined to 3.3% by 2008/2009 (UNESCO 2009).

²³ For example, as a proportion of total general secondary education spending, teaching and non-teaching staff wages absorb about 78 percent, whereas only seven percent is allocated to capital investment; other recurrent expenditure accounts for 14.96 percent. As a proportion of recurrent expenditure, the share of wages is 84 percent, confining other current expenses to 21 percent. In fact, this latter facet of spending is one of utmost importance since all funds allocated to this category are spent on items demanded by educational processes such as school equipment routine maintenance; paying telephone, water, and electricity bills; and purchasing instructional materials along with all spending aspects that impact education quality (MOE 2007, Annexes, 95).

²⁴ Of the ministry's employees, 43.8 per cent are administrative and non-teaching staff, according to the Egypt Human Development Report 1997/98 (Tadros 2001).

2008/2009 (UNESCO 2009). Egypt's overall public expenditure on education reached 4.9 percent of the GDP in 2002/03 and 4.8 percent in 2004/05. While expenditures of around 5% of GDP are similar to those of other lower/middle income countries, as well as OECD countries, expenditure on pre-university education is relatively lower than in similar countries (MOE 2007, 48).

Egypt's expenditure on primary education is 30.2 percent of total expenditure on education, compared to 43.3 percent in Jordan, 60.4 percent in Philippines, 48.4 percent in Turkey, and 40.4 percent in OECD countries (MOE 2007, 49). Expenditures on pre-primary, general secondary, and technical secondary are two percent, 11 percent, and 17 percent, respectively, while allocations for tertiary education amount to 28-30 percent of total public expenditure, although it only serves 13 percent of the total number of students (MOE 2007, 49). The financing of public university education is clearly a subsidy to the middle and upper middle classes, even in times of austerity and despite the deterioration of quality at lower stages affecting most of the population. University students disproportionately come from private or semi-private Experimental schools. The unit cost of total expenditure on higher education amounted to LE 3,467 1 which, according to the Egyptian Human Development Report, is more than seven times its value at the basic educational level, so that subsidizing higher education generates an opportunity cost per student of seven other students at the basic education level (Selim 2008).

However, any serious study of education expenditures over time necessitates far more rigorous data that indicates spending in real Egyptian pounds (accounting for successive waves of inflation), changes in rates of expenditure per student in the context of steady population growth, levels of spending on different educational stages, as well as covering longer time frames. In any case, educational spending per student in Egypt is very low indeed, even according to official figures and pronouncements. Expenditures on education in Egypt stand at 129.6 USD per student per year, compared to 289.5 USD in Tunisia, 1,337.6 USD in Saudi Arabia, 4,763.4 USD in America, and 6,959.8 USD in Japan (Essam El Din 2003).

PRIVATIZATION

The impact of neoliberal policies on education was not only manifested in decreased spending but the pervasive formal and informal privatization of education at all levels, from early childhood education to university education. Increasing marketization, privatization and the pervasive spread of private tutoring are now key features of the Egyptian educational landscape. The ministry has recently sponsored a privately financed and NGO-provided early childhood education system (see MOE 2007), and private tutoring in public universities has reportedly reached 50% (Selim 2008), while private institutes and universities have mushroomed across urban centers of country.

One of the first MOE measures of privatization and stratification in the system was the establishment of an additional elite track within public education: *Madaris Tajribiya* Experimental Schools in the late 1970s, which charged high fees and catered to middle class parents. They retain a reputation of good quality schooling and are often academically superior to many private schools. They remain a very small part of the system, to be found mainly in the major cities across the country. This pattern was also manifested in partial privatization in Egyptian public universities, by creating separate programs with fees, and where instruction is typically carried out in English, and sometimes in French. The 1990s saw the growth of new private universities and institutes catering to different social classes. Two visible features of the growth of private schooling have been the growth of Islamic schools and the growth of enrolment schools offering foreign diplomas. Existing or new schools offered further tracking to private school students, where students who can afford the very high fees can study to obtain American, British or French secondary school diplomas. Between 2001 and 2006 alone, the proportions of private classrooms at primary level increased by 31% while the numbers of pupils increased by 24% (MOE 2007, Annexes, 48). The growth in private schools is not restricted to the middle or upper classes. In recent years, due to the pressure to enroll in tutoring, low-income families in urban centers typically prefer private schools whenever they can afford them. The general perception is that there is far less pressure to enroll in tutoring with school teachers, abuse and

beating of students by teachers is less severe and less systematic and cheating is more facilitated. Private schools still remain a small part of the system, where 7.4% of students were enrolled in private education and only 2.7% of students were enrolled in private secondary schools (MOE 2007).

Private tutoring is of course the most visible, powerful and pervasive form of educational marketisation in Egypt. It is the most strongly felt by students and parents in Egyptian schools across the different educational stages. A recent official study found that 81% of households had children who received private tutoring in secondary stage, while 69% received tutoring in the primary and preparatory stages (74% in preparatory and 50% in primary) (Abdul Wahab 2009). A 2002 World Bank study found that private tuition accounted for fully 1.6% of GDP. Private tutoring and its impact on the schools are covered in greater depth in Chapter Four.

THE INFORMAL MARKET AND ITS INSTITUTIONAL SETTING

Although many Egyptians are convinced that tutoring at the scale found in Egypt is a purely Egyptian phenomenon, private tutoring has been growing in the past few decades in many countries of the world, including higher income countries. There are also a few countries where tutoring may be as pervasive across educational stages as in Egypt, such as Mauritius and Sri Lanka and in some respects India, Iran, North Africa and Turkey, especially in the secondary stage (Bray 1999, 2003, Akkari 2010). The Ministry of Education has long acknowledged that the widespread practice of out-of-school tutoring “partly defeats the democratic purpose embedded in the constitutional provision of ‘free’ public education” (Megahed 2004, 5). The spread of tutoring began in the 1980s to cater to public and private school students who were preparing for increasingly competitive general secondary certificate (*thanawiya ‘amma*) examinations leading to university admission. It was therefore a phenomenon that primarily affected middle class families. Tutoring has now spread to lower educational stages as well as

higher education, therefore affecting almost every Egyptian household. Almost from a child's first year in school, poor families (constituting about 40% of the population) are pressured and intimidated by poorly paid teachers to enroll their children in private tutoring simply in order to pass from one year to another. There are two main types of tutoring²⁵ in Egypt. The first are officially sanctioned after school classes called in-school tutoring (*majmu'at al-taqwiya al-madrasiya* or simply *magmu'at*). They are provided by the school's teachers after school time and organized by MOE regulations. Introduced as early as 1952, Law No. 149 for the Year 1986 made them a mandatory service of the school (Herrera 1992, 75). This was seen as a way to combat private tutoring and alleviate part of its financial burden on families, by providing tutoring in school at lower prices. This is a strategy that has not only failed, but fuelled the present levels of tutoring dependence. Instead, it primarily functioned as a means of increasing teacher salaries from the private purse. According to MOE regulations, 85% of the income generated from in-school tutoring goes to the teacher and 15% to the administration at different levels of the system from the school all the way up to the minister; creating clear stakes for them to 'encourage' or condone tutoring. Unfortunately, official in-school tutoring regulations are not observed in many schools in terms of maximum class size, the actual fees charged and conditions for fee exemptions (see also Tadros 2006). The second type of tutoring is the more straightforward private lessons (*durus kbususiya*) that are conducted either in student homes, or increasingly in especially established tutoring centers (*marakiz*).

TUTORING ENROLMENT, SPENDING AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Several studies have attempted to document enrolment in private tutoring in Egypt over the past 15 years. According to a UNDP survey in 1997, 51% of poor students and 60% for the rich took private lessons (UNDP 2005). Rates have been increasing

²⁵ "Tutoring" in this research refers to classes provided for a fee, which take place outside and in addition to the formal school timetable. They closely follow and are oriented towards the national MOE syllabus, with the goal of improving student exam performance. Private tutoring in a particular subject usually takes place once or twice a week from the start of the school year (and for general secondary even one month before the start), frequently with numerous additional revision and examination practice classes scheduled throughout the year.

over the years and the phenomenon has gained increasing momentum over the past few years alone. Tutoring centers, which have been mushrooming since the mid-1990s, cater to almost every socioeconomic group, although they are more concentrated in urban centers. A recent official study found that 81% of households had children who received private tutoring in secondary stage, while 69% received tutoring in the primary and preparatory stages (74% in preparatory and 50% in primary) (Abdul Wahab 2009).

Private tutoring at this scale, especially in general secondary, has had a profound impact on student attendance at schools. A known fact in Egyptian households, low general secondary certificate attendance rates of less than 10% for much for the school year may be difficult to imagine for anyone unfamiliar with the system (See Herrera 2008b and for recent news coverage, see Imsik Harami 2009 and Al-Masry Al-Youm 2009). Although reliable official statistics are not available, teacher and student absenteeism is rampant throughout the system, to the extent of simply having schools without students at all for several months of the school year and either 'lenient' and permissive attitudes to teacher absenteeism or strict measures to keep them coming to school and signing in attendance registers (even locking the school gates so that teachers do not leave after signing-in, see Herrera 2008b).

Spending on private tutoring is simply immense. According to a survey by the Egyptian National Institute of Planning in 2000, poor households spent a fifth of their yearly income on (supposedly free) schooling (Tadros 2001). Middle class households have been estimated to spend about one third of their income on tutoring (UNESCO 2003). A recent official nation-wide study found that 66% of households spent more than 500 EGP/month on private tutoring (Abdul Wahab 2009). GDP/capita was around 12,000 EGP/year in 2009 (around 2000 USD/year) (UNICEF 2009). Household spending on private tutoring is estimated to have exceeded government spending on education (UNESCO 2003). Recent official estimates of households spending on tutoring have put it between 12 and 15 billion EGP every year, compared to a 10 billion EGP MOE budget (see Kader al-Mu'alimin 2009, Al-Samni 2009).

The cost of tutoring varies widely across neighborhoods, educational stages and tracks in a highly differentiated market. While more affluent households consume somewhat more private tutoring than lower income brackets, they spend disproportionately higher amounts on it. According to one official study, per-household expenditure of the richest quintile on private tutoring is more than seven times that of the poorest (CAPMAS 2004). In some tutoring centers, students may be charged 5-8 EGP/ class, usually in packed lecture halls in low income neighborhoods (Al-Samni 2009). In affluent neighborhoods, tutoring for *private* school students can reach 120 EGP/ class. Literally, the cost of one class varies from 5 to 120 EGP, and revision classes and summary notes are typically more expensive than regular ones.

The rising cost of “free” education, in terms of private tutoring, has been a key concern articulated by and on behalf of parents of almost all social classes; especially the poor (see Sabry 2010 and Tadros 2006). It fundamentally structures student access to education. According to official figures, demand for general secondary education- where tutoring cost is at its highest- has decreased by 20 to 40% from 2001/02 to 2005/06 alone across different parts of the country (falling by 23% in Cairo and 43% in Beheira, for example) (MOE 2007, Annex 2, 79- 83).²⁶ Due to the declining quality of public education, rising unemployment and the resulting increased job competition, the status and expected returns for general secondary have been steadily declining, even in *private* secondary schools. Most of the affluent classes have abandoned it altogether to study for foreign diplomas (such as I.G.C.S.E and the American High School Diploma) in order to secure a greater edge in the market.

²⁶ Although longitudinal data is not provided in the report, MOE data point out that over twenty percent of the age cohort- mostly from the poorest households- does not enroll in secondary education in the first place (MOE 2007, Annex 2, 77).

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND TEACHER PAY

A key proposition in studies of private tutoring is that tutoring is caused by the low quality of education in public schools (Bray 2009). Given the situation of education quality described in Chapter Three, this would appear to be a very good candidate for explaining private tutoring in Egypt, although it does not explain greater rates of tutoring among more affluent households enrolled in private schools. Private tutoring has been especially attributed not only to low educational quality, but also to the low pay received by teachers. Biswal (1999) analyzed tutoring as a form of corruption where teachers in public schools intentionally reduce their teaching efforts to create demand for private tutoring in order to supplement their low incomes. In this way, governments have used tutoring as a mechanism of providing education at a lower cost (Biswal 1999). Private tutoring in developing countries therefore cannot be understood without reference to teacher pay as compared to living expenses. The initial spread of tutoring in Egypt after the first wave of economic liberalization in 1970s and 1980s came in a period when inflation had reached around 30% while increases in salaries were negligible (Tadros 2006). More recently, and despite consecutive waves of inflation and currency devaluation, public school teachers hired on temporary contracts receive pay as low as 2 EGP/class (see Abdul Wahab 2009), which amounts to a sub-subsistence wage of 105-120 EGP/month. This amounts to less than 0.67 USD/day; which is far lower than any poverty line estimated for Egypt or globally (see UNDP 2010 and Sabry 2010). Low wages are not exclusive to teachers but extend to administrators and officials across the system, creating strong pressures for corruption of various forms, including the facilitation of student coercion into tutoring. As mentioned earlier, the new “Teachers’ Cadre” system has significantly raised the salaries of ‘full contract’ hired teachers, but does not cover most teachers and the situation remains that for most teachers, their salaries are not sufficient to meet living expenses and in some cases not even to lift them above the poverty line.

One of the clearest testaments to teacher dependence on tutoring is the resulting teacher shortages in ‘non-tutoring’ subjects. Teacher shortages in Egypt are massive

indeed (see MOE 2007). Once estimated at 50,000 teachers, they are mostly concentrated in subjects that do not enter final student grades and therefore do not warrant private tutoring, such as art, music and sports, or concentrated in rural areas where even tutoring is not profitable enough for teachers to make a living (Tadros 1999). This means that not only are rural and poorer areas additionally disadvantaged, but also most schools simply cease to conduct music, sport or arts classes or any school activities at all.

In most public schools, paying for tutoring has become compulsory almost from the first year of primary school to avoid abuse and expulsion (Sabry 2010, Tadros 2006).²⁷ This obviously involves serious emotional and physical harm to children, especially poor children. While physical and verbal abuse is commonplace in Egyptian public schools (see Chapter Five, Naguib 2006 and Saad 2006), it is intensified as part of the means used to intimidate students to enroll in tutoring, an issue that is regularly covered in the local press (for recent examples of violence by teachers receiving national press coverage, see Mu'aqabat 3 Mudiri 2010, Jaza'at bil-Jumla 2010 and Mudaris Yuhadid 2010).

Finally, it has been argued that the uncontrolled spread of tutoring has left limited realistic scope for effective reform in teacher pay as means of curbing the reliance on tutoring in the short run. As a World Bank document simply put it, any increase in teacher pay could not be sufficient enough to deter teachers from tutoring (World Bank 1996, Annex 2). This means that even if the budget of MOE is doubled or even tripled (as 90% of the budget goes to salaries), pay would still be low and the market is so entrenched and so much more profitable that there would still be strong incentive to provide tutoring. The clearest recommendation of the report was to promote private

²⁷ In middle range schools, teachers typically depend on less direct means of coercion and students perceive and enact greater freedom in choosing their tutors. A study of a number of urban and rural technical and general schools in Giza, Egypt, found that more than 60% of students said that their in-school tutor teacher is their regular school teacher and more than 30% said that their private lesson teacher is also their regular teacher (Megahed 2004, 144-7). In a study of a high performing public preparatory school, Linda Herrera (1992) found that only a minority of teachers used tactics of intimidation, poor teaching, favoritism, and sometimes physical punishment so that students in their class would take private lessons with them.

education. However, regardless of the equity implications of this proposal, now even private schools cannot increase teacher pay enough to compensate teachers for the profit they are able to make easily on the market. In fact, in many private schools, administration feels entitled to push down teacher wages to levels similar to public schools fully assuming that teachers essentially make their living ‘elsewhere’.

While tutoring may prevail as a means for teachers to increase their income in disadvantaged public schools, competitive high-stakes examinations may be a more critical factor for the spread of tutoring in *private* general secondary schools and elite *tagribiya* public schools.

COMPETITION AND HIGH STAKES EXAMINATIONS

In contexts where teachers are relatively well paid, such as Hong Kong, Korea, Japan and Singapore, it has been argued that the chief driving force for private tutoring has been “the competitive nature of society and the scale of perceived rewards that can be achieved for new generations by investment in tutoring” (Bray 2009, 101-2). Scholars have also linked international variations in the market demand for tutoring to whether countries have post secondary entrance exams, major status differences among their post secondary institutions, and direct occupational rewards for entry into those institutions (Bray 1999). A World Bank study in fact concluded that the nature of exams may be the chief causal factor for the prevalence of private tutoring in Egypt (World Bank 1996, Annex 2). The stakes are indeed high for general secondary students. Public university entrance scores (unified and centralized) have been continually rising to the point that top faculties have effectively restricted their admission to those who score higher than 90%. If one does not score above the required grades for admission to a certain Faculty or Department, he or she simply cannot study their desired discipline, but has to accept whatever other specialization has lower entrance requirements. Attempts have been made to improve the *thanainya ‘amma* (general secondary school leaving) examination system, such as the current system of spreading examinations over two years (second and third secondary) instead of one

[Law 2 for the Year 1994], but with requirements for public university admission continually rising and teaching quality in schools declining, the stress and tutoring cost of general secondary education has only risen.

The sense of heightened competition, especially for general secondary students, also relates to increasing competition for jobs in light of high levels of unemployment. As detailed in Chapter Three, from 1998 to 2006, there has been a substantial increase in unemployment rates among post-secondary and university graduates who have become the most vulnerable group to unemployment. This has been accompanied by a decrease in female labour force participation (arguably due to widespread unemployment and the shrinking of public sector employment), and an increased informalization of the first job obtained by youth (see Antoninis 2001, Amer 2007 and UNDP 2010). Entering a top faculty therefore provides a critical edge in competing with large cohorts of university graduates. As elaborated in the following Chapter as well, grades mattered very little however for technical school students and their future prospects.

Students in university predominately come from the highest fourth (27.1%) and fifth (46.5%) wealth quintiles and only 4.3% of higher education students come from the lowest income quintile (UNDP 2010). The poor tend to be more represented among students in two-year institutions, constituting 11% of the student body and with higher rural representation. University enrolment largely excludes technical education students. Technical school graduates discover that entering college, while sometimes a postponed project and dream, is frequently not possible because college is expensive and even the Egyptian Open University not only requires the passage of five years after graduation from commercial school before applying, but also a prohibitively large fee, which new graduates of modest means and no job cannot afford (Elgeziri 2010). University education suffers very serious quality issues, very similar to the issues in pre-university education, in terms of instruction styles, high densities (lectures of 1000 students!), and increasing private tutoring. The proportion of students enrolling in private tutoring in universities is reportedly more than 51%, with an average tutoring cost per student that amounts to an estimated figure of 933 EGP per student, per year (Selim 2008).

Egypt therefore seems to experience, as in other aspects of the ‘dual’ neoliberal economy, tutoring driven by low teacher pay as well as tutoring driven by high competition. Larger institutional variables however drive and inform both ‘types’ of tutoring.

CORRUPTION AND THE MANUFACTURING AND PERPETUATION OF THE MARKET

In a national context where corruption is widespread and accountability at high levels of government minimal, the impoverishment of education employees encouraged and intertwined with networks of interests to facilitate the initial growth of private tutoring and set in place strong self-perpetuating patterns. The growth of the multi billion pound tutoring industry was dependent upon different forms of corruption and conflicts of interests across the system. For example, examination setting committee members at MOE were tempted to provide expensive ‘highly valued’ tutoring and author ‘external’ textbooks and practice workbooks for the market. It also became ‘known’ that there was only one way of answering the exams that was acceptable to markers, so that even high achieving students had strong incentives to enroll with tutors who were privy to that ‘way’ of answering. Until today, tutors promote themselves based on links- often weak or fabricated- to such insider information (see Abatirat al-Durus 2010). Apart from sporadic and arbitrary measures, there has been little interest in controlling the massive growth of unlicensed (and un-taxed) tutoring centers, many of which are owned by local cronies of the [then ruling and now dissolved] National Democratic Party (see Inflanwa al-Khanazir 2009). The highly profitable tutoring and private textbooks businesses became part of a powerful web of corruption and patrimonial relations across the system; often described as a ‘mafia’ in the media, as discussed below.

Other forms of ‘corruption’ and conflicts of interest compounded these patterns. This includes for example MOE curriculum setting committee members being

interchangeably- and sometimes concurrently- private (external) textbook authors. Over several decades, these authors have continued to create for private publishers more “efficient,” organized, succinct and attractive texts while authoring un-approachable official textbooks and sabotaging any efforts at textbook reform, thereby forcing students to rely on private textbooks. Textbooks received a considerable part of student grievances and rejection, where they were often described in strong language as rubbish and contemptible, as a group of students in the girls’ general school said almost in the same breath (*zibala, nila, zai il-zift*), and were almost always condemned as being too long and unclear in their presentation.²⁸

Throughout the years, this has exploded into a huge and powerful industry. It has been estimated that Egyptians spend 1.5 billion EGP on ‘external’ textbooks every year (Kadir al-Mu‘alimin 2009). With such interests at stake, examination, curriculum and even teacher pay reforms that may undermine the private market for education were blocked or resisted. For example, the Teachers’ Syndicate has proposed that students hand in their books at the end of each school year for use by students in the following years, releasing very significant funds for supplementing teachers’ salaries. However, “Ministry of Education officials, who receive a commission on every printed copy and make money from selling books at the start of every school year, blocked the plan” (El-Sayed 2006). In addition, maintaining a long and crammed national curriculum for a very short school year means that many students know that the material could not possibly be covered at school. This is coupled with the lax institutional setting across the system that left the growth of unlicensed tutoring centers unchecked and school teachers unaccountable for their classroom practices. Therefore while (middle class) parents are sometimes blamed for perpetuating tutoring by enrolling their children in it regardless of their actual academic need, this ignores these institutional realities and the divorce between knowledge of the material and ideal exam answers. Although it was

²⁸ Students also expressed those who set the curricula could not properly estimate the abilities of students; that the distribution of material across the school years was almost arbitrary and becoming progressively more difficult, where their younger siblings were studying material they had studied only in later year and material was being moved across the years without clear rationale.

not the focus of this study, there were frequent claims concerning corruption within the schools and abuse of funds, even in private schools. Many teachers in the public schools in fact opined that most school principals are corrupt and only a very small minority of principals is clean-handed. While the study did not cover forms of financial corruption in the school; an area where future research is greatly needed, it seemed that almost all financial issues involved either such restrictive regulations that school spending on anything from toilet maintenance to educational materials was completely deterred, or financial issues involved significant irregularities; ranging from what was being spent on (new fittings for the principal's office), how the contracting and accounting for spending happened, accounting for donations collected from parents and how they were used, to teacher attendance and vacation allowances and records and arrangements for sharing out of school tutoring profits with teachers.

Finally, while the assessment system in general secondary is lacking indeed, there has been some political will in maintaining its basic fairness in terms of marking and monitoring (invigilation). More recently however, there have been disturbing signs of decline in even this basic premise, in terms of patterns of collective cheating, cases of leaking of exam questions, irregularities in marking and ranking, and tampering with pass rates (See Mizaniyat Hirasat 2009 and Al-Ghazali Harb 2009). On the other hand, while difficult to imagine for outsiders to the system, the reality in most technical education schools is one of predominant exam cheating and dysfunctional marking, as elaborated in the following chapter. This absence of examination integrity is only possible because it is facilitated and perpetuated by education officials across the system.

In fact, not unlike other sectors of the Egyptian state, the education system is mired in corruption at all levels, from the highest level of MOE, and above, to the classroom. Corruption and conflicts of interest are rampant in key sectors of the ministry, especially in the textbook printing and school construction sectors (GAEB), in terms of relationships with textbook publishers or the set up and execution of school construction contracts, as well as various other violations and irregularities in relation to

huge rewards and incentives related to the membership of “committees” for exam preparation, curriculum development or work with donor agencies. Other forms of corruption in educational districts and at the level of the school deserve their own detailed and rigorous study. In fact days before the start of the January 2011 protests, there was parliamentary questioning about EGP 2.5 billion of USAID education assistance funds said to have been spent on education reform in seven governorates and on bonuses given to consultants (Azma fi Majlis al-Sha‘b 2011). MOE was simply unable to provide appropriate documentation as to how the funds were spent and the documentation it did provide was criticized by the committee as being of exaggerated costs and questionable returns on educational quality (Ta‘lim al-Sha‘b Tumhil al-Wazara 2011). Sources inside MOE and USAID would assert of course that even seemingly sound documentation submitted by MOE does not really account for actual spending. Finally, as detailed in Chapter Five, extralegal practices in schools involve various forms of pressure on students to enroll in private tutoring with teachers, as well as forms of emotional and physical punishment that are contrary to MOE regulations.

CONCLUSION

Education was portrayed by the Mubarak regime as “a national project” and repeatedly listed as a reform priority, especially from the 1990s onwards. At the end of his era, the state of education in Egypt was so negative that many Egyptians habitually commented on educational issues using the simple phrase: *mafish ta‘lim*: there is no education. The education system has been left to cope with rising enrolment without the minimum level of adequate resources, teacher pay or institutional support. The result has been severely declining quality coupled with pervasive forms of corruption and extralegal practices, and the eventual desire to displace the system and its problems unto the citizens via various forms of tracking and privatization.

This chapter has provided background information on the key issues in Egyptian education. It has presented the available data on educational quality, student-teacher

ratios, educational tracking, achievement figures and multiple shift schools. It has explained the special issues around technical education quality and assessment,. Despite serious data limitations, it has explained the evolution of and complex issues surrounding teacher pay and educational expenditure across the system. It has provided an overview of issues of corruption and conflicts of interest in the system, especially in relation to formal and informal privatization and the private tutoring market. This analysis contextualizes and forms the basis of various arguments developed throughout the chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE THREE WORLDS OF DE-FACTO PRIVATIZATION IN THE SCHOOLS

“I can work and satisfy my conscience as much as the money the ministry gives me. I get 2.5 EGP per class. If a supervisor comes in, here is my work on the board. Hijri date [Islamic calendar] for 50 piaster, Miladi [A.D.] date for 50 piaster, the title of the lesson for 50 piaster, and the lesson prepared in my notebook for 50 piaster. So I owe you 50 piaster worth of explanation. What do you think I will tell you for 50 piaster?” General school teacher

Along with the discussion of discipline and punishment in the following chapter, this chapter aims at introducing the everyday world of the schools in its concrete discourses and practices. This detailed image of school relations should help provide concrete meaning to more abstract terms used by students and discussed in the later chapters in terms of humiliation and corruption and their links to social class and poverty. In this sense, it is concerned with the ‘lived’ citizenship across the different schools and how the legal and constitutional rights of education and protection from harm and discrimination are translated and experienced in the schools. Tutoring and the material realities underpinning it are in fact the primary causes of the ‘breakdown of discipline’ described in Chapter Five, and a critical factor in the breakdown of regime legitimacy in student discourses on the state described in Chapter Seven. It is the *different* ways in which ‘informal’ tutoring markets are established within and alongside formal institutions that have significant implications for the functioning of state institutions and the injustice perceived in their operation.

Most of the arguments in the following chapters cannot solidly be made without an appreciation of the implications of private tutoring for the everyday school and for the very notion and project of schooling in each educational track. After all, I argue that what we have in Egypt is an almost complete ‘informal’ privatization of ‘public’ institutions that are still existing, and I claim that this critically informs how students understand the state and its institutions at this historical juncture.

The current crisis in education in Egypt is intimately linked with neoliberalism and privatization. It is a result of low investment in schooling at all levels, complicated by economic and labor market conditions set in place by neoliberal policies. This chapter therefore builds significantly on the background provided on Egyptian education in Chapter Three, especially in terms of educational quality, educational spending and privatization measures as well as the larger issues of informality and unemployment. The main aim of the chapter is to show the differentiated functioning and impact of private tutoring across the schools as mediated by politically determined assessment, curriculum and pedagogical policies and practices that are fundamentally premised on social class. It brings to light the actual discourses and practices of students and teachers in relation to privatization. It highlights the related discourses and practices around physical and emotional abuse and exam cheating that come with this type of commodification of education and the resulting marginalization. These are issues that frame subsequent discussions of the *differentiated* citizenship project mediated by different schooling experiences. Importantly, they underline the meaning of ‘*mafīsh ta’lim*’ for students across the system. Close examination of these different modes of privatization also challenges many of the ‘common sense’ and scholarly explanations of tutoring that see it as a ‘remedy to poor education’, as a result of peer pressure, as a strategy to deal with increased competition and unemployment in a neoliberal economy or as a result of high-stakes examinations. Although all of these issues play a role in perpetuating tutoring in Egypt, the chapter points to the complexities and unexpected ways in how they play out in different tracks of the system; and how they are informed by concrete state policies and practices.

The previous Chapter presented the available background data on private tutoring in Egypt in terms of the policy and institutional context, estimated rates of tutoring enrolment and levels of nationwide household spending on tutoring. It provided an overview of the key issues that are linked with the spread of tutoring: educational quality, teacher pay, curriculum and assessment policies and equity implications. This chapter on the other hand explores the dynamics of tutoring in the six schools. The

first section focuses on the dynamic of tutoring in the technical schools. The second section presents the main issues of general secondary tutoring and the third deals with issues more relevant to private schools. Each of the sections opens with student or teacher comments that capture some of the key issues around tutoring in each type of school, briefly lies out patterns of tutoring for each school type, then proceeds to the implications of tutoring for classroom and school dynamics.

There is however considerable overlap in the key issues, especially among the four public schools (technical and general), as well as among the four general secondary schools (public and private) and the chapter section as a whole draws a picture of marketization across the three systems. The final section brings together the key arguments of the chapter.

TUTORING IN THE TECHNICAL SCHOOLS: ABUSE AND SYSTEMATIC CHEATING

Here they write the answers on the walls, on the desks, on their skirts, on the calculator. I learned cheating here. "Study and you'll pass, cheat and you'll get good grades" (zakir tengah, ghibis tigib magmu') that's the system of the school. Student in the girls' technical school

It all depends on tutoring. The ones who have money and can pay pass. The others don't pass. 75% of teachers do not explain because they save their energy for tutoring, or they make students not understand so that they need the tutoring. Social Worker in the boys' technical school

In the boys technical school, between 60 and 75% of first and second year students and about half of the final year third secondary students enrolled in in-school tutoring. First and second year students seemed to have been more vulnerable than third year students to teacher pressure to enroll, both physically and practically. Their marks had a larger component controlled by school teachers, whereas final year students went through national exams that are not marked in the school, although they still could not pass the year without obtaining marks for 'practical' skills determined by school teachers. The rates were very similar in the girls' technical school, although in third secondary, some students took classes in tutoring centers instead of the school. Average tutoring cost for

students was about 80 EGP/month.²⁹ There was also irregularity in applying the regulations of in-school tutoring. The price of in-schooling tutoring should be 12 EGP, students reported paying the double: 25 EGP for each subject and a total of 100 EGP, unless they were able to obtain an exemption. There was very significant student absenteeism in the technical schools. In the boys' school, attendance was around 50% in most classes I attended. As students explained, "one can attend the first four practical classes in the year then ditch the rest because if he passes this, he will pass the rest... and he can make an agreement with the teacher to leave school and just say he went to the bathroom". Especially boys in public schools, many students left the school in the middle of the day. In addition to absenteeism and escaping school (*katatan*, as students called it), if they stayed in school, students did not always enter class and found places in the school to hang around and 'do their thing', whether it was playing soccer, running errands for teachers, trying to talk to girls across the fence or just chatting. Along with truancy, students in all the schools often arrived after the morning assembly, which was not always organized with a set program, as per MOE regulations. As part of the general 'dysfunction of education', especially in technical schools, students often did not even know the schedule of classes for each day, because the schedule was frequently changed without prior notice as teachers shifted classes between them or did not show up to class. Many did not bring any notebooks, or other material.

In the girls' technical secondary school, there was higher actual attendance in classes as well as in tutoring, due in part to the fact that girls did not have work commitments as the boys did. Girls in the two types of public schools attended school far more regularly than boys. Many girls wanted to come to school because it was their main arena of socialization (*il-madrassa dih fushitna*: "school is our outing", as one student put it), allowed for legitimate mobility outside the house and implied avoidance of extensive

²⁹ Those who enrolled in tutoring mostly took classes 4 days/ week for the four core "specialization" subjects. They often took revision classes for other subjects before the exam, such as Arabic and English. In-school tutoring for technical school students in each subject cost around 25 EGP for 4 classes/ month for each subject. Students could- and some did- negotiate a discount of up to 50% for in-school tutoring fees, based on financial need. Therefore, the average monthly cost of tutoring for technical school students varied between 50 and 100 EGP/month, with an average across the years of somewhere around 80 EGP/month.

household chores. Teacher ‘actual’ absenteeism from classrooms was rampant in the four public schools. In fact, teachers did not arrive to 30-50% of the classes during my time in the schools (even though my presence implied that certain appearances were preserved). Sometimes they arrived to the classroom, but did not engage in much instruction. Most teachers came to school fairly regularly and signed in the school registers, which are heavily monitored by educational authorities. But this did not mean that they did not come late, leave for an errand or just not enter class.



Figure 7: Playing Soccer in the Boys’ Technical School

Given the very poor quality of technical education detailed in Chapter Three, such tutoring rates may not be very surprising. Even though many teachers attempted to improve their general performance in my presence, there was very little ‘teaching’ in most classes I attended in the boys’ school. Most classes consisted of teachers dictating very short excerpts of lessons- a few sentences and key points to be written out in student notebooks, which are monitored by MOE supervisors- and disciplining their every murmur through verbal and physical abuse. This occurs in a very short school day of about 4 hours, where many classes were cancelled or teachers simply did not

arrive to class. Some teachers did actually attempt to ‘explain’ the material at hand and a minority of students engaged with them. When this happened, it became apparent how much of the material was beyond the level of most students, some of whom were effectively illiterate, some with very poor basics in the subjects being taught and others so irregular in their attendance that they could not possibly follow the material. The situation was somewhat better in the girls’ school, both in terms of somewhat better instruction and better suitability of the material to student abilities.



Figure 8: Tutoring Advertisements on the Walls of the Girls’ Technical School

Such poor learning conditions may easily point to tutoring as an understandable remedy. Tutoring in the technical schools however did not perform such function. It was structured around memorizing only what was enough to pass the exam- which was very little indeed. In fact, students did not need to really understand even *that* limited material. They could obtain the summary notes provided through tutoring and memorize them, and in many cases simply bring them to the exam and copy from them during the exam itself. Students, teachers, administrators—and some newspaper reports (see for example Al-Saqqar 2009)—explained the key facts known to insiders to the system: that exams are very easy, that no one really invigilates, that exam papers are

very 'irregularly' marked and that most students who provide 'some' answer pass. Students casually explained this 'normal' state of affairs of tutoring and cheating. For example, as a third year student in the boys technical school put it: "Students go to *magmu'at* (in-school tutoring groups) but they don't understand.. they just take the *mutbakirra* [tutoring summary notes]. That's 90% of the cases". I assumed that students then just studied these summary notes before the exam. The student continued however: "They just put it under the exam paper when they are solving." As a student in another class put it: "people don't take these sheets to study them, they [enroll in in-school tutoring] and know that the teacher will 'cheat them' [*yigbashihsbhom*] the exam." This means giving them the questions and answers ahead of time and/or letting them cheat during the exam. As a student in the girls' technical school put it in explaining in-school tutoring enrolment, "you have most of the exam questions, so you feel safe. Otherwise, the teacher singles you out (*yista'sadik*)". Students in the girls' school also noted not benefitting from tutoring, but that they had to go in order not to be singled out [*yista'sadna*]. Even if students wanted to 'understand' the material, this was not really available to them through tutoring. In fact, students reported being told explicitly by some teachers that they do not need to 'understand' because all exam papers are marked similarly (without really looking at them). Therefore, students who entertained some aspiration of attempting to attain marks high enough to apply for university admission expressed that they had little faith that their marks would in fact reflect their performance on the exam. Less than half of all students who enroll at the secondary stage gain access to higher education; where the vast majority attend universities and 6.7% attend lower status technical institutes (Megahed and Ginsburg 2008).



Figure 9: Copying Notes in the Workshop in the Boys' Technical School

In addition to the organized facilitation of cheating, as a senior administrator in the technical school recounted, when transfer and completion rates are not high enough to be politically acceptable (which was the case almost every year), the Ministry simply instructed districts and schools to raise their rates and the marks of students so that they could pass. The same pattern is found in basic education and it is also commonly reported that when principals submit unsatisfactory completion results, they are personally penalized and rebuked; a clear incentive to inflate and falsify school results. There is some indication that the extent of facilitated cheating varies based on type of technical school (industrial, commercial, boys, girls) as well as the educational district, with some being more strict than others. Cheating seemed to be less overt in the girls' school. Although they devised many ways of cheating, they said that they could not openly use their tutoring summary notes or books. They were aware however that their exams were not really marked: "the teacher marks one exam and marks the rest the same", or "some do not mark but they know the level of the school". "They don't care. They just put the question on the board and leave the room". However when she continued by saying: "They should be invigilating", another student immediately responded that "every student should monitor herself." Cheating was so entrenched that students were not going to easily entertain the idea of real examinations.

The very low academic requirements and assessment “leniency” in technical secondary have almost become necessary based on the realization that if assessment were ‘real,’ most students would fail due to the poor quality in the basic education stage; a politically unacceptable outcome. Cheating may be necessary because technical schools are not in fact equipped, in terms of workshop equipment and specialized teachers, to teach students the required skills. The “leniency” of technical education exam monitoring starts in disadvantaged basic education schools. Teachers in the public general boys’ school frequently attributed the state of general secondary to what happens in basic education: “they are too used to cheating”. As another teacher put it, “the students are used to buying teachers with tutoring”. Technical school teachers expressed that they had no faith in the marks presented by students- based on which they were allocated into specializations within the school- as they did not reflect the abilities they encountered from each student. Teachers in all public schools typically expressed very negative assessment of the state of basic education and its impact on the students they receive. As one teacher in the girls’ technical school vividly captured many of the common themes as such:

Preparatory school is a disaster. The teacher who teaches has no idea about the subject he is teaching. I have supervision duties over these teachers. In primary, a large number of teachers are *diblummat* [two-year institute diploma holders, not university graduates]. They just hire anyone. The whole thing needs a nuclear bomb [to clear it up] from its base. The most important thing is the teacher receiving a good salary. If you look at the school across the street, there are 90 students in class in primary. There is no education. How can a teacher teach 90 people? When I was supervising, there was a teacher eating falafel and lettuce and told the students to take down what is on the board and if they do not finish, she will do ‘this and that’ to them. These are specimens that have no relationship whatsoever to education and manners.

Students themselves were in fact keen to share stories of cheating and bribery as indications of the poor conditions of education and their exploitation by school authorities across the different educational stages. As one student in the girls’ technical school put it, “in the school I was in, if the parents paid 450 EGP, the teachers gave them answers. The cleaners help with that.” As students in the girls’ public general school collectively reflected: “they just keep passing us and passing us, even if you don’t answer they pass you, until we get to the certificate year [transition from one

educational stage to the other through national exams] and we know our real level and even in the certificate, teachers told my dad, ‘give me 500 EGP and I will get her the answers’... It’s the same in public and private schools... The answers were written for me on the board... The new generations are coming out bad (*bayza*). My sister is in 4th grade. She told my mother: why should I study? The teacher told me you are passing without studying”. Students also highlighted other financial violations in the secondary schools. They emphasized that one needed a bribe to enter their desired school. Many of these payments were presented as ‘parental contributions’ for school improvement. Contributions ranged from fans to learning materials and posters, clocks, to waste baskets, but students said they never saw any of it and much of it was later ‘stolen’ from classrooms. They were also made to pay for any photocopying demanded by teachers, even of the monthly exam. Therefore, those students who did not enroll in tutoring were not necessarily school or self-reliant, but more often counted on obtaining summary notes from friends, being able to cheat on the exam or just being passed by ministerial directive, although a small proportion of around 5% do fail (MOE 2007, 70).³⁰ The overwhelming majority of technical school students were concerned mainly with passing and expressed that their marks do not matter for either jobs or entrance into a two year college. Not only do final marks not matter, graduates typically obtain jobs entirely independent of their specializations; through connections and based on competences developed through work experience typically obtained while studying (see also Antoninis 2001).

In such context, coercion was the basic means by which teachers ensured student enrolment in tutoring. As one member of the school staff explained, teachers “use all official and unofficial means” to harass students until they enrolled in in-school tutoring. This ranges from physical beating to verbal humiliation, threats of expulsion and actual expulsion to students who had not yet enrolled. This is typically done under the pretext of non-compliant uniform, attendance, tardiness or misbehavior. After enrolling in tutoring, this wave of teacher ‘complaints’ ends and many violations are

³⁰ In 2005/06, the official promotion rate was 92 percent, the repetition rate was 5.1 percent, and the dropout rate was 2.9 percent (MOE 2007, 70).

tolerated. Students took this abuse as a fact, and some of those who did not enroll in tutoring perhaps simply could not afford the extra expense. In fact, at one point students explained non-enrolment in tutoring to me simply in terms of whose father is deceased, does not live with the family or does not provide for his son; implying that all those who were financially capable enrolled in tutoring; a clear implication of the equity impact of tutoring. As in many working class households, most of the students in the boys' school worked fulltime. This is why some of them even enrolled in tutoring mostly on paper, effectively paying for the leniency required to have irregular school attendance in order to accommodate their working hours, but securing the summary notes needed to pass the exam.

In the girls' school, there were clearly lower levels of physical abuse, but the pressure to enroll in in-school tutoring was equally relentless. This was so normalized that students were more attuned to variations within the norm. As one student put it, there are "some good teachers; they reduce the prices and take into account the conditions of student", while "others just divide the students up into tutoring groups from the beginning". Girls described that in the first weeks of school, many classes consisted of exhortations to join tutoring, with the full support of the principal. In-school tutoring is after all a legal practice established by MOE. The fact that tutoring promotion replaced actual teaching also sent a clear signal that no teaching would happen until [enough] tutoring enrolment was guaranteed. While pressure to enroll in tutoring can be explicit, abusive and severe, in many cases it is non-confrontational, implicit and masked. The following narrative from the girls' technical school may shed some light on the discourses and practices around tutoring in the technical schools.

It was time for two computer classes for a first secondary class. We moved to the computer lab. That there was a computer lab, that classes were actually held there and that students actually sat at the computers is not something 'normal' in public schools.³¹ There were two or three students per computer. The teacher started dictating the lesson and the students started writing after her. The teacher said that the class was behind in the curriculum and they had to complete the lessons in their notebooks. She

³¹ Where computers are introduced into schools, they are typically locked up and away from students 'so that they don't ruin them.' Lab teachers are held responsible for any damage to the equipment and are simply not willing to take the risk or pay the costs of any damage or repair.

dictated features of the computer and steps for making certain simple operations (copying and pasting into folders). With frequent stops to discipline chatting, late comers to class and other 'misbehavior,' the dictation lingered. One girl who seemed to have significant knowledge of computer use was ignored or silenced when she attempted to answer questions. Finally, the teacher demonstrated something on the computer and students were allowed to replicate it on theirs. As this is the moment I had been waiting for, I looked at my watch. This lasted for about two minutes. Soon the class ended. As we walked up to the classroom, I asked students how they felt about not spending more time working at the computers. They said this was normal. But how would they learn, I wanted to know. They said that those who wanted to, could go later to the teacher to get an explanation. They would enroll in private tutoring with her. A couple of students then went on to explain their understanding of the silencing of the knowledgeable student and the lingering of the discipline and the dictation as all related to 'saving' the material and the explanation for the private tutoring.

Similar situations of dictation and disciplining to avoid actual explanation were replicated in different classes and subjects. These were not thought of as appropriate or viable pedagogies, but they were almost completely normalized. Students expressed very little surprise in relation to patterns of instruction, cheating, marking or invigilation. These were simply the 'norms' of the schools.

Finally, tutoring coercion varied among teachers and was arguably linked to teacher class background, gender and educational training and background. Students frequently observed that female teachers, and especially Christian teachers, were less abusive and more committed to their classroom teaching more generally. In the case of women, this was likely driven by the fact they were not considered primary breadwinners and did not have to fight for their livelihoods. It may have also been dictated by the fact that too much private tutoring and absence from the home was not 'appropriate for them'. In the case of Christian teachers, this may be driven by a lower entitlement to the de-facto right to engage in extralegal practices available to other teachers. Several teachers in the technical schools argued that teachers who were university graduates were better teachers and were less likely to coerce students into tutoring and generally had a different approach than Higher Institute Diploma holders. This was linked to their class background but also to the level of training they received in their respective subjects. As a teacher in the technical girls' school explain it in this narrative:

Diploma holders are the same type [*siz*] as the students. They cheated and continued. There were shortages so they hired them. There is no awareness [*siz*], so forcing students into tutoring is a necessity. There is no choice. They even pay if they do not attend. One of the teachers told a student who does not take a lesson with him: if you have a chicken and you raise it and feed it and it goes to the neighbor to lay its egg there, you would slaughter it. You will find worse types in Industrial schools. They are from workshops. The others, we are embarrassed to even talk about this, because of our principles, values and embarrassment. We need this too [the money].

In sum, tutoring in the technical schools prevailed despite the lack of any sense of competition over consequential marks, without remedying the profound quality issues, and at significant emotional cost to students and their families, thereby increasing the exclusion of poorer families. It should be noted however that while the stakes may not have been high for students in the sense of final marks, they can be quite significant in terms of actual passing or ‘completion’ of technical secondary. Obtaining a secondary certificate opens up the desired (but ever elusive) possibility of obtaining formal secure employment, possibly better marriage prospects (due to higher social status), and avoidance of prolonged compulsory drafting into the army. The latter is understood as a very negative experience, including higher levels of verbal and physical abuse, very low living, sanitary and nutritional conditions and lost income for the family and student.

TUTORING IN THE GENERAL SCHOOLS: VEILED COERCION AND CLOSED OPPORTUNITIES

You have to come as a student. You will see the teachers for what they really are ('ala ha'i'ithum). When a supervisor comes, we don't believe ourselves. They never explain with conscience, except when we have someone in the class. Students in the girls' general school

Me too, my choice for university is engineering... Well... all of this they are saying is nonsense... We will all end up in an institute anyway. Student in the boys' general school

The [English] teacher's goal is not to teach us the language. He teaches us what we enter the exam with. The subjects are so many and the curricula are so long... A few days ago the teacher told the girls something very upsetting when they asked him to explain something. He said: you will not understand more than this... this is your level (mustawaku kida). Shouldn't he tell us that we are

capable?... We are not being educated in the first place (ihna mish binidris aslan). Students in the girls' general school

There are considerable similarities between tutoring in the public and private general schools, despite the clear difference in student knowledge base, the quality of teacher instruction, the resources of the schools and the different cost of tutoring. This section presents the key issues for the public general schools, while the following section deals specifically with issues more relevant to private schools.

While students were usually not overtly coerced, beaten or humiliated in order to enroll in tutoring, a variety of more subtle techniques, an accumulation of poor learning in basic education, and increased university competition has facilitated the disintegration of the general secondary school too as a site of learning. In the public general secondary schools, apart from some exceptions, all students in first secondary enrolled in private tutoring in all key³² subjects. Almost all were enrolled in tutoring in nearby tutoring centers (*marakiş*). As for *thanawiya 'amma* students (second and third secondary), their enrolment in tutoring was similarly universal, but they tended combine private lessons with smaller number of students (*durus*) in some subjects with tutoring in centers with large classes in other subjects. Although some teachers attempted to organize in-school revision sessions, there was almost no enrolment in in-school tutoring in the public general schools (and none in the private schools). However, while this ensures better profits for teachers through more expensive private lessons, it deprives administrators in public schools of their percentages of in-school tutoring revenue. Teachers conveyed that 'in many schools' (deciding not to discuss their own school), there was an understanding that informal arrangements had to be made to re-balance the financial benefits across the school, mainly through periodic gifts to key administrators; primarily the principal. Reportedly, in some schools, principals simply imposed 'fees' on teachers (a kind of private lessons tax/ protection fee) in return for showing leniency in terms of teacher absenteeism, complaints of poor teaching or veiled coercion of students to enroll in tutoring.

³² This excludes subjects such as religious studies, nationalist education, arts, music and physical education, which do not enter the student's final marks.

First secondary students attended school fairly regularly, despite their enrolment in tutoring, as a proportion of their mark is determined by monthly exams marked by school teachers and in-school performance. *Thanawiya 'amma* students attended school fairly regularly for the first couple of weeks and then they worked their way through reaching minimum- and variably enforced and reported- attendance requirements for the rest of the year, coming to school once every one or two weeks. Often boys came only to jump the fence a couple of hours later. Some were more attached to school as they came to play soccer in the playground, meet friends or attempt to talk to girls from the adjacent girls' school. For most of the school year, attendance in most *thanawiya 'amma* classrooms was no more than one tenth of the enrolled numbers. In many cases, *thanawiya 'amma* students from different classes were placed together in one classroom, so that only one teacher would have to enter class and that they would not be left alone. Students frequently commented that if I had not been present, no teacher would have entered the classroom.



Figure 10: Playing Soccer in the Boys' General School

The cost of tutoring in general secondary was huge indeed, greater than many teacher and public sector employee salaries and greater than salaries in many private sector low skilled jobs in the city (usually between 300 and 400 EGP). The cost of tutoring for general secondary students of around 500 EGP/month was more than five times higher than it was for technical secondary students (around 80 EGP/month) and it was paid for a longer period of time.³³ Some students actually shared that their parents had entered into debt in order to pay for tutoring. Many students felt the huge burden of tutoring on their families, where more than one child was receiving tutoring, commuting across neighborhoods took much time and energy, the mother did not work and the father had to work two or three jobs. As one student described it after detailing her tutoring costs and enrolment across three neighborhoods:

My father tells me you could support a whole family on your own (*fatha bit linahdik*). My mother drives all of us to the lessons. There's four of us. One in KG... Yes, she takes lessons too. Where else would she learn? And the higher the fees of the school, the more expensive the tutoring. Two of us are in certificate years. And my father, [sarcastically] he is happy. He does not come home from happiness (*mabyidkhubsh il-bit min il-farah*) [because of taking up multiple jobs].

Students found my questions about 'why' they enrolled in tutoring counter-intuitive, as tutoring was obviously an almost universal norm. They did however try to explain that tutoring offered regular follow-up, homework and quizzes and more time to cover the very long curricula. This more intensive teaching geared towards exam preparation and memorization of the right way to answer 'expected' questions was simply only available in tutoring. And according to students, it was especially available in more expensive tutoring with smaller numbers and more personalized help and follow-up, rather than tutoring in large classes in tutoring centers. In this sense, students consistently linked the "quality" of tutoring to how much it cost. They also recognized that they could not possibly afford the 'really good' tutoring offered in more affluent neighborhoods.

³³ The average cost of tutoring for general secondary students was 70 EGP/subject/month; and students typically enrolled in tutoring for 5 to 7 subjects. The total monthly expenditure was: 350 EGP at the minimum and 500 EGP on average, especially when including significant additional expenses for private textbooks and workbooks, summary sheets, photocopying, revision sessions, and commuting. Almost all students relied on either tutoring notes and/or external textbooks and rarely studied from the official MOE textbooks. Students and parents also had to factor in associated costs of a meal or snack in long tutoring sessions and significant additional clothing costs.

With enrolment in tutoring almost universal and absenteeism among students the norm, most teachers, when they actually arrived to class, were not invested in communicating the material at hand, but mostly dictated key points and touched on small sections of the material. Alternatively, some teachers did not really ‘teach’ the lessons, but rather quizzed the students about their existing knowledge, in a manner that would completely exclude any student who did not enroll in tutoring. However, in contrast with the technical schools, student participation in classrooms, especially in *thanawiya ‘amma*, frequently reflected more advanced familiarity with the material than what could realistically be obtained from the class in progress. This is because in tutoring, students were typically a few lessons ahead of the school. For example, in an English language class, the teacher quickly skimmed over the lesson and began asking questions. A number of students shot back the answers and translations of difficult vocabulary; and not one student complained or asked for an explanation or repetition. The teacher neither commended the answers as exceptional, nor did students explain the meaning from their own understanding, but rather called out the Arabic translations of the words, in classical Arabic (the ‘formal’ definition they had memorized earlier).³⁴ In discussions after class, students said that ‘of course’ those who were answering knew the material from before. In fact, as one student put it, “they take a private lesson with him, so this is kind of a revision for them.”

Other teachers gave religious advice to students or let them read the Quran, study for tutoring exams or listen to music. Classroom teaching could then be a marketing opportunity for potential clients, especially in the beginning of the year, a revision for a teacher’s own private tutoring students (exhibiting their competence in comparison to others), a time of rest, a religious sermon or a simple endeavor to get students to complete their notes, so that they can be available for inspection by MOE supervisors. A number of teachers expressed dismay at the prevalence of tutoring, because it left them in the classroom with disinterested students- who came one day and skipped a

³⁴ For example, the teacher asked: “exhausted” and one student shouted out the translation: “*mut‘ab*,” or he said: “sail” and another student immediately called out: “*yubhir*.”

week or two; and effectively rendered any attempt at ‘teaching’ on their part meaningless and futile.



Figure 11: Students Having Just Jumped the Fence of the Boys’ General Secondary School

On the other hand, in all six schools, there were committed teachers who were not seen as abusing their position or ‘withholding’ any teaching from students. They were present in almost every grade. They were clearly the exception, but they were not a rarity. Students often referred to them as conscientious [*‘andubum damir’*]. Students often expressed that they wanted to attend the classes of those teachers, but did not want to come to school regularly just for one class. The general reliance on tutoring meant that student could enroll in tutoring even when their school teacher was ‘exemplary’. Conscientious teachers were not always the best teachers who were able to communicate the material to students, and excellent teachers could be the best at communicating the material, but not interested in teaching ‘to the exam’. Mrs. Mirvat however was an ‘exemplary’ teacher because she was conscientious, able at delivering the material, as well as steering students towards the best ways of answering exam questions. The following narrative may shed light on the construction of an exemplary

teacher in light of private tutoring and the complex intersections with constructions of social class, learning, gender norms and possibly even religion.

Mrs. Mirvat immediately stood out. She was always elegantly dressed with her hair made into a simple up-do. She was perhaps the only teacher in the school who had a car. This, her demeanor and her elegant style placed her in a different social class than the students and the rest of the teachers. She was widely admired by students. She taught O level English at the girls' public general secondary school. She seemed strict and did not allow much joking in class. However, she betrayed a tender deep concern whenever a student was going through trouble. She did not seem to be scared of intervening or helping out in such incidents. She navigated the school, classroom and students with smooth confidence and grace. She was well-reputed as an excellent teacher and one of those who taught "conscientiously" inside the classroom, as the students frequently put it. This meant: not wasting class time, not withholding material or obscuring it, not discriminating against students who did not enrol in her private tutoring classes and not trying to encourage or force them to do so. Unfortunately, the Christians are better than us in this," one Muslim student told me, referring to Mrs. Mirvat and other "conscientious" teachers in the school. Several told me that many times they only came to school for her class; regretting that they frequently could not do even that, as it was difficult to come to school just for one class. Mrs. Mirvat had a real command of English (in contrast with many public school teachers). She also had a real command of the curriculum and the way questions were asked and marked on the final exam. Her classes were rigorous and students were expected to know all the answers by heart, as the exam demanded. Students were asked to read and solve questions in every class. In 'story' class, students read in turn from the book and were expected to know by heart ideal answers to factual questions they might encounter in the exam about situations in the short story: like why did Manal get upset when she heard the discovery of the scientist? Mrs. Mirvat therefore taught to the expected learning outcomes focused on rote learning that the ministry demanded. Mrs. Mirvat also stood out as probably the most respectful teacher to students in almost all the schools [including the private schools]. She never used rude, accusatory or humiliating language and also always called students 'miss' or 'daughter'. Finally, Mrs. Mirvat actually gave private tutoring on a regular basis, including to some students from the school. Although she was not a 'star tutor', this likely meant that she secured adequate income to maintain her style and living standard. Not all students would have liked to enroll with her however. While some viewed her as too strict or academically demanding, it was also implied that she was also 'morally' demanding. That meant that if a student was late or did not show up to class (possibly to go out with friends [spending tutoring money on an outing], or to meet a male friend); Mrs. Mirvat would make sure to inform her parents.

In this kind of context, it is not entirely clear what role competitive high stakes examinations had in the universality of general secondary tutoring. After all, the school was no longer available as a site of learning anyway. First secondary students, whose marks have very little stakes, overwhelmingly enrolled in tutoring. They enrolled in tutoring even while expressing disinterest in marks and frequently articulating first secondary as a 'break' between the more stressful third preparatory and *thanawiya 'amma* certificate exams. Some expressed that they would simply fail if they did not enroll in tutoring. This is not only because of lack of instruction at school, but the key issues with basic education quality and assessment, in contrast to the long and difficult first secondary curriculum. Public general secondary students seemed to perceive a very clear break between the general secondary stage and previous educational stages, especially for those who had been through (low end) private schools in previous stages. Like their counterparts in the technical schools, many students conveyed that their education in the previous stages required no real effort on their part; that most answers were accepted; cheating was commonplace' exams were easy and everyone passed.

On the other hand, although some *thanawiya 'amma* students did show interest in their final marks, it is not entirely clear that most students were indeed competing for university. Most students in fact exhibited paradoxical attitudes as though they had not yet come to terms with their loss of middle class status and privileges. On the one hand, they enrolled in general secondary (an expensive route that is meant to lead to university), while on the other hand expressing that they would never get the high marks needed for entering their desired colleges, or college at all. As a student commented: "we will all end up in the *ma'had* (institute) anyway"- a nearby low status two year college accepting low scores. Less than half of all students who enroll at the secondary stage gain access to higher education; where the vast majority attend universities and 6.7% attend lower status technical institutes (Megahed and Ginsburg 2008). Other than the highest achievers, the chances for the rest of the students in these public schools seemed bleak indeed. Students in university predominately come from the highest fourth (27.1%) and fifth (46.5%) wealth quintiles and only 4.3% of higher education students come from the lowest income quintile (UNDP 2010).

Among girls, there seemed to be even less interest in marks. For example, when one high achieving student explained her tutoring enrolment in terms of the importance of marks, other students countered that “people who care about one tenth of a mark are rare. Most girls want to get married.” Then she said pointing to other students: “This one and this one and this one are already engaged”.

Many students also felt that university enrolment was no longer worthwhile, as many of their acquaintances who were university graduates were unemployed or severely underemployed (law graduates working as cleaners or commerce graduates working as security guards in malls). Students were profoundly discouraged by the level of unemployment and underemployment they saw in their circles and expressed education, not only their marks, as futile, because “we will all end up ‘on the sidewalk’ [jobless] anyway”. They also expressed that university was a continuation of the effectively privatized system of almost compulsory tutoring and low quality of instruction. I saw it myself in the university, the professor writes some stuff on board and then erase it and in the end of the year he makes summary notes for 500 or 1000 EGP and the exam comes from it.. that’s it. We had one teacher who didn’t know anything we explained the material to her. They graduate without knowledge. She just enters university and takes the university degree just to boast about it”. In a sense, they were stuck between their (theoretically middle class) background and expectations that they enroll in general secondary and seek university admission, and the knowledge that there were very limited opportunities for them among the multitude of graduates from public and private schools in more affluent neighborhoods competing for the same university places and the same jobs.

TUTORING IN THE PRIVATE SCHOOLS: MILLIONAIRES, STARS AND REPUBLICS

Salaries in the private schools are almost worse than the public. It's like in the gas stations, you know [where people work for tips]; the school's attitude is "I'm getting you income" (ana bagiblak rizq).
Teacher in a private school

Perhaps we could rely on school if they explain and correct homework and give exercises, but if the curriculum is too long, it still won't work. Student in the private girls' school.

The private schools not only had lower class densities, far superior quality of teachers and far better learning conditions, they even employed some of the sought-after 'star tutors', which students in other private schools aspired to reserve a place with. They still exhibited an almost universal enrolment in tutoring in second and third secondary and at least 60% tutoring enrolment for first secondary. Students however enrolled in far more expensive tutoring with famous teachers usually in nearby tutoring centers in the affluent neighborhoods where the schools were located. As there are many costs related to tutoring, from transport (usually by taxi) to extra classes that "pop up," to having to pay to reserve a place with a good tutor, overall costs are both hard to estimate, even for students themselves, and varied greatly between students. The average total tutoring cost for private school students was about double that of public general schools at around 1000 EGP/month (for about 8-9 months).³⁵ Some students were able to lower their costs below this figure while others in higher end private schools paid more. They exhibited even lower attendance rates than public general schools, despite the fact that they were paying up to 6000 EGP/year in school fees in both schools. In contrast to the public school however, teachers entered classes even when only small numbers of students attended. *Thanawiya 'amma* students stopped attending school altogether beyond the beginning of the year, so teachers did not always have to enter classes beyond that time. On the other hand, having become so

³⁵ Private school students mostly had a two-hour class every day of the week including weekends; and frequently had special revision or exam classes that lasted up to four hours and sometimes much longer. Private school students could mix between 25 EGP classes, for the "easiest" subject: O Level English; and 100 EGP or more for subjects like Physics and Math, especially as they are taught in English for most private school students. Private tutoring in Arabic usually cost around 50 EGP. A proportion of private school students have the foreign language of instruction as French- not English. For them, tutoring is typically more expensive than for English Language schools.

universal, tutoring also meant that many teachers in private schools also did not teach well in class, knowing that their students obtained their instruction elsewhere.

In the private schools too, many teachers lowered the quality of their instruction in the school to encourage tutoring enrolment, or simply to save their energy for more rewarding activity. One private school teacher, who taught in school the same way she did in tutoring, explained that her colleagues criticized her practice of giving revision sheets and frequent quizzes in school. They blocked her attempt to spread this practice across the school; one of them asking her explicitly: “what then would we offer in the private tutoring?” As some teachers put it delicately, most teachers ‘leave something’ for the private lesson. With salaries effectively under the poverty line, even in private schools, this is not very surprising. The reward to be obtained from tutoring as compared to the school salary is simply incomparable. Some teachers in private schools received pay as low as 300 EGP. Beginner teachers in the girls’ school received 400 EGP/month, while teachers in the mixed ‘national institute’ received salaries mainly based on the Teachers’ Cadre rates at around 500 EGP as a starting salary. Teachers in the girls’ school eventually received that right of Cadre pay rates as well. More experienced teachers received higher salaries and star tutors received even higher salaries, although the school was still a client and status base, rather than a source of income, for them.

In many or perhaps most private schools, because there is an assumption that teachers are making a living elsewhere, and therefore in a way that they are ‘using the school’ to build up a clientele, not only were their wages very low, their financial rights are frequently violated, a pattern noted by teachers interviews from different private schools. Furthermore, many “extra costs,” including pay to cleaners or photocopying sheets for students are delegated to teachers and students. This obviously had a profound effect on teaching quality, especially in foundational stages where tutoring is not yet universal. As a teacher in the girls’ school vividly explained:

We had to pay to use the teachers’ toilet. The supervisor had the key to the toilet and to get a copy of the key we had to pay. We paid 5 EGP every month to get it cleaned

by the school cleaners. We also had to pay for the teachers' room to be cleaned. We bought our own rubbish bins and anything else we used, like materials or resources for any activities or class decoration or photocopying sheets. It was up to each teacher really. I did the photocopying extra sheets thing once, but not again. In the beginning of the year, I bought materials for about 400 EGP... [laughing]... my salary.

Private school students equally saw tutoring as fundamentally interlinked with the ways in which exams and curricula were designed, regardless of how well teachers taught at school. It is not class density or even the quality of teachers per se that created the appeal of tutoring, but rather considerably longer teaching hours and the way in which tutoring sessions were conducted. Marian, a student in the mixed school and I had been discussing tutoring, when she mentioned Ms. Naila. This was one of the most successful and sought after tutors; the famous star-tutors; the multi- millionaire tutors.

Marian described with fascination and amusement the setting and organization of the lessons she enrolled in. First, there were “bodyguards” checking if the homework has been completed at the entrance of the tutoring centre. They were part of Ms. Naila’s staff, but Marian joked at how they seemed to be selected based on body size. They immediately called parents from student mobile phones if the student had not attended the previous class, if the homework had not been completed and sometimes if the student was obtaining bad marks in assignments or quizzes. Inside the lesson, silence and behavior were monitored by about six members of staff in a lecture hall of about 350 students. With such economies of scale, this was one of the cheapest lessons available to private school students at 25 EGP/lesson. Marian was not only interested in getting the highest scores on the exams, she also seemed to value how the context of the tutoring helped and *forced* her to study and solve exams. Not only was there a quiz and homework in every class, but also there were frequent, lengthy and fully monitored exams marked by assistants and then reviewed by Ms. Naila in sessions that extended well beyond class time- and frequently involved extensive *tabzi'*: mocking reproach for bad performers and stern reminders of the necessity of studying hard. As the MOE end of year exam approached, Ms. Naila held exams where students literally spent the whole day in the centre solving hundreds of invented and previous exam questions. MOE’s exam questions never departed from Naila’s questions, asserted Marian. Ending her vivid description, she came back to the issue of the new minister’s moves towards making students attend school and not rely on tutoring. She said that even if he tried to close the tutoring centers, Naila could set up a whole school in seconds. Pointing at a building inside the school, she said “for sure Naila could buy any building like this and tomorrow the lessons would continue; she’s a republic on her own.

It should be mentioned that Ms. Naila teaches “Ordinary Level” (O Level) English, but that her entire enterprise is in place to ‘learn English’ not at all. O Level English is decidedly below the level of most of Naila’s private school students. In fact their focus on O Level English has arguably reduced their overall English language skills as they

stop attending school or studying for High Level English. Naila's "Republic", as Marian called it, is an empty republic; an elaborate system, hours and hours of intense work by students whose skill levels in English supersedes that offered by the Republic. The purpose however is different. It is a chase after 20 marks of the final total, achieved by memorizing almost word for word a short story on which they answer questions on the exam and absorbing the way that certain MOE examiners structure and render controllable the rules of English grammar (ways that were not always grammatically correct). It is sought and labored after by citizens who were never required to speak English. They were in fact citizens who planned to enroll in even more 'private' instruction in English throughout their university years in order to actually improve their language skills. The way that the system had developed meant that instruction geared at higher language skills (High Level English) in these 'English Language schools' was sidelined to focus on areas that determined student marks. All other school activities and subjects aimed at a more holistic development of student skills and abilities were equally marginalized; and students frequently expressed dismay at having to abandon their sports practice and other social, intellectual and creative activities outside the school as well. Along their tutoring journey, these students frequently endure grilling reproach and reminders of the limited chances that exist for enrolling in good colleges. In her magnificent edifice, Ms. Naila and other Kings of Mathematics, Monsters of Chemistry and Emperors of Physics- as they advertise themselves- were selling nothing more than a very small tranche of a chance at the middle class dream. Although these stars do not offer classes in the working classes neighborhoods, each area of the city has its own stars, monsters and emperors, vividly advertised on walls and buildings, across from schools or on the walls of metro tracks. Outside of the affluent neighborhoods, however, what is being sold is increasingly an illusion rather than an opportunity.

However, in addition to creating emperors and millionaires, the tutoring market has equally clearly created impoverished and marginalized teachers. These were the teachers who taught subjects that did not enter official student totals. These were the arts, music and sports teachers who saw their importance and status take a very deep dive over the

past decades. These also included teachers who wanted to teach differently; who did not want to teach to the exam; who want to help students learn and acquire important sets of social and learning skills. These also included teachers who considered tutoring to be morally questionable and those who considered it taught students dependency and gave an unfair advantage to those who could pay more. They also particularly disadvantaged a great proportion of female teachers who had other household responsibilities and could not spend their evenings in tutoring centers or student homes. They also ironically included teachers of foreign languages at an advanced level. Once the pride of private 'language' schools and providing arguably the skill most valued by the labor market facing their students, they have seen their incomes remain below the poverty level while other teachers became millionaires. They are aware of the disinterest of students in their subject, which is not counted in official totals and even the space for them to just be 'teachers' has almost evaporated in today's de-populated schools. The following narrative about an exceptional English teacher sheds light on many of these issues:

"This is one of the best teachers we have," a *thanaviya amma* student in a private school told me. "She is like our friend. She really gets us working and participating... Well, we were really active in the first semester preparing the lesson and all this... but then.. I don't know.. we lost the energy... we stopped answering in class, stopped preparing.. Well and this year we don't come to school, so..." I got an appointment to meet the teacher. Ms. Huda teaches "High Level" English. This is the more advanced English taught at English language private schools. It is more advanced than the Ministry's curriculum "Ordinary Level" and organized differently; using famous classical novels, such as *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*, and focusing on writing, comprehension and more advanced grammar. She invited me to meet her in her home. It seemed like a 'middle class home', but one that had not been cared for probably for decades, with collapsed furniture and decaying walls. Ms. Huda quickly shared with me her reflections about this. She explained her inability to renovate the apartment, and that they simply "do not buy meat;" she cannot afford it. She is separated from her husband and is the main provider for herself and two children. Her private school salary was exactly in the range of public school teachers- embarrassingly small to state to me openly, but explained within the general pay scale of the school. She did not give private tutoring although she sometimes gave extra help to students without charge. Ms. Huda was very proud of her teaching and gave special importance to her close relationship with students. She tried to teach the students well, to get them engaged with the material and to develop their English language skills. She talked and joked with them openly about their concerns and problems inside and outside school. She tried to teach them to be independent, for example, extracting their own questions from the novels, instead of giving them set questions and model answers as other

teachers do, encouraging them to speak up and to express themselves in English. Throughout my presence in the school, I came to appreciate that she articulated a sense of herself as being ‘a rebel,’ in more ways than one: in defending student interests, in talking openly with them about sensitive topics like religion and sexuality, in having their trust, in teaching them in a different way, in being a ‘moderate’ Muslim, in countering the ‘superficial’ understandings of religion she felt her students were beginning to espouse, in questioning their seeming alienation from having a career and their preference to be housewives. But at moments throughout my involvement in the school, a heavy feeling seem to take her over. She expressed a sense of futility or despair and a deep sadness about how things ‘were.’ It seemed to me that she also felt devalued and perhaps ‘defeated.’

It is possible to understand the lack of incentive students may have to give their energy to Ms. Huda’s attempt to get them engaged with “High Level” English at school and her increasing marginality as a passionate teacher, the majority of whose students do not even come to school. Students certainly have little incentive to enroll in tutoring with her than with Ms. Naila, as the grade for High Level English does not enter into the total which determines university admission. Further, her ethic of teaching directly contradicts the logic of a pervasive dependency called private tutoring.

CONCLUSION

Enough enough enough enough
Thanawiya Amma for me is a nightmare
For years we’ve been sitting dazed like bulls
Enough means enough
I’ve been pushed around for too long
But I want to know the end of the story
I will not get into any college
There are no teachers
There are no invigilators
If you have money, you will live like the others
I thought I’d leave the book and start to rap
Maybe I’ll find the door to escape from the agony

كفاية كفاية كفاية كفاية
 الثانوية العامة دي بالنسبة لي كابوس
 بقالنا سنين قاعدين مبلمين زي التيوس
 كفاية يعني كفاية
 اتضربت كتير على قفايا
 لكن نفسي اعرف ايه هي آخر الحكاية
 خلاص مش هلحق ولا كلية
 مافيش مدرسين
 مافيش مراقبين
 لو معاك فلوس هتعيش زي الباقيين
 قلت أسيب الكتاب وابدأ اغني راب
 يمكن ألاقى الباب اللي يهربني من العذاب

Abridged lyrics from the popular
 Thanawiya ‘Amma Rap Song (Thanawiya
 Rap 2010)

Private tutoring almost shaped the very reality of the schools. The tutoring market has entrenched itself so deeply into the fabric of public and private schools that it affects almost every aspect of school life, from whether the morning assembly ritual is performed, to whether students and teachers come to school and enter classrooms in the first place. It ends up determining which subjects actually get taught and which get sidelined, and which subjects attract teachers and which suffer shortages in the thousands. It sets up the parameters of not just teaching styles but of desired and rewarded entrepreneurial, abusive, permissive or ‘conscientious’ teacher subjectivities in the informally privatized educational realm. It also aids in understanding the different meanings of ‘*mafīsh ta‘līm*’. The assertion that there is no education’ or ‘*mafīsh ta‘līm*’ means different things to students across the system; from little or no instruction occurring in technical school classrooms to rigorous instruction and exam drilling in affluent tutoring centers, where students are required to memorize vast amounts of material, while using very little analytical, social or creative skills.

As with other informal markets, making sense of the “informal” is “impossible without a parallel story of the state” (Elyachar 2005, 81). The growth of this informal educational market has been fundamentally driven and determined by various state policies and practices. The uncontrolled spread of private tutoring has been carried out and facilitated by a state that has determined the material conditions of teachers, failed to prevent related abuse and corruption and reduced its investment in education to the point that the market, especially in the general track, has almost emptied out and displaced public schooling. MOE practices and the general institutional and political environment has allowed and perpetuated the growth of multi-billion pound industries of private tutoring and private textbooks. Tutoring has effectively nullified the state’s legal and constitutional commitment to free public education and imposed a huge financial burden on most families, effectively structuring and undermining their access to education. In fact, this has culminated in extreme cases of public school authorities simply going ahead and privatizing their own school by running it as a tutoring centre (see for example, Mukhalafat Ta‘līm 2009 and Al-Mudarisun Hawalu 2011). Tutoring at this scale has obviously created a system that is both very inequitable and very

expensive (World Bank 1996, Annex 2). It effectively amounts to huge resource wastage as public spending on education continues while at least half of the students across different levels of the system obtain their education elsewhere. This ‘privatization through tutoring’ therefore has profound implications for access to education, equity, the functioning of the institution of schooling and the very legitimacy of the state. In the three school systems, access to the available forms of schooling [and freedom from emotional harm] was largely structured by the ability to pay for private tutoring.

It has been argued in various settings that private tutoring maintains and exacerbates social stratification (Bray 2006, Akkari 2010). However, in a context where private tutoring effectively replaces mainstream schooling, arguments on ‘privatization’ and equity are more relevant than studies of the impact of private tutoring per se³⁶. The implications of a largely private education system for equity are obvious: access to education is premised upon income. In fact, official achievement data in Egypt show clear- and extreme- polarization based on social class/financial ability. Those who come from poor households constitute 5.3% of achievers in the primary education stage, 3% of achievers in the preparatory stage and 0.5% of achievers in the general secondary education stage; and achievement is highly dependent on school type, which is a proxy for social class (UNDP 2010, 45-6). Despite the lack of detailed data, tutoring is a plausible cause for at least a significant part of this extreme polarization in achievement. The general argument that privatization increases inequality is documented in many parts of the world. For example, in reference to increasing privatization in Chinese education Mok (1997) has argued that especially in the largest cities, it is unquestionable that the growth in private education has caused disparities among different income groups. In Singapore, a country where reforms were carried out against the backdrop of

³⁶ When discussing tutoring in more detail, students offered more nuanced pictures of the relationship between tutoring and their marks/ ‘achievement’. For example, sometimes they simply chose the wrong tutor, sometimes they did not pay much attention in tutoring, sometimes they hated the subject, sometimes they felt more or less motivated, interested or hopeful and sometimes they were too tired to study if they went out to long tutoring classes every day, especially for girls who also attended school. In this sense, tutoring was somewhat ‘like school,’ not a magical solution for the fundamental issues that determine how students interact with learning, schooling and achievement.

heavy government investment in education, Tan (1998) has argued that the marketization of education to exacerbate not only the disparities between schools in terms of educational outcomes but also social inequalities.

This extreme marketization of education and teacher [and school] impoverishment has meant that teachers who do not provide tutoring simply cannot make a living. In fact, they can hardly cover their transport and associated costs through their salaries. This has especially affected 'non-tutoring' subjects such as art, music and sports, and rural areas where even tutoring is not profitable enough for teachers to make a living (Tadros 1999); so that many schools cease to conduct music, sport or arts classes or any school activities at all. Many school activities do continue to exist on paper and appearance only. This varies from the principal entering a class I was attending, asking the teachers about the 'good students' and taking them to be presented to school guests as the school's elected 'Student Union', or teachers asking students to write a research 'off the internet', put it in good binding and submit it to a district contest [and in fact asking me if I could perform such task!], or parents completing out artwork to be hung in the school corridors with a teacher's signature underneath. The only 'real' activities where students actually participated in the public schools were the seminars and trips organized and funded by the NGO that was sponsoring the school. In fact, teachers in the general school for complained that any creative or even illustrative work by young children is rejected by supervisors and they as parents also did the homework and activities of their children so that they can be at the appropriate quality that a teacher would approve, would not mark down and would be comfortable showing to a supervisor.

Therefore, "Activities" classes, such as art, music and sports were usually cancelled, ignored or taken over by other teachers. Practical classes in the boys industrial technical schools were also implicitly cancelled and replaced by dictation of main points (due to lack of materials, machinery or teacher motivation). Students often moved to the 'workshop' or lab to be dictated the lesson constituted of a few sentences. The breakdown in school activities is only one symptom of a more general breakdown of

schooling and school discipline across the system, premised on both weak resources and privatization. There were multiple features of the breakdown of discipline (observation, normalization and examination) and control in the schools. The clearest and most important issues were related to: attendance monitoring, the role of supervisors (see Chapter Three) and examination and invigilation.

Private tutoring in Egypt emerges as a phenomenon that is not easily explained as a remedy to poor education, as a strategy to subsidize low teacher pay or as driven by job competition and high stakes examinations. It is a complex relationship between these factors and the related educational and institutional policies and practices. The school level dynamics described here only amplified the impact of the policies and practices supporting this type of marketization across the system. The growth of tutoring has been effectively backed by government policy intent on privatizing the financing of education and embedded in a complex web of corruption extending from high up in the structure of MOE to the community and school levels. The above song, which students listened to on their mobile phones and shared with me, shows the themes of disempowerment and anger in the voice of the singer and lyrics of the song. Apart from other themes in the rest of the lyrics, the song expresses key issues put forward by students, including a sense of anger and deep frustration with the state of education, a sense of blocked opportunities and a sense that money determines one's fate, and ending with the futility of education itself.

In the technical schools, the market entrenched itself not by manufacturing demand, or to remedy poor quality, but primarily through intimidation and abuse of students by poorly paid and unaccountable teachers. The current educational context has allowed for greater physical and emotional abuse, especially of poor students, with serious implications for their need for respect, dignity and safety from physical and emotional harm. In a context where education is 'absent' and cheating pervasive, technical school students were forced to 'buy' their degrees by paying for tutoring in return for almost no education at all. This privatization through forced tutoring has contributed to fundamentally undermining notions of equity, merit and fairness. Passing was

effectively conditional upon a negotiated payment to teachers, as well as cheating, laxity and corruption across the system. This payment- for supposedly free education- is being extracted from families already struggling to secure their basic needs and from boys (below the legal working age) working fulltime to support their families.

The market initially presented itself to general secondary students as providing an edge in exam performance in the context of greater competition for university admission and jobs. This myth perpetuated itself through a web of interests and corruption in a billion pound industry supported by MOE's remuneration, curriculum, textbook, examination and marking policies and practices, and an overall absence of accountability. The outcome is that the general school has been almost completely eliminated as a site of learning, as it becomes displaced by tutoring centers and home tutoring. Private tutoring is no longer seen by individual students as a 'choice'. Students are forced to obtain tutoring, each family according to its means, in a highly differentiated market. Lower middle class students were equally forced into this market, increasingly without a solid expectation of entering university or competing for high quality jobs. This has imposed a massive cost on middle class families constitutionally entitled to free education.

Private school students had more realistic chances of joining public and private universities, but suffered more than double the cost of education, essentially due to the ways in which curriculum and assessment policies were set up in secondary and tertiary education. They were also keenly aware of the ironies of parallel schooling where they paid fees for schools they hardly attended and tutoring costs for instruction that was only geared towards exam success and very little learning, especially on skills they valued highly, such as English language acquisition. Their tutoring involvement and spending however represent the real core of the tutoring industry and is of greater consequence for the big players in the market. Upper middle class parents could not hold schools accountable to tutoring center exam preparation standards and were equally reduced to buying additional education elsewhere.

Informal privatization has reinforced the transformation of much of formal youth schooling experiences into private tutoring focused on exam readiness in a few 'key' subjects. It has implied the effective removal of art, music and sports components from the actual curricula of public schools, eliminating key spaces that had been intended to allow young people to develop a range of skills, abilities and experiences. Ultimately, the forms and mechanisms of privatization described here reinforce the patterns whereby access to constitutional and legal rights of schooling and freedom from physical and emotional harm are dependent upon each citizen's financial ability. The progressive de-facto privatization of schooling in Egypt has therefore profoundly contributed to undermining the legitimacy of the state and its institutions by altering the social contract and subjecting poor and middle classes to heightened forms of exclusion and abuse.

Through the focus on the key modes of discipline and punishment in the schools, the next chapter contributes to the thesis of a breakdown of the school as a state institution and the collapse of schooling, especially technical schooling, as a social contract of reciprocity. The increased prominence of violent punishment in public schools is linked to a sense of the impotence of the institution, to the breakdown of its role and authority. It also highlights that struggles around gender and sexuality were central to school's efforts to 'educate' and discipline girls and boys. Neither beating nor the practiced controls of femininity are sanctioned by law or formal state power. In fact, the inability to summon 'the law' and the power of the state defined the position of poor students as susceptible to the abuse of power by school authorities in these regards, despite their will to contest these realities in many cases.

CHAPTER FIVE: CLASS AND GENDER IN SCHOOL PUNISHMENT AND SURVEILLANCE

It was the second half of the day at the boys' technical school. It was time for practical classes (*'amali*) and our class was to move to the 'workshop' for a geometrical drawing (*rasm bandasi*) class. We proceeded at the usual relaxed pace, trickling slowly into the workshop. The teacher was inside and did not appear to pay much attention to us as he was working on something at his desk. The few students in the workshop gradually took out their notebooks and started chatting quietly to each other. More students trickled in and some left again. The teacher was still working at his desk. Another student came in and then started to walk out. The teacher got up, moved towards the student and began beating and cursing him, hitting him on the back, head and face and kicking and beating other students who were in his reach near the entrance of the workshop. I was in shock and the student who had received most of the abuse seemed to be about to cry. He protested at the teacher's insults, and this was met with more insults. Then the situation dissipated and the teacher returned to his desk after a few more insults directed at the students as a whole. The teacher spoke very little, but it was implicit that this treatment was deserved due to the tardiness and carelessness of the students. He did not really note their names or take any further disciplinary measures against the violators. He eventually talked briefly to the class, tasking them with copying a drawing from the blackboard using a method that many of them did not quite understand. He went back to his desk and continued what he was doing. The students chatted quietly—with me and with each other—throughout the rest of the class, as some of them attempted the drawing while others did not. The teacher did not attempt to monitor or assist them. A photocopied exam question from a previous year was being circulated among the students and arrived to our table. The students understood that this would be the exam question they would find in their next exam. Some began

to discuss arrangements for obtaining a copy of the model answer so that they could paste it in their notebooks and, later, enter the exam hall with it in order to copy or paste it into the exam paper.

INTRODUCTION

The violent, arbitrary and humiliating modes of school discipline and punishment may be clear in this incident. The absolute normalcy of abuse is also evident in the willingness to display it in front of an external guest such as myself. But is the school “disciplined”? If so, why did students do as they pleased during class time and while coming to class and why did some not arrive to class at all? Are students docile, afraid of teachers? Do they learn to cower, appease, obey and be hypocritical with those in positions of authority? If so, why did they not come to class in a timely manner and have their material ready? How, furthermore, can these forms of systematic cheating be understood? What does it say about the functioning of the school as a disciplinary institution which is meant to observe, normalize and examine?

Common incidents such as these and their implications are part of and result from a breakdown of schooling itself [*mafīsh ta’lim*]. As discussed in the previous chapter, this breakdown manifested itself in rampant student and teacher truancy across the schools; and, in the case of technical schools, systematic cheating. While official MOE regulations definitively protect students from beating and humiliation, and regular instructions to teachers indicate that “physical and emotional punishment” (*al-‘iqab al-badami wal-nafsi*) is strictly forbidden, the breakdown in schooling evident in scenes like those above demonstrates the difference between official regulation and lived experience. In fact, ironically, amendments to the 2008 The Law of the Child went further to criminalize school violence against children instead of being subject to MOE regulations- in a context where violence intensified and the law was little known or implemented across schools.

This chapter discusses the key patterns of discipline and punishment in the schools. It starts with an overview of the issue around school punishment in Egypt from a comparative perspective. It then provides an image of the use of physical and emotional violence in schools, the gendered and classed dimensions of the violence and students' discourses about it. It looks at the key discourses used to construct and legitimize beating by teachers and MOE officials. It discusses the main issues around gender surveillance in the schools. Whereas Chapter Four emphasized key aspects of the subversion of school rules by students, this chapter expands the discussion by exploring the issue of student "noncompliance"³⁷ with school and classroom rules, and links to traditional gender norms.

It is appropriate to note on the onset that the physical and emotional punishment of students is by no means exclusive to Egyptian schools. The findings of a 2007 report conducted in thirteen Indian states, for example, pointed out that about sixty-five per cent of school children underwent corporal punishment, with nearly fifty-five per cent of those affected boys and more than seventy per cent of affected children never reporting the matter to anyone (Nagar 2007). In other countries of the South, beating can also be common (see Pineiro 2006), but it is very difficult to make meaningful comparisons across countries from available survey data where definitions of 'corporal punishment, 'harshness' and social class are not always comparable. It may seem from anecdotal evidence however that current levels of beating in Egyptian schools are not paralleled in other Arab countries such as Morocco, Tunisia or Jordan

The forms of violence found in schools are both physical and psychological, and usually occur together. From the initial introduction of universal education in the North in the nineteenth century until well into the last century, beating, humiliation and isolation were routinely used as methods of teaching and discipline (Pinheiro 2006). At

³⁷ Compared with terms like "misconduct" or "resistance," "noncompliance" indicates behaviors that do not comply with the expectations and the structured activities of adult authorities in schools (Stevick and Levinson 2003).

home and school, corporal punishment³⁸ and other forms of cruel or degrading punishment were widely favored methods of ‘discipline, perceived as ‘taming’ unruly children, training presumptuous children to take their ‘proper places’ in the social order and hardening unseasoned children to the difficult, brutal and abrasive world (Pinheiro 2006). As Middleton (2008) notes in the case of Britain, what might be considered cruel now was likely considered unremarkable in the early twentieth century, at a time when physical violence was a part of everyday life. Corporal punishment and the implements of such punishment were a regular part of the spectacle of power within the school (Middleton 2008). It has been argued however that corporal punishment did not constitute the sort of individual that the state in the late twentieth century deemed appropriate because corporal punishment tended to exclude rather than include (Marshall and Marshall 1997). “Punishment in schools began to shift away from the public, the spectacular and the physically violent, to the personal, the mundane and the psychologically compelling, from ‘threats or blows’ to ‘a cold and neglectful countenance’... The body, once made to be tortured, became something to be trained and corrected” (Deacon 2006, 182). The historical development of school discipline in the North is therefore generally portrayed as moving from harsh and humiliating means to less physically violent and exclusionary forms of discipline and punishment. Studies in the global North have observed however that children of color, boys and students receiving compensatory services at schools for disabilities are disproportionately and more severely subjected to school discipline (for reviews see Cameron 2006 and Hyman 1995). As mentioned in Chapter Two, studies in the sociology of education have emphasized the ways in which students of different social classes are taught different skills in schools. The virtues of compliance and submission to direct orders are emphasized to disadvantaged children, while middle class children are socialized in school to be independent, autonomous and to internalize control (Da

³⁸ The Committee on the Rights of the Child defines corporal or physical punishment as any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however slight (Pinheiro 2006). Most such punishment involves hitting (smacking, slapping, spanking) children, with the hand or with an implement. It can also, though, involve kicking, shaking or throwing children, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair or boxing ears, forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning, scalding or forced ingestion (for example, washing children’s mouths out with soap or forcing them to swallow hot spices). Non-physical forms of punishment include, for example, punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child.

Silva 1988, Hempel-Jorgensen 2009, Ivinson and Duveen 2006). Bowles and Gintis (1976), for example, have argued that students from different social class backgrounds are rewarded for classroom behaviors that corresponded to personality traits allegedly rewarded in the different occupational strata- the working classes for docility and obedience, the managerial classes for initiative and personal assertiveness.

Although it may be tempting to consider Egyptian schools to be at an earlier point in the same ‘developmental trajectory’ as countries of the North, this chapter suggests that there has in fact been a rise in violence in Egyptian schools. Corporal punishment has been a regular feature of public and private schools since the inception of modern schooling in the Middle East (see Fortna 2002), but the level of violence and humiliation in today’s schools in Egypt is generally seen as being unprecedented. In 2007, a study by the Egyptian Center for the Right to Education (ECER) linked rising violence to critical patterns of school governance, resources and pedagogy; including the focus on memorization, abuse and physical punishment by teachers, weak oversight over education, high class densities, lack of school activities because of short school days and multiple shift schools (Yunus 2009). One report of the Egyptian Centre for Human Rights on incidents of teachers’ severe violence against students detailed forty-one cases reported in the media over one academic year; which included severe beating, the breaking of an arm, a nose or a finger, threats of pushing students from higher floors or of beating students with shoes, stepping on their neck, hitting them with sticks, puncturing their ears, using an electric Taser, injuring their faces, slandering them and preventing them from entering school (Nasif 2010). According to the report, the reasons for this violence included: students not understanding the material, speaking out-of-turn with a classmate, excess noise in the classroom, attempts to coerce students to enroll in in-school tutoring or private lessons, students’ long hair, students’ rejection of punishment, requests to leave early, failure to bring the proper notebook or to do the homework, jumping the fence or not attending the morning assembly (Nasif 2010). A study by the National Center for Social and Criminal research showed that 91% of noncompliant students experienced violent punishment, that 42% of teacher resort to violence to control the educational process, and that the same percentage of

families believed in violence as a means of education and upbringing (Yunus 2009). Around 80% of the boys and 60% of the girls in one study reported being beaten by teachers with the use of hands, sticks, straps, shoes, and kicks (Youssef, Attia and Kamel 1998). In addition, 38% of Egyptian children were harshly physically disciplined in the form of beating with implements; where the most common reported injuries were bumps and contusions. There is little systematic data however on how a host of different factors affect school punishment, from teacher training and qualification the rural or urban location of the school.³⁹ Therefore, while there is no claim that the modes of punishment in the six schools are somehow ‘representative’ of violence across Egypt’s 40,000 schools, the aim of this discussion is to show the discourses and practices around punishment in concrete school contexts. This is an area of research however that is in great need for far more extensive treatment.

BEATING, HUMILIATION AND UNSANCTIONED TASKS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

There is no education in the first place... The teacher comes in, beats the kids around a little and goes out (Huwa mafish ta’lim aslan... huwa il mudarris biyudkbul yidrab il ‘iyal shiwaya wi yitla’). Student in the boys’ technical school

They make us sweep the floors. Is this a school for education or for sweeping and mopping? (di madrasit ta’lim walla kans wi mash). Student in the boys’ technical school

“*Zifta*”, or “scum”,⁴⁰ was the first word I heard inside a classroom during my fieldwork. “*Zifta*” was simply shouted at different corners of the room and at particular girls by the teacher in the girls’ technical school until all students were seated and quiet. Students were also told, in reference to my presence, “if we are not respectable, at least we can pretend to be respectable” (*law makunash muhtaramin, ‘ala el a’al ni’mel nafsina*

³⁹ Other studies may suggest that the factors associated with harsh corporal punishment include: rural area, male gender of the child, low maternal education, and large family size [or larges class size, for school contexts] (see Alyahri and Goodman 2008). This may suggest that large class size and low teacher qualification are especially important determinants of corporal punishment, especially of boys.

⁴⁰ Feminine of: “*zift*”: literally, the black tar used for covering asphalt roads, it means “bad”, someone or something of low quality, with connotations of being disgusting or disgraceful.

muhtaramin). Name-calling, humiliation and scolding (*sbitima*, *ihana* or *tabzi'*) were the main ways which many (but not all) teachers used to establish order and calm or rebuke non-compliant or under-performing students in the public schools. Real or perceived noncompliance was typically responded to with “*sbitima*”—name-calling—often directed at the whole class and often extended to more general derogatory statements about the students as a whole, their future potential and the families and parents who had failed to “raise them” properly. Students were regularly called “stupid”, “rubbish”, “retarded”, or animal. Even sympathetic teachers often labeled and described students as being without future [prospects], purpose or ambition. “*Hayawan/a*” (animal), “*ziift/a*”, and “*humar/a*” (donkey) were the most common curses I heard used to address students in public schools—considered mild enough to use in front of a “guest”. For example, a teacher who often used beating, kicking and abusive language and gestures with students, at one pointed started to call out the names of each student in class by using “*il-hayawan*” before each name: the animal Ahmed, the animal Fadi and so on. This was not due to any individual or collective offense, but simply for them to come to the front of the class to receive their medical insurance cards. Harsher terms were used when I was not in close range or were reported to me by students. The spectrum of swear words extended across the full range used on Egyptian streets, especially in the boys’ schools. There was a clear awareness among all school actors however that beating and humiliation were not considered proper, were not sanctioned and should therefore not be used in front of a guest, especially a researcher with a formal MOE research permit. What I observed was therefore likely no more than half the normal severity and frequency of abuse. Students frequently remarked that abuse was considerably reduced in my presence.

Public schools are certainly not uniform in this regard. In more affluent neighborhoods in urban centers across the country and especially in semi-private Experimental schools, better quality education and less physical and emotional abuse are the norm. Physical and emotional punishment may still be commonplace, but it is not as severe. In a study of one of the best preparatory schools in its district, for example, Linda Herrera (1992, 31–2) found that the most common methods used in physical punishment were hitting

the palms of the hand with a stick, making a girl stand with her hands up in the air and punching her in the arm or back. Other common forms of punishment sought to embarrass or shame the student: by sending her to the corridor with a paper attached to her back with the word “stupid” written on it, for example. As Herrera (1992) has explained in terms of punishment, teachers make a clear distinction between the male and the female student and the more effective way of dealing with each one’s “nature”; so that girls are “shamed”; they are punished more verbally and embarrassed in front of peers, while boys have to be beaten and beaten harshly as they do not respond to ‘slight’ punishment.

In the two boys’ public schools and, to a lesser extent, in the girls’ schools, many teachers carried with them hard plastic hoses or medium-sized canes of roughly one meter in length, which they used in the courtyard, corridors and classroom. Others used their hands—and legs—to deal with noncompliant students. This was not a legacy of secondary schools alone and was portrayed as being the norm in most primary and preparatory public schools (see Naguib 2006). My presence did not affect the prominent display and use of the canes and hoses in school courtyards and corridors, although my presence in the classroom did seem to temper their use therein. In the boys’ technical school, students were still slapped on the face and harshly beaten in my presence. Furthermore, if the principal was made aware of student noncompliance, students also risked enduring his courtyard drills as additional punishment: a number of very challenging squats and physical exercises.

Beating was not only an unsanctioned response to student noncompliance; it was also arbitrary and dependent on a number of factors and patterns of exchange in the school context. Punishment was not uniformly employed with students, and therefore did not represent the same kind of grievance for all students. This added a critical element of arbitrariness or ambiguity in the extra-legal application of punishment. For example, older third secondary students in the boys’ technical school were often notably spared some of the harsher humiliation and beating that many first and second secondary

students endured. This is because they could better retaliate against it or perhaps because many had become more assertive and resourceful due to greater years of work experience in difficult conditions outside the school. As students put it, “teachers are scared of third secondary; they treat us differently”. As discussed in Chapter Four, this also reduced teachers’ ability to pressure them into enrolling in tutoring groups, resulting in their lower enrollment in tutoring. Family background was also seen as important for tempering abuse. Many students implied that the disrespect of teachers was predicated on their low social class. As students in the girls’ general school put it, “teachers treat us as though they are above us.” Others declared that “they treat us as though we are from the street” and “they look down on us”. Some students expressed that their fathers were able to intimidate teachers in order to deter them from further abuse. Orphans or those whose fathers had left the household were seen as being the worst off in this regard. Attentive mothers could however intervene and plead for better treatment or fewer financial demands on their children. Students who came from more affluent or better “connected” families were typically afforded better treatment, especially the children of school teachers. In the technical schools, students who paid in-school tutoring fees regularly and enrolled early were spared the related abuse. Students who excelled in (non-oppositional) areas of religious learning such as Quran recitation tended to receive better treatment. High-achieving students did as well; although their number was limited in the public schools and they significantly overlapped with the previous categories of more affluent and connected students. Others yet had privileged positions due to their relationships with particular teachers, won by running errands for them or otherwise gaining their favor. The same behavior could clearly therefore elicit different levels of punishment from teachers. This applied to the ability to coerce students to perform additional chores in the technical schools (see below). While students often expressed beating as arbitrary and unfair; and ascribed its occurrence to financial issues or compliance with extra-legal demands, beating was not always seen as reprehensible per se, likely due to its normalization in household settings, as discussed below.

In the girls' public schools, teachers' attitudes were similar in terms of the regular use of humiliation, but physical beating took different and less severe forms. As described by students, the major causes of punishment were girls' perceived immodesty, the payment of tutoring fees, the personality of the teacher, classroom disturbances and efforts to deter students' complaints. Teachers responded to student noncompliance using punishments that ranged from verbal abuse, twisting the student's ear, hitting her on the back or shoulder, to calling her parents and sending her to the principal. While some teachers reportedly slapped students on the face, threats of slapping, and the general use of intimidating language, were more common. Pulling girls from their scarves and punching them in the shoulder was far more common than actual slapping of the face or the harsher beating I saw and was informed of in the boys' schools.

In both technical schools, students were often forced to clean the labs and perform other chores in the school. In the boys' technical school especially, students were made to sweep the floors and carry out different tasks, such as making tea for teachers and running private errands for them. Boys particularly resented being compelled to clean the floors and were fully aware that this was against official regulations. Some students also explained that they were the ones who set up the labs and arranged classroom furniture. This work was seen as less humiliating, but it was nonetheless resented for being an extra-legal means by which teachers and the school took advantage of student labor (arguably saving a portion of the contractual costs provided by the school's affluent sponsors for this purpose and distributing it amongst themselves). As one student commented, "if I did this work in a workshop outside, I would be treated better and I would get paid." In my presence, some teachers tried to justify these practices, arguing that it was laudable to keep one's surroundings clean and that this was a normal practice in good schools and "abroad". Not all teachers forced students to perform such chores and not all students complied with such directives. It was clear that some students had more leeway than others in performing these chores and would actively resist being forced to do them.

Many students understood that those who challenged teachers or complained about them would receive especially severe punishment. This may have been especially true because of the extra-legal, unsanctioned practices pervading the schools [from withholding teaching to encourage tutoring enrollment to beating and teacher absenteeism], which could be used in recriminations against teachers. Nada, a diligent student who sat in the front row in a first secondary class in the technical school recounted an incident where she protested an exam result where most students had failed or had scored very badly. The exam questions covered material that the teacher had not covered in class and had not indicated would be covered in the exam. She objected in class, was harshly rebuked and was sent to the Principal's office for punishment. There, she was further rebuked and humiliated until she entered into a crying fit. She later managed to secure the support of friends to uphold her claims and teachers to vouch for her. In the end, some remedial action was actually taken. The scores for some exam questions were cancelled. She seemed however to have been emotionally injured by the experience. The educational injustice had been partly mitigated, but her humiliation in the process was left unaddressed. Her right to object, her justified grievance and her dignity were not fully acknowledged nor respected. Therefore, complaints had some chance of "success" if they came from individuals who were able to gain wider support, but their emotional and practical costs were very high. In fact, based on his fieldwork in a public preparatory school, Naguib (2006) has observed that those who confront the power of the school, through police complaints for example, eventually lose out and even drop out of school.

In another incident in the girls' technical school, parents had come to the principal with a complaint against a teacher who had insulted their daughter. The principal spoke to them in a rude manner, told them they had been unable to raise their daughter properly and abused the mother in particular; telling her not to talk during the meeting and saying that, as the father was a respectable and reasonable man, only he should talk. The parents threatened to raise the issue at the district level, and the principal reportedly colluded with the teacher in question to fabricate a memorandum that accused the girl of being the one who had used foul language with the teacher.

Therefore, not only were students humiliated if they complained, but also if they were of modest social standing, their parents were humiliated as well. This explains why students felt that their modest backgrounds were the main cause of abuses against them. Many also knew that students in private schools were not beaten, even in local [low-end] private schools, where many of them in the general schools had enrolled in the primary and preparatory stages.

BEATING AND SHAMING IN THE PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Beating was allowed in my day, but it was a certain number of strikes, on the hand only and the teacher never resorted to beating without prior warning and repetition of mistakes. But beating students on the nape of the neck and kicking them [darb al-talib bil-‘afa wil-shallut]; These are thuggish practices that people do not undertake on the street, let alone that could be practiced in institutions that bring up young people. Private School Teacher

In the two private schools, the physical punishment of students was the exception rather than the rule. Aside from the fact that the schools were a relaxed space only occasionally frequented by students for reasons other than learning (see Chapter Four), the levels of abuse in the public schools were simply unthinkable. Parents paid for the schooling services their children enjoyed and did not expect them to be physically or emotionally abused in school. They possessed the material and cultural resources to bring to bear if abuse did occur against their children. There were, however, forms of physical and verbal punishment that were telling in terms of how punishment was framed and justified by teachers and students.

The practices of Mr. Samir and Mrs. Samia are good examples of modes of physical and emotional punishment in middle and upper range private schools. Students were so afraid of Mr. Samir that some even reported panicking when they saw his cup of tea being brought in by the cleaner; signaling his imminent arrival. Mr. Samir was a strict physics teacher who was also a “star tutor” (see Chapter Four). While he did not

physically punish female students, he often used rude remarks and negative labels to keep students in check. As he told me, he knew which students he could shout at or call “rotten” (*m‘afīna*) and which ones he could not. For him, students understood these insults as endearing, funny and as a sign of care; so much so that some girls would ask him if he were upset with them if he did not call them names as he usually did. He and other private school teachers did hit students, especially boys. Usually this comprised punches in the shoulder and back, as they are considered less humiliating. Most of his punishment was related to academic performance, although disruptive behavior was also not tolerated. He took pride in his power to intimidate students, which not only established him as a feared and elevated authority, but also effectively scared and shamed students to perform the hard work needed to obtain high scores. He offered a route to the coveted scores needed for admission into prestigious colleges.

Mrs. Samia, however generated far less fear and deference on the part of students. She continually used negative labels and insults but mostly did so jokingly with a feigned angry demeanor. Throughout her classes, she would make remarks (in English) such as “very bad behavior... you are not human beings”; “I think I’ve come to a zoo”; or “Here we have a PhD student... She is here to see your stupidity.” Throughout the class time, students would be portrayed as not “civilized”, refined or industrious enough. This was seen as endearing and funny by some students, some of whom even tried to provoke her further. It was ignored and perhaps disliked by other students. In Mrs. Samia’s classes, students generally displayed the usual level of limited interest and compliance as they showed for other teachers (except for especially ‘strict’ teachers); mainly because they enrolled in tutoring in most subjects. Furthermore, Mrs. Samia taught High-Level English; a subject which did not affect students’ overall totals. She was not teaching an ‘important’ subject like Mr. Samir was, was not a millionaire start tutor and could not rely on similar incentives and pressures for students to remain attentive. She may well have been dealing with her own frustration at the declining importance and status given to her subject, her own meager income relative to other teachers who offered tutoring (see Chapter Four); and more generally the diminished authority and audience for the school’s civilizing role in producing proper middle class

girls and boys. Ironically, her subject, advanced English Language, is actually the most marketable and desirable skill for the students, many of whom actually chose this school based on its historical reputation for strong English instruction. The market, the system and the school simply failed to reward or increasingly even provide effective instruction in this key subject.

PUNISHMENT AND AUTHORITY

You see me: I come in with a stick and a bosc. I beat and I scold but they accept it. I tell them: "I am glad to be your mother, would you accept me to be your mother?" If not, here is the local police station, go complain if you want because "teachers are not allowed to beat students". Psychology and sociology teacher in the boys' general school

Why were beating and humiliation normalized in the public schools? Was it really a question of 'middle class' teachers looking down upon working class students? What generated the perceived increase in the use and severity of emotional and physical punishment? How did teachers articulate beating? Were they simply reacting to the increasing disrespect and noncompliance they perceived among students? This section explores the discourses on physical punishment among teachers in the public schools. There were four main frameworks for articulating beating: beating as means of preserving respect and authority, beating as a form of caring and moral instruction in an extension of parental roles, beating as the only effectively available mode of discipline in the school system, and finally beating as sanctioned by Islam. Ultimately, however, physical punishment was made possible because it went unpunished by the ministry and students did not have access to the means of deterring it.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ENFORCEMENT

On February 2, 2010, then Egyptian Minister of Education Ahmad Zaki Badr stated while addressing the upper and lower houses of Parliament that "teachers have lost their *hiba* (status) after the banning of beating in schools, and have become easy targets of abuse (*maltasha*).... The filing of police complaints by parents when their children are

beaten has led to the destruction of the educational process” (see Shihata 2010). *Hiba* is a quality attributed to someone who has a natural claim on the respect of others; someone who commands authority, respect and a measure of deference. Beating thus maintained the superior and sovereign position of the teacher. While this was an unprecedented official statement, it echoed the sentiments of many teachers. Teachers frequently identified the law on the prohibition of physical and psychological punishment as one of the reasons for the deterioration of education and the diminished power and status of the teacher. Most teachers considered such punishment to be their right: a positive, normal and required practice needed to maintain order, to properly “bring up” (*yurabi*) students and to maintain teachers’ *hiba*. A few days later, however, the Minister had to retract his statement, assert that it had been misunderstood and emphasize that beating is prohibited, unacceptable in all its forms and considered to be against sound educational principles (Difa’an ‘an al-Darb 2010). The minister’s retraction reportedly resulted from the condemnation of donor agencies and a veiled threat by USAID to suspend all loans and grants supporting Egyptian education (Sadiq 2010).⁴¹

Previous ministers were more consistently vocal in their condemnation of beating (see Tadros 2001), although beating continued freely throughout the system.⁴² Some teachers are ultimately held accountable for major cases of abuse, notably when those cases attract media coverage and calls for accountability. It is safe to say that the majority of beatings in schools happen with full immunity and the complete approval of school actors and authorities. Teachers’ actions are almost only questioned if parents

⁴¹ Exemplified by the Egyptian Centre for the Right to Education (ECER [sic]), a number of education experts, researchers and commentators reacted very strongly to Badr’s statements on beating in schools and teachers’ authority and respect. ECER forcefully rejected the opinion that violence would restore teachers’ authority, declaring that “the weakness of the teacher is a natural result of the policy of transforming education from a right to a commodity as well as a natural result of the violation of teacher rights at the hands of the ministry and syndicate” (ECER 2010a).

⁴² If a complaint against beating is lodged only at the school, the principal determines the punishment. If the student needs more than twenty days’ medical treatment, however, an educational Legal Affairs Department is made aware of the case and penalizes the teacher, usually by deducting a portion of his monthly salary, withholding benefits or delaying promotion (Herrera 1992, 32). If a parent reports an incident of a teacher’s abuse to the police, the court will take up the case and pass an appropriate sentence. The accused may face a prison term, in which case he is not allowed to return to the teaching profession, or be required to pay compensation to the victim’s family.

take their grievances to the police station, typically doing so in cases where students have been gravely injured and they are able to demonstrate this with medical reports. In these cases, teachers may expect to face considerable repercussions. Parents do, however, need considerable cultural capital for the police to show any interest in their cases. Individuals of more modest socioeconomic background “are [often] unwilling and incapable of calling on the state or invoking its powers” (Ismail 2006, 43). Teachers were therefore fully aware that they could beat students with impunity and that students had no effective access to the law

Furthermore, the harsh style of punishment, including humiliation and rebuke was applied to teachers themselves (see Chapter Three). Naguib (2006) has presented a vivid image of how the oppressive structure inside the classroom extends upwards into a punitive, oppressive and humiliating relationship between teachers and principals and between school principals and those higher up in the hierarchy of the educational system. The absolute power of the principal was frequently maintained through intimidation and humiliation; not through codes of conduct but rather through unwritten codes of silence and obedience (Naguib 2006). Therefore, despite considerable license to beat students with impunity, higher educational authorities established harsh control over teachers. This may have lead directly to teachers being harsh with students and resorting to various extralegal practices (and not simply as a means of displacing anger and frustration). For example, if teachers are held accountable and harshly rebuked for classroom cleanliness; while insufficient cleaning staff are employed and properly paid, they clearly had an incentive to force students to perform such tasks. As elaborated in Chapters Three and Four, this kind of institutional setting also informed teacher practices such as the facilitation of cheating, the presentation of inaccurate attendance data and other school information and activities and various other issues around the appeasement of supervisors and inspectors. According to Kamal Naguib, teachers experience three levels of impotence: social and economic impotence stemming from their low salaries preventing them from earning a decent living; creative impotence because they have little autonomy in the classroom

and are subject to surveillance and institutional pressure; and an impotence that results from students' full awareness of all of these conditions (2006, 66).

As described in Chapter Four, teachers in the public schools also had great leeway in whether or not to enter classes and they quite regularly did not; and diligent class by class recording of attendance is coupled with rampant absenteeism of 50 to 90%, which does not show up in official school records submitted to MOE. Administrators are of course fully complicit in regularized games of 'pretend discipline' in the schools. Just as teachers dutifully collected attendance records in each class, principals and administrators continuously filled out reports about the smooth functioning and discipline of the school. Even though principals hold substantial power in their schools, they are subject to continuous monitoring and supervision from higher educational authorities; their work is regulated by ministerial orders pertaining to every minute detail of their work. Punishment and harsh penalties are the fate of dissenting directors who fail to implement the regulations and instructions coming from above (see Naguib 2006). District and MOE supervisors—sometimes two or three visiting a school per day—collect constant data about various aspects of school performance. Supervisors have little real power to assist schools however; and are frequently charged, often accurately, of monitoring the most superficial and least important aspects of school or classroom life, especially cleanliness and maintenance, issues on which the school has little control, due to centralized hiring and resource decisions and other limitations on school spending. Some also monitor the morning assembly (and its pro-regime content), the presence of the ex-president's photos in every classroom. Many are aware that they are monitoring issues over which neither they nor the schools have real power and keep their visits brief and focused on fulfilling the minimal formalities that complete the required paperwork. As frequently noted, this leads to a situation where most schools maintain excellent records and most teachers across the system receive "excellent" annual appraisals (an issue that is meant to be remedied under the new Cadre system).

WITHDRAWAL OF DISCIPLINARY POWERS

Teachers frequently argued that beating was necessary because the system had deprived them of all other disciplinary measures. Principals and teachers almost always complained of their lack of power over students, including in private schools (see also Saad 2006). Disciplinary procedures had progressively become more complex and prohibitive, with teachers feeling that they had no measures either to hold students accountable for their behavior or incentivize them to study. Teachers emphasized that, in effect, students could not be penalized or expelled for tardiness, absence, poor academic performance or classroom disturbance. Teacher powers in this regard had been curtailed precisely because of the potential (and reality) of their abuse to extract resources from students through rewards and punishments for those who do or do not enroll in tutoring. This has meant, however, that some of the teachers who had used marks to extract resources from students would now resort to physical coercion.

The resentment and reluctance of principal and teachers to give up control is reflected in the continued investment on their part in a semblance of observation and normalization. Teachers and administrators continually threatened students, for example, with grade reduction or suspension for absenteeism. Most schools, including private schools, resorted to arbitrary and reversible dismissal letters in order to maintain a semblance of control. Teachers typically spread rumors that this year is different and students will really get expelled if they exceed absenteeism limits. Although most students knew this was not true, there was still some ambiguity about whether they could indeed get expelled if they exceeded the maximum number of permitted absences.

INCREASED NONCOMPLIANCE AND MAINTAINING ORDER

Teachers portrayed beating as necessary to maintain order and control and as appropriate for the “types” of students they dealt with, frequently describing students as “only responding to beating” (*maygush ghir bil-darb*) or “not [properly] raised by their

parents” (*ablubum marabubumsh*). Students’ supposed poor upbringings and noncompliance were typical justifications given for the use of severe punishment. It is not at all clear that beating enhanced the teachers’ authority or their control over their classrooms. In most cases, order and calm in the classroom were better promoted without violence. In both the boys’ technical and boys’ general school, it seemed that the harsher the teacher, the more disruptions there were in the classroom. Although teachers repeatedly emphasized that students could only be treated in this manner, it was clear that students behaved differently depending on the teacher in the classroom. One experience in the boys’ technical school made this vividly apparent to me. During the lesson of one particularly harsh teacher, students were disruptive throughout her class; as she continued to verbally and physically assault them. She later explained to me that “animals have to be treated like animals;” and that if the students were human, she would treat them as such. In a subsequent lesson, under a different teacher, the same students engaged in very little challenging or noncompliant behavior. The next teacher was strict, but used very little verbal abuse or physical punishment. She stuck to the material she was teaching and did not seem to be wasting class time.

Harsh punishment and humiliation was clearly not needed to ensure the compliance or respect of technical school boys. In a study of Egyptian technical and general secondary schools, Zayid (2006) similarly concluded that the more dictatorial the teacher was, the more he prompted the students to contradict him out of stubbornness or abandon attending his classes; and the more chaotic he was the more it encouraged the students to create havoc and chaos. As Middleton (2008) concluded, children felt most respect for those teachers who could keep order without relying on corporal punishment.⁴³ That said, violence and intimidation may have been necessary for teachers engaged in extra-legal behavior such as subtle or overt coercion to enroll in tutoring or the assignment of extra chores to students. As noted in Chapter Four, excessive emphasis on compliance and order is used by many teachers to waste class time and to create student dependence and ‘demand’ for private tutoring services.

⁴³ Davidson (1999) found that students facing borders liked and respected adults who maintained their authority yet managed to establish relaxed, friendly relationships with students.

In fact, it should not be very surprising that harsh and repeated beating did not produce the desired results. Since the time when it was first prescribed in British teaching manuals, the excessive use of corporal punishment has been understood to produce what educational psychologists referred to as the “hardened offender”, who believed that he (or she) was “an ill-used person”, suffering punishment merely because the teacher was “in a position arbitrarily to exercise a coercive authority” (Middleton 2008, 269). As educationists have long observed, the value of any punishment in school was in inverse proportion to its frequency of application. “Corporal punishment was simply a hazard of school life, a painful correction to be borne with stoicism and which ultimately had little effect on behavior” (Middleton 2008, 270). In this sense, it generally only taught children to dislike their teachers. This attitude arising from routine corporal punishment explains students’ nonchalance in the face of the prospect of being beaten in the opening narrative of this chapter. In many classes, students simply did what they pleased, regardless of the likely response in terms of humiliation or physical punishment.

BEATING AS A RELIGIOUSLY SANCTIONED PRACTICE

Some teachers wondered however how beating could be prohibited by the Ministry when it is sanctioned by *shar‘* (Islamic jurisprudence). Because beating of children by parents for the sake of promoting religious observance is sanctioned by Islamic texts, teachers in public schools (and parents) reasoned that they were entitled, by analogy, to beat students to instill in them proper discipline and moral upbringing. In contrast, most teachers in private schools rejected the beating practiced in public schools and many expressed that it had no grounding in Islam. Some reacted particularly strongly to the use of religious justifications for beating by public school teachers, elaborating on how they understood the religious sanction for beating and how it related to practices in public schools. As one teacher put it, “*shar‘* does not sanction beating... this is an incorrect use of religion. These teachers say it’s sanctioned by *shar‘* just so that no-one objects. The basis of education in Islam is dignity, how can there be dignity with

beating?... This issue of beating in the schools is disgusting habits that they falsely attribute to religion (*biyilza'uba fil-din*).” Another religiously learned teacher in a private school reacted by elaborating on the restrictions on beating in Islamic jurisprudence: that it not be severe, that it never be on the face and that it never be perpetrated against children younger than ten years of age. He added that the only clear sanction for smacking children was to encourage them to practice their religious obligations beyond the age of ten, but not for other reasons. He added: “I personally do not think in any way that a jurist would sanction what happens in Egypt’s public schools. This is torture, not beating.” This claim was still used by teachers to legitimize beating across the different educational stages.

BEATING AS A SOCIALLY-ACCEPTED EDUCATIONAL AND PARENTING TECHNIQUE

A recent incident concerning teachers’ beating of students received considerable media attention in 2011. The incident was revealed in a video of a teacher in a small community nursery in a rural village beating a crying kindergarten child harshly and repeatedly, while pulling her hair and also beating other children on their hands, backs, heads and feet (see Baladna Muthaharat Ahali 2011, for a brief report and footage from the video). The video was widely viewed on the internet, received considerable news coverage leading to significant public outrage and condemnation. This public furor brought about a swift official response: the suspension of the teacher and the announcement of the closure of the day care center. However, reporters covering the issue were confronted with a gathering of the mothers and their children outside the closed kindergarten in a ‘demonstration’ of sorts. They were expressing their support for the teacher—who was also the manager of the nursery—calling for his release from police custody and for the re-opening of the nursery; emphasizing that the beating happened with their full approval. Although their main concern may have been that the nursery remain open, chanting: “we want the nursery” (*‘ayzin il-badana*), they clearly supported the teacher’s beating of their children. In interviews with the media, they also referred to their own corporal punishment of their children. As one parent declared in

reference to her child, “I beat him to death by the time he gets to the nursery” (see Baladna Muthaharat Ahali 2011). Another parent stated that beating was necessary given the “nature” of the rural child: “we are here in a rural area, children are a bit stubborn... beat the child, it’s ok. What’s important is that he comes out educated.” The young child that was seen being beaten in the video was actually interviewed by the media as well. She said that the teacher was beating them because they had not done their homework, that he loved them and brought them sweets. Another—older child—presented the matter this way: “the basis of education is beating, but not with this cruelty;” adding that “just as there is beating, there were also means of education and entertainment” in the center. Beating for promoting education and beating in the context of the provision of other forms of care were therefore accepted by many parents and children. Children recognized beating as the norm in the educational setting, but saw it as balanced by other forms of “provision”. It is worth noting that even in the context of attempting to salvage the day care center; some children still spoke out against corporal punishment that is unnecessarily ‘cruel’. This may however shed light on why beating had become so contested in public schools, as it is not clear that either ‘education’ or other forms of provision were framing its exercise in the schools. .

This incident shows not only how normalized physical beating in education, but also in the family. It is not surprising therefore that teachers used analogies with parents to legitimize the beating of children. Physical and emotional violence is seen by parents as an effective and normal practice in child-rearing in many parts of the Arab world (Fernea 1995, see also Makhoul, Shayboub and Jamal 2004).⁴⁴ Indeed, students in the public schools frequently confided that their parents treated in them in disparaging and insulting ways; calling them stupid, failures or declaring them to be with little potential for success. Although they were not as frequently beaten nor as harshly humiliated, private school students were also reportedly not spared the verbal aggression and

⁴⁴ Makhoul, Shayboub and Jamal (2004) note in their study of working children in disadvantaged suburbs of Beirut that the children were exposed to physical as well as emotional violence. Their parents, furthermore, often openly expressed pessimistic views and negative opinions about them, views and opinions which influenced how the children viewed themselves.

negative labeling of their parents. Despite the lack of significant literature on the matter in Egypt, one study conducted in a middle-class neighborhood indicated just how widespread a harsh disciplinary approach is: about half of parents beat their children and roughly thirteen per cent did so severely (Hassan et al 1999 cited in Alyahri and Goodman 2008).⁴⁵ Teachers therefore legitimated their beating [despite the other purposes it may have been serving] by saying that they are like parents to the children. This was an analogy that many students forcefully rejected; asserting that no, teachers are not like parents to them. This is likely because this would in fact give legitimacy to teacher beating.

BEATING, POVERTY AND MASCULINITY

If teachers treated their children in the same manner as they treated students, beating could be seen as a social norm that penetrated the school and overrode school regulations, so that the state could not dictate behavior in the schools. There was frequently a class difference between teachers and students in the public schools, however, and many teachers saw themselves as coming from a higher social class than their students (with the exception of teachers of practical or technical subjects in the technical school). This may indicate that they likely treated their own children with significantly less violence and greater respect. Many of them certainly enrolled their own children in private schools where they were not beaten or humiliated in the ways seen in public schools. Many teachers also explicitly linked engagement in extralegal practices, such as beating and coercion into tutoring, with the social class background of the teacher; arguing that teachers of ‘technical’ subjects, who came from a different social background, were more likely to engage in such practices. .

⁴⁵ The study explored disciplinary practices in a sample of 602 families with children aged between one and seventeen. It found that just over half of parents used positive corrective approaches such as verbal reasoning with their children; just under half used either psychological or emotional maltreatment, or both, with verbal aggression; and just under half used mild to moderate physical maltreatment, with severe corporal punishment (physical abuse) regularly practiced with thirteen per cent of the children, with particularly high rates for those aged from nine to twelve. Factors associated with emotional and physical abuse included the child being difficult to care for, marital violence and the parents themselves having been abused during their childhoods by their own parents.

Styles of parenting that are more democratic, dialogic, “involved” or “sensitive” reflect not only distinctly middle-class values, but also resources and possibilities. Walkerdine and Lucey’s (1989) classic study, *Democracy in the Kitchen*, emphasized how middle-class child-rearing practices of “sensitive mothering” are articulated as normal and desirable through the language of developmental psychology. As such, they are accepted as self-evident markers of “good parenting”, particularly when compared with representations of ignorant, insensitive working-class practices (Walkerdine and Lucey 1989, 102). Research on parenting in working and middle-class families in the UK suggests that children who are encouraged to reason and negotiate can become assertive and defiant (Gillies 2008). While this might be considered precious or self-assured for a middle-class child, such outspoken working class children are likely to be viewed as dangerous and their assertiveness as having severe consequences (Gillies 2008, 107, see also Baumrind 1991).⁴⁶ It has been suggested that the same set of behaviors or attributes could be evaluated by the school according to the social class of their bearers: assertive behavior from middle-class girls being met with approval, but seen as ‘troublemaking’ from working-class girls (Walker 1989, 267). For some working class parents, the use of relatively harsh disciplinary strategies could be related to a belief that their children “must become strong individuals in order to survive the risks and demands of inner-city life” (Holloway, et al. 1997). Different studies have therefore concluded that there exist clear relationships between the resources held by particular parents and the child-rearing practices they pursue (Gillies 2008).⁴⁷ Extreme poverty also creates a variety of stressors that reduce parents’ resources and abilities to raise their children in a caring,

⁴⁶ Baumrind (1991) has discussed the relationship between parental choices of disciplinary style and the contextual realities of their communities. The authoritarian parenting Baumrind found among African-Americans appeared to be suitably protective of children living in dangerous communities; where authoritarian behavior may reflect—and indicate to children—nurturance and protectiveness.

⁴⁷ Parenting and teaching literature often refer to authoritarian, authoritative and permissive adult styles to describe approaches to discipline (see Baumrind 1971, Firmin and Castle 2008). Authoritarian parents are controlling, rigid and cold; they are strict and demand unquestioning obedience from their children. Above all, children of authoritarian parents are not allowed to question or disagree with their parents. Permissive parents provide lax and inconsistent feedback to their children. They are typically less involved in their children’s lives than other parents. Such parents may also place fewer limits on their children’s behaviors. Authoritative parents are firm, setting clear limits on their children’s behavior. Although they seem to be somewhat strict, compared with authoritarian parents these authoritative parents allow interaction and dialogue with their children. Authoritative styles are typically promoted by parenting and teaching literature.

supportive and involved manner; where in many such cases, parents are absent, abusive or lack the capacity to be supportive (Currie 1998). In fact, it has been suggested that the level of stress a parent experiences is lessened by the parent's belief that corporal punishment is valuable (Crouch and Behl 2001). .

There is also arguably a link not only between beating and social class, but also between beating and masculinity. Low teacher salaries in light of rising living expenses may also have increased teachers' stress. However for male teachers in particular (the key perpetrators of the more severe forms of beating), it also arguably undermined their claims to reflecting ideal masculinities as able primary breadwinners. Being unable to provide for their families (their nuclear families as well as their parents and siblings) injures ideal masculinities in ways that do not apply to women. Fodor (2006) argues that one of the major gender differences in the experience of poverty is that men often find themselves in a gender role crisis when they are too poor to function as successful breadwinners. This bears strongly on the greater frustration, or 'impotence', that male teachers may feel and the greater pressure to secure additional funds, even if this includes intimidating and coercing students to enroll in private tutoring.⁴⁸ Bringing up boys using corporal punishment can be a "way of claiming or asserting masculinity" (Connell 1995, 83; Moore 1994). The use of beating by male teachers may, therefore, be related to an acute sense of vulnerability in the face of a perceived assault on their masculinity due to the poor wages and working conditions of many teachers. As Ismail demonstrates, the encounters of young men "with the state destabilize their masculine constructs and necessitate a renegotiation of their masculinity" (2006, 127). "Through a reassertion of practices of patriarchy, they seek to reproduce the dominant position of men, that of hegemonic masculinity. Yet this connection with hegemonic masculinity is scarred, bearing the wounds inflicted through its articulation with class and state power" (2006, 112). In this sense, every humiliating encounter with higher education

⁴⁸ Manhood can also be defined around certain forms of integrity and independence in terms of income generation. The lesson on 'manhood' in the technical secondary Arabic textbook for example highlighted manhood in terms of integrity in taking up public office, so that the minister who is a real man, for example, remains in office so long as he preserves the rights of his nation and only cares for the voice of his conscience. The real man does not use his public office to extract additional resources, a practice many teachers were forced into in different intensities.

authorities or wider forms of abuse by police or agents of the state could drive male teachers and parents to reassert their sense of dominance through violence in the classroom and household. Such assertion of domination could also be expressed in terms of control of female modesty in girls' schools. .

GENDER SURVEILLANCE AND HARASSMENT

They talk about things that should not be said. They are always making insinuations about "girls who stand at street corners" or at the bus stop. They assume you must be waiting for a boy. They always talk harshly. Student in girls' technical school

They always hit and never talk softly. They talk with their hands or hit with the stick. Student in girls' technical school

While girls were subjected to corporally less severe forms of punishment, they endured an additional form of control and punishment. All of the schools employed practices of discipline, punishment and surveillance in relation to the performance of gender identity, but especially as it related to female attire, mobility and comportment. Schools are expected to teach children about the proper and available gender roles for them to take up. Ideal modesty and femininity, however, were articulated and enforced differently across the schools. Constructions of modesty and the control of modesty overlapped with constructions and embodiments of social class, distinction and 'coolness'; and this was critical to the daily struggles around the attire and behavior of girls across the different schools.

In the public schools in particular, girls were monitored and harshly rebuked on a daily basis for violations of the modesty/femininity code. In fact, one of the most contentious issues in the general public school was the girls' desire to layer their headscarves with scarves of different colors; a style which is currently in fashion. This was perceived by students as unreasonable and cruel. There were disputes about scarves almost every day in the school. Girls were rebuked and threatened that the violating scarves would be confiscated and cut up with scissors, even when less than one

centimeter of the colored scarf was showing or the white scarf had any kind of pattern. Regular forms of ‘punishment’ also included pulling girls from their scarves. Such disputes frequently escalated and quickly become framed around the impoliteness and poor upbringing of students if they contested teacher statements or practices. Students especially resented the associated implication—and often explicit accusation—that they were ‘bad girls;’ that they only wore the colored scarves to attract the attention of boys or because they were planning to meet with boys after school (removing the mandated plain white scarf to reveal the more appealing colored layer). The situation was similar in the technical girls’ school.⁴⁹ Girls in both schools felt themselves to be under constant surveillance and the subjects of regular judgment inside and outside the school.

Tearing up ‘violating’ scarves with scissors and pulling girls by the scarf are not of course part of MOE codes of punishment. In fact, the headscarf itself was “approved” as an acceptable part of public school uniform after its pervasive and de facto incorporation into student attire, and after much cultural and ‘security’ struggles (see Herrera 2006 for an insightful analysis). The role of MOE was only to organize and formalize its use by identifying acceptable colors that match school uniforms. Gender disciplining was neither centralized nor formalized; it was instead diffuse and extended outside schools’ walls. Nearly any teacher or administrator would feel entitled to rebuke and humiliate students in the school, around the school or elsewhere in the neighborhood. Most teachers and administrators felt they had the right to enforce standards of morality. The enforcement of rules of modesty and comportment was mostly independent of MOE regulations and varied based on the aesthetic sensibilities and sense of religious duty of each teacher. This not only meant the effective

⁴⁹ There seemed to be less zeal and vigor in monitoring and dealing with violations in the technical school. The principal was not as strict on this matter as the principal of the general secondary school, or perhaps was not forced to become as involved in the issues surrounding sexual policing of girls that emerged due to the close proximity of boys’ schools to the general secondary girls’ school. It is also possible that this reflected greater modesty as more of a middle class ideal. In a concrete sense, technical school girls were closer to their expected marriage age, whereas general school girls were generally not expected to marry except after university. This may have meant that general school girls should not be searching for husbands and may be more likely to be taken advantage of in relationships without a viable prospect of marriage.

communication with boys. Several related to me their own successive liaisons, which they understood as an active search for a husband. They certainly did not see themselves as too young to marry and many were already engaged. As one student put it, “most of the girls are ‘in love’/ [in liaison]” (*ulayil any illi mabithibish*). Another responded to my surprise: “what do you think mobile phones and 2 a.m. phone calls are for?”

School rules were separate from the girls’ desires, not only for meeting with boys and searching for life partners, but also for greater social distinction. For most—but not all—girls, the ideal conservative femininity promoted by the schools was seen as less cool or classy. Seeming cool and of higher social status was seen as demanding less conservative attire and comportment. The way the girls dressed when I met with them outside school or when they came to school for revision sessions after the end of the school year was telling of the vast gulf between the school ideal and everyday styles. Although virtually all the Muslim girls were veiled, a majority of them seemed to prefer close-fitting and very colorful clothing to accentuate their femininity. Teachers were obviously aware of this, and many were not particularly disapproving. Some teachers seemed equally torn therefore between the conflicting ideal and desires. In one instance in the middle of a [rather relaxed] philosophy class in the girls’ public general school, a student brought out recently taken professional photos to show to the small group—not only to classmates but also to the teacher and to me. The students loved the photos, and the teacher commented in a rather neutral tone: “flirty and all” (*dallu’a wi kulu*). The student was indeed in a flirtatious pose in the photos, wearing tight and colorful clothes, full make-up and an elaborate scarf style. Another girl then showed me her own professional photo. This was in fact in the form of a business card with the word “hot” and other English words on a colorful embossed background. She was also in colorful, tight clothes and a flirtatious pose. Additionally, she was not wearing a headscarf in the photo, and it was a full body shot. I thought the picture would be considered scandalous. Again, there was approval from students. In response to my stated surprise at how “different” the girls looked in the pictures, I was told that, “of course, in the photos we look upper class” (*asl ibna fil suwar binib’a wilad nas*). Being flirty

and feminine was desired and cool across the different schools and seemed to successfully override and disrupt the schools' attempts at promoting more conservative behavior. The actual practices of girls, their attire and comportment and their relations with boys were almost completely divorced from the control the schools attempted to assert. The rules, the reprimands, the threats and the maligning were subverted as a daily practice.

For private schools in general, there is considerable variation in the monitoring of female comportment, depending on the neighborhood, the school's proximity to boys' schools, the tradition of the school and the current administration. Most schools do monitor quite intrusively various details of student attire—nail polish, hair coloring and styling, the style and tightness of trousers and the length of skirts and the height of socks, for example—in an effort to foster and preserve a certain image and reputation for the school. This varies from seeking a conservative Islamic image in lower middle, middle-class and Islamic schools, to a “reserved” and “proper” image in traditional middle-class and ex-missionary schools; to a relaxed and cool image in higher end and mixed schools. Students, boys and girls, across different private and public schools complained of strict school rules and the control of personal expressions of style. In this Egyptian students were not alone of course. The rejection of school rules and guidelines on attire pervades almost all schools that enforce any kind of dress guidelines in different parts of the world (Thornberg 2008).

In the two private schools, control of attire was more formalized and the rebuke far less humiliating. The response of school authorities in the private schools to violations of these codes was typically a brief and strict rebuke. This could comprise having offending students stand outside the principal's office for some time. In some cases, this could be followed by a formal warning and a “follow-up slip” sent to parents for acknowledgement. This could be followed by later escalation (e.g. after a certain number of warnings, the parent would be summoned to the school, the student suspended and so on). Such escalation was relatively uncommon. In the private girls' school, which

was adjacent to a boys' school, in addition to enforcing rules on attire, one of the school's principals reportedly patrolled the area around the school after the end of the school day to see if girls were talking to boys. This zealous behavior was mocked by several students, even those who were critical of girls who talked to boys around the school. Such matters took a different hue in the mixed school and featured much less prominently in school dynamics. Attire regulations were less restrictive to start with, and most disputes occurred around new or eccentric styles worn by both boys and girls: most notably among boys wishing to grow their hair long or to have an "afro" or boys wearing chokers or bracelets. Gender mixing was allowed by definition, although a girl and a boy sitting alone in a secluded area of the school was not sanctioned. Students in mixed schools were typically afforded far greater liberties by their own parents to mix outside the school in social clubs, private tutoring or birthdays and arranged gatherings. The relaxed attitude of high end schools has arguably exerted significant pressure on traditional schools to liberalize their attitudes, as students pressed for different uniforms and fewer restrictions on style. Many girls felt that these restrictions were 'un-cool' and therefore lacking in social distinction; that they undermined their class image in comparison with a rising and far more liberal elite. For example, the students and principal of an ex-missionary school explained the process by which girls were given choice over school uniform and voted for a change in uniform colors, less conservative styles and the ability to wear trousers. .

HARASSMENT AND MORAL BLAME

One morning, as I was entering the girls' general school, a male teacher was shouting abusive language at a girl and accusing the girls more generally of lacking in manners and modesty and being the ones who run after boys and flirt with them. The girl was angry and arguing with him. There seemed to be a general tense atmosphere in the school. I later understood that a girl had just been attacked outside the school by a boy who injured her hand with a razor. The principal had left the school, probably to talk to the principal of the adjacent school and attempt to find the perpetrator. It was repeatedly emphasized by the girls and teachers that the girl was a kind of 'ideal' student

who dressed very modestly.⁵⁰ While this did not protect from being harassed and arguably retaliated against for not being responsive, the remarkable outcome of this incident was that teachers took this opportunity to level abuse at girls and accuse them of moral failing and of bringing about harassment through their immodest behavior.

While the surveillance of modesty in public schools may have been extensive indeed, it had complex and mutually reinforcing relationships with patterns of sexual harassment around the different schools. After all, the justification that is almost always given for harassment is that girls are dressed provocatively. According to most boys, and to many girls, the ‘reputations’⁵¹ of all of the girls’ schools were deficient. Indeed, for most boys, the reputations of almost all girls were, too. Although girls in all the schools were monitored for their modesty, girls in public schools were more severely blamed for their own inappropriate behavior and were more likely suspected of moral failing if they were victims of harassment. Private school girls on the other hand had significantly greater means of minimizing their vulnerability to harassment and their very presence on the street; as they were often picked up by their parents in private cars, took taxis or the school bus. Just as a teacher’s rebuke was premised on teachers’ assessments of the modesty of a particular student rather than official rules, so harassment was justified in terms of girls’ behavior rather than whether boys had the right to harass them. In this sense, girls were perhaps in the bottom of the entitlement pyramid and unable to draw upon significant discursive resources to claim access to rights and freedoms.

A recent survey on sexual harassment conducted by the Egyptian Centre for Women’s Rights (ECWR) found that 83% of women (most of them veiled and many wearing

⁵⁰ It was noted that she wore the very long scarf that falls from the top of the head to below the waist (*khimar*); that she was a good student; that she attended religious lessons regularly and was proficient in the proper recitation of the Quran and was sometimes asked to speak on the school radio.

⁵¹ Many of the girls in the different schools made reference to the ‘reputation’ of the school, either when I asked about it, or organically within their discussions. By the school’s ‘reputation’, they almost always meant not its educational profile, but how ‘loose’ the girls were perceived to be in the school, which had an impact on their own reputations as members of that school community. Many parents explicitly seek and value schools that control and monitor female sexuality, mobility and gender mixing; and schools that teach boys discipline and proper behavior. In this sense, the nature of the school as a disciplinary institution was fundamentally premised on its structuring of female subjectivity or gendered behavior.

niqab or variants of more conservative veiling) reported experiencing sexual harassment. Male and (paradoxically) female respondents expressed that harassment was caused by women being immodestly dressed, with the police typically ignoring and reluctant to investigate harassment cases (see Abdelhadi 2008, Mayton and Ammar 2008). Girls are of course blamed for sexual assaults on them in many other contexts, especially those where such is a widespread phenomenon, such as in disadvantaged areas in countries of the South, where it becomes one of the key barriers to schooling and perhaps the key reason for school drop-out, especially in rural areas where students must travel significant distances to arrive to school (Pinheiro 2006).⁵² Patterns of blame and increased sexual harassment on Egyptian streets are closely related to religious discourses that claim Egyptian women are not modestly dressed. That is, the religiously legitimized atmosphere which sanctions the rebuke and beating of a student based on her attire is the very same one that legitimizes sexual harassment against women in general, based either on the claim that they are insufficiently modest or even *regardless* of the modesty of their attire, and even they are wearing the full *niqab*. As Ismail has observed in her study in a popular neighborhood of Cairo, the headscarf was not taken as a guarantee of modesty by many young men and stories about its use “as a cover for compromising conduct” were invoked to undermine women’s claims to modesty (2006, 109).

Sexual harassment is an issue that many schools have to deal with on a daily basis. This was especially true for the girls’ general public school. The fact that the school was directly adjacent to both the boys’ general secondary school and another preparatory school meant that school authorities had to deal with harassment issues almost daily. Sexual harassment was a serious concern for both parents and students. Some parents simply did not want to bring their girls to school because of constant harassment. A

⁵² As various studies from different communities especially in countries of the South, sexual aggression by male teachers and boys is often dismissed as ‘just boys being boys’, while girls are blamed for ‘asking for it’ (Pinheiro 2006, 112). In the Middle East, sexual harassment of girls is not commonly reported, perhaps because girls are commonly separated from boys in schools, and because girls are reluctant to speak out; and a study in Ethiopia, for example, found that students attributed the sexual harassment of girls to the way the girls dressed and not to boys’ attitudes toward girls (Pinheiro 2006, 119). In West and Central Africa, teachers justified sexual exploitation of female students by saying that their clothes and behavior were provocative, and that the teachers were far from home and in sexual need (Pinheiro 2006, 119).

group of parents and teachers had actually went to the head of the local police station to ask him to assign a policeman to the area to prevent harassment; a request that he refused; reportedly unless the parents paid the policeman themselves. Many girls resented, feared and were deeply hurt by the harassment they encountered, which ranged from bags of chips being thrown at them to draw their attention, to a whole range of verbal harassment and attempted physical contact. They tried different strategies to avoid this twice-daily ritual. Some tried to walk out of school accompanied by teachers, many made sure to walk out in big groups or with one other student at the very least and a few carried small self-defense tools such as spray, a pin or a small knife. The most effective strategy unfortunately was not to come to school at all. The girls were constantly harassed by the boys from both schools, despite the many efforts to prevent this: through changing the timing of the start and end of the school days for each school, by having teachers patrol the area around the school, or by attempting to prevent students from lingering outside the school. It was largely in vain. The principal of the school had also tried to convince district educational authorities to switch the newly built schools, so that the girls' school could be the one on the main street instead of being in the middle, between the two boys' schools and only accessed by a small passageway. This was also in vain. Teachers and students began to access the school from another gate, but this was blocked because local residents used the area outside it as a rubbish dump and educational and local authorities could not prevent them from doing so. Despite the legitimizing rhetoric of moral blame to girls, school actors did in fact make concerted attempts to rectify the security situation for girls, but were blocked by a weak and corrupt state apparatus.



Figure 13: Boys’ General School and Boys’ Preparatory School with Arched Pathway Leading to Girls’ Secondary School.

Beyond this everyday verbal—and limited physical—harassment, incidents of grave sexual assault were also not un-common; including a recent case of rape of a girl in the public general school. Seeing my shock when they recounted how the student had arrived to school in torn clothes and a hysterical state having been assaulted by one or more boys and was locked up in the toilet by the principal until her father and brother came to collect her, several students expressed that this was “normal.” Several other stories were referred to of girls from other schools being assaulted. It was not a pleasant topic, however, and the girls did not want to discuss it in great detail. .

PUNISHMENT, NONCOMPLIANCE AND GENDER TRADITIONALISM

What are the implications of these practices of discipline and punishment for student discourses and practices? Do they produce submissive citizens who have little self confidence and hypocritical subjects who understand that the best way to deal with/in institutions of the state is to act ‘extra-legally’? Significant psychological and educational research has linked harsh punishment with four main areas of student discourse and practice: an increased propensity to engage in violence, an inability to internalize moral values, a negative self-image and increased noncompliance. It is not straightforward however to relate such conclusions to the level of classroom observation because the research did not follow each student in either his or her reflections on experiences of punishment or patterns of discourse and practices relating to violence, ‘moral values’, submissiveness or noncompliance. There is no necessary association between school disciplinary styles and how any particular individual will receive the punishment and incorporate it into his or her repertoire of behaviors, self-image, discourses or practices. Clearly, students varied greatly in their levels of assertiveness and noncompliance as seen in school contexts and in their own use of physical and emotional violence in their interaction. Too many individual, family, economic and political variables may affect such insertions or reverse and alter them.

In any case, in terms of ‘submissiveness’ or rebellion, for example, it may be difficult to consider the general attitude of most boys or girls in any of the schools as “submissive”; a fluid and contextual concept (see Allan and Gilbert 1997). Age may be critical here as secondary students cannot be easily compared with primary and preparatory students in terms of fear and submissiveness. Naguib (2006) argues, however, that students in preparatory schools displayed an extremely aggressive and confrontational stance towards the school system in a way unparalleled in the history of Egyptian education. He describes a new wave of student violence in schools which includes damaging school property, beating teachers, infighting and smuggling soft

weapons such as blades and knives into school. Recent news reporting and media portrayals of Egyptian education also paint an [anecdotal] image of a rising assertive and confrontational attitude among students. Their focus is typically on general secondary students, the main locus of middle-class audiences' interest. Indeed, the focus is frequently on middle-range private general secondary schools in upper middle-class neighborhoods. These reports and portrayals emphasize violence between students, but also stress students' abuse and intimidation of teachers (see for example, Difa'an 'an al-Darb 2010).

Literature on school discipline suggests that forms of student noncompliance may develop when teachers use harsh or arbitrary punitive measures, maintain extreme social distance because of classroom size or teacher personality, or use arbitrary criteria for judging student work (see Woods 1990 for an overview). D'Amato has argued that in the absence of either compelling structural returns to education in terms of improved social standing, or situational rewards in terms of interest in the material and positive classroom relations, student frustration often escalates into more volatile forms of noncompliance.⁵³ Such a process can help students establish and modify their understandings of material in a way that is meaningful for them. Anne Locke Davidson (1996) has further argued that a number of factors contribute most to student alienation, and hence noncompliance; including educational tracking, negative teacher expectations, differential treatment of students, enforcement of hierarchy and status divisions, and withholding or making inaccessible knowledge that students need to succeed. Youth also express strong distaste for lecturing and seatwork and prefer personally relevant curriculum (Davidson 1999). As described throughout this thesis, all of these elements were characteristic of the situation in most public schools and, in fact, private schools as well.

⁵³ The "structural rationale" refers to students' perceptions that doing well in school will help their career opportunities, social status and economic mobility. That is, education will have the "extrinsic value" of improving their position in the broader societal structure. The "situational rationale," however, refers to students' perception that doing well and participating diligently may be a "means of maintaining valued relationships with teachers and peers and of gaining access to experiences of mastery and accomplishment" (D'Amato 1993, 191).

Noncompliance however was a key feature of classroom interactions across the schools. Challenging behavior was most consistently apparent among the boys at the different schools I became familiar with. I experienced the technical boys' school as a volatile and violent context in comparison with all the other schools, though it was not as violent as some schools that have received press coverage. Despite—and arguably because of—the use of physical violence by teachers, students frequently engaged in confrontational behavior. In almost every class in the boys' technical school, one or more students engaged in behavior that was guaranteed to elicit verbal humiliation and physical punishment from the teacher. Indeed, if the frequency and severity of their noncompliance is an indication of lack of fear, docility or submissiveness, the technical school boys were the least fearful and boys across the schools were generally quite assertive. While I witnessed far less challenging behavior in the girls' schools, female students seemed more engaged in 'complaints' related to rectifying perceived educational injustices. As Ohn has concluded (1998), girls seem more invested in educational justice; which can be seen by boys as 'hacking at meaningless detail'. It seemed that many boys preferred to 'take it like a man' rather than filing complaints or overtly protesting teacher decisions. They also sometimes took it 'in their hands', through noncompliance, ridicule, pranks or other retaliation against teachers. In fact, on one of first days of fieldwork in the boys' general secondary school when the car of one of the teachers had disappeared. It seems that students had arranged for the car to be removed from in front of the school and the teacher had to frantically leave the school and search the whole neighborhood for it.

It has often been argued that noncompliance is a fundamental feature of working class education. Willis (1977), Foley (1990), Holland and Eisenhart (1990) have argued that, contrary to top-down models of the imposition of unequal social relations, educational institutions are one of many social sites within which specific populations actively reproduce their own subordinate status. Status negotiations within and between peer groups, conscious and unconscious strategies of resistance to institutional authority, and the realistic perception of often limited employment opportunities after leaving school life, together channel the creative interactions of students themselves toward the

reproduction of standing relations of power.⁵⁴ From Willis' Hammertown 'lads' to Eckert's (1989) Detroit 'burnouts' to McLaren's (1999) Toronto 'cool guys' to Macleod's (1987) US Northeastern 'hallway hangers,' resistance researchers identify rebellious subcultures and trace them to the culture of the working class. They argue that these youth learn in their local milieu- family, neighborhood, peer group- a discrete culture which clashes with a middle-class oriented school system. This is argued to activate a rebellion characterized by truancy, delinquency, disinterest in school, and troubled relations with teachers, thereby leading to poor grades and streaming into non-academic tracks. In rejecting school, these youth rebuff irrelevant school qualifications and eagerly anticipate the 'real world' of employment (Davies 1995, 663). However, while many students may be fully aware of the empty content and illusory promise of their education and resentful towards school authorities, confrontational behavior is only one way of expressing this awareness. Some of the most vulnerable or disadvantaged youth may not feel empowered to be noncompliant at all; if they are unable to rely on social or familial resources that could temper any school punishment.

For girls, noncompliance revolved most around control over gender identity. Female students engaged in other forms of noncompliance: talking to friends, using mirrors to fix their headscarves or make-up, listening to music—or religious sermons—on mobile phones during class and displaying a general disinterest in the content of lessons. It has been argued in other contexts that working class girl's 'opposition' to schools is articulated through different forms of 'gender traditionalism' (Weis 1990, McRobbie 1981, Lees 1986, Griffen 1985, Davies 1984, Gaskell 1985). This means that girls accentuate their femininity in exaggerated displays of physical maturity and hyper-concerns with 'romance' on the one hand, while prioritizing domestic roles such as

⁵⁴ In relation to these gendered dynamics, Paul Willis' (1977) argument was that by contesting schooling, working class youth reproduce themselves as future manual laborers and homemakers.⁵⁴ It is therefore argued that a defiant masculine ethos propels school rejection, whereas female opposition to school is less confrontational and disruptive and lacks the bravado that the 'lads' supposedly expressed (Ohrn 1998, Davies 1984, Griffin 1985, Anyon 1988). Based on his work on Canadian high schools, Davies (1995) challenges the argument that misbehavior is a conduit for differential class outcomes but agrees that gender traditionalism rather than class background is a more durable source of cultural reproduction through school underachievement. Several studies have suggested that among 'less successful students', male and female roles polarize over time (Davies 1984, Holland and Eisenhart 1990).

marriage, child-rearing and household duties over schooling, on the other. This arguably provides students with alternative identities from which they can repudiate school sponsored 'middle class' ideals of femininity such as diligence and passivity (Davies 1995). Yet this opposition is thought to also ironically trap girls into early marriage and motherhood, thereby reproducing their positions as working class wives and mothers. It is not difficult however to see why almost all the girls in the technical school, and many girls in the public general school, valued marriage and relationships over work, given high unemployment, underemployment, very low wages and sexual harassment in the sectors they are likely to find work (see Elgeziri 2010, see Chapter Three on female withdrawal from the workforce).

CONCLUSION

Severity with learners is harm upon them, especially in younger children. The learner raised in injustice and repression becomes overpowered, the vastness of his self narrowed, its enthusiasm done away with; it brings him to lethargy, drives him to lying and cunning; which is to pretend other than what is in his conscience in fear of the outstretching of hands with oppression over him. It thus teaches him craftiness and deceit, which become his habit and nature; and the meanings of humanity that he possesses are corrupted.

Ibn Khaldun in his Muqaddima (cited in Sadiq 2010).

فصل في أن الشدة على المتعلمين مضرة بهم، سيما في أصغر الولد... من كان مرباه بالعسف والقهر من المتعلمين، سطا به القهر، وضيق على النفس في انبساطها، وذهب بنشاطها، ودعاه إلى الكسل، وحمله على الكذب والخبث، وهو التظاهر بغير ما في ضميره، خوفا من انبساط الأيدي بالقهر عليه، وعلمه المكر والخديعة لذلك، وصارت له هذه عادة وخلقاً، وفسدت معاني الإنسانية التي له.

This chapter has described the most salient issues around verbal and physical punishment in the schools. Humiliation and negative labeling were constant features of school and classroom relations in the public schools. While verbal insults were common in all the schools, including the private schools, the use of physical and verbal punishment ranged from severe to mild based on social class and gender. Boys in technical schools suffered the most verbal and physical assaults, even in my presence,

followed by general school boys. Girls in both public schools were less frequently beaten and were humiliated using less “street” language. Boys and girls in private schools were not systematically beaten or humiliated. .

Beating and humiliation were a part and expression of social hierarchy and relations of power in the schools and were legitimated by discourses that validated them and constructed them as common sense. Teachers used religion, patriarchy, analogies with the family, and cultural appropriateness to justify their harsh practices. Public school teachers were fully aware that they could beat students with impunity and that students had no effective access to the law. Importantly, beating and humiliation were used to compensate for the lack of formal disciplinary powers and status brought about by the impoverishment of teachers and the marketization of education. These relationships of discipline in a key institution of the state symbolize the ways in which the Egyptian state had suffered profound corrosion of its key functions, and has been reduced to dealing with this decay through daily practices of both repression and permissiveness in an almost complete breakdown of the “rule of law” (for the overwhelming majority of the nation’s citizens who enroll in public schools). The chapter has attempted to show how youth experiences of schooling may inform their experiences and expectations as gendered and classed citizens of the state. By focusing on patterns of punishment and control used by school authorities, the chapter highlight has highlighted not just the violence but the informality or ‘extra-legality’ of school relations of control, especially in public schools. These dysfunctional relations of discipline and control embody and are premised upon the state’s distinct citizenship and social contracts with different social classes. .

The observed increase in arbitrariness and violence in the public schools has critical links to privatization and low teacher wages. With the decline in their real wages, teachers had been increasingly resorting to various forms of pressure on students to enroll in private tutoring with them through their control over student marks and other disciplinary measures. Rather than raising their salaries, the state attempted to prevent them from this kind of abuse by removing their various ‘formal’ powers over students;

leading to forms of ‘invented’ or ‘pretend’ discipline, arbitrary and illegal punishment as well as permissiveness and leniency. Teachers’ own impoverishment may have led to the increased use of violence either in an effort to gain access to resources, to enforce a measure of order in the absence of other measures, or to compensate for feelings of powerlessness. It is not clear that teachers have lost their *hiba* because they are unable to beat children. Their sense of a loss of status and disciplinary control—and the actual withdrawal of formal disciplinary powers from them—was primarily the result of their low pay, their dependence on private tutoring and the very poor value of the education their school systems were able to offer. The increase in the use of physical beating and humiliation across the public schools is therefore fundamentally related to the multi-faceted impoverishment of schools, teachers and families under neoliberalism, as well general governance patterns of informality, extra-legality and corruption. .

Informal and extra-legal practices disempowering students from protection and provision rights almost necessitated the use of both continuous negative labeling and intimidation and repression of protest. In reference to the practice of some teachers in the technical school of making students clean the floors of the classrooms, one student in the boys’ school recounted how a teacher had failed him in the practical exam because he took a video on his phone of this practice and her behavior in the classroom and threatened to expose her. He explained the teacher’s degrading attitude and negative labeling of students; adding that “she makes us feel hopeless [*bitya’isna*].” This reflects the three interrelated patterns of abuse to which teachers resorted. Extra-legal practices are combined with two more forms of abuse: negative labeling and the intimidation and punishment of protest. Therefore, aside from beating and humiliation, forcing students to perform extra chores or to enroll in tutoring perhaps works best if opposition is forcefully deterred and there is a general and sustained discourse of the unworthiness of students. Themes of humiliation, negative labeling and their links with social class are revisited in some detail in the discussion of student citizenship discourses in Chapter Seven. .

Public school students most often linked teachers' beating and humiliation to illegitimate motives and practices. Many understood the treatment they received as resulting from their social class. Beating in the public schools also significantly varied according to the age and physical build of the student, as well as by parents' involvement and connections. Safety from physical and emotional harm—or the securing of protective citizenship rights—was understood to be only guaranteed in private schools. These citizenship rights were understood as fundamentally structured by the ability to pay and by social class. Indeed, one of the ways students sometimes argued for their entitlement to greater respect was not that this was their right as citizens, students or human beings. It was the possibility that they were not destined to failure and low social status as their teachers assumed. As one student put it, “they should not treat us this way... maybe we will graduate and become doctors” (even if they were unfortunately aware that this is rather unlikely, see Chapter Four). .

In describing such routine forms beating and humiliation, this chapter does not seek however to portray technical schools or public schools more generally as veritable nightmares for students. For many students, there was always time to chat, to jump the fence, to play soccer or to escape class by running an errand for a teacher, sometimes even being allowed to ride the teacher's motorcycle. Teachers were not unequivocal monsters who simply beat boys and humiliated girls at whim and exploited students financially. In some classes in the general and technical secondary schools, some teachers did not insult students at all. Students in these classes were typically more compliant. To address noncompliant behavior, these teachers would say, “miss, concentrate here please” (*ya anisa, rakekizi hina min fadlik*), or would simply call out, “mister, sir, respectable” (*ya ustaz, ya afandim, ya muhtaram*), to get their attention and rebuke them. Mrs. Mirvat, the ‘exemplary’ English language teacher in the girls’ general secondary school (see Chapter Four), called the students “daughter” (*ya binti*) and sometimes “miss” (in English). There was also complicity, leniency, the sharing of jokes, ringtones, religious sermons and perhaps even sexually explicit material. There were teachers who showed compassion for the orphaned or poorer students and always one or two who encouraged and believed in hard-working students and showed respect

for students as a whole. One teacher in the girls' general school actively attempted to help students 'believe in themselves' and their power to become 'successful' by believing that they can achieve what they want; organizing school seminars based on motivational themes ('you are what you believe'). Unfortunately, he also reinforced for them the middle class ideal of becoming a doctor or engineer as worthy goals to believe in.

There were fundamental differences between the disciplinary styles of even the harsher private school teachers and the beating and obscenity used in the public schools. The underlying assumption in the private schools was not that beating was right and did not need justification; quite the contrary. For example, whereas teachers in public schools explained beating in terms of poor student upbringing, Mr. Samir told me "I am impolite (*ana 'alil il-adab*), and everyone will tell you this." And while he offered students a highly valued service that was believed to greatly enhance their chances for success, it was not at all clear what public school teachers offered (see Chapters Three and Four). Importantly, he taught the same way at school as he did in his private tutoring.⁵⁵ He explained diligently, did not waste class time and provided a high level of instruction. He did not need to withhold information to build up a clientele among students. He was already a sought after "star" with a long waiting list every year. He had plenty of financial and moral capital to obviate any dependence on severity in order to extract resources from students or encourage their enrollment in his tutoring classes.

DISCIPLINE, AUTHORITY AND NONCOMPLIANCE

Beating was not rejected in principle; whether by most parents or by students. Beating in exchange for education and beating in exchange for other forms of care were widely accepted by parents. The public schools, however, lacked the minimum necessary material and cultural capacities to 'provide' or care for students—educationally, recreationally or developmentally—in ways that may make the violence more palatable

⁵⁵ There was still more class time, more revision classes and more exercise exams in tutoring than in school, which explains why most of his students still enrolled in private tutoring, either with him or with other tutors.

or part of a ‘disciplinary’ project. As the example of harsh private school teachers shows, the “impoliteness” of Mr. Samir was tolerated and even reportedly found endearing by many students. In fact, many students paid thousands of pounds to enroll with him in private tutoring despite his severity. Was he tolerated because he was ‘conscientious’? Students valued and were responsive to teachers’ ‘respect,’ both in terms of conscientious behavior (teaching well in class and not coercing them into tutoring, see Chapter Four) as well as in terms of teachers’ encouragement them or taking their circumstances into account. As noted in different studies, disadvantaged students especially tended to define respect broadly as teachers caring for them as well as having positive expectations of them (Davidson 1999, Hajji 2006).⁵⁶ Mr. Samir certainly had very high expectations of his students and undoubtedly provided them with a quality of instruction considered to be one of the best in the country. He believed that they could get the highest grades in the difficult Physics exam and he methodically prepared them for this. There is no claim that his abuse was benign or without negative emotional consequences for students. The point, however, is that his teaching and his harsh discipline and punishment techniques are part of a “disciplinary project” and of an educational endeavor, where subject matter was actually taught to students, who then had real prospects of competing for university placement based on their marks (see Chapter Four). It may well be as parents implied in the “pro-beating demonstration” mentioned earlier: beating is ok if the child gets educated.

The significant removal of disciplinary powers from teachers was a token measure by MOE to address the abuse of power by segments of teachers to extract additional income from students through private tutoring. The authority, rules and discipline of the school were violated in fundamental ways. Rules of attendance and good behavior were scarcely observed in all of the schools. Given the realities of informal privatization discussed in the previous chapter, this might not be very surprising. Most students got their education elsewhere, and many of them felt this to be an unjust situation for

⁵⁶ “Students believe they are respected when adults challenge them to succeed academically, give attention to their particularities and commonalities, are responsive to their needs and foster positive expectations” (C.A.R.E: Challenge, Attention, Responsiveness, and Expectation) (Hajji 2006, 66).

which teachers carried a lot of the responsibility. Seen in this light, noncompliance was a fundamental symptom of the privatization and the breakdown of national school-based secondary education in Egypt. .

Furthermore, especially due to pervasive extra-legal practices, there was a sense in which students and parents had also become more assertive; making complaints, threatening escalation to higher educational authorities and, in some cases, filing police complaints. As argued throughout the thesis, the erosion of disciplinary powers is directly linked to teachers' impoverishment, the marketization of education and its declining market returns due to increasing unemployment and informality. Many students displayed acute awareness of the arbitrary repression to which they were subjected. Many voiced their opinions and challenged the teachers' decisions, despite the dire consequences. Many teachers and administrators refused to participate in the repression and financial abuse of students and attempted to temper its effects on their students. School actors also pervasively employed various 'weapons of the weak' (Scott 1985) to neutralize the injustice of the system against them, strategies that ranged from falsifying rental contracts in order to enroll in better schools to fabricating stories of sexual abuse in order to remove emotionally and financially abusive teachers. Parents also came to school authorities with complaints and went to the police with litigation. .

The sense of blocked opportunities and low returns to education that working class students experienced arguably fed into more traditional gender attitudes, where girls focus on relationships and motherhood over school work and boys display more macho and confrontational styles. Not only perceptions of the value of their education, but also perceptions of the unfairness and extralegality of practices pervading the public schools were behind forms of noncompliant and challenging behavior in the schools, especially for boys. The subversion of school discipline was particularly visible when it came to female modesty, and this subversion brings to the fore the role of schools in the construction of ideal femininities and masculinities. Different projects of 'coolness' and 'distinction' effectively competed with the schools' conservative ideals of gender comportment and led to continuous struggles around noncompliance in the schools.

IMPOSSIBLE FEMININITIES AND INJURED MASCULINITIES

Although religious orthodoxy on these matters was not explicitly challenged, rules of modesty and comportment were subverted on a daily basis. A significant proportion of girls went ahead with whatever they wanted to do, from colored scarves to talking to boys; mastering ways of maneuvering the multiple modes of street, school, peer and family surveillance and control. Private school girls, while subject to similar patterns of moral blame, had access to material and cultural resources that relatively shielded them both from harassment and more severe and systematic certain forms of moral blame.

Parents and the school community proactively tried to ensure better security for the girls, through educational administration and through the police, who did not respond to their needs and effectively expected them to pay for the public service of security. Forms of gender control around the school were fundamentally related to the weakening and corruption of the state's protective powers and functions and its accommodations with Islamist forces. The discourses concerning modesty and victim-blaming and limitations placed on girls' behavior as a result were perhaps necessitated by the precarious security situation in popular quarters. These discourses and limitations also helped facilitate and obscure the withdrawal of the state from its protective functions. .

I have wondered why the girls, usually very open and talkative did not really want to talk too much about incidents of sexual assault such as the one recounted above. Their distanced reaction reminded me of how boys reacted around the issue of physical assault by teachers. Boys often wanted me to record the beatings and insults, urging me to document this, gesturing to me to "write it" in my notes, and checking with me: "did you write that one down?" (*katabti di ya miss?*). Many wanted to shame the teachers, to expose them or to exact a measure of justice out of them. Some clearly expressed a sense of grievance and a desire for accountability. For example, after describing regular practices of beating and humiliation, one such student emphatically declared: "I'm talking to the minister from here and saying this. We are suffering, Miss." Many

students refrained however from decrying the violence, and many maintained a matter-of-fact or a playful attitude: not one of pain and indignation, but rather one of wanting to expose, mock and debase the teachers. For both boys and girls, there was a resigned or matter of fact attitude; that this was a reality one had to live with and ought not to dwell on. In a sense, there was nothing to do about it, nothing other than what most girls normally do: try to stay in groups, hope that a male relative, teacher or neighbor could escort them through empty or crowded streets and hope to be lucky. I imagine that, for girls, deepening the discussion around sexual assault would bring up the usual patterns of blame for the victim. If a student was attacked on the way to school, for example, she was likely walking alone to school. It may then be said, but why would she do that or why do her parents allow this; what kind of family is she from? That is, I imagined from the reluctance of the girls to elaborate on this matter, despite their usual openness, a certain awareness that any discussion of sexual assault would inevitably bring blame onto the girls: not only onto the victim in question but onto all girls and especially those who may engage in the same behaviors, even something as simple as walking to school un-chaperoned. The implicit assumption is of course that if the girls were dressed properly and behaved properly, they would not be harassed. Therefore, the reality of harassment, especially of a more grave nature, and the experience of being harassed could be seen and experienced as a moral failing; as an affront to one's ideal femininity.

The reality of sexual assault and the moral blame connected with it have direct implications for the spaces of freedom girls try to carve out for themselves. Incidents of sexual assault give legitimacy to strict family and school surveillance and monitoring of girls on the one hand and to the various forms of limitations on their mobility on the other. It seemed that the girls preferred not to confront these realities out of 'desire'; the desire not to lose their limited margins of freedom; or the 'fear that these spaces may be lost. Implicit in this (relative) silence is an acute realization of the limited and fragile legitimacy of their presence on the street, or an 'internalization' and normalization of the assessment of their 'deviance' from ideal femininity. The girls were aware that in most cases, their very presence on the street could easily open them to

accusations of moral failing. It injured 'ideal femininity'. Almost anything could be taken against them so that they could be blamed for the occurrence of harassment, from their attire to walking alone or simply waiting for a bus. The very presence of (young) women in the public space, especially the street as its epitome, could be incriminating and open them for violation. They had to try to be as un-present as possible. As one girl put it: "in order to walk in the street, a girl should to be deaf and blind... and mute too" (*'ashan timshi fel shari', il bint il mafrud tib'a tarsha wi 'amya... wi kbarsa kaman*). This "demure femininity, rooted in the notion of a closed, contained body moving toward a clearly defined destination through public space, both enables and constrains a women's presence in public" (Lukose 2005, 514).

To go back to the boys' reactions around physical assault by teachers, being beaten could also be seen and experienced as an assault on ideal masculinity (see Ismail 2006, 127 on the destabilization of masculine constructs); one that it is not pleasant to confront, highlight or dwell on. The boys may have thought that had they been better built or more aggressive, they would not have received as much strikes from teachers. If they had enough money to regularly pay for private tutoring, they would be spared related harassment from teachers. If they had powerful fathers who could intimidate teachers, they could stand on the side of the classroom while others swept the floor. If they could afford private education or had parents who had access to state institutions and could file police complaints against teachers, they would not be beaten or humiliated. Ultimately, if they were not poor, they would be more masculine. Being beaten can therefore represent a distinctly 'masculine' shame, intimately linked to income, power and social status. Within the construction of men as primary breadwinners and the centrality of income earning capacity in constructions of masculinity, beating represented an injury to ideal masculinities both in terms of physical vulnerability and in terms of its relation to social class and poverty. The silences around harassment and beating seemed to point to how untenable the hegemonic ideal femininities and masculinities were for poor students under the neoliberal (and Islamist) citizenship projects.

In her powerful ethnography of impoverished families in a *favela* in Brazil, Donna Goldstein (2003) observes that the survivalist ethos of many of the mothers coping with a harsh world leads, in turn, to some rather harsh forms of discipline and punishment. She observes that mothers deeply fear that some of their children will find the street more attractive than their crowded, destitute, and sometimes contentious households. These women often initiate harsh, even brutal or degrading, forms of discipline in the hopes of keeping their children in line and off the street. This applied not only to boys but to girls as well. Girls who spent too much time on the street were seen as girls ‘of the street’— without the protection of a man or a family and thus open to sexual predation. Despite significant differences between this context and the research sites, these issues may recall the strict limits teachers placed on their daughters’ presence in potentially dangerous streets around the public schools and their vulnerability to various forms of harassment or sexual assault. They highlight the relationships between poverty and vulnerability, harsh punishment, gender surveillance and discipline at the heart of school relations.

CHAPTER SIX: NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CITIZENSHIP IN SECONDARY SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

INTRODUCTION

The Good Citizen is characterized by:

- *Faith in God the Almighty and adherence to the correct teachings of religion and respect for the beliefs of others*
- *Complete awareness of his civil and political rights and duties in society, so that he demands his rights and undertakes his duties*
- *Possessing a sense of initiative and positive participation in developing his society, including volunteer work and participation in elections and political party work.*
- *Integrity and diligence in work in pursuit of pleasing God, whether this work is religious or worldly.*
- *Commanding virtue and forbidding vice through wisdom and good advice in his social sphere, in application of the God's words: "Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for thy Lord knoweth best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance" Surat al-Nabl, verse 125 [Holy Quran 16:125 -Yusuf Ali Translation]*

(Nationalist Education textbook for First Secondary Technical 2009/2010, page 20)

The above description proceeds to emphasize a long list of attributes of the Good Citizen ranging from personal skills development to respect of the constitution. The desired citizen subjectivity articulated by the textbook includes a host of additional qualities, values and attitudes: the use of scientific thinking methods, awareness of current events and adoption of a position on them, awareness of society's political, economic and social system, the ability to deal with modern technologies, intellectual tolerance, moderation and acceptance of the other, preservation of national unity, communication with others without prejudice or condescension (*isti'la'*), awareness of national history and extraction of lessons from it in order to improve the present and the future, avoidance of passivity, selfishness, self-centeredness and apathy, a strong will and decision making abilities, respect for the constitution and preservation of the

stability of society, pride and belonging to nation, history and civilization, increased self-confidence, faith in one's skills and abilities and developing them in order to contribute to the elevation of one's nation.

This comprehensive description may indicate that the citizenship project of Egyptian education in the late Mubarak era was Islamist (see Chapter One, pp 41-49, on defining Islamism), nationalist, democratic and neoliberal. To what extent are these aspects of the desired citizenship project reflected in the message presented to students across secondary school textbooks? Which aspects of Islamic thought and piety do these books promote as key defining attribute of the "good" citizen? Which understandings, themes and values of Islam are emphasized in the textbooks and which are obscured or condemned? Is it significant that a book on the life and reign of the Caliph Umar Ibn al-Khattab, a symbol of the just and accountable Islamic ruler, was removed from Arabic Language textbooks in the early 1990s, whereas *Wa Islamah*, a historical novel on struggle against the Crusaders and Moguls remained the key literary text of the general secondary stage? How do the textbooks portray the nation (*al-watan*), Egypt, Egyptians and the contours of desired national identity? How do they portray the regime, the President and the citizen? How do the textbooks articulate protective, provision and participation citizenship rights and duties?

This chapter and the next attempt to draw a picture of how the nation and state were articulated and enacted in the schools, in terms of official discourses, mainly official textbooks, in this chapter; and in student and school level discourses and rituals in the next. This chapter describes constructions of national identity and citizenship across a sample of secondary school textbooks. The textbooks reveal the extent to which the regime had arrived at an accommodation with Islamist forces whereby they gained increasing control of cultural and identity spheres as the regime maintained and increased its economic and political monopoly. This is an accommodation that imploded in unexpected ways in January 2011, but will continue to have a profound effect on issues of national identity and citizenship, and hence, on economic and political citizenship rights, for decades to come. Secondary school textbooks draw the

contours of a desired national identity where love, belonging and loyalty to a nation that has been under external threat throughout its history are supreme. Docile and politically-benign non-oppositional aspects of Muslim identity and Islamist morality represent the core of this national identity, and the accomplishments of ancient Egyptian civilization are presented as a key source of national pride. In terms of citizenship, the textbooks seek to erase citizenship from view by merging the state (and the regime and the President) with the nation, so that the primary relationship of the individual is to the nation; a relationship where the individual ‘naturally’ owes the nation the duty of loyalty and sacrifice. Replete with fictional achievements of the regime and its supposed promotion of democracy, the textbooks place the blame and responsibility on youth to become hard-working citizens adjusted to the demands of the neoliberal economy and lift up the nation to higher levels of ‘progress’ and development. In their articulations of Islam and Muslim identity, the textbooks construct ‘Islam’ around personal morality in non-oppositional terms; and citizenship becomes understood in religious terms so that the Good Citizen is the one who adheres to religious teaching and improves his personal conduct for the elevation of the nation.

The first section of this chapter describes its approach to textbooks as sites of the production of nationhood and citizenship. The second section provides an overview of the historical changes in constructions of national identity and citizenship in Egyptian school textbooks throughout the Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak eras. The third section focuses on current textbooks, discussing the key ways in which they construct national identity and citizenship. It examines a selection of the 2009/2010 textbooks in general and technical secondary, as well as a sample of the corresponding ‘external’/private textbooks. This chapter covers deals with four subjects that are most relevant for identity and citizenship construction: Nationalist Education and Arabic Language are given detailed treatment, while examples from History and Islamic Religious Education are introduced to support the key arguments. The final section brings together the main themes of nationhood and citizenship in secondary school textbooks.

TEXTBOOKS, NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CITIZENSHIP

This research starts out from the assumption that schooling provides students with powerful citizenship lessons. Much of the research is focused on how the lived experience of schooling structures student citizen subjectivities. This chapter shifts the focus to the discourses of the official texts, and the citizenship and nationhood lessons they explicitly and implicitly attempt to impart to students. The focus is on the state's project of nationhood and citizenship in the late Mubarak era as articulated in the textbooks. The first three objectives of curriculum development of the Egyptian Ministry of Education (henceforth MOE) in 1995 were: (1) national loyalty, (2) religion and respecting others, and (3) basic literacy and numeracy for communication between citizens (Sayed 2006, 62).

School textbooks reflect the narratives, knowledge and values considered appropriate and important to emphasize to young people by groups in control of textbook authorship and production. They also reflect the changes over time in the knowledges and discourses promoted by powerful groups. As Apple and Christian-Smith have argued, textbooks reflect "profound political, economic, and cultural relations and histories" (1991, 3.) Textbooks are "conceived, designed and authored by real people with real interests" and are "published within the political and economic constraints of markets, resources and power" (Apple 1993, 46). In this sense, textbooks have been utilized as a means of examining power relations in society (Russell 2004). "How a society selects, classifies, distributes transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control" (Bernstein 1971, 47).

"Since the inception of the nation-state, political education has been bound up with the project of nation-building, and the inculcation of patriotism has been widely regarded as a primary purpose of mass schooling" (Callan 2004, 77). 'Citizenship Education'

itself has grown in importance across the world in recent years in light of debates around multi-cultural citizenship, immigration as well as the so-called ‘war on terrorism’. History textbooks occupy a privileged position in this task of promoting national belonging and national identity. For this reason, History textbooks are always sites of struggle and reflect competing ideological influences, whether in authoritarian states or contemporary democratic societies. For example, a study of U.S. textbook portrayal of slavery between 1900 and 1992 identified a pronounced shift of emphasis from the multicultural texts of the 1960s and 1970s generated within a climate of liberal reform based around the civil rights movement to the more conservative representations of the 1980s and 1990s produced within the political context of the neo-conservative Reagan and Bush administrations (Washburn 1997, 478). Since “[n]ations rarely tell the truth about themselves”, it is not surprising “that the history which is taught to children is often a watered-down, partial and sometimes distorted, sometimes fictional, view of a national past based upon cultural, ideological and political selection” (Crawford 2004, 10-11). However, other textbooks also play a major role in constructions of national identity and citizenship. In the case of Egypt, I argue that Arabic Language textbooks are in fact the most critical sites of identity and citizenship construction, along with Islamic Religious Education and Nationalist Education, the key course/subject concerned with citizenship issues.

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CITIZENSHIP UNDER NASSER, SADAT AND MUBARAK

There is little doubt that throughout most of modern Egyptian history, the education system has been an arena for struggles around national identity, citizenship and the ideologies informing them. The institution of education in modern Egypt was explicitly premised on providing only as much education as was needed to create a modern army and state bureaucracy and to limit education beyond the fulfilment of these needs of the state (Marsot 1984). After the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, British government officials called for the creation of more productive, more modern

Egyptians to serve the state and more likely to be loyal to a central state (Pollard 2005, 100-101). Educational reform in the nineteenth century intersected with struggles for political and economic autonomy from the British, national identity building, and uses of novel technologies to forge a public sphere (Herrera 2002). Key public intellectuals like Abdallah Nadim saw education as “the panacea for society’s ills, and teachers the champions of a better society that would ideally be characterized by intersectorian social harmony, liberation from European domination, and national unity” (Herrera 2002, 18). The British, on the other hand, had very specific ideas about educating Egyptians and creating a literate Egyptian class, “which clashed with those of the Egyptians” (Pollard 2005, 114). The British were determined to maintain the country’s “agricultural spirit” and promote its agricultural productivity in order to guarantee the supply of cotton to British mills, and viewed education that would have led to industrial growth and detract from Egyptians’ fitness for agricultural labor as “a national evil” (Pollard 2005, 114). Russell also argues that the British maintained their rule by teaching submission through religion and reinforcing British hegemony in history and geography classes (Russell 2002). As the Egyptians’ struggle against British occupation intensified, the educational system became a means through which notions of “the nation,” its history, its future, and its characteristics were cultivated (Pollard 2005, Herrera 2002). Until the end of British Occupation in the 1950s, the education system was a critical arena for the cultivation of the modern Egyptian. As Lisa Pollard argues concerning the onset of modern education in Egypt, from “the latter decades of the nineteenth century onward, British administrators and Egyptian nationalists who worked within the colonial administration subjected elite Egyptian schoolchildren to a reform of their personal behavior that was designed to fit the needs of the Egyptian state- both as it transferred itself and as it struggled to liberate itself from the British” (Pollard 2005, 100).

However, a ‘mass public education system’ only truly emerged in the Nasserite period. The Nasser regime (1952- 1970) understood state schools to be central to establishing and maintaining the new revolutionary political order, both through massively expanding access to education and attaching considerable importance to school

curricula as primary means of disseminating the values, symbols and goals of the July 1952 Revolution. As Arab Nationalism and state socialism were the key ideological drivers of the Nasser regime, they were also the basis upon which nationhood and citizenship were articulated in Nasserite textbooks. Arab nationalism, Arab unity and the struggle against foreign imperialist and local and Arab counter-revolutionary forces were the cornerstones of national identity. Textbooks emphasized issues of poverty and exploitation and the expanding social and economic (protective and provision) citizenship rights promoted by the regime. They also emphasized ‘democracy’ as a basic principle of the new regime; an assertion of course that was almost purely rhetorical, although ‘participation’ in state affiliated organization such as the Socialist Union was greatly encouraged and rewarded. Nationalist Education textbooks offered detailed explanations of the role and function of the organs of the state, the rights and duties of citizens and the various problems in the country such as ‘ignorance and poverty’ (see Adli 2001, 173-75 on Nasserite Nationalist Education curricula). Since 1959, with the greater emphasis on Arab Socialism, the education system was tasked with preparing the child for life in ‘a cooperative democratic, socialist, society’ (Adli 2007, Starrett 1998). Educational discourse also went to considerable lengths to emphasize the role of women and that young men and women would build the country ‘hand in hand’, the ‘girl next to the boy’ (discourses that had been normalized for the Nasser generation, but today would more likely be sexualized, ‘moralized’ and deemed inappropriate).

Faten Adli (2001), who conducted a detailed analysis of educational discourse in the Nasser and Sadat eras, notes the key themes of textbooks in the Nasserite era, which were aimed at instilling loyalty to the regime and affinity with its goals. Textbooks placed great emphasis on class struggle and the struggle against imperialism and framed these as the bases of regime legitimacy. These were also articulated as part of the core of Egyptian identity, where not only ‘struggle,’ but in fact ‘revolution’ was expressed as a common thread in Egyptian history and national identity. The textbooks were full of passages about the role of resistance and national liberation movements and revolutions, with special emphasis given to the role played by peoples, the struggles of

peoples and the role of youth in promoting and defending the values and goals of the Revolution (Adli 2001).

As such, textbooks gave considerable centrality to ‘the people’ (*al-sha‘b*, a word that rarely appears in current textbooks) and other oppressed peoples across the world. Despite the massive personality cult that developed around Nasser, commentators and researchers have noted the ownership of discourses on the role of ‘the people’ and expressions of their own sense of agency and contribution to the Revolution. Adli, along with other commentators, attributes the degree of political awareness and organization of the student movement of the 1970s, to the political education received in Nasser’s schools. Even among Nasser’s critics, liberal commentator Usama al-Ghazali Harb noted that “the efforts and practices of political propaganda and inculcation in the Nasser era through the massive publicity machine that matched the very authoritarian nature of the regime... had no doubt contributed to spreading awareness and educating citizens on the concepts of independence, anti-colonialism, social justice, Arab nationalism and Arab unity and instilling these concepts in their hearts” (Harb 2010). The Nasserite era political education may have been so powerful that Sadat became convinced that only the unleashing- and in some cases arming- of militant Islamist groups could counter the politicized left.

The framing of the July Revolution and its declared principles of social justice, anti-imperialism and Arab nationalism were progressively diluted under Sadat and entirely removed and revised under Mubarak. The decline in the Arab nationalist dimension began under Sadat after the peace treaty with Israel. In recent textbooks, Arab nationalism is dealt with in 38 sentences compared to 712 sentences in the history textbook of the Nasser era (Adli 2007). The Sadat Regime (1970-81) sought to promote Sadat’s new personal vision of Egypt and Egyptian identity, where three key areas represented new developments in Egyptian educational discourse. This included the focus on “science and faith” as the basis of Egypt’s progress and desired identity, the beginning of the involvement of the World Bank in educational policy making and the initiation of experimental schools (a privatization measure whereby higher quality elite

public schools charged fees and accepted high performing students), in addition to a focus on his own personality cult. As Adli (2007) notes, the 1977 history textbook was full of Sadat's pictures with the greatest importance placed on individual leadership, and ignored the role of the people or even the new 'political parties' that were allowed to form. Educational goals in the Sadat era also began to emphasize linking education to work, adjusting to the open door policy, and the expansion of technical education to absorb 60% of secondary students. In a kind of reversal to the politicization and emphasis on 'participation' in Nasserite revolutionary discourses, a number of recurrent themes shaped Sadat's educational agenda, including the emphasis that there was to be "no politics in education" (in textbooks as well as university activism), the emphasis on the 'moralities of the village,' the importance of tradition and respect for 'values', obedience and deference to elders, and the emphasis on faith and religion (For an excellent exposition see Adli 2001). Adli (2001) also documents some of the tactics through which Sadat enabled Islamist groups to gain control over universities and university politics, with a strong base in Upper Egypt, especially the Assiut University. Islamist control over Teacher Colleges may have had a profound impact on education until the present (see detailed discussion in Chapter One, pp. 41-49).

Mubarak continued most of the trends initiated by Sadat, in terms of allowing progressively greater Islamist influence on education, complete divorce with the values and rhetoric of the July Revolution, the general 'de-politicization' of educational discourse and greater involvement of international agencies in educational policy making. While global and U.S. pressures relating to curriculum development and the promotion of 'religious tolerance' are frequently highlighted, all other areas of education policy were heavily affected- if not entirely shaped- by foreign technical assistance and its agendas, with the greatest impact seen in terms greater privatization and lower educational spending (see Chapter Three). Textbooks also increasingly highlighted large pictures of Mubarak as well as Suzanne Mubarak, with smaller pictures for other leaders.

Studies of Mubarak era school curricula argue that schools prepare youth to submit that the movement of society is not determined by masses as by individuals, so that society's overcoming of problems and crises depends on the existence of the ruler (the manager- the hero- the rescuer- the savior), where the child is raised to equate the government with the state and country and side with political authority, depend on it, trust it and adopt positive attitudes towards it (see Abdul Hamid 2000, 124). The textbooks primarily tackle the history of state authority and ignore the people's history, failing to mention the flaws of different rulers or their relationships with different classes, and refraining from the treatment of any controversial issues (MARED 2010). Contemporary textbooks ignore European, American or Japanese history, as well as the histories of other colonized people in order to focus only on the 'injured self' (unique in its injury as it was unique in its historic greatness), with constant expressions of pride in the self and parallel condemnation of others (MARED 2010). The History textbook examined for this chapter not only places the origin of all virtue, civilization and innovation in either Ancient Egypt or Islam, but thoroughly de-politicizes and voids of ideology and struggle the entire history of the 'self': from modern Egyptian history, to Arab nations and Egypt's relation to them, to Islamic history. There is almost no discussion of any intellectual trend in Egypt or the Arab World (from socialism to Political Islam to Baathism to Wahabism), internal or regional struggles, hierarchies, differences or divisions. There is Egypt, Islam and 'the other'. As for the July Revolution, only the nationalization of foreign companies is portrayed as a positive nationalist act, but there is no reference to the nationalization of local industries, socialist legislation, practices, symbols or rhetoric (MARED 2010). Similarly the Sadat era is reduced to the permanent constitution and the 1973 war, without any reference to economic liberalization, openings with Islamism or even the assassination of Sadat. Research on History textbooks has also emphasized their factual mistakes, ignoring certain periods in Egyptian history, lack of vision or strategy, as well as the boring nature of the textbooks geared towards the memorization of dates and lists of causal factors, and their control by a 'mafia' that prevents reform (see MARED 2010).

In terms of portrayals of relations with Israel in official textbooks, critics have argued that MOE is deliberately rewriting and revising history textbooks in order to marginalize the contemporary history of the period surrounding the 1952 revolution and 1967 Arab-Israeli war, in a conscious conspiracy on the part of consecutive education ministers to privilege Ancient Egyptian identity, in favor of neo-colonial project (see Sayed 2006, 99). According to Linda Herrera, initial interventions of the controversial Center for Curriculum and Instructional Materials, to which local and foreign USAID-hired advisors provide technical assistance, involved either changing or removing material from social studies, geography, and history books at all pre-university levels. For example, numerous maps of the Arab region, such as that of the Sinai, were eliminated from textbooks, and the name “Palestine” was replaced with “Israel” (Herrera 2008). Because the curricula do portray Zionism as hostile and Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, Fatma El-Sayed has attempted to show that “most arguments in support of the presumed foreign conspiracy are not based on valid argument and facts; and are expressed by actors that are not directly involved in the decision-making process” (2006, 122 and 114). Despite these debates and controversies, Islamization and the shaping of student knowledge and subjectivities around morals, values, Christians, Jews and Palestine continue to be powerfully informed by discourses circulating *outside* the school, from mosque and cassette sermons to satellite channel programs to the internet. On the other hand, the toning down and elimination of the rhetoric against Israel and its illegal occupation of Arab lands, has perhaps been replaced by the religious messages where Jews are portrayed negatively based on Islamic teachings as presented in the curricula.

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CITIZENSHIP IN CONTEMPORARY SECONDARY SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

This section examines a sample of the key identity related textbooks in general and technical secondary in terms of their constructions of nationhood and citizenship. Textbooks are unified for all schools in the nation within the same secondary school track and specialization and are all prepared under the control of one entity: the Ministry of Education. This does not include about 8% of students who study under the Azhar system and a very small segment of the population studying under various ‘international’ systems; who are still required to “pass only” exams in the official curricula of Arabic, Nationalist Education and Religious Studies. This section focuses on Nationalist Education and Arabic Language textbooks to reflect both the ideal nationhood and citizenship project envisaged by the regime in the Nationalist Education curriculum, the subject directly concerned with these matters in Egyptian education, and the actual taught everyday curriculum exemplified by the Arabic Language textbook. These two subjects are also understudied in analyses of contemporary textbooks, where researchers have mostly focused on Religious Education textbooks (Carre 1979, Toronto and Eissa 2008, Starrett 1998 and Groiss 2004) as well as History textbooks (Sami 2009a, 2009b). I have looked at all the other textbooks studied by students in the six schools and while there certainly are relevant references in the textbooks for English Language, French Language, Sociology, Philosophy, Economic Geography, Commercial and Maritime Law and other subjects, they are not significant enough to warrant analysis here.

Different subjects carry very different importance and meaning for students and teachers in the day-to-day life of the school. Religious and Nationalist Education are pass/fail subjects that do not affect final marks. With the predominance of private tutoring and high student truancy, most students do not typically receive much instruction in pass/fail subjects. Pass/Fail subjects suffer huge teacher shortages and

their classes are frequently taken over by teachers for other subjects. For example, History teachers, who usually also teach Nationalist Education, habitually take over its allocated class time to cover the crammed history curriculum; while Arabic teachers, who usually also teach Religious Education, frequently take it over to focus on the difficult and long Arabic Language curriculum. Exams for pass/fail subjects are not only easy, but grading is also very lenient, so that it is rare that students in fact fail these subjects. In fact, for ‘political’ reasons, students are almost guaranteed to pass Religious Education exams. Therefore, many students may only open these textbooks on the night of the exam, especially Nationalist Education. Attending one or two tutoring/revision sessions in these subjects, coupled with a few days [or even hours] of studying, could be enough to earn students a passing mark. Furthermore, the actual content of the official Religious Studies textbooks should be seen as a few drops in the sea of religious material most- Muslim *and* Christian- students are exposed to today in various types of media and institutional settings. As explained below, History, central as it is for identity issues, is usually hated as one of the most un-stimulating curricula of the school and is not compulsory on all secondary school students. For example, in general secondary, beyond first secondary, Arts (*adabi*) students (currently 70% of students) must study History but not students who choose a Mathematics or Science specialization (*‘ilmi*).

Arabic Language is by far the subject that receives the strongest emphasis and closest attention among the identity subjects. A greater number of class hours are devoted to it and it forms a significant part of student marks. Importantly, significant portions of the Arabic language curriculum—especially the *Qira’a*/Readings and *Qisa*/Novel components of the curriculum, with considerable identity content—constitute an improvement to the exclusionary nature of Egyptian textbooks. This was notable in observing their delivery and reception in classrooms, where not only could students interact with meanings in the readings, but even with some images in the assigned poetry pieces, despite the tedious manner in which they were expected to comment on the poetic techniques. Therefore, although Arabic was generally considered a very difficult subject, especially in terms of complicated grammar rules, memorization and

formulaic analysis of literary texts, some texts were relatively more approachable and engaging to students.

The sample 2009/2010 textbooks examined for this chapter are:

- Nationalist Education for First Secondary Technical Education (for Commercial, Tourism, Professional and Industrial Specializations),
- Nationalist Education for the General Secondary Certificate,
- Arabic Language for Second Secondary General,
- Third Secondary Technical- for Commercial and Hospitality Specializations,
- Third Secondary Technical for Industrial and Agricultural Specializations,
- History for the General Secondary Certificate, and
- Islamic Religious Studies for Third Secondary General.

In addition, I also looked at a number of the corresponding external textbooks/study guides for each subject, as these are the textbooks actually used by students, in addition to with tutoring notes. I used the two most popular external textbook series: Al-Adwa' and al-Mu'alim. I consulted:

- Al-Adwa' for Arabic Language for Third Secondary Technical for Industrial and Agricultural Specializations,
- Al-Adwa' for Islamic Religious Studies for Third Secondary General,
- Al-Mu'alim for Arabic Language for Second Secondary General,
- Al-Mu'alim History for the General Secondary Certificate and
- Al-Mu'alim for Nationalist Education for the General Secondary Certificate.

NATIONALIST EDUCATION TEXTBOOKS

The textbook for Nationalist Education for First Secondary Technical 2009/2010 provides an excellent introduction to the ideal national identity and citizenship project of the late Mubarak era. Apart from a somewhat surprising emphasis on selected Islamic themes at the center of conceptions of ideal citizenship, the textbook resembles the discourse of the National Democratic Party, with its so-called 'New Thought'

affiliated with the rise of Gamal Mubarak. This section focuses on this textbook and offers a number of remarks concerning the differences between it and the textbooks for the general secondary track.

The goals of the Nationalist Education textbook revolve around promoting belonging to the nation and umma (Islamic nation) and the preparation of the ‘good productive citizen’ adjusted to economic competition in a changing world and labor market. The first five goals of the curriculum were listed as follows (Nationalist Education for First Secondary Technical 2009/2010, page 8):

- 1- Presenting the student with concepts and terms that deepen belonging and loyalty to the nation and umma.
- 2- Preparing a generation that participates in and leads economic life in a new world based on competition
- 3- Preparing a good productive responsible citizen aware of the requirements of the labor market
- 4- Training the student on practicing the values and behaviors that allow for launching into a rapidly changing world
- 5- Providing the student with some concepts and contemporary issues in the form of practical practices

Like many other textbooks, a Quranic verse prefaces the textbook and identifies the best person and nation as the one that is more pious:

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)”.
Surat al-Hujurat, verse 13 [Holy Quran 49:13- Yusuf Ali Translation].

The textbook was divided into four chapters: An introduction to Nationalist Education, Human Development, The Values of Progress and the Factors of Success of Advanced Countries, and Performance Development Skills in the Field of Work. The opening of this chapter showed the explicit description of the late Mubarak era citizenship project in education, with its emphasis on Islamist, nationalist, democratic and neoliberal themes. This section details the textbook’s treatment of national identity and citizenship issues. As interesting as they are conceptions of development, progress and ‘the other’ are not dealt with here.

DEFINING NATIONALISM

In terms of national identity, the textbook focused on Islam and Ancient Egyptian civilization as the sources of pride, glory and identity for Egyptians. President Mubarak and his stances vis-a-vis Israel and Arab countries were highlighted as examples of protection of national interest and embodiments of national belonging and a number of youth practices were condemned as lacking in national belonging. There was limited space for Arab nationalism, which was articulated around hopes for an Arab common economic market (an idea which had been failing for decades).

Nationalism was defined as “belonging and love of the nation the human lives in” and the textbook presented students with distinct constructions of national belonging and national identity. In the introductory explanation of Nationalist Education and the justification for its study, the key idea is that the person belonging to a group naturally “owes it the duty of loyalty and sacrifice at any cost”. The example presented to support this claim was “the position of President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak when he was faced with the crisis of Israel’s refusal to withdraw from the Taba strip and its claim that it is part of Israeli land. He stood tall to say: ‘Egypt will not give up one grain of sand, and it will also not close the doors of negotiation’”.

In defining the very notion of nationalism (*wataniya*), the textbook starts out by mentioning that nationalism is one of the most important ‘discoveries’ that the Egyptian people have given humanity, because “we have inherited from our Ancient Egyptian forefathers a nation that they established thousands of years ago and is still present until our day as a testimony to the greatness and genius of the Egyptian” (Nationalist Education for First Secondary Technical 2009/2010, page 15). The text then explained that “nationalism emerged with agriculture when people became attached to the land, settled in it and made sacrifices for it out of a sense of belonging and shared interests”. The next point was that Islam achieved and emphasized equality based on piety, regardless of race or ethnic origin, and was therefore a corrective to

fanatic nationalism, and yet it affirmed nationalism and loyalty to one's nation and umma:

“With the spread of Islam, equality predominated and discrimination was removed, as there was no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab except based on piety, good deeds and an enlightened mind... This is because Islam came to all people, to fulfill the humanity of the human being as a vice-regent of God on earth, and is not exclusive to one race or nationality. This Islamic instinct continued to protect our nation and our nationalism from fanaticism; and belonging and loyalty to nations and the umma was a human instinct blessed by the noble Islam.” (Nationalist Education for First Secondary Technical 2009/2010, page 15).

Three real life examples were then given to clarify the meaning of national belonging. In the first example, the meaning of nationalism was constructed in terms of rejection of foreign linguistic influences and pride in the Arabic language. Three patterns of behavior were presented as “unacceptable” and revealing “the weak nationalist sentiments of some youth” and lack of pride in the Arabic language: a) many youth who wear clothing with foreign script even when it is made in Egypt and those who are wearing them are our Egyptian youth (page 31); b) we see in many Egyptian streets banners that are written in Arabic letters but the meaning is foreign (like Carpet City, Power Clean, High Class); and c) the title ‘Mr.’ has spread in schools instead of *ustaz* so that the Religious Education teacher and the Arabic Language teacher are being called ‘mister’ or ‘monsieur’. A second example was given of Mubarak’s effort ‘to remove the Iraqi aggression on Kuwait’ in 1991 and students were asked to reflect on how they feel as Egyptians and Arabs about this stance, who the losers are in this war, and whether this position served the establishment of a common Arab economic market, and on the local and regional repercussions of this stance. The third example is a narrative about Mustafa Kamil, a nationalist leader who coined the famous phrase ‘if I were not Egyptian, I would have wished to be Egyptian’, as a symbol and embodiment of true nationalism:

“Mustafa Kamil has struggled/made jihad [*jahada*] for the independence of Egypt and its liberty internally and externally and exposed the faults of colonialism using the Dinshway incident until Lord Cromer was forced to resign. He also established the *Liva* Newspaper and the Nationalist Party to spread awareness and fire up the nationalist sentiment of citizens against British occupation. Mustafa Kamel’s

jihad/struggle was not only slogans or speeches but constant movement, communication and messages overflowing with patriotism and expressing the feelings of a revolting Egypt. Mustafa Kamil was not a seeker of fame or power, but was a nationalist symbol concerned only with his nation's affairs regardless of the expenses and sacrifice in effort and money" (Nationalist Education for First Secondary Technical 2009/2010, page 32).

The three examples implied condemnation of lack of youth and society's nationalism (reduced to linguistic symbolism) implying their susceptibility to western influence, nationalism as embodied in the Mubarak's stances on regional issues and nationalism as embodied in pre-1952 struggle against British occupation. Nationalism was therefore defined around themes that will recur throughout the textbooks: lack of youth national belonging (coupled with notions of bad citizenship), pride in the intellectual contributions of Ancient Egypt and Islam, and nationalism as a struggle (that has already been concluded) against foreign occupation of Egyptian land.

CITIZENSHIP

The textbook also introduces the key themes of the late Mubarak era citizenship project encountered in the rest of the textbooks through descriptions of the 'bad citizen', the centrality of 'science and faith' in the construction of ideal citizenship, the renaissance promise of volunteerism and developmental NGOs, along with the displacement of citizenship altogether through the focus on nationhood defined around stances against the 'other'. In terms of citizenship rights, the textbooks presents the rhetoric of a supposed support for democracy and freedoms, denial of sectarian tension and discrimination and presents its supposed achievements in the social sphere, such as the declaration of education as Egypt's national project.

From the very first pages of the textbook- following the example of nationalist sacrifice by Mubarak in relation to Taba- students are invited to reflect, by way of contrast, on "the individuals who commit unacceptable acts in society from crimes and drug dealing, waste/ abuse (*ibdar*) of public funds, non-compliance with the manners of

public roads, lack of environmental awareness, lack of respect for the rights of others and many of the events we see in newspapers and different media day and night” (Nationalist Education for First Secondary Technical 2009/2010, page 14). The ‘nationalist’ President who takes a stance against ‘the other’ is contrasted with the ‘bad citizen’ who commits “unacceptable” acts. In the middle are the ‘Egyptian models’ to be proud of in all fields like “Avicenna, Jamal Hamdan, Mustafa Musherafa, Naguib Mahfouz, Ahmad Zuweil, Magdi Yacoub and other Arab scientists across history” presented to students “in order to take them as role models and become acquainted with their scientific achievements” (Nationalist Education for First Secondary Technical 2009/2010, page 14).

In addition to its articulation of the Good Citizen around religious adherence, volunteerism, and hard work, the textbook also devoted a chapter to describing the desirable individual qualities that lead to national ‘progress’. These values: time management, democracy, excellence in performing one’s work, and “community participation” (charity and volunteerism), while clearly linked to the ‘causes of the progress of advanced states’, were often framed within Islamic traditions and backing (especially in the areas of democracy and excellence) and /or linked to the exemplary stances of President Mubarak. For example, the treatment of democracy was focused on how the principles of democracy had their grounding in Islamic tradition, how the regime supports democracy and how the education system supports democracy. Democracy is defined as a system where “power is left to those whom the people chose to handle their affairs, with an expansion of the circle of participation of people in responsibility and decision making” and the citizen’s right to express their opinions in complete freedom through “legitimate channels”, so that the people are the decision-makers and participants in directing the agencies of the state and in oversight over them (page 65). The textbook emphasizes that Islam had called for democracy and its values and principles and applied those principles 14 centuries ago while Europe was in its dark ages. The democratic values of freedom of belief, brotherhood, equality, individual accountability and consultation (shura) were given textual support from the Quran and Hadith.

The textbook then describes the state's support for democracy and its protection and defense of freedoms, highlighting Mubarak's emphasis on "consulting with opposition leaders in all situations that necessitate the adoption of a unified stance" and his insistence on the right of youth to "participate with their opinions in confronting society's problems" (page 67). The textbook then moves to MOE's efforts in supporting democracy through initiatives such as Debating Societies, The School Parliament, the TV show A Dialogue with Adults, the introduction and deepening of concepts of tolerance, national unity and rejection of extremism, and convening video-conference meetings with teachers to receive their feedback. The text then engages in further claims in the following lines:

The main axis of education is that which is based on democracy and social peace, which are the natural outcomes of good education. The student who has been trained on understanding, dialogue and courageous expression of opinion, and acceptance of the opinion of others will be raised with the seeds of democracy within him and becomes the responsible citizen who participates with conscious will in choosing his leaders, a believer in team work and able to coexist with people (Nationalist Education for First Secondary Technical 2009/2010, page 68).

Therefore, freedom of speech was the main citizenship right affirmed by the textbooks, while being denied in reality by the police state in most cases. There was no further mention or explanation of political rights, the political system, or the existing political parties. In general, the textbook presented a very limited conception of citizenship in terms of 'rights', be they protective, provision or participation rights.

In the place of any language of rights or public service provision, the textbook framed the issue around the state's role in human development. This textbook is the most explicit in identifying the developmental ideology of the regime, which is not merely neoliberal, but explicitly seeks to displace the responsibility for social issues, social provision and indeed 'renaissance' unto 'society'. The lesson titled: The Role of the State in Human Development, was divided into brief sections on education, training, health, the environment and self-education. A number of listings of laws issued, national conferences held and the declaration of education as Egypt's National Project were presented as reflecting the interest of the state and its 'achievements' in relation to

'human development'. This was followed by a section on Activating the Role of Civil Society in Human Resource Development, which was associated with the Mubarak era, had contributed to solving transportation, education and housing problems and is the hope for a true renaissance:

“The term ‘civil society’ began to appear since President Mubarak came to power in the beginning of the eighties, which is society with all its civil nongovernmental and non-profit organizations and institutions that contributes in economic social and political activities and conclusively and effectively confront the chronic problems the state is suffering from in the fields of transportation, education and housing. It is futile to rely completely on the state to solve these problems, and the hope in bringing about a real renaissance will not come about except by reviving the institutions and organization of civil society” (Nationalist Education for First Secondary Technical 2009/2010, page 50).

While the reference is to ‘civil society’, the ‘civil society’ constructed in the regime’s discourse is made up of organizations that provide services and assistance to the poor, most of which are either faith-based or funded through international organizations. The President, however, is indirectly credited with this explosion of charitable citizenship. It notably, ‘civil society’ is not used by the textbook to refer to advocacy groups, professional syndicates or human rights organizations, which were more typically the targets of periodic repression and condemnation.

While the focus on development implicitly acknowledges the existence of social problems, another section implicitly and briefly acknowledges the existence of inequality and unemployment. This came within a general discussion about globalization and its critics, where inequality (in the world, in general) is caused by global patterns and is unavoidable. A brief discussion of globalization presented a rather balanced view of the arguments put forward by critics (inequality, unemployment, environmental impact, Americanization, power of multinational corporations) and proponents of globalization (offering technological solutions in many areas, better products due to competition, greater international cooperation). It concluded that globalization is simply a fact that has taken over the world and “cannot be avoided by hiding in the caves of the past” (page 35).

National unity and combating extremism are also highlighted as aspects of good citizenship, with a section on the role of the state in supporting national unity and preserving society's values (the ironic—and as always 'nationalist—example given being the rejection of foreign intervention in educational curricula) and the role of Egyptians in terms of 'commitment to their values in light of global changes'. The role of Egyptians- in a world defined by technological, communications, and economic changes- was to achieve excellence in their work in order to perfect local production, to buy local products to reduce unemployment, to refrain from overzealous buying of unnecessary foreign products, and to arm themselves with spiritual values and avoid psychological illnesses (page 30). Egyptians are portrayed as a tolerant people 'whose hearts fanaticism had not entered'. Sectarian incidents are declared as attempts at weakening the nation. They were linked to 'old attempts' practiced by the British when they were occupying Egypt and tried to cause disunity by claiming to protect Coptic Christians; who realized this plan and emerged in demonstrations for the liberation of Egypt; so that the 'conspiracies' that caused strife between the sons of the same nation were destroyed.

Once more, it was the external enemy that was the cause of problems, not any concrete state or societal discourses or practices. The textbook affirmed that all Egyptians have the same rights and duties; and that places of worship provide services to all Egyptians "without discrimination; providing educational, health and cultural services to all sectors of society with the goal of developing society. President Muhammad Hosni Mubarak affirmed this fact by issuing his important political decision whereby the 7th of January [Coptic Christmas] became a national holiday in Egypt to all Muslims and Christians, which is a clear message to anyone who dares to tamper with national unity in our dear Egypt" (page 72). Sectarian tension was therefore 1) foreign-directed, 2) countered by the declaration of a new national holiday and 3) was not really a problem because there was no discrimination in Egypt or fanaticism among its people.

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE GENERAL TRACK

The content and focus of the general secondary Nationalist Education textbook for first secondary, as well as for the general secondary certificate, were markedly different from the technical secondary textbook discussed above. They significantly replicated material studied by students in history and geography curricula throughout the various educational stages. They did provide, however, additional brief discussions of the intellectual trends in Egypt in the first half of the twentieth century, introducing students (superficially) to the work of a number of well-known Egyptian figures. While operating within the same general nationhood and citizenship framework as the technical education textbook, notions of citizenship were not as explicitly articulated; as in discussions of the Good Citizen, the centrality of religious adherence to citizenship, the role of civil society or the importance of democracy. It is not clear whether the ‘New Thought’ of the National Democratic Party under Gamal Mubarak the technical education textbook, had simply not yet arrived to general secondary, or whether there was an intention to provide redundant material so that overburdened general secondary students do not have to study additional material, or whether the greater emphasis on Islam at the center of citizenship was specifically targeted at working class students in technical education’; an issue discussed in the final section of this chapter.

The first secondary textbook was divided into sections on: the Historical Importance of Egypt’s Location, the Genius of the Egyptian people (which focuses on the established of the first centralized state in history and details the apparatuses of the Ancient Egyptian state, the production of paper, and the wonders of construction) and the Crusades and the military responses to them. These are all issues covered elsewhere in geography and history textbooks. The second part of the textbook provides discussions of a number ‘modernist’, liberal, nationalist and Islamist figures (clearly ignoring any leftist figures): Rafa’a al-Tahtawy, Muhamad Abdu, Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayid, Sayyid Darwish and ‘A’isha Abdul Rahman. The presentations were very cursory and best resembled bullet points to be memorized as opposed to detailed narratives to reflect upon. For example, the section on the revivalist ‘modernist’ leader Muhammad Abdu

emphasized a number of discrete ideas: his respect for the mind (reason) and its use in explaining the Quran and the rejection of blind adherence to tradition, the compatibility of Islam with the demands of modern times, the permissibility of relying on non-Muslims in areas that “benefit Muslims”, the permissibility of wearing hats and depositing money in savings accounts, encouraging learning of foreign languages, that predestination does not mean surrender and despair but reliance on God through work, the importance of perseverance and trust in God, and finally his rejection and condemnation of Sufi Orders that ignore the value of work and call for abandoning life in the name of reliance on God. Despite the obvious importance of these issues, the textbook was not so much inviting students to reflect on them, as it was attempting to set them as authoritative and close them for discussion or debate. They were probably too cursory to serve either purpose.

In terms of the provision citizenship rights, the textbook for the general secondary certificate mentioned very briefly the achievement of the values of social solidarity in terms of social insurance, pensions and insurance against old age and sickness from *before* 1952. These were expressed by the text as “Islamic” values. The text then states that these rights were expanded by the July Revolution and that recently the state ensured the provision of services to citizens through its specialized National Councils: the National Council For Women, the National Council For Childhood and Motherhood, and the National Council for Human Rights. It should be noted that the work of these councils is very limited in terms of any impact on the ground and much of it is actually funded through donor projects and private donors, not through the state. Furthermore, instead of crediting the Nasser regime with the expansion of social protection, the pre-1952 regime is somehow credited with the ‘achievement’ of these values. While the values are claimed as Islamic, this is nowhere else used to provide religious grounding for an understanding of these forms social protection as part of a more comprehensive understanding of Islam or of a religion-centered citizenship.

ARABIC LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS

This section focuses on the textbook for Arabic Language for Third Secondary Technical Schools for Agricultural and Industrial Specializations for 2009/2010 and draws upon issues of identity and citizenship in the other textbooks, especially the novel: *Wa Islamah*. The readings in the three Arabic Language textbooks examined in this chapter present a varied collection of topics falling within the nationhood and citizenship framework defined by the ‘faith and science’ discourse. Reading topics in the selected textbooks also emphasize the impact of Arab culture in Europe, the disadvantages of smoking and drugs, the Environment, or essays on famous Egyptians. In addition to the Readings section, poetry pieces included pieces reflecting on the universe and nature, love of the nation, and memories of the past. To give an overall image of textbook Readings and their themes, the content of the Arabic Language for Third Secondary Technical Schools for Agricultural and Industrial Specializations for 2009/2010 can be taken as an example:

- Justice
- Islamic Civilization: The Impact of Arab Culture in Europe
- Population and Environmental Issues: The Hidden Enemy
- The Age of Scientific Achievements: Can We Catch Up with It?
- Sportsmanship and How We Can Promote it
- Social and Literary Figures: The Liberator of Women: Qasim Amin,
- Sinai [a geographical description]
- Smoking and Addiction
- Currency: A Means not An End [a historical and economic analysis of the emergence of currencies and their use]
- Humor is Therapy
- Fine Arts and the Position of Islam on Them
- An Article by Muhammad Abdu
- A Portrait of A Poor Girl [Poetic article by Al-Rafi‘i]
- Article by nationalist leader Saad Zaghloul [one of the main leaders of the 1919 Revolution against British occupation, upon his return from exile in 1921].
- Friendship
- Manhood [emphasizing honor, self-respect, duty] by Ahmad Amin, an Islamic Azharite writer.
- A poem by Umar ‘Asal [with faith and science we protect youth and build Egypt]

The textbooks contain numerous pieces of readings and poetry on the nation and the duty to protect and serve it. Literary pieces included a sermon by a pre-Islamic poet

urging his tribe to fight the enemy (because dying in dignity is better than life in humiliation [*thul*]). Another typical example of how national belonging was articulated in the textbooks is the poem of the celebrated poet Ahmad Shawqi from the pre-1952 era, which includes the famous verses that almost elevates the nation over heaven itself: *watani law shughiltu bil kbuldi 'anhu, naza'atni ilayhi bil-kbuldi nafs*⁵⁷.

However, even when the textbook discusses anti-British nationalist Saad Zaghloul, the iconic figure of the 1919 'Revolution' against British occupation, there is no discussion of revolution or struggle per se. The emphasis is rather on negotiations with the British and de-mobilization of the people. In the article, Zaghloul expresses his gratitude for the reception upon his return from exile by the patriotic, conscientious and enthusiastic Egyptian people, bursting with nationalist sentiment ("their hearts beating with true patriotism/nationalism"), confirming that he will proceed with formal negotiations [with the British regarding independence] and that all that remains is for each of us to return to his work; "and to believe that he is increasing with his work "a treasure to the nation's treasures", and "a power to its powers". Zaghloul declares, "All to work! Let us lift up the lighthouse of the nation, and elevate its word, and long live Egypt". This was the type of political speech the textbook authors could include, emphasizing that patriotic Egyptians who need to "go back to work", to disengage from the revolution (demonstrations and civil disobedience against British rule) and in this way add to the power of Egypt; the same discourse that was employed in order to pacify people after the deposition of Mubarak.

Literary pieces also included a central piece of Muslim heritage: the speech of the first caliph Abu Bakr upon assuming the caliphate after the death of the Prophet, which emphasizes political consultation with the people and equal rights to rich and poor:

I have been given the authority over you, and I am not the best of you. If I do well, help me; and if I do wrong, set me right. Sincere regard for truth is loyalty and

⁵⁷ The verse has been subject to many interpretation but basically implies that the poet would be conflicted if he had to choose between heaven and the nation; a statement which has been taken to put the nation above God himself.

disregard for truth is treachery. The weak amongst you shall be strong with me until I have secured his rights, if God wills; and the strong amongst you shall be weak with me until I have wrested from him the rights of others, if God wills. Obey me so long as I obey God and His Messenger. But if I disobey God and His Messenger, ye owe me no obedience. Rise for your prayer, God have mercy upon you.

As in the Nationalist Education textbook, and as in *Wa Islamah* below, love and belonging to the nation is supreme, Islam is the main source of political inspiration and nationalism is confined to struggles against the other. The centrality of religion was reflected in the explicit desired sense of national identity and citizenship as well as in frequent use of religious content, readings and exercise questions. As Khalil (2009) notes, direct or derived religious material amounts to 30% of Arabic curricula in general education. Under the heading “With faith and science we protect youth and build Egypt”, an excerpt from the poem by a lesser known poet named Umar ‘Asal (roughly translated) declares:

And Egypt whose banner youth raise high
the day of victory was achieved and the clouds cleared
It wants the youth of the Nile a blessed generation
through religion and piety growing up and guided

Grammar and literary analysis texts—that were not presented and analyzed in terms of content and meaning—reflected similar features, with focus on the Quranic texts, discourses of Early Muslims, discourses by 20th century writers on Early Muslims or texts involving nationalist (pre-1952 or 1973 war) themes or general interests such as friendship and smoking. In general, Quranic and religious examples represented 10 to 25% of examples given for literary analysis or grammar, while this was higher in the parallel external textbook examined here, reaching 50-100% of examples in some sections.

In terms of citizenship, protective, provision and participation ‘rights’ were not mentioned in any of the Arabic Language textbooks. However, two of the textbooks open with readings on justice, which were fully based on, and referred back, to early Islam or the Quran and other grounding Islamic narratives. The first lesson in one of the textbooks (Technical Secondary- Agriculture and Industry Specialization) presented

a more politicized discourse that linked Islamic notions of justice to the state, its governance and the condition of the nation. It explained that justice is the basis of religion, governance and the civilizing (development/ prosperity) of the world, emphasizing that the nation is only in good stature if there is protection for the weak and the deprived. The stated main ideas of the lesson included: The justice of the ruler is to rule by what God has decreed, Religion's call to justice, the Prophet's cautioning from injustice, the just have a high status among people and reward from God, the history of Islam is based on justice, and (caliph) Abu-Bakr establishes justice as the just Prophet had taught him.

In the textbook for the general secondary certificate, the lesson on justice stated that the whole history of Islam was established on justice alone and equality in everything; that Islam made justice the basis of all triumph and blessing; and that the unjust will be the fuel of hellfire. The stated main ideas in the reading included themes such as: 'the concept of justice in the Holy Quran'; 'with Godly justice the conditions of human societies improve'; and 'justice is the first of God's attributes on which he establishes his creation'. Therefore, the only readings that related to state-society relations were fully based on Islamic and Islamist framework: where the progress of the nation and the establishment of justice was premised on and stemmed from 'Islam' in general, and not on any other—more concrete—notion of legal, political, economic or social 'rights'.

WA ISLAMAH

The theme of nationalism defined around struggle with the 'other' is best crystallized than in the mandated novel for general secondary Arabic throughout the Mubarak era: *Wa Islamah*. Authored by Ali Ahmad Bakathir, who has been called "the pioneer of Modern Islamic/ Islamist Literature" [*ra'id al-ruwaya al-Islamiya*], the novel seems to have been introduced into the curriculum as early as 1945, although it was removed after the 1952 Revolution; and the author was reportedly spared clampdown by the Nasserite regime due to the prestige and influence of the novel, despite links with the Muslim

Brotherhood (Hamid 2010). The novel is also part of the curriculum of other Arab countries, such as the United Arab Emirates and was produced as a major feature film which continues to be frequently broadcast in Egypt. Revolving around the struggle against and defeat of the invading Crusades and Mogul Empire, it is an Islamist nationalist novel par excellence. Its key premise is that the ultimate expression of Islamic and nationalist identity is the defense of the nation against foreign forces repeatedly attempting to subdue it. It emphasizes the importance of personal morality based on the Islamist idea that “abandoning Islam” leads to foreign occupation and all the misery caused by it. In its emphasis on the role of religious authorities in relation to the war effort, it also lends great importance to their fatwas as the legitimate guidance for the ruler and community.

Wa Islamah includes themes of the importance of obedience to the good ruler who establishes jihad, stories of collaborators with the invaders, betrayals between princes, and the ruler’s tactics in mobilizing the war effort. It portrays Egyptians as docile people, but with inert power when it comes to the defense of the nation from external enemies. As one teacher, put it while explaining the incidents in one chapter, “Qutuz called for jihad and this is the character of Egyptians... the Egyptian personality is moderate in its reactions... When jihad was announced, people refrained from vice and sins, they refrained from alcohol consumption, houses of worship were filled up... this is a trait in Egyptians from ancient times and still exists until now. The true caliber of Egyptians shows in trying times”.

The novel is also notable in how, like most historical constructions across the textbooks, it is concerned not at all with the conditions of ordinary people, justice, poverty or inequality (for example, the burden of the war effort or the huge tax levies on them). Instead, Egyptians are portrayed as willingly and honorably sacrificing for the nation. When the (bad) Mumluk Princes reject making extra payments for the war effort, the ruler decides to take these funds by force. He then collects more money from every able Egyptian household, while sending preachers across the country to emphasize the duty and virtue of supporting the (defensive) jihad effort. The ruler,

Qutuz, is presented as heroic and exemplary; and the Egyptian people are praised for their sacrifices.

One scene in the novel highlights its key message. The long lost beloved of Qutuz was injured in the final battle and when he ran to her and cried out: ‘oh my beloved, oh my dear’, she urged him to continue fighting and said to him, ‘do not say oh my beloved, say oh my Islam: “*wa Islamab*”’. As one teacher in the girls’ private school commented in explaining the final scene, “so this sentence if you understand it correctly means: do not put personal interests above the interest of the nation.” Clearly, the nation, Islam and “Jihad”- the name of the beloved of Qutuz- were all merged. The jihad the novel refers to and sanctions throughout is the jihad against the aggression of a foreign ‘other’, not against the vices of the self, local tyrants or to establish a better or just society.

REPRODUCING THE NATION

The following examples of exam essay topics in general secondary certificate Arabic Language past exams reveal rather vividly the desired sense of nationhood and citizenship supported by the curriculum:

- Love of the nation is part of (religious) faith and should be translated to words and deeds. Write expressing your noble feelings, and what youth should do to serve their nation.
- Egypt will rise with the thought of its scientists, the arms of its youth, the flourishing of its economy, the strength of its army, and its adherence to its religious values.
- Egypt is in greatest need of the efforts of all of its sons, in order to compensate what it has missed due to its engagements in wars, and to achieve its major launch in the field of construction and development.
- Egypt, God’s *kinana* [*lit.*: arrow bag] on his earth, has unified its people and sacrificed its youth and its money to fight off the barbaric attacks of the Tartars and Europeans; and still has the prominence in defending its nation and unifying it. Write about the role that Egypt undertook, and undertakes in the defense of the Arab nation, and achieving its unity.
- Egypt has adopted monumental stances towards its Arab nation across history, and it has never rescinded in carrying out this duty and its support to the Palestinian people is the best example of this.
- The 25th of April commemorates the liberation of the Sinai. Write a message of love and appreciation to our brave soldiers, clarifying the hopes and efforts exerted to develop this dear part of Egypt’s land.

- “Education is a matter of national security” is a slogan that we should work to achieve, and it is the route to a productive citizen and a strong economy; and a weapon to protect the nation.

Although no guiding content is spelled out in the textbook, the essay topics build on the overall spirit of the textbooks and quite succinctly reflect the key political messages that students are expected to echo. As apparent in the first essay topic on the list above, love of nation and faith were intimately linked and students were expected to expound on their ‘noble feelings’ of love of the nation. The rest of the themes are also well represented, in terms of the importance of science, Egypt being under constant external threat and the duty of citizens in developing the country. It was clear to students that only answers that fit very closely with the spirit and letter of textbook discourse would receive good marks. It was understood that essays that did not toe the line would either be marked down as a minimum measure or the student could fail the essay or the subject as a whole.

Although most cases receive little or no national coverage, opposition newspapers occasionally reported on cases where students or teachers were penalized for voicing any opinions critical of the regime, however mildly. In one of the more publicized cases, a technical education student in Luxor had attempted suicide in 2008 after failing to find employment because employers feared harassment by state security if they hired him. The student was famous for his phrase “an unjust leader and an oppressed people” written on an examination answer sheet for which his school failed him in the final exams. In 2010, a preparatory school student who had written an oppositional essay on her Arabic exam received a failing grade, underwent security investigations, and was going to be made to repeat the year if her case had not reached national media. In fact, even after the removal of Mubarak, police officers stormed a school in Qena in an attempt to obtain the names of students who had been demonstrating to request the removal of Mubarak’s photographs from official textbooks and for the removal of the Governor of Qena (Umana’ Shurta Yaqtahimun 2011). Despite larger margins of freedom, expression in the schools was clearly not going to simply be ‘free’ after the ‘Revolution’.

As a student of the system myself, I remember receiving a lower than expected mark on an essay and going to the teacher to discuss what had went wrong. He implicitly let me know that he had to mark the essay down because of its oppositional content. It seemed bizarre to me that a teacher would care to do such a thing for a routine essay [in a private school], not even on an MOE-organized national exam. I can now appreciate the extent to which teachers are monitored and their every mark—in fact, any of their or their students’ writing—may be scrutinized by supervisors and cause them trouble with security personnel in the ministry and beyond. It is not only subject supervisors and other supervisors who monitor teachers, but this may be coordinated with security personnel at each school and educational district. In fact, throughout their own schooling and university years, teachers also undergo different forms of political monitoring and investigations by State Security for engagement in oppositional action of any kind. However, students who do not wish to engage in flattery to the regime or give credence to its claims have to choose non-political essay questions, of which there was always at least one topic among the three choices given on final exams, on topics of relating to friendship and family, or issues such as smoking or drugs.

ISLAM, NEOLIBERALISM AND THE BAD CITIZEN

NATIONAL IDENTITY

Across the textbooks examined, nationalism was defined around love, belonging and sacrifice to a country that was under continuous attack by foreign and outside forces. Exemplary nationalism was embodied in struggles that had been concluded against foreign occupation of Egyptian land. Religious faith, science, volunteerism and charity on the part of citizens were the means to lifting Egypt up into development, progress and ‘renaissance’. The focus on nationalism and the besieged nation across the textbooks served to conceal issues of citizenship and the actual conditions of the

people; who were not part of the story of the nation, except when they were subjected to ‘the other’ and fought against its injustices. In this sense, the West is established as the clear ‘other’ and ‘we’ as Muslims and Egyptians as the victims.

Islam—as a moral and nationalist force—was central to constructions of national identity and citizenship articulated throughout the textbooks. The textbooks presented a solid base for the propagation of the ‘Islamist Creed’ (Sobhy 2009): that only the faithful adherence to Islam could bring about power and prosperity. As in many mainstream Islamist discourses, this was accomplished while removing potentially oppositional themes of Islam and Islamism and redefining it almost entirely around personal morality and individual responsibility.

The notion of the nation presented by the curricula is centered on pride in Egypt, especially in its Ancient Egyptian past and struggle against waves of foreign occupation. Love and sacrifice for the country is elaborated and spread across the textbooks of different subjects, from poetry and novels to history and nationalist education, throughout the different stages and tracks of education. The key positive quality attributed to Egyptians is their sacrifice for the nation in times of war and is typically supported by Islamic traditions that credit Egyptians with special warrior status (that they are ‘the finest of earth’s soldiers’- incidentally based on a weak Hadith); in contrast to public discourses decrying the weakness and docility of the Egyptian army and the scientific and military superiority of Israel. The need to give religious backing to nationalist sentiments perhaps already signaled a deep crisis of ‘Egyptian’ nationalism and of the state; where love for Egypt is not in fact simply ‘natural’, but needs additional justification. It signals as well that such legitimacy is best derived from religion, so that even if the nation does not compel student to feel love and belonging, it can be pointed out that Islam instructs them to do so. This is similar to the commonly circulated discourses that students reached out to in search for justification to love the nation. As described in the following chapter, “Egypt is mentioned in the Quran” was one of the few narratives students used to reflect on their sense of love and belonging to the country [or to avoid actually answering the question].

The repression which the Mubarak regime has periodically unleashed on Islamists, whether they engage in violence or not, has been “tempered by willingness to permit Islamicization to make significant inroads into areas previously secularized, presumably out of the calculation that accommodation and even appeasement will not necessarily buy off the Islamists, but will deprive them of symbols which they could utilize to mobilize the masses against the government” (Springborg 2003, 24). In fact, technical education textbooks seemed to be distinctly more Islamist than general secondary textbooks. This may have been related to a greater fear of the spread of more militant and politicized Islamist discourses and recruitment among working class students. The Mubarak regime promoted a de-politicized version of Islamism that steered away from the role of the state in ‘applying Islam’ and cohered with the U.S. and western desires and regional interests (Sobhy 2009). It was structured around and cohered with the neoliberal and authoritarian citizenship project of the regime, which erases from view almost all political or economic citizen rights. Its focus was on improving the moral character of each individual. Islam is redefined around these qualities of personal morality, chastity, charity/ volunteer work and industrial and business entrepreneurship; and it is through the cultivation of these qualities by each individual, that the real goals of Islamism can be achieved: power and prosperity, or ‘renaissance’.

The textbooks gave very little attention to the domestic practices of the Muslim empires, the evolution of Muslim legal thought, practice, and institutions, as well as the conflicts between different Muslim political forces, focusing instead on the ‘nationalist’ struggles of Muslim empires against other empires. Islam is portrayed as the source of justice, equality, freedom, fraternity, tolerance and democracy. This contributes to a view of Muslim history as one of unity, power and piety (see Sobhy 2007 for a brief overview) reinforcing the key Islamist message that Islam is the solution; that has historically led and would lead to ‘power’: national independence and dominance, as well as prosperity. Furthermore, as witnessed in different classrooms, the curriculum as taught in schools in the different years is fully embedded in a “mainstream Islamist”

(Sobhy 2009) sensibility. For example, this Arabic Language grammar practice piece, given by a teacher in a 2nd secondary general classroom, puts forward the key Islamist premise that links personal religious adherence with national and global security, prosperity and progress:

“humanity will not be able to enjoy safety and stability except if it returns to the heavenly messages, to their refined values, free from personal interests and extremism, at which point every citizen feels that he is responsible before God, so he performs his work with sincerity and honesty, watching his Lord, delivering the dues of his nation, and this security predominates, and love spreads among the children of the nation, and they reach heights of progress and prosperity.”

Similarly, this grammar practice piece from one of the most popular external textbooks (Al-Mu‘alim, 2nd Secondary General, 296) states:

“The world is about to explode with weapons in the hands of powerful states. People are starting to be fed up of the control of poor states by rich states. Famines are usurping souls while grains are thrown into the sea so that they become scarce. Is there a way to remedy this condition? The way is religion which mandated the meeting of people on the basis of compassion, mercy and cooperation; a meeting which should bear its fruit. There is no way for the removal of vice from the world except through religion, for it tames instincts, strengthens the soul, establishes justice, organizes human relations on the basis of virtuous morals, and shows that (virtue) and justice do not discriminate between races, but are applied to the people of the earth.”

So the message is that the injustice and inequality in the world is caused by powerful rich exploitative non-Muslim countries that dump grains into the ocean while poor people die of famine. However, if these nations faithfully adhere to religion, justice, mercy and cooperation would prevail. No parallel message is provided concerning stark inequalities *within* Egyptian society or any other Muslim society at any point in history; nor *between* Muslim states at the present or at any point in history; or any reference to forms injustice and exploitation carried out by Muslim states. Injustice and exploitation are externalized to the non-Muslim realm and justice and prosperity are premised on adherence to religion.

CITIZENSHIP

The overriding nationalist and Islamist themes almost completely overshadowed other constructions of the state, state-society relations and citizenship in the textbooks, especially in relation to legal, constitutional, political and economic rights. In fact, they served to merge the state with the nation and define and confine politics to nationalist issues centered on relations with ‘the other’. Not only was the ‘withdrawal’ of the state from the provision of social services ignored and erased from view, volunteerism through ‘developmental’ NGOs was actually presented as the only hope for real renaissance. With much rhetoric about citizen duty to shoulder responsibility for improving conditions in the country and “lead economic life in a new world based on competition”, the textbooks reflected the regime’s desire to fashion and idealize neoliberal subjectivities. There was an attempt to lay the ground and legitimize a variant of neoliberal citizenship; but one essentially stripped of the most basic citizen rights guaranteed in other neoliberal settings, such as in many countries of the Global North.

The thin veneer of legitimacy on which the Mubarak regime finally promoted itself is in fact evident in its Nationalist Education curricula. Textbooks referred to “accomplishments” on the social front such as “the establishment of the National Council for Motherhood and Childhood”. Most ironically, they emphasized “education” as the National Project of Egypt promoted under Mubarak; a failed and non-existent project in the view of almost all students. Overall, there was very little discussion of protection and participation rights and the examples given of provision rights seemed more ironic- and generated sarcasm when presented in classrooms- than actually reflecting services provided. There was almost no mention of the fundamental concerns of citizens in terms of poverty, rising inflation and unemployment or poor education. As reflected in textbook discourses, the erasure of ‘poverty’ from official discourse has been a key feature of the neoliberal period in Egypt, where the regime refrained from even the use of the word ‘poverty’ or ‘the poor’, using instead the ambiguous and all-encompassing term “those of limited income” (*mahdudi al-dakhl*).

While the textbooks sometimes explicitly promoted the desired autonomous flexible neoliberal citizen subjectivity, overall they actually sought to erase any notion of citizenship from view. Citizenship, as a relationship between state and citizen, is obscured by discursively merging the state with the nation, so that the primary and only relationship of the individual is to the nation. This serves to legitimize the definition of that relationship as a non-reciprocal one-way relationship of loyalty, sacrifice and personal excellence on the part of the individual for the sake of the nation. Consequently, there was little treatment of the state's role as a provider of social services, such as poverty reduction, healthcare, education; and key public services, such as security and the rule of law, and close to nothing on any role in relation to job-creation and unemployment. That is, the state was not constructed in its citizenship-related roles. Protection rights (rule of law and protection from discrimination) were hardly referred to. Provision rights (economic and social welfare rights) were sometimes briefly presented as achievements of the regime and participation rights were briefly listed in the Nationalist Education textbook as defining the Good Citizen, but received little detailed treatment in the textbook itself or in other more important textbooks.

Ideology and domestic politics as a whole were almost entirely ignored. While Egypt's state socialist experience was given very limited treatment and portrayed in more nationalist and less ideological light, even economic liberalization under Sadat was ignored. Within the overall Islamist framework of nationhood and the actual repression of any expression of political rights, citizenship became more easily and intuitively defined around personal morality understood in religious terms, where the Good Citizen is the one who adheres to religious teaching and improves his own personal conduct for the sake of the elevation of the nation.

An example of how the textbook used nationalism to obscure citizenship, social issues and the social history of Egypt is how the History textbook described the conditions of Egyptians society under British occupation. Here, poor social conditions are a reason to reject British rule and it becomes appropriate to show the injustice befalling the

Egyptian people under occupation. The neglect of education by the British, its high fees and limited recipients are highlighted, as well as the introduction of English as the main language of instruction. Even the otherwise ‘forbidden’ term ‘poverty’ is used. The spread of feudalism, poor distribution of agricultural land and its concentration in the hands of the few are examples of the negative social realities under colonialism, where most peasants were deprived (*mu’damin*), suffering poverty and need; and workers had no rights protecting them from the oppression (*istibdad*) of employers, a pension law or social insurance; so that ‘major capitalists exploited workers in the worst manner’. This sudden snapshot of social conditions simply stands alone across almost the entire textbook. There is no mention of how these conditions compared to the preceding ruling dynasties, nor indeed the succeeding regimes, and certainly not to corresponding contemporary conditions. The passage is clearly an abridged remnant of Nasserite textbooks. However, it serves to show that the only citizenship-related and the politicized references- to capitalism, exploitation, poverty, social insurance and to ‘the people’ as workers and peasants- retained in history textbooks 40 years later were those that referred to conditions under rule by the ‘other’. The other can be responsible for poverty, inequality and lack of access to education. Otherwise such terms and issues are hardly ever referred to. Another notable discussion of state provision and taxation policies was under Islamic dynasties. This was most concretely presented in detailing taxes on agricultural land, determined based on the religion of the holder.⁵⁸ This was followed by an explanation of the categories of distribution of *zakah* to the poor and needy, in one of the rare mentions of “the poor” in the text. Here, poverty was related to an Islamic framework and linked to the ‘individual’ religious duty of paying alms, albeit regulated by the state, but not a citizenship rights per se. It was therefore far closer to charitable citizenship than legally guaranteed social protection.

The textbooks attempt to provide a legitimizing discourse for poverty, inequality and corruption in terms of promoting a neoliberal subjectivity where individuals must learn

⁵⁸ Khiraj was taken from non-Muslims (an unspecified amount in the textbook, although 50% of the produce of Jewish lands is listed in the same lesson), and zakah was taken from Muslims or converts to Islam (10%). The *jizya*, another tax on non-Muslims is mentioned, along with a discussion about how it is not an Islamic innovation.

to ‘adapt’ to ‘market conditions’ and globalization is inevitable; along with a selective reading of Islam where personal responsibility, morality and accountability is extended to encompass and determine the political and economic fate of the nation. The onus is on each individual to live up to standards of integrity and to be ‘conscientious’. There is no role for the institutions of the state or the legal system to ensure accountability. This is in stark contrast to Islamic and Islamist discourses that hold the ruler- not the citizen- accountable for any form of injustice or inefficiency in the territory on which he reigns- even if it befalls roaming cattle, as in the often cited example from the reign of the Caliph Umar. The emphasis on ‘corruption’- especially as reinforced in the Islamic studies textbook- provides the only available discourse to explain negative socio-economic realities, morally, individually and Islamically; not structurally or politically. It was not only the personal responsibility of each person that determined and drove corruption, it was also part of being a ‘man’. A lesson on ‘manhood’ in the technical secondary Arabic textbook also highlighted manhood in terms of integrity in taking up public office, so that the minister who is a real man is the one who considers his office a duty, not a source of pride and thinks first of his people and last of himself, remains in office so long as he preserves the rights of his nation and only cares for the voice of his conscience.

The dominant themes of mainstream Islamism and general public discourse in Egypt typically malign ‘the self’/ Egyptians—especially youth and women—and displace unto them negative qualities and responsibility for the negative state of the nation (Sobhy 2009). The citizen is frequently portrayed as bad and not possessing the right Islamic and modern values necessary for success, prosperity, and national empowerment. The ‘bad citizen’ and the ‘nation under external threat’ work together as one of the key rhetorical tactics of the late Mubarak regime. Maha Abdelrahman (2007) has highlighted the discourse used by the state to malign citizens, especially when it is under pressure by human rights groups regarding its violations. The regime had been able in many cases to successfully divert attention from human rights violations by casting human rights organizations as promoting ‘foreign’ agendas, a staple strategy of many authoritarian regimes (Pratt 2005). Building on the general notion promoted in the

textbooks, and in public discourse, that Egypt is a unified whole (not, for example, a corrupt regime and disempowered citizens) constantly under threat from the ‘other’, the regime seeks to move the terms of debate onto its preferred terrain of nationalism and ‘us’ versus ‘them’. Maha Abdelrahman has traced some of these debates as they evolved in terms of human-rights and ‘nation-rights’, where “several articles in the semi-official press have condemned what is regarded as an overemphasis on human rights at the expense of the citizens’ responsibilities towards the nation and respect of the nation’s rights” (Abdelrahman 2007, 290). The theme of ‘bad citizens’ is amply clear in these discourses. As Abdelrahman explains:

In these articles, Egyptians, irrespective of their class background, are portrayed as ‘spoiled citizens’ who are provided for by a caring and devoted government, but who, inexplicably, enjoy violating the law, neglecting their work responsibilities and destroying public services at every possible opportunity. For example, a recent article from the ‘nation’s rights vs. human rights’ school demonstrates how the government does its utmost to employ hundreds of thousands of citizens in the public sector every year, only for these new employees to neglect their work in search of more lucrative extra jobs in the private and informal sectors (2007, 290).

Finally, the official textbooks for different subjects blatantly marginalize different religious, class and regional identities. Apart from the explicit emphasis on the ‘national unity’ of Egyptians: Muslims and Christians, the frame of reference for discussing critical political and moral issues are clearly “Islamic” and emphasizes the supremacy of Islam over all other religions and presents it as the basis and predecessor of all human, and especially European, intellectual and scientific achievements. Shirif Yunus emphasizes that the forcing of Islamism onto the history textbooks is not only aimed at establishing an Islamic and Islamist identity to replace Egyptian identity, but serves to humiliate and spite minorities to the extent that the few pages devoted to Coptic history in one textbook ended with an assignment to “write 10 lines to the Danish cartoonist who maligned the Prophet” (MARED 2010). Clearly as well, only certain elements and interpretations of Islam and Islamism were given space and expression. Furthermore, Upper Egypt, the Bedouin communities of the Sinai and the Western desert did not receive any more than passing references across the different textbooks. The authors of the curricula put very little effort into drawing upon the realities or experiences of communities outside urban and middle class sectors of the nation.

Other than a section of the Islamic Religious Education textbook which outlines traditional female occupations as more appropriate for women (teacher, nurse) and explained their differentiated inheritance rights (commensurate with their differentiated financial responsibilities), the textbooks did not put across many discourses that explicitly discriminated or differentiated between men and women. Sexist and derogatory discourses, widely employed in public and private discourse in Egypt, were not replicated by the textbooks. As with national unity and poverty, inequality, disempowerment and discrimination were erased from view. On the other hand, the focus on defending the nation clearly elaborates a gendered citizenship and nationhood discourse that privileges men as the real nationals and citizens. But with such nationalist struggle 'completed', the focus on faith, religious adherence and personal morality could theoretically equalize male and female citizenship, as the moral message is directed at both men and women. On the other hand, where Islamic morality is increasingly defined around female modesty and chastity, ideal citizenship for women is further reduced to issues of chastity and the related comportment and behavior. With their claims to sound Islamic morality consistently undermined (see Chapter Five), the citizenship and entitlement of women is further narrowed and rendered precarious. Their extreme vulnerability to harassment (lack of entitlement to protective rights) and their entitlement provision rights (through the state or charitable NGOs) can be critically premised on their embodiment of the ideals of Islamic comportment, their status as mothers or as carers for [male] dependents or family members. The participation rights of women have been rendered painfully precarious due to targeted sexual harassment against female demonstrators and activists. The dominant constructions of Islamized citizenship arguably serve to further undermine female citizenship rights and the legitimacy of their very appearance in public space.

Similarly, the instances where religious faith, Muslim or Christian, is articulated as the basis of good citizenship can potentially position ideal citizenship as inclusive of Muslims and Christians. On the other hand, with the saturation of the public sphere and official state textbook with the supremacy of Islamic identification, this can only be

seen as fundamentally undermining the citizenship status and entitlements of Christians, as many Christian Egyptians experience it on a daily basis.

CONCLUSION

The preceding discussion may have made the textbooks seem more coherent and developed than they really were. Textbooks were structured in a very exclusionary manner in their presentation, content and expected modes of reproduction and assessment; and this was fully recognized by students and teachers. They were composed, and often approached by students and teachers, as sets of definitions, lists of factors, dates and likely exam questions with “ideal” answers prepared by tutors and found in external books. The textbooks were not treated as exalted sources of authoritative knowledge. They were so often called “stupid” and “retarded”, “rubbish”, “do not reflect reality” and almost always condemned as too long and full of useless detail (*hashm*). Engagement with textbook content seemed so minimal, that for a long time it was not entirely clear to me whether it was worthwhile for a study of ‘lived schooling’ to give significant attention to textbook content. I finally accepted that the textbooks and in fact the ways they were approached are indeed a critical component of lived schooling.

In addition to the way that many students engaged with the texts instrumentally and with distance and indifference, there were frequently running commentaries of humor, ridicule of the official curriculum and guarded sarcasm about constructions of the state (and citizenship) within them, especially in regards to its provision of social services. For example, when commenting on the accomplishments of the state, one teacher in the girls private school simply changed his tone to convey sarcasm, employing rhetorical questions: “the state provides what, my children (*ya milad*)? It provides everything for us”. This kind of subversion was far more common, at least in the schools where I conducted my research, than more overt and elaborate critique. This type of ridicule was applied to discourses on the state but not to discourses that invoked religion (see Chapter Seven).

Finally, modes of engagement with textbook discourse are further framed and diminished by the quality of instruction and assessment in the system, especially in terms of exam-oriented tutoring and pervasive cheating. The content and message of the texts is also mediated by teachers, and importantly, by tutors operating outside the formal system. Textbooks do not speak in the classroom. Teachers speak for them and students receive them, and they are mediated by the whole of the discursive field they arrive to. Textbook discourse and its actual reception can only be understood in relation to the setting in which it is introduced. The same textbooks in a culture that is not saturated with Islamist discourse may be delivered and received very differently. As Magdi Khalil (2009) notes in terms of intolerance and discrimination, the flaws of the textbooks in this regard are multiplied many fold when they are translated by teachers in classrooms. To give one example, in the rare incident that Nationalist Education was actually taught in a classroom, the main message of the lesson became that believing in God is the basis of citizenship and the definition of the Good Citizen, which the teacher repeated over and over, intermitted with her admission that she was not familiar with the material and her complaint that this was not her specialization. While the importance of religious adherence was indeed listed clearly in the textbook, other themes were also mentioned, including respect for the beliefs of others, knowledge of civic and political rights and participation in political and volunteer work. The teacher however seemed to be unwilling, unqualified or unsure how to elaborate on them.

It is now appropriate to explore how textbook constructions of citizenship and nationhood linked to teacher and student discourses and practices. Did students articulate national belonging and citizenship in a nationalist, moralist and Islamist vein and in reference to relations with the unjust 'other', as the textbooks did? The discussion in the next chapter provides an idea of the power of these discourses to shape the discursive reproduction of nationhood and citizenship by students and teachers. As detailed in the chapter, much of these discourses were not reflected in the key ways in which students articulated the nation and national belonging. It elaborates on the strikingly open lack of belonging and love to the country expressed by students,

using the nation as a platform and entry point from which to launch critiques of the regime and Mubarak himself, particularly emphasizing negative economic and political realities and thereby highlighting a very distinct understanding of citizenship.

CHAPTER SEVEN: NATION AND STATE IN SCHOOL RITUALS AND DISCOURSES

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed how textbooks defined nationhood and citizenship and hinted at the divorce between textbook discourses and the discourses and practices of students and teachers across the schools. This chapter explores in greater depth these discourses and school rituals and the ways in which they appropriate or subvert the meanings and themes found in the textbooks, and therefore in the official state project of national identity and citizenship. It discusses some of the ways in which nationalist rituals had been undermined across the schools and elaborates on the strikingly open lack of belonging and love to the country expressed by students. The chapter also highlights the ways in which discourses of the ‘bad citizen’ were variably appropriated and resisted, while discourses of the ‘bad state’, regime and President took center stage in discourses of citizenship, especially among students. Importantly, it emphasizes that most students expressed a very different notion of citizenship and the role of the state than the one reflected in the textbooks; one that was especially centered on provision and protection rights, equal opportunity and rule of law; while paying little attention to participation rights. In particular, public school students used the ‘absent’ terminology and meanings of poverty and inequality to explain their realities and the protection and provision rights they received. In this sense, they seriously revised the ‘unitary’ notions of history and nation presented in the textbooks where the nation and Muslim society were portrayed as a uniform whole juxtaposed to a hostile ‘other’.

Their reflections on national belonging were fundamentally merged with discourses on the state, regime and president. Perhaps in this sense, they had replicated the textbook merging of nation, state and president; while reversing their meaning and implications. In the lack of separation between state and nation, they gave primacy to citizenship and entitlement over nationhood and loyalty. This fusing of nationhood and citizenship

was not only a reversal of textbook discourses that downplay citizenship and obscure it under nationalist devotion. It meant as well that as a fundamental component of their oppositional discourse, students expressed little ‘love’ or belonging to the nation; a blatant failure of the goals of curriculum and of Egyptian education itself. They subsumed nationhood under citizenship issues so that the failure of the state’s citizenship projects seemed to be expressed as lack of faith in and rejection of the nation itself. This forceful reaction is not taken as a verdict on enduring emotions towards the nation. More than anything, it reflects a rejection of the state, the regime and its practices.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the morning assembly ritual as a key practice and concrete example of the production and performance of nationhood in the schools and the ways in which this performance is influenced by the general dysfunction of contemporary secondary schools. The second section discusses student and teacher discourses of nationhood and citizenship. It also discusses student, teacher and classroom discourses that relate to notions of the bad citizen, bad youth and the complex constitution of Muslim identity in relation to citizenship. The final section elaborates on the ways in which students and teachers appropriated or subverted textbook constructions of nationhood and citizenship.

TABUR: THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE NATION

There isn't even a flag salutation. The flag is torn in the first place. It doesn't even have an eagle [the eagle in the middle of the Egyptian flag]. Other students, yes they know something about Egypt: "Long Live Egypt". There are a lot of songs about Egypt. They're all obscene words. They compose new songs to curse their country (yishtimu baladhum); that's how much they love it.. they don't love something called Egypt. General School Student

Schools provide the space and the material for the promotion of constructions of national identity and citizenship by the state as well as other competing parties. Symbols, discourses and rituals of the nation and state were clearly present in schools in flags, maps, posters, drawings, rituals, civic and national education curricula, school

radio and extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, pictures of the then President (and sometimes the ex-First Lady) existed in all schools and in almost all classrooms. The chapter does not however deal in great depth with the visual representation of the nation in the schools. Attention is given to the morning assembly as the key daily ritual where the nation is meant to be present and performed in the schools. Studies have emphasized the importance of school activities of various kinds in fostering national belonging, including volunteer and cooperative work, social, cultural, religious, sports, artistic, creative activities, trips, psychodrama and seminars about social issues (see Al-Sayid 2006, 141-3). School activities and the actual production of representational material across the school are not only heavily dictated from higher educational authorities and reflecting official discourses, they were also undermined by the poverty of resources and the marginalization of activities of all kinds across the schools (see Chapters Three and Four).



Figure 14: Glazed Mubarak on Flag in Classroom—and Boys Posing—in the General School

Rituals have received special attention in educational studies, especially in terms of their role in creating a sense of school community. Various studies have indicated the importance of ritual in creating and transmitting ‘culture’ within educational settings

(Bekerman 2003, McLaren 1999). As McLaren (1999, 38) posits, rituals serve as “the foundation of institutional life such as that found in schools”. “Rituals play an essential role in socializing members of school communities, communicating to them what the institution values most highly, and building a sense of cohesion amongst students, teachers, and administrators” (Bjork 2002, 466). McLaren has argued that “rituals do more than simply inscribe or display symbolic meanings or states of affairs but *instrumentally bring states of affairs into being*” (1999, 141). There has also been some attention to nationalist rituals in schools and the ways in which they embody notions and myths of national identity that include or exclude, as well as norms and values that are normalized, contested or resisted (see Bjork 2002, Ben-Amos and Bet-El 1999, Adely 2010). In addition to texts and discourses, rituals are key sites of the production of the nation in schools. The deployment of national symbols is particularly strong in schools as they are considered crucial sites for inculcating national loyalties (Adely 2010). It should not be surprising therefore that one of the key areas where “Islamic” schools introduce changes are rituals, and especially the *tabur*/ morning assembly (see Herrera 2006, Saad 2006, Starrett 1998). The morning assembly is the opportunity to increase the amount of religious content as well as develop and alter nationalist flag salutations with religious ones (see Chapter One). Schools “often operate under the implicit assumption that habituation to a ritual will lead to the absorption of its symbolic content... Though the link between practice and ideology is rarely so direct as such rituals might imply, the *existence* of such a link is the basis of many disciplinary practices... “Docile bodies” are molded in the hopes that docile minds will follow” (Luykx 1999, 101). As Wadeen (1999) has demonstrated in the case of Syria and as Cohen argues in reference to state rituals in former Soviet states: “state ceremonies suffered the fate of imposed ritual anywhere: that however well contrived their forms, they could not control the meanings read into them by their audiences” (Cohen 1994, 163).

The main formal ritual of Egyptian schools is the *tabur* (literally: queue/ line): the daily morning school assembly that all schools are required to hold. The patriotic morning ritual is common to most Arab schools and many educational systems across the world.

In Egypt, this is a ritual decreed and carefully delineated by the ministry. Schools receive regular directives about *tabur* and its contents, its importance, upcoming inspections and specific injunctions such as the need to “to emphasize the achievements of the minister and the government”. *Tabur* is meant to have a number of components, including the flag salutation, singing the national anthem, a Quran recitation or a chosen prophetic hadith, daily news of the country, school radio, student talents such as a poem or music, a morning exercise routine, general school announcements and school and district level activities such as student elections, yearly festivals and exhibitions, wall journals, debating, sports, art or music competitions or tournaments.

As highlighted in Chapters Three and Four however, music, sports, arts and other creative and intellectual activities have almost completely been removed from school life in most public schools. This is not only in order to focus on ‘important’ subjects that affect student grades, but fundamentally because of lack of school resources- or the corruption and bureaucratic procedures that prevent their utilization; and critically because of severe shortages in teachers in these specialization who simply cannot make a living on government salaries- without private lessons. Therefore, despite the importance of school activities in cementing nationhood and citizenship projects at the school level, in most schools, activities of all kinds are effectively absent due to lack of resources, crammed curricula, teacher shortages in these courses (where there are no opportunities for private tutoring and therefore no possibility to make a living on a teacher salary), or reportedly because of fear of their appropriation by Islamist forces. The first blow then to the performance of the nation and state in school is that there is no music accompanying it, no developing and displaying student talents and hardly any real activities to report. Most of the components of *tabur* cannot be genuinely developed in many schools. But because of the general deterioration of schooling in Egypt, the very existence of the morning ritual is highly variable across the schools of the capital and the country. In many schools, the morning school meeting is simply not prepared, performed or attended. It becomes solely an endeavor at escorting students to classes in a somewhat orderly manner. The process of maintaining order during

assembly is rarely very smooth. Sporadic “relatively” minor insults (“come on you two animals”: *yalla ya hayawan inta wi huna*) frequently opened into a severe collective “reprimand” of the whole student body with varying levels of obscenity and physical violence involving the use of the canes and hoses (see Chapter Five). In many other schools, *tabur*, if performed, is typically reduced to four components: invocations to stand in line properly, the flag salutation, one couplet of the national anthem and more often than not collective reprimand and humiliation of the student body (usually for lack of order or lack of proper comportment during the nationalist rituals).

In addition to all of this, most secondary school students do not in fact attend *tabur*. Especially in general secondary schools, most students do not regularly come to school due to private tutoring (See Chapter Four) and many of those who do come arrive in the end of assembly. In fact, in the girls’ public general school, which was the most “orderly” and strict of the public schools, special incentive, warning, reminder and threats had to be made to students in order to attend the morning assembly on a particular date. The school had entered into the Assembly Competition (*Musab’it il-Tabur*) for the selection of the best assembly in the district. An exemplary *tabur* was being prepared and competition officials were going to be present on that date to inspect the Assembly.

Despite the diminished audience on most days, the four public schools actually did attempt to maintain a semblance of *tabur* at least in the first weeks of term, albeit in an abridged and hasty format. There was some attempt at having student stand in line and chant the flag salutation. The singing of the national anthem was also attempted. In all the schools, particular teachers and administrators were more interested than others in *tabur* discipline and student embodiment of the correct patriotic comportment and vigor during the flag salutation and national anthem. For example, two of the principals gave this matter particular importance; in the boys’ technical school and in the mixed private school. They brought up *tabur* in their reflections on the school and students and were invested in trying to cement the ritual. For these principals and other teachers, *tabur* and discussions of *tabur* were occasions to lament lack of student sense of national

belonging and rebuke students for it. In the technical boys' school, students singled out for more marked violation of 'the mannerisms of *tabur*' (*akhlaqiyat al-tabur*) were retained for special rebuke and punishment by the principal, including his difficult courtyard physical drills. Proper *tabur* comportment included the vigorous singing of the national anthem and flag salutation, refraining from any speech or movement and standing tall, upright and embodying a sense of pride, respect, devotion and commitment to the nation.

It is useful to bear in mind that most public secondary schools are *only* secondary schools. That is, they do not enroll students in primary or preparatory stages (except for the semi-private Experimental Schools). Most private schools however enroll students in all stages. This explains why they retain far more semblance of discipline overall and why *tabur* remains populated with students and the nation and state retain a daily audience, of mainly primary and preparatory students. In both private schools, *tabur* was certainly performed and prepared by teachers and students. Students came up to the microphone and led the flag salutation, read headlines from official newspapers, recited a chosen piece of poetry or shared a 'useful' piece of general knowledge with the student body. Teachers led a brief morning exercise and the students marched to their classes in a fairly orderly manner. Because secondary school students in the private schools had very low attendance indeed (less than 10% of the cohort) and many arrive at the end of Assembly, they were hardly party to this ritual.

Finally, as hinted in the opening quote, even in assemblies that were being in fact performed, as in the private schools, most secondary students and many preparatory students did not even utter the salutations of the flag. Some uttered them without the required vigor, others made fun of enthusiastic performances of the national anthem from younger students, while some murmured "alternative" lyrics to the national anthem. These highly critical songs were widely known and circulated, primarily among boys, in the schools. These were typically short verses fitted to the same tune or other popular tunes. The lyrics were in fact deemed by the boys to be too obscene to repeat in front of me. They were typically variations on themes of abuse by the nation and

state, of disentanglement and failure, of being violated or raped by the nation, or the nation being a 'prostitute'. Adely (2010, 141) has suggested that the existence of symbol-laden rituals in schools may in fact create opportunities for engagement with conflicts around such symbols "and for the possibility of constructing new symbols with new meanings". In this sense, students were indeed constructing and solidifying new symbols and meanings in relation to the nation; meanings bound up with their experiences of citizenship, as elaborated below.

The reluctance to sing the national anthem or enthusiastically salute the flag were not solely forms of 'teenage rebellion' against authority, or the mandated pious embodiment of discipline or enthusiastic performances of national devotion. For example, many students also chatted with friends during the Quran recitation in *tabur*. Clearly this was not only disrespectful and inattentive, it contravened the explicit religious injunction to listen attentively when Quran is being recited. It would be very difficult however to encounter popular songs of ridicule of the Quran. When they deviate from what may be considered as proper religious conduct, students typically employ a variety of other discourses to describe their behavior; contextualizing their actions, exonerating or blaming themselves (e.g. that they cannot really hear the recitation because there is a lot of noise). No such justification is needed to excuse unpatriotic discourses and practices. Rather as described below, many students openly expressed lack of love or belonging to the country.

NATIONHOOD AND CITIZENSHIP IN STUDENT AND TEACHER DISCOURSES

Why should I love it as long as I do not get my rights in the country? One can be proud of their country when they see something good in it, when they do something good for him (Ahibaha lih law mish wakhda ha'i fil-balad. Il-wahid yib'a fakhur bi-baladu lama yishuf fiha haga kuwayisa, lama yi'milulu haga kuwayisa). Private School Student

One of the most common registers used to describe youth in Egyptian public discourse, at least prior to January 2011, had been that they do not have a sense of belonging to

the country (*ma'andubumsh intima' lil balad*). As described in the previous chapter, 'belonging' is constructed a 'natural' feeling people have toward their nation. In textbook and public discourse, 'belonging' was used primarily in a negative sense: not possessing a sense of belonging and was fundamentally bound up with discourses of 'the bad citizen', who uses foreign languages or are susceptible to western influence and engage in un-civic or illegal practices, from corruption to the violation of traffic laws. To legitimize such critique of the citizen, it was more effective to couch it in nationalist terms, again merging the state with the nation. The use of legal or citizenship terms or notions of reciprocity would not as convincingly condemn such behavior, given the various failings of the state in terms delivering protective, provision or participation citizenship rights. The nation however is not constructed to owe 'its sons and daughters' anything in order to receive their 'naturally' felt love. The common characterization of youth as lacking in belonging is part of the maligning of young people in an authoritarian gerontocracy, as well as reflecting the strong sense of alienation and lack of nationalist zeal among young people. As detailed in the previous chapter, promoting national belonging is however one of the fundamental goals or in fact *the* goal of Egyptian education. This section details student and teacher discourses of nationhood and citizenship, reflected both in answers to more or less direct questions, and in the course of everyday activity within the schools. Within long conversations, using different overtures, I asked students individually or in groups about their views on love or sense of belonging to the country for themselves or their peers, and how they would describe or characterize their 'generation' or peers. I also asked teachers and principals, individually and collectively about the sense of belonging or knowledge of the country among students and how they would describe the students as a whole or as a 'generation'.

Because after all I did ask students to reflect on 'love' and 'sense' of belonging, there is some overlap between what I explore in the schools and the sociology or anthropology of emotions, for example as explored by Goodwin, Jasper and Polleta (2000) or by Abu Lughod and Lutz (1990). As highlighted in Chapter One, emotions are fundamental to political identity and its concomitant issues of citizenship and national identity. In this

sense, I did approach “discourses on emotion and emotional discourse as social practices” (Abu Lughod and Lutz 1990, 1). Although I talked with students about love and feelings of belonging to the country, I saw these discussions as discourses and practices on nationhood and citizenship, not as exploration of emotion or emotional expression, despite the supreme importance of emotion in relation to nationhood and citizenship, as well as of course to protest and mobilization. That is, emotional experiences of indignation, humiliation, anger, hatred, disgust, sadness, or empathy were arguably critical to the development of student and teacher discourses in the course of their own experiences of the state, whether in their daily lives or through media exposure and public and private discourse. However, I conceived of my question, and it proved to be, an avenue for getting at constructions of citizenship, the state and the regime. The invocation of love of country was an opening to enter freely into a discourse on the state. It was not used to reflect on emotional states or to attempt to interpret emotional experiences and intensities; an excellent area for future research.

In terms of my choice of terms, I chose “the country” (*il-balad*) as a more neutral term and more commonly used than any other term for the nation in Egypt. Egyptians hardly use *watan* or *umma* to signify Egypt in everyday talk. *Il-Balad* is also not associated with a certain camp or ideology in the way that *watan* may be associated with the Arab world and *umma* with the Muslim world. Egypt is referred to as Egypt/ *Masr* or *el-balad*: the country. *Masr*, I felt, carries within it more nationalist, (perhaps recalling pre-1952 nationalism, see Chapter Six), grandiose, formal and exalted undertones. As a more ‘nationalist’ term, it may also recall a juxtaposition to ‘the other’, to Egypt’s relation to the outside world, to war and borders, to soccer matches; that is, to ‘nationalist’ themes. *Il-Balad* also has a more domestic undertone, as it hints at society as well as nation. It is used when discussing social, economic or political issues. It may also signify moral issues. In this sense, it would be more hospitable to commentary on the state of morality in the country or Islamist critiques of governance or society. It is therefore a more encompassing term and I did not wish to close up opportunities for students and teachers to reflect on these issues by choosing the somewhat more ‘nationalist’ term ‘Egypt’. As with any other term however, using it already deploys certain discourses. In

the end, my question was supremely a nationalist one: to comment on the sense of belonging and love to the country, and was going to be appropriated by students based on their own discursive repertoires. Because of this and because the act of asking the questions invariably sets the tone of the conversation, throughout my presence in the schools I avoided direct questions or reference to nationhood and citizenship. I was interested in instances where students or teachers brought up or discussed these issues in their ongoing interactions. The themes that emerged in open ended discussions also came up in the course of these interactions.

It is appropriate to emphasize once more the level of political control of schools and its classed nature. For the poor, being involved in any kind of oppositional activity, especially with religious undertones, is a matter with possibly grave consequences. Testimonies of men, including very young teenagers, detained for years on account of attending a religious youth camp, sporting a beard or praying in the ‘wrong’ mosque are regularly featured in media and human rights reports. The consequences of being reported to have political activity are not a small interrogation, a brief beating or blocked opportunities for career advancement. They can include years of detention and the most brutal and humiliating forms of torture. Unofficial and undocumented discourses are different however and many but not all students and many teachers felt ‘some’ liberty to engage in oppositional discourse. Especially in the general public schools, students wanted to open up many critical comments on the government and the regime, until I unfortunately felt that I had to censor them by changing the topic, as I feared jeopardizing my access to the school. This kind of self-censorship was arguably occurring all the time during my presence in the schools. They also wanted to pursue the discussions of politics and corruption, including those they were directly familiar with, in public schools, bribes and falsified leases to enter particular schools. At times, my attempts (half-heartedly and clearly as a required performance) at limiting oppositional “political” discourse were directly countered by students. As one student objected, “but everything is related and this is related to education”. Self-censorship was exercised by teachers, students, principals and myself much of the time; suggesting that many views may have been more oppositional than the discussions here reflect.

Such censorship often happened visibly, where students would silence each other through words or gestures, teachers would ‘correct’ other teachers or ask them to refer to ‘officials’ not the President and the Ministers by name, or when I would jokingly tell students when they criticized the President and regime, “do you want them to take away my permit or what?”

School authorities of course made sure that there was no oppositional political discourse in any ‘public’ forum in all of the schools. As Abdul Hamid (2000) has observed in his study of social control in Egyptian schools, students were not allowed to discuss political issues with their teachers or in the school radio/ morning assembly program. The main reasons were framed around “fear”: of teachers or the principal, or fear of what this permission may entail, fear of political oversight by the state, fear of arrest, fear of punishment or expulsion or trouble, and fear of the occurrence of unruliness (*shaghab*). There was of course some ‘political’ expression in the schools, if it remained within the lines defined in the textbooks. For example, ‘nationalist’ poetry or other material revolving around the injustices of the ‘other’ was allowed in the school radio or official competitions, but never anything on domestic politics. It is obvious therefore that in most school contexts, protective and participation rights relating to freedom of speech and organization were very limited.

CONSTRUCTING THE NATION AND STATE

Given the insistence on national belonging in textbooks, daily rituals and the media, I expected at least significant expression or even lip service to ‘love’ of the nation among students, especially that most discussions were conducted inside the schools. However, even when students started with affirmations of love of the country, it seems that they could not locate further content to support it with and quickly began to articulate the opposite view: that there was no reason to love the country. After their preliminary responses, whether negative or affirmative, students developed further reflections that almost always centered on negative conditions in the country. They developed narratives revolving distinctly around domestic, economic and ‘citizenship’ issues.

There were a number of common themes that they typically drew upon: unemployment, poverty (including rising prices), humiliation, inequality and corruption. The main reasons not to love the country were most consistently articulated in terms of unemployment, poverty, and the interlinked themes of inequality, corruption and crime. Even private school students framed their own expressed lack of belonging in terms of blocked opportunities and lack of desirable jobs, as well of course as systematic corruption and cronyism.

The discourses and emotions described here arguably reflect the growth of independent media and other forums where dissent can be voiced and information can be shared more freely. The media, newspapers (Al-Tukhi 1999), and more recently satellite television channels (Abdullah 2007), have been considered to be the main sources of knowledge on politics; and shaping the perceptions of political issues and their importance among Egyptian students; representing “the most important source of political socialization” for students (Al-Tukhi 1999, 215). Arabic satellite channels, importantly Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya, held a privileged position in this regard (Abdullah 2007). This has been balanced in more recent years however by the growth of relatively independent Egyptian satellite channels. For example, in the course of our conversations, especially in the general schools, students and teachers referred to issues that were raised on the famous political, social and news programs aired on privately owned Egyptian channels. These popular shows (such as *al-'Ashira Masa'an*, *Wabid min al-Nas* and *Al-Qahira al-Yum*) regularly discussed forms of corruption extending across the system, and highlighted—to varying degrees—the plight of the poor especially those living in informal neighborhoods. In 2011, new and more openly oppositional channels were either established or gained increasing prominence, notably Ontv and Tahrir Channels and others. Furthermore, popular films in recent years have dealt with systematic corruption, increasing poverty and daily police repression. These may have had even more significant impact on student discourses, as the news may not of high importance to most students in comparison to films and television drama (see Mahmud

2004).⁵⁹ In an era of far more open media, the vivid multiplication of Egypt's "others" may have made the image of Egypt worse in the eyes of young people as well as strengthening alternative notions of citizenship.

While lower middle class students of the public general schools seemed to be by far the most vocal and oppositional in their discourses, similar attitudes prevailed across the six schools and for boys as well as girls. Boys however tended to be more direct in expressing a distinct and open lack of belonging. Many simply answered that 'no' or 'of course not'; that they do not feel love or belonging to the country; some quickly linking this with the desire to leave the country. Girls frequently began their reflections with short affirmations, "of course," "surely" we love the country. Then they would open up into: "not a lot;" "we like it in words not in deeds." This would progress into statements like: "if we as a people benefit from Egypt we would like it," and "we are oppressed in the country... we don't feel our freedom or anything". This escalation and progression in one conversation with a group of girls in the general school was characteristic of many student responses. This may indicate why surveys of nationalist sentiment find such overwhelming expressions of national belonging (see UNDP 2010, 67-74).⁶⁰ While the first and socially sanctioned response may be 'yes of course we love the country', this is not always the final answer.

There was something of a gender difference therefore in expressions of lack of love and belonging to the nation/state, which may indicate how boys may indeed feel more grievances due to blocked opportunities for upward mobility, as future breadwinners. However this may have also been informed by differences in political interest between

⁵⁹ Mahmud found that all teenagers watched television, about half of them watching it regularly; and almost all of them watched, regularly or irregularly, television serials (*musalsalat*) aired on Egyptian state television, be they romantic, social, historical or political (Mahmud 2004). Their preferred television viewing was for Arabic films, followed by religious programs, Arabic plays, Arabic songs, television serials, foreign films, sports, then educational programs (Mahmud 2004, 486).

⁶⁰ A recent nation-wide survey asked young people directly about their feelings of national pride, religious sentiment and practice and political and civic participation (UNDP 2010, 67-74). In the survey, seventy-one percent of youth are proud of their Egyptian identity, among them, females with university level education have the strongest sense of allegiance. This put Egypt fifth in the international comparison in youth pride in national belonging with a difference of 13% above the international 58%. The survey also shows that national belonging among youth in Egypt is expressed in the response of 85% of the sample who showed readiness to go to war in defense of their nation, most of them males with university level education.

boys and girls and therefore difference in their exposure to political news and media, including oppositional variants, and revelations of corruption and repression. Girls' oppositional discourse shared the same themes with boys but with one significant difference. Girls in the public schools frequently emphasized the lack of 'safety and security' within their reflections on love and belonging to the country. Girls in the popular neighborhood seemed to feel acutely physically vulnerable and feared for their safety from sexual harassment as well as other forms of crime. Safety however was a general concern in the informal neighborhood. School authorities and students in the general boys' school also expressed security concerns and had also attempted to secure some police presence around the school to deter violent fights among students, drug dealing and drug use near the school.

Previous studies of youth political discourses and priorities have also linked both class and gender to political knowledge and national belonging among students, although their conclusions do not reflect a clear consensus. It has been argued in a number of studies that economic factors, especially in terms of income distribution and unmet basic needs, impacted student sense of national belonging (see Al-Sayid 2006, 137-9). Other studies noted higher rating of nationalist identity and belonging among girls than boys (Sabah 2004), although some studies noted higher male ratings or no gender differences (see Al-Sayid 2006, 133). Girls many experience greater pressures for obedience and conformity to social norms (see Al-Sayid 2006). Although the general tone was similar, I did find that boys were generally more engaged in oppositional discourses and perhaps better informed of the details and concrete examples of corruption than girls. Interest in politics among students has been shown to be primarily influenced by family factors (Awad 2006). Gender and class however do play a role. One study among Egyptian school students found that boys had higher rates of reading newspapers than girls, and more knowledge of political facts; attributing this to different interests and socialization and the fact that girls spend more time doing household chores and studying (Al-Tukhi 1999 and UNDP 2010, 41). Boys were portrayed in other studies as having more sense of belonging due to greater levels of participation in different (public) activities and because they had more freedom, more

social engagement and participation (Al-Sayid 2006). Another study of Egyptian school students found that older students, male students and private school students were more politically aware than younger, female or public school students (Al-Tukhi 1999), although other studies did not note this gender difference (see Awad 2006), or class difference (see Al-Sayid 2006, 137). The current research is of course conducted among urban students in the capital, and this may suggest that students are more politically informed and bolder in expressing their views.

UNEMPLOYMENT, POVERTY AND HUMILIATION

Most students brought up unemployment and underemployment at the heart of their reflections on national belonging (and the reasons for the lack thereof). Unemployment was such a strong theme for public general school students that it seemed to define their whole outlook on their generation and on national belonging. Unemployment was intimately linked with their reflections on love and belonging to the country. As one student put it, “if I finish and sit, will I love Egypt?” Teachers and principals equally focused on unemployment in their reflections on national belonging. As the principal of the boys’ general school put it, students want to “graduate and find work but most men graduate and sit at home... you know how much money he needs to get married and have a home? So they want to leave the country. They think of things financially.. not love of the country... It’s all because of this unemployment”.

Therefore, intimately related to unemployment was the desire or hope of leaving the country in search for jobs. The desire to leave the country was perhaps even more pronounced for upper middle class students, perhaps because it was a more realistic option given their higher qualifications. The desire to leave the country was clearly an aspiration for many students as well as teachers. As one French teacher expressed in her sentences for grammar exercises: “*Je ne souhaite qu’une chose: vivre en Amérique.... Je souhaite que mon frère réussis, et que vivions au Canada*”. A national survey of youth found that more than 28% of male youth expressed their intention to migrate, with socio-economic background being positively correlated with the intention to migrate, as those

who showed intention to migrate are coming from the highest socio-economic level (UNDP 2010, 39).

Strong imagery and emotions were in fact used in relation to unemployment: “it’s all black and closed in front of the kids”, as one principal put it. Students themselves used language that reflected the powerful emotional impact of unemployment. They reflected on ‘this generation’ as “frustrated”, “in a bad emotional state”, “feeling in a closed circle” and “with no way out”. They drew upon the experiences of their relatives and acquaintances among whom unemployment was prevalent or even dominant. Many in the general schools noted that even graduates of good faculties and universities could not find jobs, commenting that most boys end up lingering in cafes and seeking to leave the country. “There are no jobs. We expect that we too will take the certificate and ‘sit’ [*nu’ud*] (stay at home unemployed). All our friends are in open universities and in the end they too ‘sit’”. Technical school students did not seem to feel themselves to be as vulnerable to unemployment per se (after all, the boys were almost all employed, albeit in temporary, seasonal, low-skilled and very low paid work in the informal economy). Some did however express desire to leave the country and were concerned about the difficulty of getting jobs in the future, especially well-paying jobs in the formal economy. This is not uniformly the case across the country as unemployment rates among technical school graduates are very high and unemployment rates vary considerably across the country and are much higher in Upper Egypt in particular (see Chapter Three for details). Unemployment is highest among youth who come from households in the fourth wealth quintile, slightly drops for those in the highest wealth quintile, and is lowest among youth who come from households in the lowest wealth quintile (UNDP 2010).

This intense concern with unemployment is framed by the general lack of social safety networks in the country. There is no unemployment insurance to speak of and other welfare provision for poverty, disability, sickness or old age is limited and difficult obtain. This accentuates the implicit framing of employment as a sort of primary

citizenship right and need in a context where survival needs cannot be met except through employment.

PROVISION RIGHTS: POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

Students were also aware of their disenfranchisement from other citizenship rights. As evident from the preceding chapters, when it came to the concrete provision rights of supposedly free public education, students were bitterly critical of the education they were receiving and the conditions of education in the country. Education was described in variably disparaging terms as: corrupt-dysfunctional, retarded-backward and rubbish (*bayiz, mutakhalif, zibala*), or as one student put it, “should be set on fire, all of it, with the teachers and students”. Many students did not hesitate to condemn the whole system, along with minister and government. Importantly, public schools students felt that the quality of education they were receiving was premised on their social class: “well this is the free education that they make us feel indebted for (*yiziluna bib*) and they don’t (actually) give us anything”. Private school students were also exasperated with the quality of education and its relation to their future prospects. They equally mocked regime claims of free education and lamented the poor quality of public universities and the relatively poor prospects it implied for them. As one student put it, public universities “are becoming like *ma’abid* [low status two year institutes]. Even the new private universities, people say it’s expensive and people still enroll in tutoring as well! Good education costs money (*il-ta’lim il-bilw bi fulus*). Now it’s either AUC or GUC”. This student was obviously considering options beyond the hopes of almost all students in the public general school, but was equally frustrated with the low prospects most options promised, not only among public universities, including the most competitive [and fee-charging] faculties within them, but even in new private universities. According to this view, ‘good education’ that led to good job prospects was only available in the two most expensive foreign universities in Egypt: the American University in Cairo and the German University in Cairo, with fees ranging from 50,000 to over 100,000 EGP/year.

Inequality, poverty, and rising prices were also strong themes in the reflections of public school students. In their reflections on national belonging, students made statements such as: “I see people who cannot eat and those who can eat chicken every day” and “there are people whose salaries are huge and here there are people who sleep in the street”. Several students explicitly expressed that incomes in the country should be more equal. There was clear awareness of the privileges and rights afforded to other Egyptians based on income, where students made statements like: “those who are living in this country are those who have money”. As Ghannam (2002, 173) has also found, people strongly believe that the rich, who have more money and better connections, enjoy more protection and are better able to secure access to various resources. Not only were unemployment and poverty the key themes, but even hunger featured in many student discourses, which they linked to inequality, to government policy and to crime in their neighborhoods. Students remarked for example, “how can someone see people dying of hunger, how can they go to bed at night?”, or “they are about to starve the people”, or as one student in the public general girls’ school elaborated, “poverty makes people do these things. And more and more, the poorer we get, we are killing each other. Even rape, if a guy can’t afford to marry... The poorer the country, the more we are tearing each other apart (*bin’ata’ fi ba’d*)”.

As such, there was a sense of gravity in the discourse of some students on these matters and a rather discernible narrative of causality leading from regime and state to poverty and social ills. Notably, there was little culturalist or moralist explanation of these issues even among private school students, such as the ‘bad citizens,’ the ‘lazy poor,’ the ‘bad Muslims’, God’s punishment for decadence or even foreign conspiracy or the greed of wealthy nations. Furthermore, as opposed to neoliberal ideology and the discourse of the textbooks, job creation and social protection were firmly conceived as state responsibilities. As a recent national study of causes of poverty as perceived by the poor concluded, “youth, both urban and rural, explained poverty on the basis of the failure of state policies to protect low income groups in the face of the trend towards privatizing the economy” (El-Laithy 2007, cited in UNDP 2010, 86). They also

emphasized that they found the future less predictable, jobs are uncertain and income very irregular.⁶¹

While articulations of themes of poverty and social inequality varied from one student to the other, they tended to be less intense and common in the discourses of private school students. While clearly frustrated with conditions in the country, students from the upper middle classes used themes of recognition instead of livelihood and survival in relating to opportunity and employment. Poverty per se was not a key concern or theme in their discourses. Many still felt there was limited sense of national belonging in their generation and limited opportunities. As a female private school student put it, “most people are not interested in the country. For example, if they say there is a war tomorrow, will all the guys want to go? Do you think they care about it? No. They all curse it and the day they were born in it and will flee it whenever they can. If you say I want to stay and build my future, he will say: where is the future? ”. Or as another private school student, put it, “Yes. It’s true. We don’t have belonging. We are coming out in an age when the country doesn’t give us anything. People say it didn’t give us anything to give back. They don’t know how to give back.”

PROTECTIVE RIGHTS: HUMILIATION, CORRUPTION AND HARASSMENT

However, for public school students, it was not only poverty that shaped their narrative, in terms of not being to secure certain goods or services, but the humiliation and abuse that came with it. Both in reference to love of the country and in the course of ongoing discussions in the schools, students referred to humiliation and bad treatment when dealing with agents of the state in the school which they understood to be related to their low social status. Students were aware not only of their lack of access to legally available rights such as medical insurance or freedom from physical

⁶¹ “This uncertainty about the future seems an integral aspect of the experience of poverty in Egypt. It brings an intolerable sense of insecurity and vulnerability to lives of the poor. They feel vulnerable to trivial and accidental incidents. Insecurity is related to lack of health security as indicated by the poor when expressing their fears about tomorrow. The first fear they describe is being sick and unable to afford treatment. All interviewees of focus groups considered health as a major asset whose absence necessarily leads to poverty” (El-Laithy 2007, cited in UNDP 2010, 86).

punishment in the school, but also of facing humiliation if they attempted to access those rights or challenge any violations of their rights (see Chapter Five). For example, each school should have medical supplies, a nurse, occasionally a doctor and all students are officially covered by national medical insurance. Students knew however that the nurse or doctor hardly come to school and usually had little or no medical supplies. Students were also frequently treated very badly when seeking such public services. As one student commented, “they are disgusted of us when we go to the *ta'min* [medical insurance room at school] and they tell us to get out...as if we are beggars”. Humiliation was interlinked with student reflections on national belonging and the desire to leave the country. As one student put it, “here, what do we get? We get insulted and humiliated and that’s it (*binitshitim wi nitbahdil wi khalas*).”⁶² Student reflections on national belonging included statements that highlighted the theme of humiliation based on poverty, like: “the poor are treated like dogs.” As it was in terms of their concrete and lived citizenship, as discussed in Chapter Five, student statements in relation to patterns of physical punishment in the public schools also highlighted the understanding that the beating and humiliation they were subjected to was premised on their social status. Finally, some boys also linked humiliation to being harassed by the police or treated abusively if drafted in the army, and at least one student referred to the possibility of being arrested in a demonstration and the police treatment associated with it as another reason to hate the country (that student was indeed arrested on January 25, 2011 on the first day of the protests; fortunately released several days later).

Student discourses on the nation also reflected the focus on protective citizen rights and the rule of law in terms of their discourses on corruption. Poverty was frequently linked to corruption in the discourses of public school students: “would we be like this, if we did not have all this theft and corruption?”, as one student asked rhetorically. This was directly linked to the regime and the President in particular, not individual petty corruption in institutions of the state. As students in the boys’ general school asked rhetorically, “the income of the Suez Canal, where does it go?” Whose pockets is it

⁶² *Bahdala* is “something that unsettles or disturbs one’s sense of honour and integrity” (Ismail 2011b, 850).

entering?” In the girls’ technical school, girls also linked conditions in the country with the President; some by immediately needing to disentangle the wedding of nation and President: I love Egypt but the President, I hate him. The same sentiment was echoed by general school girls: “I love it but I don’t love the one controlling it.” “He is taking the country down (*midayya’ il balad*)... girls get kidnapped and body parts get stolen.. and education; there is nothing”. In fact, at points students made statements like: “we want the president to be changed”, or “to fix things, everyone has to be removed... the minister, everyone... We need all new people”.

Private school students also frequently brought up corruption in their reflection on the country: “The people responsible for the country; they are the ones stealing it.” They also linked national belonging to the massive scale of corruption being revealed and how this encourages further corruption across the system. Therefore, across the schools there was a direct attribution of bad conditions in the country to the President and the regime; not to globalization or the practices of ‘other’ countries, nor certainly to bad citizens, as in textbook discourses. There was also the boldness to express this and in some cases to explicitly express the desire to remove him. The emphasis on corruption in the textbooks came up in student discourses where there was a recurrent theme of attributing poverty to corruption. However, this was not a replication of official discourse, but rather a subversion centered on the use of the forbidden term ‘poverty’, absent and erased from the textbooks, and where corruption was not generalized and related to individual morality but to the regime and the President.

While their primary focus was on provision rights, rule of law/ lack of corruption, freedom from humiliation, other protective rights were highlighted as well, especially for girls in terms of their vulnerability to sexual harassment. Girls in the public technical school brought up their discussions of harassment within their reflections about ‘sense of belonging to the country.’ In these cases, in addition to other themes of unemployment, poor education and humiliation, they articulated the state’s function directly in terms of security and mocked regime claims of “the country of security and safety” (*balad al-amn wal-aman*). Girls, especially in the public schools, expressed serious

concerns and lacking citizenship rights around physical vulnerability and fears for their chastity, while boys saw economic opportunities as more primary in achieving their future goals, as expected primary breadwinners. As mentioned earlier, participation rights featured little in student discourses, even for private school students. There was little mention of rigged elections, even in discussion of corruption. While some students did use statements like “there is no democracy” in their reflections on national belonging, this was not an aspect expressed in significant detail.

Therefore, young people across the schools, as well as their teachers and principals linked disempowerment to citizenship rights and the dysfunctional state to national belonging. Among teachers, while many lamented the lack of belonging of students, this was frequently ‘explained’, excused or contextualized by teachers. Lack of national belonging was evidenced in two key issues for teachers and principals. They frequently referred to the lack of vigor in the salutation of the flag as the most immediate manifestation, but mainly focused on youth desire to leave the country and their despair or anger with conditions in the country. For example, when reflecting on ‘this generation’, the principal of the public general boys school said that there is no ‘belonging’; that this is the first thing that can be noticed. She explained that this was because students did not know the national anthem and were not getting the lyrics right. She then continued that the students were ‘frustrated’ because everyone tells them that there are no job opportunities and nowhere to go. The principal of the mixed private school voiced remarkably similar themes, “the children have lost faith in us. The state they are in, we are the reason for it, all of the role models are corrupt... They hear about corrupt people. They do not have belonging to the country; many of them want to travel. They didn’t used to greet the flag when I got to this school”. Teachers sometimes blamed public discourse or parents for being a source of student lack of belonging, because students could hear in their homes statements like “God curse this country; is this a life we are living?” (*yikbrib bit dib balad, biya dib ‘isha illi ‘aysbinha?*). As the principal of the girls’ private school put it, “unfortunately, there’s not this power of feeling loyalty to the country. They hear what’s going on around them, from their parents, about everything, transportation, economic crisis, private tutoring

costs, living expenses... I feel that they always say: there's nothing.. they don't have the hope or loyalty to improve anything... They feel the future is not bright. I don't want to say they are lost (*dayi*), they are better than that but the circumstances around them are not good." Across the different schools teachers found immediate explanations for the lack of national belonging they believed was indeed present among students. These explanations were not about unpatriotic youth, bad citizens, or of course the wise President, as articulated in the textbooks. As a male teacher a private school put it, "at the core is the relationship between the state and the person.. if it is normal, then there will be love and belonging to the country".

Teachers sometimes also expressed a special difficulty or contradiction in dealing with themes of the nation. A number of teachers expressed that they wanted to instill love of the country in their students or lamented its absence. In their own reflections however, many digressed into an affirmation of student alienation, and even their own lack of national belonging. As teachers in the girls' general school reflected, "it's true, why should he love it, he has no apartment, no job and no good treatment, even ourselves, we don't feel belonging." A teacher in the technical girls' school offered the following reflections about the sense of belonging and knowledge of the country among students and its links with inequality and corruption:

No they know nothing about the country. You know the social situation we have. Sometimes I talk to them about Egypt.. to love Egypt.. but the country gives them nothing.. we have class backwardness (inequality). These people are neither blind nor idiots. They know the income coming in to Egypt and where it goes. Sometimes, I tell them, if only you knew about the miracles of ancient Egypt (you would feel, act differently), but the level of culture is low. For me, I look at Ramses statue or pyramids I feel I am the son of a civilization".

Many teachers therefore voiced contradictory views, where lack of belonging was lamented but justified. Even when students were deemed as having no belonging, this private school teacher concluded that "if the citizen is treated humanely then he will have belonging and he will want to give to the country. If you treat the citizen as less than an animal, he sees that this country deserves nothing."

BAD YOUTH, BAD CITIZENS

In one of the Islamic Education classes in the general girls' school, the teacher explicated and elaborated on hadith from the official textbook. One of the hadith was about the importance of *itqan*: excellence and diligence in performing one's work. In his commentary on the text, the teacher employed frequently voiced Islamist assumptions about the importance of *itqan* in how "they" (in the west) progress and that it is because each person is not performing his role that "we" have backwardness (for a discussion of *itqan* in non-oppositional Islamist discourses, see Sobhy 2007). The teacher said that 'abroad' (*barra*), "they work eight hours; but here you wake up, go to work, have breakfast, bring onions, sit and chat... A large percentage do not do their work well". He continued, "our factories are losing and closing down. Why? Because of people not doing their work well and being careless (*adam al itqan wal-ihmal*)". The next brief hadith was about the grave sin involved in harming one's neighbors. The teacher elaborated that those who leave their laundry dripping on that of others and causing them harm are not really Muslim. The woman who does this, "is she a Muslim?", he asked the class. They nodded that no, she is not. Another example was about people disposing of their garbage close to the houses of neighbors. These were also declared as not Muslim; an assessment seconded by the students every time.

I felt that these were grave pronouncements on who is or who is not a Muslim; assessments which would be considered outright "wrong" in mainstream Muslim jurisprudence. More importantly, as part of the state citizenship projects, agency and responsibility was placed on the individual for negative realities in society, regardless of the wider context and government inaction. Quite simply, the municipality failed to regularly collect the garbage in the neighborhood, despite the large garbage collection fees paid by citizens. If the residents preferred to throw the garbage further from their homes, and likely closer to the homes of others, was this really making them worthy of condemnation as infidels? Perhaps what was more alarming was the willingness of students to accept and defend such statements, perhaps especially because I had challenged the statements in subsequent discussions. After class, I asked students what

they thought of the lesson and wondered if it was right to pronounce on the infidelity of Muslims. A student tried to explain that the teacher was only really talking about the ones who intentionally meant to harm their neighbors. Another student stood up, as if to give an official speech, and in a pious demeanor reiterated the message of the teacher and the importance of obedience to the words of the Prophet and God to be good Muslims. So the situation was somewhat heightened as I was perceived to have challenged orthodox understandings of ‘Islam’ and the very status of hadith; not the textbook or the teacher’s interpretation. In fact, one of the students subtly signaled to me to end the conversation and later told me that she agrees with me, but that students “are not used to discussing anything about religion” and that anyone who does this is “a transgressor and wrong”: (*kharig ni ghalat*). This was despite the fact that I only referred to the well-known prohibition on making pronouncements on the “Muslimness” of others, and especially so for such a matter which (I assessed) was not grave; suggesting that we know many people who may engage in such behavior, including in this neighborhood, are they not “Muslims?”



Figure 15: Piling Garbage—and Tutoring Advertisement on the Wall—opposite the Gate of the Boys’ Technical School

This was an example of the strength of Islamization across the schools, as described in Chapter One and demonstrated in different survey research (See UNDP 2010).⁶³ Perhaps it was an example as well of the ‘deference’ that educational scholars attributed to authoritarian ‘Arab’ education (see Chapter Two), which I only witnessed in relation to discussions that involved religion. Clearly however, my reception of these words was very different from that of the students. It was as though I took the words to their depth and length, while the students passed through and beside them. Most of the students stayed outside, beside and in deference to the text and the authoritative discourse. They did not negate them, accept any challenge to them, nor affirmed the way I took the discourse to its logical conclusion: that many of the residents of the neighborhood would not really be Muslim in this framework. But this ‘deference’ was partial and distanced. The discourse had to remain suspended; “true” as discourse, but loosely linked or separate from such close to home implications. However, students did seem to significantly appropriate their construction as bad Muslims, as reinforced across various Islamist discourses, and did not have the power, tools or desire to ally themselves with a critique of its received orthodoxy. In this sense, while it did not override their discourse on nationhood and citizenship and the role of the state, it was perhaps the strongest appropriation of some of the textbook discourses on citizenship.

However, the condemnation of the ‘bad Muslim’, even with student deference before it, does not reflect an understanding of agency as firmly placed within the individual or neatly divided between individual and state. ‘Deference’ is complex and incomplete. Alternative and competing constructions as well as practices were operating in the same context and often for the same people. For example, when I asked a teacher in the same school to tell me a little bit about the neighborhood, “garbage” (*zibala*) was not only the word she used to describe the neighborhood as a whole, but a main theme in

⁶³ Concerning religion, survey data show overwhelming religious sentiment among youth at 96%, slightly higher for females and those with higher education (UNDP 2010, 71-73). International comparisons rank Egypt first in the world in this respect with 38% percentage points above the international average 58% (UNDP 2010, 71-73). Although there are no significant social differences among youth categories on this question, there are relatively stronger religious feelings among females, urban dwellers and the middle class. If religiosity increases among persons with higher education, this may suggest that currently, education has a fundamental role in spreading religious values.

her narrative on the place. She commented on how the neighborhood was full of uncollected garbage. This was clearly evident around the school. The municipality cleaned the streets, removed the garbage and placed plants in the streets at one point when a high official was rumored to be planning a visit to the area.⁶⁴ Parallel to the absence of garbage removal, the teacher explained that all other services in the neighborhood were also very poor. In fact, no public transportation reached the neighborhood and all residents had to depend on private minibuses. In terms of the school itself, one of the school gates had to be closed off with cement because residents were disposing garbage in the passage way to the gate and setting it on fire, both effectively blocking the entrance and creating choking fumes every morning. (This was the gate, referred to in Chapter Five, which students had used to escape constant harassment from boys from the adjacent schools). The point here is that although this teacher (who displayed a very pious demeanor), did speak disparagingly of those who disposed of the garbage, blaming them for throwing it near the school, she mainly focused on “services” and the actions of the municipality. She certainly did not call the residents non-Muslims or bad Muslims. Further, she explained that “they” in the school had written many letters to the educational authorities and the municipality, and made attempts with the help of influential sponsors of the school to remedy the situation. School actors were not simply docile, nor did they make those appeals to the residents themselves. They took action and demanded it from government bodies, and tried to get influential individuals to mediate between them and those government bodies to achieve their goals.

Many of the more popular religious discourses, whether among poor or affluent students, do focus almost exclusively on the agency of the individual and only forcefully blame the state in relation to issues of identity (such as foreign intervention in education) or sexual morality (moral laxity in the media). However, there seemed to be a critical divide in student and teacher discourses on the self with profound

⁶⁴ This was a significant event in the life of the community that several people also referred to, saying that they had never seen their neighborhood like that. The plants were removed however on the same day and garbage quickly piled up again especially close to schools. This is also a reality for many schools across the country, as frequently covered by the press (likely because there are open unused spaces around them that are not residential).

implications for citizenship; as well as political protest and change. There was a continuous tension between constructions of citizens as bad and therefore responsible for negative conditions in the country and youth as oppressed and unjustly treated where bad conditions are mainly caused by those in power. This tension does not divide students into ‘individual agency’ and ‘state agency’ camps, but often exists jointly in the discourses of many students and teachers. As this student in the girls’ general school commented: “In the end, we are treated unfairly (*fil akebir ibna binitzilim*). If we [were educated well] from the beginning, we would have been great people (*nas hayla*). Now we turn out disgraceful” (*binitla’ irar*: a strong expression implying being worthless and disgraceful). This complexity and overlap is inseparable from the way that the late Mubarak regime had made corruption integral to the daily functioning of citizens (see Chapter One). From cheating on exams, to bribing government officials for different services (private tutoring included), almost every citizen was in some respect a participant in extralegal, illegal and questionable practices. Every citizen could be corrupt. This was especially true for the lower strata of society. Staying within the education system, upper middle class students and their parents were not involved in illegal practices in the way that lower middle class parents sometimes paid teachers to obtain exam questions, solved their own children’s homework or falsified rent contracts to enroll in certain schools. Even if such parents still paid bribes when renewing their driving licenses or to obtain other public services, privatization for them meant somewhat more removed from extra-legality. This embeddedness in corrupt or extralegal practices was more endemic and more blatant for lower middle class and working class parents, whether it was because of the way they disposed of their garbage, built their homes without permits on agricultural land (as in much of the neighborhood) or ‘stole’ electricity from the main public connections without license (See Singerman 1995, Ismail 2006, Dorman 2009).

It was not only the Islamic messages of the curriculum that were instrumental in reinforcing constructions of students as bad and unworthy. As detailed in Chapter Five, disrespect and negative labeling of students was systematic and normalized through the patterns of physical beating and humiliation across the public schools, but far less so in

private schools. Many teachers- and according to students, their own parents- were constant sources of charges and portrayals of failure and worthlessness.

While derogatory language was not used to describe students in interviews, lack of ambition, materialism and having trivial interests were key themes articulated by teachers in their reflections on ‘this generation’. Many teachers often labeled students as being without aim or ambition: an empty generation that “does not work and had been brought up that way”; that wants money without putting in the effort; that is “dependent and will always be like that; that their state is saddening because they are the future of the country and they “just care about soft drinks, crisps and ringtones”. There were of course clear tensions where the same teachers portraying students as ‘lacking in ambition’ would also assert that students are ‘frustrated’ because they could score above 95% and not get into any good college. In terms of materialism, teachers frequently lamented that students only cared about money and future incomes and made all decisions on that basis. In the private schools, they asked teachers which faculties they should enter to make better income and in the public schools, teachers joked that many students wished they could have become football players in order to make huge amounts of money. Contrary to the idealized neoliberal active citizen, interest in financial success was critiqued by school authorities across the schools. While, both girls and boys received negative labeling for lacking in ambition and patriotism, it seemed to be easier for teachers to label girls as superficial and ‘empty inside’, while excusing boys as the subjects most affected by the negative economic conditions and repression in the country: ‘why would he love the country if he has no apartment, job or good treatment’. In this sense, the neoliberal citizenship project of the state was seen as especially disempowering for boys because of their construction as primary breadwinners. Their lack of nationalist sentiment was therefore more understandable and stronger.

In discussions with teachers and principals, the theme of ‘bad youth’ was also related to construction of Islam understood in moral terms, especially sexual morality. Here when the blame was placed outside youth, it was directed at the other and the West as

corrupting youth, often intentionally. For example, in reflecting on ‘this generation’, the principal of the technical school mixed apologetic and sympathetic views of the students as a disadvantaged generation (*gil ma‘thur*) with moral blame to youth and society. His focus was not on poor economic conditions, but on “the lack of adherence to moral and religious values”. In many cases, teachers were referring to increased access to pornography; a phenomenon that seemed to be widespread. This was a frequently voiced concern especially in the public schools and immediately linked to new media, technologies and the internet and patterns coming from abroad. Other teachers also placed the weight on foreign plans for the weakening of the country and the targeting of its youth. As a vocal Islamist teacher in the general public boys’ school put it, this generation is “oppressed (*mazlum*), targeted and its destruction is [deliberately] planned out (*mitkhatatu izai yitdammar*)”. A religiously observant teacher in the girls’ private school also opened his reflections on ‘this generation’ in terms of a loss of identity due to conscious intentions to “marginalize youth, direct them away from what is important and corrupt their awareness (*tughyyibub*)”. Foreign intervention in education was seen by these teachers as a key means by which this intentional corruption of the generation was being carried out through high level education officials. Here, as in mainstream non-oppositional Islamism (see Sobhy 2007), symbols of identity and issues of sexual morality were given primacy in reflecting on youth, and the ‘other’ was the source of negative conditions, especially in terms of changing gender norms.

This framework was not however the key theme for most other teachers or students. Many teachers and administrators in fact explicitly resisted the articulation of the students as a corrupt and lost generation and therefore as bad citizens. As highlighted above, across the schools, teachers often referred to the bad conditions in the country (*zuruf*) and to students as oppressed, unfortunate or crushed by living conditions and helpless before them (*mazlum*, *ghalban* or *maghlub ‘ala amrub*). In fact, students as ‘frustrated’ and having no faith in society or in the future was articulated by teachers and principals in all the schools, and again intimately linked with national belonging.

THE 'OTHER', SCIENCE AND NEOLIBERAL CITIZENSHIP

As described in Chapter Six, textbook discourses of nationhood and citizenship also focused on building Egypt through science, on good citizens adjusting to the demands of a changing economy and on Egypt as being under external threat from the 'other' that is a major cause of injustice and disenfranchisement. Student discourses however hardly reflected these themes. In their generally critical mood, many students reversed the significance of the intended sources of national pride provided in the textbook. Celebrated Egyptian scientists and the accomplishment of Ancient Egyptian civilization were not key themes in their discourses. When they were mentioned however, they were frequently used to mount further critique on current affairs in the country. The only times students mentioned 'science' in relation to nationhood or citizenship was to comment that "no one gets their rights in the country" because world class Egyptian scientists like Nobel Laureate Ahmad Zuweil had to leave the country "to get their chance". The only times that Ancient Egypt was mentioned was also in negative commentary on current affairs: "we say we have the pyramids, but what did we invent this year?"

In fact, students often negatively constructed Egypt in contrast to 'other' countries that progress and prosper. In this sense, the image of the oppressive and unjust 'other' was hardly present in the discourses of students. School level discourse on the 'other' reflected the general tendency to attach to the West and 'the other' the opposite of what is constructed as lacking in Egypt or about Egyptians. The other was primarily just, fair and offered contexts where people were treated with respect, especially poor people; and where one does not need connections to get a job. The other is also hard working and productive. Therefore, when students brought up the 'other', this still generally reflected the sense of lack of justice or access to rights for most Egyptians, especially in themes of favoritism to the rich and powerful, cheating and corruption. Comparisons with other countries were also typically employed by students as evidence of Egyptian inferiority and Egyptians as bad and lazy. Not only was the west or the US frequently employed in student critique of the condition of 'Egypt', but so was China

and other rich Arab countries. As a student in the public general girls' school put it, "in China, they beg people to take a vacation and the students here they just dance or sleep in the playground." Just the mention of China could prompt a student to declare that Egypt is the most backward country in the world, revealing the depth of this sense of 'backwardness' or inferiority. Even one of the most vocal Islamist teachers argued that: "we have to admit that in the U.S. there is fairness and justice", juxtaposing this to patrimonialism and connections in accessing opportunities and resources in Egypt. In fact, the 'other' mainly featured as the 'good' standard against which to measure the country. As one student put it, "you can see films about the life of American youth, the lives of other countries. [Young people] grow up with the idea that Egypt is bad. Its debts are endless. America is much better, or Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Australia, China, or the Emirates". As one female student put it, "if I were not born here, I would not like to live here". These themes have clear resonances of discourses in popular films or TV programs. These were clearly discourses that were far more appropriated in student discourses than textbook constructions of 'self' and 'other'.

Quite surprisingly, only some teachers, but none of the students, cast Egypt in geopolitical terms and articulated issues of national power along with issues of unemployment and corruption in their discourses of the nation and state. In this view, the destruction of education is a deliberate policy by the U.S. to maintain the superiority of Israel (See El-Sayed 2006 for more on the 'conspiracy theory' in education, and Herrera 2008a on U.S. intervention in Egyptian education). The weakness of education, and especially of science education, and scientific research was juxtaposed to the strength of Israel, which produced advanced weapons. For example, in reference to the choice of many students to study arts instead of sciences, a teacher in the public general boys' school commented:

There is a problem in science subjects in Egypt... Israel is so small and produces weapons... It's a problem of curriculum. Iran is rising too. They started putting obstacles in science. Even in putting schedules they have science subjects right after each other. The minister is a just a big employee. They tell him the main lines and he applies them... This is a predetermined policy... They include things to destroy the identity of students.

Perhaps in this sense, they were the ones who had most appropriated, albeit in an oppositional vein, the official discourse of Egypt as a state under threat from external powers, interlinking this with Islamist themes. Such issues featured very little in the discourses of students (although it is possible to imagine they might agree with some of these sentiments, if put forward to them). In their own discourses and framework of nationhood and citizenship, these issues were quite marginal.

Finally, neither in their discourses nor in their reported practices was there a strong interest in active, participatory and charitable citizenship as promoted in textbook discourses. Participation in civic activities was very limited among students (because it was not truly encouraged or tolerated by the state), despite a growth in charitable activity among the upper classes.⁶⁵ There were very limited forms of local participation, except for religious lessons and Quran recitation. In the private schools, the school tried very hard to engage the largely 'absent' and academically overwhelmed students in school 'activities' to promote an image of a vibrant school, and a small number of them did engage in charitable activities; small numbers also engaged in creative and civic programs over the summer vacation that were not attached to the school.

CONCLUSION

Geertz (1965) has argued that rituals are both 'models of' and 'models for' society. That is, they are representations or idealizations of the society that produces them and are models or programs for action in the social world (Kapferer 1981). The absence of *tabur*, and its breakdown into chaos and violence is in this sense symbolic of the loss of sanctity of the nation, the state and its institutions. *Tabur* was not only undermined because students did not regularly attend school, teachers also colluded in the

⁶⁵ According to a recent national survey, less than 3% of young people are participating in volunteer work (UNDP 2010). In terms of group membership; including participation in youth centers and sports clubs, political parties, unions and associations, housing and school boards, only 4% of young people appear to have participated in any of these groups; the majority in recreational activities with 67% participating in youth centers and sports clubs (UNDP 2010, 40-41). Those who participate in political parties represent only 0.12% of young people in the age group of 18-29; and eighty four percent of eligible youth did not exercise their right to vote in the last election

cancellation of the ritual, sealing the reality of the emptiness of the school of its purpose and inhabitants and confirming the lack of commitment of all school actors to the institution. The exalted deliberate construction and performance of the nation in school ritual envisaged by the state is either absent or frequently disintegrates into nothing more than the humiliation and physical beating of ‘the citizen’. In a dysfunctional institution, the nation had no audience and in fact ceased to be ritualistically performed. Berezin has argued that emotion “is the pivot upon which political ritual turns. It is a vehicle of political learning that has the capacity to create new identities” (2001, 93). However, the nationhood project of the state was so undermined in school ritual and discourse that the national anthem could be replaced with curse words recited among students. Instead of embodying love for the nation or belonging and commitment to it, it was discourse and emotions of violation, humiliation and disempowerment that seemed to dominate this subversion of school ritual by some students and its marginality for many others; creating and fostering in its own right new oppositional identities, emotions and meanings. On the other hand, how individuals feel, see or relate to these narratives and histories varies not only from one individual to another, but goes through different fluxes and intensities, as apparent from the change in nationalist belonging and expression after the ‘January 25 Revolution’.

The issues discussed in this chapter are necessarily framed by the ‘dysfunction’ of the secondary school. As described in the previous chapters in terms of informal privatization and arbitrary and abusive forms of discipline and punishment in public schools, the secondary school is a place where the de-facto citizenship project of the state is lived and de jure citizenship rights were not available to most students due to both marketization and the absence of administrative and legal enforcement of protective and provision rights. If education is dysfunctional and/or happens outside of formal schooling, this clearly limits the avenues for the expression and experience of official citizenship and nationhood projects in schools, whether in school activities, wall journals, homework assignments or even the morning assembly. The only remaining expression of these state projects is in textbook discourses.

However, the ideal construction of the nation articulated in the textbooks and described in the previous Chapter was hardly reproduced by students. Many students could not express love and belonging to the nation and focused on explaining reasons not to love the nation. Therefore, as opposed to pride in Egyptian identity as put forward in the textbooks, students often affirmed and repeated disparaging statements about themselves and about ‘Egyptians’ and ‘Egypt’ as a whole, especially when juxtaposed to the ‘other’. While they sometimes acknowledged positive aspects of historical achievements of Ancient Egypt, and contemporary Egyptian scientists, they tended to use these to critique the current state of ‘progress’ and scientific achievement in the country. The role of science and faith in uplifting the country were not major themes used in student discourses on national belonging, neither were the discourse of the nation under constant threat by the other and therefore the glorious duty to defend and save the nation. In fact, students hardly constituted Egypt in its regional, geopolitical or Islamic roles and identities. Ideas of the nationalist President who takes tough but ‘wise’ stances *vis a vis* the ‘other’ were also not significant themes, certainly not in relation to Mubarak, nor as an ideal. Even Islamic notions of justice and the just ruler were not utilized by students.

Above all, the way that citizenship entitlement was overshadowed by nationalist sacrifice was completely reversed by students. Students articulated love, belonging, and essentially the legitimacy of the state in relation to the socioeconomic sphere, not around issues of identity, morality, authenticity or the ‘other’. The focus was on education and jobs, not for example, the role of Islam, the application of sharia, or Israeli or American occupation in the region. In fact, there was significant discussion around social class, entitlement and inequality; as students in the popular quarter, even lower middle class students, articulated themselves as poor and placed this at the center of their discourse of the nation-as-state. “Egypt” and “the country” were constructed as a “state,” which does or does not provide certain services or opportunities, and more often than not as a failing state; a state that was failing them. Especially in general secondary schools and especially among boys, students constructed the country as

corrupt and not worthy of allegiance, service, or domicile. Notably, students used a language of rights, equality, injustice, humiliation/dignity and poverty; vocabulary that is by and large absent and removed from state and textbook discourses. While clearly frustrated with conditions in the country, students from the upper middle classes used themes of recognition and “underemployment” instead of livelihood and survival in relating to opportunity and employment. It is nonetheless critical that the concern with blocked opportunities (or the reproduction of their class status) had reached high up into the upper middle classes. The turn to neoliberal citizenship and the withdrawal of the state also has a significantly gendered impact as men are understood as having the primary- and sometimes the sole- responsibility for breadwinning, implying a greater openness of boys in expressing lack of belonging and indignation.

In terms of the state’s citizenship project, its neoliberal aspects seemed to therefore meet with overwhelming failure. Discourses of neoliberal citizenship had not taken root across the schools and were undermined in different ways in student discourse. First, students clearly articulated the primacy of provision rights in their implicit construction of ideal citizenship. Second, there was little use of the language and themes of ideal citizens who need to develop themselves and adjust to the market. Third, poverty and poor social services were not to be remedied through volunteer work, charity or ‘renaissance’ through service-providing and developmental associations. Poverty was linked to state policies, inequality and systematic corruption and not the effort of each individual to access market opportunities. School actors articulated the state in its role as a provider of social services/provision rights like education and other public services/protective rights like security and the rule of law (undermined by systematic corruption). Students also emphasized humiliation and disempowerment based on class, underlining the impact of repressive measures on their conceptions of citizenship and nationhood. As Ismail has shown in relation to the “narratives of young men of their experience of interaction with the agents of the state is organized around values of self-respect and dignity and feelings of humiliation and injury” (2006, 127).

Muslim identity and non-oppositional Islamist morality as the core of good citizenship and their links with notions of the 'bad citizen' represented perhaps the strongest and least adulterated overlap between student discourses and textbook discourses on nationhood and citizenship. It is not at all surprising therefore that the regime had chosen to incorporate and promote such Islamist themes in its discourse. This was evidently the most effective element in its citizenship project; the element that was least challenged or susceptible to challenge by students and teachers. However, while such challenge did not come directly in terms of explicit collision with constructions of Muslim piety or orthodoxy, it came indirectly from the needs and resources of the school agents themselves. Even while affirming religiously framed discourses on the 'bad citizen', school actors engaged in practices that implied competing notions of citizenship. They did engage in demands on the state for better access to its protection and provision rights and did not act as though the solution was simply in the reform of the personal character and conduct of each individual. The hegemony of such discourses was also partial in the sense that they could remain 'suspended', 'true' as discourse, but not taken to their logical conclusions and not determining the relevant practices. For example, students certainly used notions of individual morality to discuss grievances at a more micro scale; notably characterizing teacher practices in terms of lack of 'conscience'. However, the textbook focus on corruption from an individual morality perspective, legitimated within an Islamic framework, was largely subverted in student discourses. Corruption was articulated by students as systemic and extending to the head of the state and the nature of the regime, not stemming from the individual's conscience of each citizen. Textbook and other public discourses of the bad citizen or bad Muslim were of course coupled and reinforced for many students at the school level by daily practices of negative labeling and humiliation (see Chapter Five). It is not surprising therefore that the construction of the bad, unworthy and disgraceful self had significant resonances in teacher and student discourses. However, overall it only had a limited impact on student discourses on the state itself. These discourses did not thoroughly 'de-politicize' all students or seal a discourse of acquiescence or of deserving the kind of treatment or rights obtained from the state. Whatever measure of lack of entitlement and a negative self-image may have been reinforced into student discourses,

it did not erase the realities that many students articulated as informing their relationship to the state and nation, or crowd out the alternative discourses they appropriated to understand these realities.

Therefore, students and teachers engaged with the discourses on bad Muslims, bad youth and bad citizens in complex ways. Dynamics around the appropriation of discourses of entitlement or moral blame cannot however be understood without reference to direct repression and punishment of dissent, both at the level of school and classroom extralegal practices or wider oppositional discourses. Expressions of the responsibility of the state for negative conditions or demands for citizenship entitlement can obviously come with a high price if they escalate to certain intensities and organizational forms or are voiced in relation to immediate dynamics in the school. Such expression is not the discursive path of least resistance. The relationships between disentanglement, unworthiness, deference and direct repression are complex and delicate, but the state was still ultimately able to punish dissident teachers or students, especially among the poor (just as school authorities were able to punish protesting students as described in Chapter Five). This is clearly reflected in the lack of any oppositional discourses in the formal forums of the schools, in stark contrast with the discourses articulated in everyday discussions and conversations with school actors.

CONCLUSION: SCHOOLING AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE LATE MUBARAK ERA

The educational dysfunction of the late Mubarak era occurred in a general context where provision, protective and participation citizenship rights were seriously undermined, and where young people have been disproportionately paying the price of neoliberal policies and demographic realities through high unemployment and lower quality of education. Despite significant openings, especially in relation to independent media, citizenship rights of participation and expression were undermined by increased securitization and repression structured by social class. These patterns were clearly reflected in the education system, which suffered decreased spending and pervasive corruption and informality, experienced rapid forms of privatization and exclusion and where teachers increasingly resorted to harsh forms of physical and emotional punishment to control students, extract resources from them and silence forms of complaint or dissent.

Schools are important sites for the production, construction and performance of the nation and state. They are institutions where the power of the state and its practices of government are manifested. They are key sites where young people encounter the state and learn about it; are disciplined into classed and gendered subjects; and encounter, share and make sense of discourses and forms of discipline that shape their differentiated production as citizens of the state. They are institutions explicitly aimed at shaping subjectivities and producing students as citizens of modern states. At the same time, schools are not sites where 'the state' or official curricula simply shape student discourses and practices. They are spaces that reveal the complex ways in which such discourses and practices are appropriated or subverted by school actors.

This research has been concerned with some of the ways in which mainstream national secondary schooling in Egypt constructs and produces students as subjects and citizens and how students construct schooling, the state, the nation and themselves. The

research has emphasized the ways in which the schools offered different subjectivating experiences to students from different social classes. It has outlined some of the key ways in which school relations inform and reflect the lived citizenship of students, their differentiated access to legally-guaranteed protective and welfare rights and the de-facto social contract of the state with different social classes. It has explored ideal citizenship and national identity projects as constructed in official textbook discourses and the use of religion in legitimating them. It has contrasted these with notions of citizenship and nationhood implied in school-level rituals, discourses and practices. It has emphasized the role of marketization and school practices of humiliation and punishment in disciplining students into classed and gendered citizens and the ways in which this has informed their discourses on the state and nation; highlighting the informality and “extra-legality” of both privatization and school relations of control, especially in public schools. It has demonstrated the extent to which the uncontrolled growth of private tutoring had undermined various aspects of discipline, attendance and examination in large parts of the system. It has detailed the ways in which the production of classed and gendered citizens is fundamentally shaped by forms of physical punishment and humiliation. It has highlighted as well the ways in which the complex appropriation of the notions of the ‘bad citizen’ and the ‘bad Muslim’ may be linked with the normalized discourses and relations of disentanglement with the state and within its institutions.

This chapter presents an overview of the main findings of the research; reflecting on their links with broader political, educational and theoretical issues in terms of privatization, discipline, nationhood and citizenship. It looks at how the Egyptian case can nuance our understanding of neoliberalism and privatization in education. It reflects on realities of discipline and punishment in the schools and how they relate to Foucauldian discussion of discipline. It revisits the popular discourse of *mafish ta'lim* (there is no education), highlighting concrete examples of what this means for students across the system. Finally, it reflects on constructions of nationhood and citizenship and how they may be linked to the events of 2011.

PRIVATIZATION AND NEOLIBERALISM

This research was conducted at a time of educational crisis; a time when education was thought to be failed and dysfunctional. This reflects something profound about the Egyptian state and its social contracts with different classes under Mubarak. It is also a reflection of a more global neoliberal moment that structures the forms of citizenship available to students. Neoliberal policies including educational privatization have contributed to the impoverishment of not only those already poor, but vast sections of the middle classes. The current sense of crisis in education, and in fact the growing protest movement over the past years, cannot be understood in separation from the increasing impoverishment and precariousness of the (urban) middle classes and the increasing alienation of the upper middle classes. However, neoliberal educational policies and the de-facto privatization of secondary education in Egypt have been carried out within distinct contexts of repression and informalization that set them apart from patterns of educational privatization in the global North.

The state is a principal actor in the process whereby the school is given over to the market in the different types of schools. Tutoring markets were perpetuated through a web of interests and corruption in a billion pound industry supported by various MOE policies and practices, and an almost complete absence of accountability across the system. It is concrete practices and policies of the state that have allowed for institutional and market forces to extract additional income from households for a service that is meant to be constitutionally ‘free’. Although this mode of privatization has taken place “informally”, it is inseparable from state policies that facilitated it, left its growth unchecked through various forms of corruption; but critically through the massive reduction in real teacher wages in its attempts to ‘cut spending’. The informal and de-facto privatization of schooling in Egypt has profoundly contributed to undermining the legitimacy of the state by altering the social contract and subjecting the poor and middle classes to heightened forms of exclusion, corruption and abuse. The hollowing out of formal schooling has also resulted in the destabilization of the state’s nationhood and citizenship projects by undermining the school as a key institution

where young people are available to engage in discursive and ritual reproduction and performances of the nation.

Privatization has also affected students from different classes differently. Tutoring meant very different things for students in each track. In the technical schools (in the track enrolling almost 60% of secondary students), tutoring was an almost forced payment extracted from students in schools where little formal education of any kind was occurring and where cheating was in fact pervasive. This payment was extracted in return for conferring a degree unto students who were not being 'taught' significant material or provided with actual skills and abilities. In general secondary, although most students still perceived little choice in whether or not to enroll in tutoring, the context was markedly different. Tutoring was an intensive affair designed to impart significant knowledge and content to students and to assist them in achieving better scores in competitive national examinations. This meant however that student school attendance was minimal; and the general school, both public and private, has been almost completely replaced by tutoring centers and home tutoring. Students in the public general schools were universally enrolled in the private market. They incurred huge costs in the process although their chances of university enrolment were increasingly low and uncertain. The even higher cost of tutoring for private school students was also a considerable burden on family finances. Private school students actually had realistic chances of entering university, whether public or private. However, they were not only faced with double privatization; paying almost as much in private tutoring as in private school fees, they also expected to pay for further private instruction in valuable skills, such as English language; the skills for which they had enrolled in private language schools in the first place. Despite their greater financial means, many families tended to experience this situation as unfair and corrupt, decrying the high prices charged by tutors and often blaming the government for having let tutoring spiral out of control. As discussed below, the fact that these parents continued to buy into these multiple forms of privatization highlights the question of what purpose education actually served for different classes.

This level of privatization has nullified the state's de-jure commitment to free public education and imposed a huge financial burden on most families, structuring access to education based on financial ability across the system, but especially at the secondary level. In the three school systems, access to the available forms of schooling- and freedom from extralegal emotional and physical punishment- depended upon the ability to pay for private tutoring. It reflects the diminished citizenship entitlement across the system. Importantly, it also eliminated actual instruction/school time devoted to any sports, creative or leadership and civic-engagement activities, adding to the 'poverty' and repressiveness of educational experiences.

The introduction of the market into the deep fabric of the school across the system has fundamentally altered modalities of observation, normalization and examination. Informal privatization has opened up the possibilities for different relations of power, interest, privilege and sociability. This is especially so because of the concrete ways in which privatization was been carried out, primarily through private tutoring, *within* public schools *and* within private schools; hollowing out, informalizing and transforming the very institution of secondary schooling. This privatization-through-tutoring has fundamentally undermined notions of equity, merit or learning itself. Students offered many vivid examples of how "money" solved all problems and moved the dynamics in their schools. Students in the public schools frequently articulated the marketization of education as a kind of corruption. They referred to lack of "consciousness" in the general schools; and almost to extortion in the technical schools; that the system of the school is simply 'you pay, you pass' (*tedfa' tengah*). They frequently articulated their own education as a kind of hopeless futility. They commented on how they and their younger siblings now found little incentive to study, because everybody passes through paying and/or cheating. General secondary students felt an added frustration and a greater vulnerability to unemployment, referring many times to ending up 'on the sidewalk': waiting for a job that would never come. In private schools, the huge cost of tutoring was a key concern, but there was also recurring emphasis on the lack of value in the learning obtained. Students and teachers

expressed their frustration with the emphasis on memorization and rigid forms of assessment and the dependency of students on tutoring.

It is argued that the neoliberal state seeks to create an individual who is an enterprising and competitive entrepreneur (Olssen 1996, 340). It is not apparent that many of the expected or desired neoliberal changes have come about in the educational context in Egypt in similar ways. For example, in the place of positivism and self-help and individuals as separate but equal, many parents and teachers expressed dismay that students are becoming more passive, “dependent” in their learning styles and unable to approach learning material without direct assistance from an adult or tutor. The system is seen as breeding dependence, cheating, cynicism, as well as a sense of oppression, unfairness, pervasive corruption, abuse, futility and closed up opportunities. Although not exactly the ones predicted by its proponents, the policies and practices of the privatization of education are indeed “creating new ethical spaces and new clusters of goals, obligations and dispositions” (Cribb and Ball 2005, 115).

As described in the detailed examples in Chapter Four, the patterns of marketization in Egyptian education have also had a huge and differentiated impact on teachers; their livelihoods, their survival strategies and the new behaviors demanded of them in order to succeed in the new environment. As Elyachar (2005, 214) puts it, “the expansion of the neoliberal market may be practiced in the name of scientific objectivity...but it can succeed only if it creates new subjectivities on the ground. Certain mechanisms as well as certain ethical attitudes must take hold for that free market to be established”. Among teachers, there was certainly a realization that the ethic required for their ‘success’ has been shifting, and with it their attitudes, dispositions and desired skills. Many teachers in urban centers are now expected to build and maintain customer relations, craft and manage a market image and reputation, develop their style—including elements of entertainment and charismatic theatrical performance, use advertising and marketing strategies, have catchy slogans and offer promotions and combinations of services: indeed to make enterprises of themselves. Indeed, the effects of privatization, commodification and market forces can be seen in terms of the

possible forms of self that they make available to us, and the “practices through which we act upon ourselves and one another in order to make us particular kinds of being” (Rose 1992, 161). This is a context which clearly privileges certain dispositions and marginalizes and impoverishes others (see Chapter Four). Different skills and attitudes become more valued and better rewarded in this context. It should not be assumed however that teachers are now responding to a simple logic of profit. Teachers’ dispositions interact with the wider trends of marketization in complicated ways. For example, strictness on academic matters, the class image of the teacher and the tutoring centre, leniency with gender mixing and the reporting of student performance or attendance to parents, are all elements more valued by some students and parents than others. In fact, while some teachers were portrayed by students as facilitating gender interaction to gain more popularity and clients, other teachers did not hesitate to call a parent when a student was systematically skipping class (presumably to go out with her male friend). Finally, this type of marketization seems to have fundamentally disadvantaged women and deprived many of them of the decent livelihood that was obtainable in one of their key traditional occupations. Tutor ‘lifestyles’ of working late and long hours, ‘jumping’ from one tutoring center to another and dealing with clientele, parents and diverse employees, is seen as decidedly less appropriate, acceptable or feasible for women, whose primary duties are in the home.

PUNISHMENT AND GENDER

The ‘neoliberal’ project alone is clearly not an adequate framework to explain the experiences of subjectivation in schools and the mode of governance of social services in the late Mubarak era. Gendered practices of humiliation and physical abuse are fundamental components of the social contract of the regime with working and lower middle classes and of their de-facto citizenship status, as reflected in the schools. In turn, these disciplinary practices were also significantly driven by the modes of privatization that functioned in the crony capitalist economy.

Through its focus on school punishment and surveillance, the research has examined some of the ways in which classed and gendered citizenship was constructed and enacted in the everyday life of the schools. It presented an image of the use of physical and emotional violence in schools, the gendered and classed dimensions of the violence and students' discourses about it. It also highlighted the key discourses used to construct and legitimize beating by teachers and MOE officials; including beating as means of preserving respect and authority, beating as a form of caring and moral instruction in an extension of parental roles, beating as the only available mode of discipline in the system, and beating as sanctioned by Islam. It explored the issues around student "noncompliance" with school and classroom rules, especially in its gendered dimensions.

Working and middle class students in the public schools were subjected to far more violent, corporal, arbitrary and humiliating forms of punishment than more affluent students in private schools. Students in public schools experienced on a daily basis the knowledge that they do not have access to formally guaranteed 'protective citizenship rights', in the form of freedom from physical harm and humiliation and freedom from sexual harassment for female students. Unsanctioned extralegal practices in public schools extended from beating and humiliation to demanding that students clean the school and perform other chores; and included the various practices used to coerce students to enroll in tutoring. In the public schools, boys were beaten and girls harassed with impunity within multiple discourses justifying the abuses and blaming the victims. Religious discourses were used to legitimize violations against both boys' and girls' rights. Students of private schools experienced other forms of punishment and negative labeling, but did not endure the kind of physical beating and humiliation practiced in public schools. Not only were key protective rights only guaranteed in private schools, students in the public schools also frequently expressed that the treatment they received in school was premised on their social class. Financial ability had therefore become a pre-condition of access to formally available protective rights, just as it had become a pre-condition for accessing basic 'provision rights'.

The actual patterns of punishment and control used by school authorities highlight the informality or “extra-legality” of school relations of control, especially in public schools, both in terms of physical and emotional punishment as well as forms of gender control that ran counter to or independently from school regulations. This underlines the weakness of the state and the erosion of its powers and institutions, feeding the sense of undermined rule of law and its classed nature in authoritarian neoliberalism. The situation of intensified punishment and the dysfunction of education parallels the more general “shift from welfarism and corporatism toward an articulation of security politics with neoliberal politics” captured by Ismail in terms of “ordinary citizens’ encounters with the everyday state” (2006, 128).

Furthermore, beating and humiliation were clearly used to limit the right to complain and voice their concerns for students in the public schools. The humiliation and negative labeling of students was essential for legitimizing abuses against them and preventing them from speaking out against various forms of corruption and dysfunction in the schools. These were critical mechanisms used to compensate for the decline in the authority and status of teachers due to their impoverishment, their dependence on tutoring and on other forms of corruption. The erosion of formal disciplinary powers held by teachers has impelled patterns of ‘invented’ or ‘pretend’ discipline, arbitrary and illegal punishment, as well as permissiveness; where codes of the school were regularly violated by students, especially those who could get away with noncompliance based on social or physical capital. This has further contributed to the sense of the arbitrariness and informality of state regulations so that much of school practices were conducted ‘extra-legally’ or outside the codified rules of the institution. This led to increased noncompliance on the part of students and a sense of chaos in the schools. As elaborated in Chapters Three and Four, the general institutional setting also informed extralegal teacher practices that undermined various facets of ‘discipline’ such as the facilitation of cheating, the presentation of inaccurate attendance data and other school information and activities and various other issues around the appeasement of supervisors and inspectors.

Beating and humiliation were almost an integral and necessary part of the regime's particular neoliberal project of governance. Education Minister Ahmad Zaki Badr's shocking statement endorsing beating discussed in Chapter Five, in fact, came shortly after he had declared that he had received tutoring himself as a student and that "there has to be a way for the teacher to improve his income" (ECER 2010a). Badr's desire seemed to have been for docile consumers in a privatized system where the market can be enforced by extra legal and violent means.⁶⁶ The other alternative would have been that the state actually pays the teachers it hires and addresses the fundamental issues of educational quality. In order to avoid doing so, the option seemed to be to unleash those in positions of relative authority onto their subordinates in a kind of Darwinian struggle in which those with greater access to financial or state power can deter violence against their children while the weaker must both endure the abuse and pay up in the form of forced private tutoring. In Badr's statement, there was a clearer and more honest expression of attitudes and policies that had been concealed, obfuscated and white-washed by previous ministers. Badr is emblematic because he exemplifies the masks-off neoliberal and security approach of the late Mubarak era associated with the rise of Gamal Mubarak and the new business elite; and the close alliance with the head of police Minister of Interior Habib Al-Adly. Badr was in fact famous for being the son of a former minister of interior, and was nicknamed in the media as the 'minister of interior of education' (*wazir dakbilyat al-ta'lim*). He had already exercised his policing mode of governance as head of one of the nation's largest universities, reportedly releasing thugs on the university campus to assault politically active students (Baltajiyat al-Intikhabat 2010). His selection as education minister and his statements shed light on the governance approach and credentials favored by the late Mubarak regime.

As observed across the schools, there were clear gender differences in the modes of discipline and punishment in the schools. Boys were far more likely to be beaten or subjected to physical violence, while girls were far more likely to be monitored, rebuked

⁶⁶ It is noteworthy that one of the most visible waves of school protest happened under his reign amidst allegations that his intention was to sell off valuable school assets to selected NDP-affiliated businessmen (See Chapter One, p.26).

and punished for failing to adhere to standards of modesty and chastity. Beating and control of chastity constituted critical ways in which schools produced dominant gender constructions and conveyed to students ideal masculine and feminine performativities. Multiple techniques of enforcing female modesty were employed by different school authorities in all the schools. Direct rebuke, humiliation, threats and physical beating were used to deter girls from violating the codes of modesty. The functioning of these techniques highlights not only the disciplinary power of school as a state or public institution, but also its subversion by school actors who enforced their own notions of ideal femininity regardless of whether or not these were supported by state regulations. It therefore highlights the ‘extra-legal’ means through which this control was established and enacted. It reveals the subversion of that order as well by students who continually breached the directives and expectations of school authorities, especially in the public schools. Competing constructions of fashion and distinction (promoted through different media, music videos and fashion industries) pushed girls, across the schools, to express their femininity in ways that were in contradiction—and daily conflict—with the expectation of school authorities.

The grave daily concerns relating to sexual harassment around the girls’ public schools also informed and reinforced patterns of gender control by the schools. Harsh forms of rebuke and punishment seemed to be ways of dealing with the frustration of school actors with their lack of access to citizenship rights of public safety. The weakening and corruption of the protective powers and functions of the state meant that students and schools could not call upon the police or rely on other institutions of the state to protect the girls from harassment, despite their various attempts to do so. Islamist discourses on the other hand defined and emphasized the limitations on female modesty. In this way, they partly obscured the withdrawal of the state from its protective functions, and enabled the framing of the failure of public safety as a result of the improper or immodest personal conduct of the citizen. Perhaps in this sense, they offered school actors a semblance of control and agency to draw upon in a situation they had failed to tackle in practical terms.

Beating however was not only disproportionately experienced by boys, it was more frequently (and almost exclusively in its severe forms) administered by men. It was therefore arguably part of a distinctly masculine discourse or masculinity training, where physical dominance becomes central in the construction of ‘successful’ or hegemonic masculinity. This the same logic that sanctions the physical punishment and repression of younger males by older authority figures; in the workplace (Shehata 2003), on the streets by arbitrary police power (Ismail 2006), or of female partners or family members by male members of the household. Because it was fundamentally related to the social class and financial ability of the students, beating represented an injury to ideal masculinities both in terms of physical vulnerability and in terms of its relation to social class. Public discourse and practices of socialization into masculinity construct manhood in terms of guardianship of honor and responsibility for providing for the family” (Ismail 2006, 127). Arbitrary beating, especially by male teachers, may have also been an outcome of the frustration of teachers with their own low pay and their need to resort to extralegal—and less than honorable—practices to survive and fulfill the masculine duties of breadwinning. It was also an attempt to deal with the diminished motivation and compliance of students due to the increasingly low and uncertain returns to secondary schooling.

Despite the harsh forms of punishment in public schools, noncompliant behavior was in fact pervasive in all the schools. Regulations and expectations of attendance and good behavior were systematically violated in all of the schools. This may not be very surprising in a context where most students received their education through private tutoring and many of them felt their education to be of limited intrinsic or extrinsic value (in its own right or in terms of future job opportunities). Pervasive noncompliance was therefore a byproduct of changing job market structures, privatization and pervasive unemployment in the neoliberal era. It may have also been linked to particular gendered response to these low educational returns, where boys adopted more challenging and confrontational behavior and girls’ violation of school rules centered on expressions of their femininity.

In the final analysis, if the school is a disciplinary technique aimed at the creation of ‘useful’ subjectivities and endowing citizens with appropriate cultural capital for their advancement or the reproduction of their class status, it is possible to see that where this process of capital accumulation is seriously impaired, the institution may use a mix of repressive and permissive measures to compensate for the breakdown of its authoritative disciplining position. The increased prominence of violent punishment in schools is therefore premised upon the ‘impotence’ of the institution or its inability to provide rewarded cultural capital to students; to the breakdown of its disciplinary role and authority.

REVISITING DISCIPLINE AND PUNISHMENT

How do these findings relate to broader theoretical questions about disciplinary regimes under neoliberalism? How do these findings relate to arguments about the ‘docility’ and obedience created by schools as disciplinary institutions in countries of the North (Raby 2005, Deacon 2006)? Can these frameworks of discipline and docility help us understand such school ‘dysfunction’ and ‘lack of discipline’ where boys and girls—with full collusion from school authorities—have subverted school discipline (observation, normalization and examination) in major ways; ranging from predominant truancy to widespread cheating in parts of the system? Can they account for schools that come to be frequented as soccer playgrounds that boys rent for money (the losing team pays); a stopping point to meet friends before jumping the fence and going to a café; or a social club where girls only come to meet each other? Can they account for schools as contexts where students are forced to clean the floors of classrooms, sweep the playground or make tea for teachers in exchange for marks, attendance leniency or being spared physical abuse? The findings clearly point at an ambiguity in relation to how ‘discipline’ as an analytical concept applies to dysfunctional secondary schools in Egypt.

One- perhaps less than satisfactory way- of thinking about these questions could be that given the ‘breakdown of discipline’, such institutions cannot be considered

'disciplinary' in the first place, but rather repressive, violent or pre-modern. Another way is to consider that there are different levels of analysis implied in thinking about discipline; one level looking at the modern school as a disciplinary institution and another level where one can examine, as this research does, the concrete workings of discipline *across* different schools. Ultimately however, the research findings contradict the assumptions of the disciplinary society under neoliberalism and its role in the production of docile citizens; and point to the different ways in which discipline could be enacted and meaningfully studied under neoliberalism. This section elaborates these issues, discussing the relevant constructions of discipline and punishment and how the research findings fit within them.

One can agree with Foucault that the superimposition of the power relations and the knowledge relations assumes in the examination all its visible brilliance (Foucault 1977, 185). On the other hand, if the examination does not do the work of normalization and judgment, then can we talk of effective 'discipline' in these contexts? Should we talk of 'dysfunctional discipline' in such schools? The examination can be an arena where such little power is exchanged and such little knowledge is controlled or imparted, as in technical schools. The functioning of that kind of examination indeed renders the schooling experience behind it brilliantly visible. That is, in contexts of dysfunctional education (*mafish ta'lim*) and open cheating, the functioning of such key disciplinary techniques brings to light the irrelevance and marginalization that indeed disciplines students into classed and gendered subjects. This (mal)functioning of discipline itself can be argued to produce certain kinds of subjectivities, discourses and practices. This allows us to explore the production of subjectivities in institutions that do not effectively observe, normalize and judge, where 'neat' discipline may be replaced and permeated by repression, permissiveness or arbitrariness. This recalls the works of Timothy Mitchell (1991) and Ben Fortna (2002) on education and discipline. Both, like Foucault's discussion of schools, were working on historical material. While Mitchell looked at the models of schools desired by the engineers of modern education in Egypt, Fortna (2002) attempted to compliment his work on designs of modern Ottoman education with available records of disciplinary issues in concrete schools.

While looking at actual practices in schools is far more difficult in historical analysis, contemporary analysis can benefit from exploring discipline in its lived and everyday manifestations.

Looking at discipline at the level of concrete schools and divergent schooling experiences necessitates greater complexity in understanding how subjectivation actually works through discipline, as well as how discipline works through class and gender. Disciplinary institutions do not only act upon subjects by virtue of their normalizing power and their surveillance and examination techniques, they do so differently; and these differences are fundamentally structured around class and gender (in addition to other sometimes critical factors such as ethnicity and religion). As this research shows, discipline worked in very different ways across the schools; so that it cannot be said that schooling per se, discipline students into certain kinds of subjects. The examination itself can be an intense national event with high material and symbolic returns in upper middle class schools, while having an ambiguous position in the disciplining of middle class students with uncertain prospects for university enrollment, a much as it can be a theatre of mass cheating and irrelevance for working class students. Research that engages at that level of the actual functioning and dysfunction of discipline therefore highlights class-based differences and other critical variables in the functioning of disciplinary institutions.

Finally, discipline may be distinct from 'repression' and violent punishment in ways that are important for the production of subjects. However, the distinction that Foucault seems to have been drawing between repression/sovereign power (or relationships of violence) and disciplinary power (or power relations) is not easily observed in many situations across the schools or other institutions in the social world. It was clear that relations in the technical and public schools exhibited daily patterns that were repressive, arbitrary and violent. On the other hand, even if violence was less prominent in the private schools, discipline in those schools was also seriously undermined. 'Discipline' and the lack or breakdown thereof, as well as violent punishment and humiliation also normalize, judge and punish; and all work in

imperfect and incoherent ways. Regardless of whether Foucault's historiography of power is broadly accurate (at least insofar as it traces out predominant patterns of change), "the "regimes" of power in question are less than hegemonic in their scope. Strands of so-called pre-modern power coexist with modern, disciplinary techniques and interact with them in complex and varied ways in the lives of many people" (Westlund 1999, 1055). As Deacon (2002, 112) notes, "[n]ot only are power relations not reducible to the disciplines, or the latter to the apparatuses of the state, but it would also be wrong to see the disciplines as replacing or transcending sovereignty, as if Foucault had merely reversed Enlightenment histories of progress in order to relate the story of the rise of unfreedom". Ismail has also pointed to the difficulty in drawing "a definite line separating the modern and the traditional" with regards to "Foucault's genealogy of disciplinary regimes in the context of historical practices of control in non-Western societies" (2006, xxix). Perhaps even for Foucault, the distinction did not always seem very sharp or the displacement of one form of power by the other complete.⁶⁷

Therefore, despite the repressive and violent means of control found in disadvantaged schools, it is not possible to talk about a lack of 'discipline' in the Foucauldian sense, unless we imagine a clear distinction between repression and discipline. Relations that include or are dominated by forms of physical and emotional violence also discipline subjects. Even slavery, which is the extreme example of captive and physical control for Foucault (1982) cannot be said to function solely repressively without relations of observation and normalization that discipline and govern. It is difficult to make a fruitful distinction between the disciplinary role of physical punishment in the technical

⁶⁷ That the omnipresence of the monarch was a condition for the extension of disciplinary power relations into everyday life (Foucault 1979, 87) also helps to explain why discipline still bears many of the violent and spectacular trappings of the age of absolutism: even the Panopticon, that emblem of the disciplinary society, testifies to the continued presence of sovereignty in being organized around a central tower (Foucault 1977, 317, n. 4). Thus: "At the moment of its full blossoming, the disciplinary society still assumes with the Emperor the old aspect of the power of spectacle" (Foucault 1977, 217).

schools and less violent and more codified forms of discipline and punishment in general and private schools and tutoring centers. The school does ‘discipline’ students into classed and gendered subjects, whether it is a violent and dysfunctional technical school, a laid back and dysfunctional private school, or a disciplined and functional tutoring center. It always normalizes and judges, even if it does not always really examine; and the differences in its disciplinary role are fundamentally premised on social class and gender.

MAFISH TA‘LIM?

Education was portrayed by the Mubarak regime as “a national project” and repeatedly expressed as a reform priority, especially from the 1990s onwards. At the end of his era, the state of education in Egypt was so negative that many Egyptians habitually commented on educational issues using the simple phrase: *mafish ta‘lim*: there is no education. This is a statement that may be difficult to understand at some level. How can there be no education if about 17 million students enroll in pre-university education alone and about 1.2 million persons are employed by the Ministry of Education in a truly massive system? On top of this, millions enroll in various additional forms of private tutoring. Enormous sums of money are spent, materials and school uniforms are bought and millions commute back and forth to schools and tutoring centers throughout the year. This section attempts to explain what ‘no education’ meant in different parts of the system and reflects on what purposes [dysfunctional] ‘education’ was really serving for students and the state.

The first class I attended in my fieldwork remains the best illustration of what *mafish ta‘lim* could mean. It was a computer science class; a subject recently introduced in Commercial specializations in technical schools in an effort to upgrade and modernize their programs. The lesson at hand consisted of the following four sentences: 1) to insert a symbol, place the cursor where the symbol is to be inserted; 2) open the “Insert” dialogue box; 3) select the symbol and choose the command “insert;” and 4) note that operations applicable to normal text are applicable to symbols, like changing

the size of the font or highlighting the symbol. These four sentences were repeated in different ways throughout the class time of about thirty minutes. First, they were stated by the teacher—after she had written the title on the board and spent some time directing casual insults at the students [calling them *zifta/scum*] to urge them to sit down and be quiet. Second, the students were asked to repeat each sentence after the teacher. Third, she dictated the sentences to them, stopping and repeating herself several times, as the students wrote them out in their notebooks. Fourth, she mentioned that it was a frequent question in exams to be asked to insert a symbol and that the students would have to know these steps, which she overviewed quickly. Fifth, she dictated an exercise homework question: “what are the steps of inserting a symbol?” She then asked for the attendance sheet, counted the students, signed it and said that she would look at the notebooks next class to check each student’s notes. The class ended. This was a third secondary class. There were no computers in the classroom. The lesson was one of a series of six lessons on the “Insert” function (inserting symbols, footnotes and endnotes).

This lesson remains for me the best illustration of how ‘education’ often happened in the technical schools. The content of the lesson, the way it was delivered, the way it would be examined and the ‘knowledge’ and ‘skills’ it was meant to impart show just what kind of education was available in technical schools where nearly 60% of secondary students are enrolled. There was simply no measure of contextualization throughout the class: when and why one may need to use “symbols”, what are “symbols”, and no indication as to why the “insert” function is so critical and so complicated that sixteen year old secondary school students needed six different classes on it. Students were not asked to use this material in any way throughout the school year. They were never given assignments involving the insertion of symbols or that required computer use in the first place. Students were not really allowed to use the computers at school either.⁶⁸ They clearly graduated without obtaining any meaningful

⁶⁸ There was however a lab in the school, provided through a donor project. Students were sometimes actually allowed to enter the lab, where many computers were in fact functional; rare occurrences in other public schools. In other classes in the lab in this school, students were in fact taken to the lab, but

computer skills from school. Students did obtain the four sentences they would need to write if this question showed up on an exam paper, but more likely, they would not need even such knowledge, as cheating would be readily available in most exam contexts and summarized exam preparation sheets would be made available to them if they enrolled in tutoring with school teachers, as elaborated in Chapter Four. Exam questions were remarkably similar—and disturbingly ‘simple’—every year. Students only spoke in class to mechanically repeat the simple sentences after the teacher or ask her to slow down her dictation—and of course to make whisper side comments to each other.

In subjects like history, Arabic, geography and economics, there was more ‘substance’ in the material at hand, especially in the textbooks themselves. However, its truncation, the style of its presentation and lack of contextualization was similarly disturbing. The larger patterns around examinations, tutoring and cheating were however the same. Each class presented students with small bits of data and lists of items often without context, meaning or use. This is not because they did not develop the ‘whole person’ or their full range of faculties. They were of little use even in the most practical, pragmatic or immediate sense. This was true even when students attended and teachers actually entered classes and ‘taught’ the material at hand. As detailed in Chapters Four and Five, the opening insults and the fact that the teacher actually entered the class was likely an improvement on the norm, due to my presence. Initially, the teacher was actually eager to let me ‘take the class’.⁶⁹ I have found it difficult to describe or comment on classes like this and on the style of instruction in most classes without value judgment, without a measure of outrage, without criticism. Students were acutely aware of these deficiencies however and used the same kind of normative judgment I wanted to use to describe their education; in two words: *mafīsh ta‘lim*: there is no education.

were not given the opportunity to use the computers, or to ‘learn’ or practice the extremely basic skills at hand in any meaningful way (see Chapter Four for a description of such an incident).

⁶⁹ Perhaps she had planned to leave early that day to run an errand or preferred to continue socializing with other teachers. She may have wanted to ‘withhold’ the lesson from the students in order to pressure them to enroll in tutoring or simply did not feel comfortable being monitored.

There really was very little education going on in the classes I attended in the general and private schools as well. The memorization and recitation style of teaching in this class was by no means unique to technical schools, but extended to public schools and tutoring centers. In fact, some sought after ‘star tutors’ are famous for creating attractive songs and rhymes to help students memorize the material (see Hartmann 2008). For general secondary students, the content however was far denser—and in tutoring, it was covered at length and in great detail. Students were still very critical of the quality of education they received and used the same statement that ‘there is no education’. They usually either meant: there is no education in the school, but there is education in private tutoring, or they meant that education—even in tutoring—did not really develop their knowledge and skills, prepare them for the job market or offer solid prospects for enrollment in a good university. Their sentiments are confirmed by rising unemployment for secondary school and university graduates.

Marketization and accumulated lack of political commitment to educational spending have weakened not only classroom teaching but also dominant pedagogies and the ability to control and support better teaching practices. This state of education was a reflection of poor quality and poor accountability or ‘discipline’ across the system. Simply, if teachers are not trained to teach a certain subject and students in most schools had hardly been able to learn the basics of the subject (see Chapters Three and Four), memorization is the only way to pass students from one stage to another. If workshops in technical schools have no functioning equipment, or are locked in fear that they be ruined, what option is there except to memorize a few points for the exam? To give a concrete example from general secondary, in one of the rare occasions when I observed a supervisor inside a classroom, he rebuked, interrupted and directed in an authoritarian manner the English teacher giving the class in the girls’ general public school. The teacher however had simply not received the training to apply the methods the supervisor was advocating (who had briefly received training outside of Egypt), and in fact had very weak knowledge of English in the first place. He himself had graduated out of university with poor subject knowledge. Furthermore, his students, who had been through several years of poor English instruction, did not really have the ability to

deal with the curriculum at hand and therefore relied on what they could memorize by repeating after him. They needed to focus on how exam questions would be placed, so that they could better target their memorization efforts. They, in fact, voiced support for the teacher's memorization-focused approach over the more participatory methods promoted by the supervisor. In turn, exam question and exam preparation guides were geared to these skill levels and rewarded memorization, not participation or communication skills on the part of students.

In fact, many 'subject' supervisors who are meant to monitor and advise teachers with regard to their teaching performance, do not even enter classes. They sign in the main visitor register in the principal's office, stay for tea and a chat and look at teacher 'preparation' notebooks. In remote areas of the country—where transport to the school may require a few hours and transport allowance is a negligible fraction of the frequently considerable transport costs—supervisors may call the principal by phone in lieu of a visit. That is, similar to how beating and punishment was conducted in the schools, there may be quite harsh rebuke to the teacher, even in front of the class, but no formal disciplinary measure that could structure teacher incentives to alter their behavior, no formal rewards or punishments or remedial programs. Teachers whose notebooks are not prepared in accordance with strict regulations may be harshly rebuked, but supervisors have limited disciplinary or remedial powers over them and usually end up giving them 'Excellent' annual appraisals (due to complications in the appeal process of receiving less than 'Excellent' appraisal ratings).

A whole system was in fact in place, which rendered supervision, as a disciplinary technique, meaningless; along with examinations and pedagogy. Due to the pervasiveness of private tutoring, it is very difficult to attribute student familiarity with the material to the school teacher in the first place. Student competence is more likely developed in private tutoring; a fact not unknown to supervisors. The dysfunction of supervision and its operation as a pretence meant that it offered teachers little incentive to work on student learning, while providing an incentive for them participate in the maintenance of appearances, by giving due attention to their preparation notes and

student notebooks that are constantly monitored by (in-school and external) supervisors. When supervisors were known to enter classes, teachers also tried to alert and prepare the class beforehand, so that the end performance was a satisfactory one. This was sometimes accomplished by explaining a lesson that had been explained before in class.

The clearest expression of *mafīsh ta'lim* is a degree of educational marketization that has essentially emptied the schools and therefore transformed them profoundly. Its clearest cause is the poor investment in quality across the system. Technical secondary schools—enrolling students from poor schools where they were hardly equipped with literacy skills—suffer such poor resources, permissive cheating and forced private tutoring, that many students understood the school as a place where one got beaten and humiliated, but where no learning or education occurred in the first place, even in effectively compulsory in-school tutoring. For students in general secondary schools, education was a highly demanding affair that occurred almost entirely in private tutoring centers. It was focused however on memorization and exam preparation in such an intense manner that students still expressed that there was ‘no education’, as they felt that they were not really developing any useful knowledge, skills and abilities. Education was not only incredibly dull and difficult, it was also not equipping them with marketable skills, from analytical thinking, organizational abilities and communication skills, to English language and computer skills.

One of the biggest puzzles in Egyptian education is not only understanding that ‘there is no education’, but also why then families remained invested in the same educational contexts and continued to incur massive costs in the process. This puzzle is partly explained by the larger issues around employment and education, discussed in Chapter Three. Why did students stay in the technical schools, despite the daily forms of abuse, low returns and lack of learning? One reason boys gave was that enrolment in secondary school reduced the duration of compulsory drafting into the army; seen as a negative, unrewarding and humiliating experience. Having a secondary certificate also made it theoretically possible to obtain a formal job. While this has been a shrinking

prospect (see Chapter One), there was still an expressed hope of possibly attaining this goal among students. Critically, obtaining a secondary degree more easily enabled them to marry (within their social class); a key issue voiced by boys and girls. It seems however that for boys it was increasingly apparent that it is more important to have a job at the point of proposing to a family than holding a particular type of degree. This was an increasingly difficult prospect given rising unemployment among technical school graduates and many students may have felt that having the degree along with a precarious job was better than only having a low paid job or none at all.

The situation seemed to have been worse for general students in public schools. While there is a decline in the demand for general secondary education (see Chapter Three), there are still millions enrolling in it. They seemed stuck in a class background that they could not reproduce. They faced higher barriers in terms of employment and university enrolment and yet they were in a system where tutoring costs were very high indeed. The tension was apparent between their aspirations to join university and obtain a high-quality job and the realization that they were more likely to join a two-year institute, end up unemployed or severely underemployed [sweeping staircases, attempting to find a job as a driver or security guard or various unskilled work]. It was still unacceptable for many of them to abandon such aspirations and the middle class status that comes with general secondary, as glaringly evident in their insistence on the expressed goal of becoming a doctor or engineer. Girls particularly saw the school itself, even if useless educationally, as a legitimate escape from household chores and an arena for socializing with friends outside the house. Overall, boys and girls also agreed that many or most students had a special interest in tutoring due to the opportunities it provided for gender-mixing, which was not available in the formal school. So long as their parents could secure or borrow the necessary funds, general secondary—and its tutoring—was the only and most desirable option available to them.

For private school students, again their costs of education were very high, but the returns to their education were uncertain. Mostly for social status reasons, they could not abandon their school enrolment even though they were obtaining all of their

education in tutoring. One's school is still an important marker of status. However, students typically paid as much for yearlong tutoring as they did for the schools they attended a few days per year. They were also increasingly competing against graduates of more prestigious international diplomas, who would have an edge on the job market. They were also aware that public universities offered low quality of education and limited places in desirable colleges. They were feeling increasingly compelled to consider a range of far more expensive private university options. They too were nervous about the reproduction of their class status. Most private schools catering to this stratum of society, including both schools where the research was conducted, have already created further tracking in the system by offering foreign diplomas (mainly IGCSE and the 'American Diploma') in addition to the 'national' track; leading to an almost visible decline in its status where school resources are diverted to the 'International' tracks and class differences become more pronounced within each school.

The state on the other hand was able to maintain a huge system of patronage and employment through the education system, where little service was provided while massive costs were incurred by the state and the citizen. With the exodus of the upper classes from public schooling and from national schooling altogether, the state also got rid of a key source of pressure for reform within the system. Middle and upper middle class parents had little knowledge or interest in technical school issues, while the elite had little firsthand knowledge of the issues of national schooling altogether. This still did not deter most people from declaring education non-existent in the country.

NATIONHOOD AND CITIZENSHIP IN TEXTBOOKS AND SCHOOLS

They taught us by the cane

And breastfed us fear

They taught us in school

The meaning of the words: "All Rise"

They taught us to fear the principal

So that all talk is ceases

علمونا بالعصاية
ورضعونا الخوف رضاعة
علمونا في المدارس
يعنى إيه كلمة قيام
علمونا نخاف من الناظر
فيتمنع الكلام

*They taught us how to fear
And how to cover
But they forgot to teach us respect
So don't be upset
When I turn out not listening to you
And don't be upset if I'm out of order [against the system]
What do you expect from a child they raised by shouting
Other than trouble and fighting
All those who tell you I love you, this is hypocrisy
I, when I told you I loved you,
it was hypocrisy*

...
*Love means two people giving
Not one hand building and 600 beep beeps tearing down*

...
*Love means a vastness in the hearts of lovers for the beloved
It means the poor sleep at night feeling warm
Love means an answer to all the imprisoned
Why have they become imprisoned
It means to live for a goal
For a message
To feel my worth in you
That I am not living as a dependent
It means when I sweat [work] you reward me fairly
Love is a state
Love is not poetry and talk
Love is something that cannot exist among people who get their
lunch from garbage bins
Love inside you
Is an impossibility*

From the poem *Juha*, by Hisham El-Gakh, (Al-Gakh
2010)

علمونا إزاي نخاف
و إزاي نكش
بس نسيوا يعلمونا الاحترام
فمتمز علوش
لما أبقى مش باسمع كلامكم
وماتز علوش لما أبقى خارج عن النظام
مستني إيه من طفل ربوه بالزعاق
غير المشاكل والحناق
كل اللي بيقولك بحبك دول نفاق
أنا لما قلت لك بحبك
كان نفاق

...
الحب يعني أنتين بيدوا
مش إيد بتبني وستميت تبيت تبيت يهدو

...
الحب يعني براح في قلب العاشقين للمعشوقين
يعنى الغلاية يناموا في الليل دفيانين
الحب يعني جواب لكل المسجونين
هما ليه بقوا مسجونين
يعنى أعيش علشان هدف
علشان رسالة
يعنى أحس بقيمتي فيكي
إني مش عايش عوالة
يعنى لما أعرق تكافئيني بعدالة
الحب حالة
الحب مش شعر وقوالة
الحب حاجة ما تتوجدش في وسط ناس
بتجيب غداها من صناديق الزبالة
الحب جواكي
استحالة

The evolving mode of governance of social services in Egypt has entailed its legitimating discourses and official projects of citizenship and nationhood. In addition to repressive measures across society, or unleashed into the school through silence on beating and extra-legal practices, the state's effort to bridge actual and official citizenship entitlements appears in the attempts of official textbooks to craft different notions of citizenship that are focused away from provision and protection rights and geared towards love and sacrifice for the nation, active neoliberal citizenship and Islamist personal morality. There is a critical relationship between the forms of citizenship made available to segments of the population and the centrality of

nationalist devotion that redefines good citizenship as the duty to serve the nation, especially the nation under threat, and obscures all other definitions of citizenship and entitlement to protective or provision rights. Constructions of both the nation and Islam were used in the regime's attempt to stabilize de-facto citizenship projects. In fact within and through their constructions of nationhood, the textbooks also sought to fuse the state—and the regime and President—with the nation; so that the primary relationship of the individual is to the nation not the state; a relationship that is then continuously emphasized as one where the individual embodies natural feelings of love and belonging to the nation/state and owes the nation the duty of loyalty and sacrifice. Mubarak himself was set up as the example of the adoption of sound nationalist stances (vis-a-vis 'the other'), while 'youth' were frequently portrayed as lacking in national belonging and hardly ever portrayed in a positive light. Constructions of the 'bad citizen' and the 'nation under external threat' work together to undermine alternative citizenship discourses in one of the key rhetorical tactics of the late Mubarak regime.

Egyptians were only glorified for the scientific achievements of ancient Egyptians and for rising to the challenge of foreign occupation under the correct leadership. The textbooks therefore emphasized to contemporary youth the duty of contributing to Egypt's civilizational glory through personal morality and faith, as well as scientific progress. While Egyptian youth were to somehow single handedly come up with major scientific breakthroughs, the lack of any supportive atmosphere for anything that resembles 'science' in Egypt is evident not only in 70% of general secondary students choosing to study non-science subjects, the state of education itself, the corruption and lack of resources overwhelming any form of scientific research; but also in student discourses to the effect that 'real' Egyptian scientists, like Nobel laureate Ahmad Zuweil, had left Egypt because they simply had no context to excel in it.

The strong emphasis on Islam as a moral and nationalist force articulated throughout the textbooks was mixed with elements of neoliberal citizenship where science and technology, time-management and efficiency, volunteerism and charity would develop Egypt, and lead it to progress and renaissance. While the classic Islamist emphasis on

ruling by sharia was not explicitly promoted in the textbooks, there was greater presence of the non-oppositional Islamist message that adherence to ‘true’ Islam by each individual leads to power and prosperity for Muslim nations. Within the overall framework of the textbooks, where Islam is defined as personal morality in non-oppositional terms, citizenship was increasingly articulated and understood in religious terms so that the Good Citizen is the one who adheres to religious teaching and improves his personal conduct for the elevation of the nation. Secondary school textbooks highlight the extent to which the regime had selectively crafted, promoted and appropriated aspects of Islamist discourse that served its projects of governance and the construction of citizenship in neoliberal and nationalist terms that almost completely obscured protection and provision rights, while paying lip service to supposed participation rights and ‘democracy’.

In various forms of official and semi-official discourse, the citizen is portrayed as not embodying the correct values and practices, grounded in Islam and necessary for success, prosperity, and national empowerment. Textbook discourses placed the blame and responsibility on youth to become hard working citizens adjusted to the demands of the neoliberal economy and lift up the nation to higher levels of ‘progress’ and development. Therefore, notions of ideal “active” neoliberal citizenship, as articulated in countries of the North, were reflected in secondary school textbooks and official state discourses with the same focus on charity and assistance to the less fortunate (through ‘civil society’), but within the moral framework of Islamist citizenship. However, ‘active citizenship’ was articulated in countries of the Global North to promote adjustment to the withdrawal of the state (reduced provision rights) in a neoliberal economy with functional judicial and police services (relatively secure protective rights and rule of law), and indeed with functional public education and health services. The articulation of such concepts of citizenship in contexts where protective and participation rights- and the rule of law itself -are either effectively absent or severely undermined has markedly different meanings and consequences. In a context like Egypt, neoliberal citizenship is a mask for disempowerment at a very different scale when charity and entrepreneurship are the solution for 40% poverty rates,

pervasive corruption and repression, and failing education, health and transportation services. Similar to developments noted elsewhere in Africa and Latin America, “philanthropy and charity are increasingly becoming modes of provision of social needs, eroding social rights of citizenship and transforming citizens into clients of notables” (Ismail 2011b, 858).

The textbooks revealed a sense in which ‘Egyptian’ nationalism was something of the past (in contrast with religious identity, which is current). Poetry pieces about love of the nation (as Egypt) and Egyptian nationalist writings typically came from the pre-1952 era during the struggle against the British—but *not* from the more ‘revolutionary’ phases of that struggle, such as the Urabi Revolt or the 1919 Revolution. Not only was the nation about relations with the ‘other’, it was also about relationships that are over and done with: formal colonialism. Other themes of nationhood, especially those articulated under Nasser, had no place in the textbooks. The nation that had been defined to students through the discourses of ‘liberation’ from imperialism, solidarity with the struggles of Arab peoples *and* ‘other’ oppressed peoples, freedom from exploitation, expanding social provision and the equality of women had been erased from history. It should have seemed extremely plausible therefore that if the ‘liberation’ nation did not exist, there was no context for scientific excellence, and even struggle against the aggression of the ‘other’ was largely over, what was left of nationalism was indeed creating neoliberal renaissance through Islamist personal morality.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of textbook discourses—equally reflected in official media discourses throughout the late Mubarak era—was the ability to put forward a discourse that so crudely and blatantly twisted reality, notably on two major issues. A regime that was an ally and client of the United States continued to portray itself as protecting national and Arab interests against foreign influence. It accused the citizens at large—and its opposition more vehemently—of betrayal to the nation through adoption of western cultural norms and deficient citizenship, or tarnishing the image of the nation abroad. These themes found echoes in many quarters in discourses that maligned youth and dealt with opposition forces with suspicion. This was perhaps

only paralleled by the other myth the regime promoted to the west and sections of the elite; namely that it was the last line of defense against the sweeping wave of Islamism. While it indeed repressed various politicized and militant variants of Islamism, there is little doubt that it gave vast organizational space and voice to less politically challenging forms of Islamism that in fact came to dominate popular discourse, the education sector, as well as the discourses of official national textbooks. These brands of Islamism or mainstream piety emphasized personal morality, chastity and ritual performance and cohered with the neoliberal and authoritarian projects of the regime, and the United States, which obscured almost all citizen rights. In contrast with the slogans of the popular protests that led to the removal of Mubarak, these dominant Islamist discourses made no demands for a regime that provides ‘bread, freedom, dignity and social justice’, whether the ‘Salafi’ or the ‘softer’ elite Islamism (see Chapters One and Six for extended discussions).

In terms of how these nationhood and citizenship discourses were translated in the schools, the research focused on school rituals and student and teachers discourses. The morning assembly ritual was approached as a key practice and concrete example of the production and performance of nationhood in the schools. While ritual and other school activities are arguably critical in the construction of collective identities, the emptying and hollowing out of the schools through privatization has meant that their ability to perform this function was seriously undermined. In fact, the key avenues for the expression and experience of official citizenship and nationhood in terms of school activities, homework assignments, wall journals as well as the morning assembly were either undermined or completely eliminated due to de-facto privatization, pervasive truancy and lack of resources in the public schools. The highly delineated and centrally decreed performance of the nation in the morning assembly envisaged by the state was either not performed or reduced to its most basic components and permeated with collective rebuke of the students (and in some cases replaced with alternative Islamic content). In the characteristic style of the permissiveness (lack of rule of law) and repression of the late Mubarak era, the morning nationalist ritual either ceased to be performed or was effectively reduced to the physical beating and humiliation of the

student body. On their part, students continuously subverted the nationalist rituals of the schools in different ways; by putting forward their own mocking and obscene versions of the national anthem, not uttering the anthem or flag salutation, pronouncing them without the required reverence or not attending assembly altogether. Critically, the rituals, discourses and legitimacy of the state were undermined because the very institutions meant to promote them had effectively disintegrated under the weight of a mixture of abuse, corruption and de-facto privatization throughout the secondary school system.

The research also explored the key themes in student and teacher discourses of nationhood and citizenship. It showed how the ideal construction of the nation articulated in the textbooks was hardly reproduced by students. In fact, many students could not express love and belonging to the nation at all and focused on explaining reasons *not* to love the nation. As opposed to pride in Egyptian identity, students often affirmed and repeated disparaging statements about themselves and about ‘Egyptians’ and ‘Egypt’ as a whole, especially when juxtaposed to the ‘other’. Students did not construct ‘Egypt’ in regional or geopolitical terms or in terms of Islamic themes and identity. Egypt was constructed as a “state,” which does or does not provide certain services, job opportunities and dignified treatment. Students and teachers related the conditions of education and patterns of privatization directly to government policy and weaved this into their constructions of nation and state. Students articulated love, belonging, and essentially the legitimacy of the state primarily in relation to the socioeconomic sphere, not around issues of identity, morality, authenticity or the ‘other’. In fact, there was significant discussion around social class, entitlement and inequality; as students in the popular quarter, even lower middle class students, articulated themselves as poor and placed this at the center of their discourse of the nation-as-state. Especially in general secondary schools, and especially among boys, students constructed ‘the country’ as corrupt and not worthy of allegiance, service, or domicile.

Themes of neoliberal citizenship did not therefore seem to take hold among students or successfully ‘discipline’ new neoliberal subjectivities. On the contrary, students implied distinctly different notions of citizenship that emphasized state protection and provision, not market rights and entrepreneurship. Notably, students used a language of rights, equality, injustice, humiliation/dignity and poverty; vocabulary that is by and large absent and removed from state and textbook discourses. In fact, public school students especially used the ‘forbidden’ terminology and meanings of poverty and inequality to explain their realities and their actual access to the protection and provision rights of the state. [As reflected in secondary school textbooks, ‘poverty’ was almost completely eliminated from official discourse throughout the neoliberal period in Egypt, where official discourses did not even use the word ‘poverty’ or ‘the poor’, using when necessary the all-encompassing term “those of limited income” (*mahdudi al-dakhl*).] Students especially emphasized humiliation based on class, underlining the impact of everyday repressive measures on their conceptions of citizenship and nationhood. Girls in the popular neighborhood also emphasized issues of public safety and security in this regard. While clearly frustrated with conditions in the country, students from the upper middle classes used themes of recognition and “underemployment” instead of livelihood and survival in relating to opportunity, employment, the lack of a ‘sense of belonging’ and desire to leave the country. It is nonetheless critical that the concern with blocked opportunities (or the reproduction of their class status) had reached high up into the upper middle classes.

In contrast with textbook discourses, the key issues highlighted by students in reference to constructions of nationhood and citizenship were framed around corruption, poverty and inequality and were usually not given any religious backing and framing. This is arguably telling in terms of the distance of the dominant non-oppositional Islamist discourses from these daily concerns of the students. These dominant religious discourses did not emphasize or mobilize for a citizenship project that insists on the delivery of protective, provision or participation rights by the state. Their focus was on improving the moral character of each individual. Religious discourses did not seem to provide them with the language and framing to legitimize their need for an alternative

citizenship project or to articulate their grievances on unemployment, inequality and poverty. These alternative citizenship discourses may have been significantly influenced, not only by the lived citizenship of students, but by new (largely ‘secular’) independent media and the growth of new protests movements.

On the other hand, Muslim identity and non-oppositional Islamist morality as the core of good citizenship and their links with notions of the ‘bad citizen’ represented perhaps the strongest overlap between student discourses and textbook discourses on nationhood and citizenship. These discourse and their legitimization of notions of the ‘bad citizen’/ bad Muslim was the element of the state’s citizenship project that was least susceptible to challenge by students and teachers in the schools. These discourses represented a significant limit on, and alternative to, other discourses that emphasized state agency and responsibility and articulated citizenship in terms of ‘rights’ and entitlement. Despite this discursive limitation, alternative discourses did circulate among students and teachers in the schools shaping different practices that implied a logic of entitlement and citizenship. In this sense, it was the needs and resources of school actors that structured their practices, not merely their exposure to sanctioned forms of religious discourses.

In sum, there was a bounded set of themes that structured most student and teacher discourses relating to the nation, the state and socioeconomic and political realities. First, the main registers when discussing ‘the country’ and/as state- revolved around provision rights and rule of law, equal opportunity, respect and reciprocity. Second, these discourses were not reproductions of official textbook discourses. They utilized their concepts and themes quite selectively, mostly stripping them of their determining power. Third, these discourses are not assumed to have straightforward or automatic implications for political behavior and protest, despite the events of 2011. The level of boldness and opposition voiced by students (despite evident self-censorship) points to how deep the resentment and indignation ran among youth from different social classes; especially in the lower middle classes; emotions that are of course critical for

political mobilization. However, grievances, and the emotions accompanying them, are understood in studies of social movements as “relatively constant and pervasive” (Jenkins and Perrow 1977, 250), so that their existence cannot explain why frustration only sometimes leads to collective action. Different political process theorists have argued that “aggrieved groups are likely to mobilize when new political opportunities are exploited by people within indigenous networks, networks which provide ordinary people solidary incentives to participate” (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2000, 70).⁷⁰

On the other hand, this should not obscure the fluidity and different possibilities within these discourses. First, what I am implicitly characterizing as a relatively ‘secular’ citizenship discourse among these urban Cairene youth should not be simply generalized to all parts of the country and does not dictate the shape of nationhood and citizenship projects after 2011, especially in light of the dominance of variants of Islamism in public discourse and in education, especially outside the capital. Political discourses before the Iranian Revolution, for example, offered only partial indications of what came about during and after the revolution and how it got consolidated and solidified (Ashraf and Banuazizi 1985, Kurzman 2004). Second, just as the lines of discourse and practice could not be easily drawn between the use of discourses that implied citizen entitlement and those that implied citizen blame, a distinction between discourses of love and sacrifice for the nation as opposed to discourses of lack of belonging or even hate, is also a very delicate one. The poem above by the young Egyptian poet Hisham al-Gakh—viewed close to three million times on Youtube alone—is a powerful expression of many of the themes put forward by these Cairene youth across the different schools and social classes. The excerpts above draw out in particular the links between schooling, humiliation, poverty, inequality and love of the nation. Al-Gakh has in fact emerged as one of the voices of a new (oppositional) Egyptian nationalism, where his powerful expression of the impossibility of loving the

⁷⁰ While “[m]oral outrage over feared practices, the shame of spoiled collective identities or the pride of refurbished ones, the indignation of perceived encroachment on traditional rights, the joy of imagining a new and better society” are emotions all relevant to politics and mobilization, it is perceptions of open opportunity and expected outcomes, as well as existing networks for mobilization that are critical for political mobilization (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2000, 79).

nation (above), and his other famous phrase from the same poem: *Mantish habibti min il-nabarda, Habibti matit/* You are not my beloved from today, my beloved is dead, are both expressions of a powerful love-hate relationship and arguably lay the ground for a passionate nationalism.

Powerful contemporary events are more important in shaping discourses on the nation than anything that can be deduced from gauging a political culture or discourse that is stable over time. Constructions of the self, of the state and of national identity and perception of political opening are all elements that can change significantly and quite rapidly based on changing political realities. It is easy to imagine for example that if Egypt is attacked by another country or the state enters into strong confrontations with a clear ‘other’, students may shift their discourses on the nation considerably and rather rapidly. Clearly, in light of recent events, the ‘January 25 Revolution’ itself and the powerful experiences around it can profoundly change student discourses on the nation. Research has suggested, for example, based on the examination of discourses of national character and consciousness before and after the Orange Revolution in the Ukraine, that High school students’ experience of new forms of community and solidarity *during* the “revolution” led to the emergence of novel articulations of national identity; that national consciousness was therefore an effect rather than a cause of the Orange Revolution (Fournier 2007).

After the ‘Revolution’, Al-Gakh explicitly renounced in his poem *Mikamilin*⁷¹ the verse declaring the death of the beloved Egypt; and also wrote the celebrated verse on the eve of the removal of Mubarak: *Mazziq dafatirak al-qadima kulaba, wa uktub li misr al-yawm shi‘ran mithlaha/* Tear up all your old notebooks, and write to Egypt today poetry that becomes it. The explosion of nationalist sentiments, song, symbolism and flags *during and after* the 2011 ‘Egyptian Revolution’ was sparked by euphoria of hope and faith in a possible new ‘Egypt’; that is, a possible new ‘citizenship’ contract. These nationalist sentiments were clearly not there for many youth prior to the events. It was

⁷¹ He said in *Mikamilin* (Al-Gakh 2011): *ten’iti’ idi ama ‘ult habibti matit* [roughly translated: Cursed is my hand when it wrote my beloved is dead.]

the events that brought about the songs and new symbols. This underlines that feelings of national belonging are not stable or permanent. It arguably underlines as well that feelings about the nation were indeed more an expression of and fundamentally linked to the regime and its practices as found in this research; that indeed citizenship and nationhood were fundamentally linked for significant strata of Egyptians. Pride and faith in Egypt therefore hinged on the perceived relations with the regime and the disentanglement and humiliation it was seen as inflicting upon citizens. With the hope of a change of regime, nationalist feeling could be more comfortably experienced and expressed. While many people clearly embraced these nationalist symbols, the use of flags was of course an intentional strategy promoted by key protest organizers from [less disempowered] upper middle class backgrounds (making protest as well as new forms of nationalism ‘cool’ and ‘in’). This strategy arguably worked by mobilizing latent themes of devotion to the nation continually propagated in official discourses. It is notable that there was a clear theme of framing the protests around love of the nation, not only in officially commissioned songs that sought to contain the ‘Revolution’, but in the songs developed and sung in Tahrir as well. This, and the importance of framing Mubarak as a traitor to the nation [not only an unjust tyrant], arguably drew upon existing nationalist themes and continued to link and perhaps subsume citizenship under and within nationhood, albeit while critically redefining nationhood around the struggle for a better society. The construction of the nation during and after the ‘January 25 Revolution’ is certainly a rich area of research that should receive considerable attention in the coming years.

The place of humiliation in constructions of the nation in particular should receive significant attention in future research. Commentators in the Egyptian media have already noted the symbolism of one of the key chants of the night of the fall of Mubarak: *Irfa’ Rasak Fu’ Inta Masri/* “Lift your head up high, you are Egyptian”. Al-Gakh—in a poem already viewed over a quarter of a million times on YouTube alone—has linked the persistence of Egyptians in Tahrir to the masculine pain of humiliation and oppression [*mahanit il-rjial* and *qabr il-rjial*] under the old regime (Al-Gakh 2011). It was as though the regime—especially through practices that were

received as humiliating and undermining human dignity and ideal masculinity—had destabilized pride in the nation; bringing about constructions of Egypt as ‘violated’ and ‘violating,’ as students had put forward in their alternative lyrics to the national anthem.



Figure 16: Flag and Victory in the Boys’ General School

CONCLUSION

If *zifta* [scum] was the very first word I heard in a classroom in my fieldwork in the girls’ technical school, and my introduction to the constant rituals of humiliation in the public schools, the closing of my fieldwork in the girls’ general school was a situation that highlighted the fundamental modes and discourses of disentanglement and unworthiness were normalized in the schools. This was a situation where Mrs. Mirvat (see Chapters Four and Five)—one of the most exemplary, “conscientious,” diligent, respectful and caring (towards the students) teachers in the school—told me that the

students did not deserve the computer-based English Language course that I had bought for them, and for which they had asked me a number of times. Having always been incredibly warm with me, on that last day, she firmly rebuked me for buying the course, arguing that students were not serious about their request nor had the will to make use of the material or really develop their English language skills. She preferred to take the course and then give it out to ‘some’ serious students and only in a phased out manner. The school principal for her part effectively prevented me from sharing the course with the students as well as the teachers. She resented and was almost appalled that I had intended to bypass her and simply ‘democratize’ student and teacher access to this special resource by allowing them to make direct copies of the digital material.⁷² She did not only prevent me from meeting again with the students, but also effectively asked me to leave the school. Students themselves had no doubt that the course would not be shared with them if it went through the principal. They seemed however disappointed in me. They were upset that I should have been so naïve as not to have realized this on my own. I had come face to face with the norms of entitlement, power and hierarchy in the school. My minimal gesture of gratitude and educational support was too offensive to the personalized hierarchical clientelism by which resources were meant to be dispersed in the school.⁷³ On a methodological note, this brought home to me once more that only by breaking the norms of the ‘field’, do they show themselves most vividly to researchers. It was a very humbling reminder of our very limited ‘knowledge’ of any given ‘field’. On my last day at the school, I had not yet ‘understood’ the school. In fact, I so blatantly violated its norms and disappointed its

⁷² What I later realized was that the principal probably initially understood the present to be a personal gift to herself (even if it were given under the guise of a gift to the school). Gifts to principals are a common practice for ‘nominal’ postgraduate education researchers who pass through schools and receive a principal’s signature that they have completed considerable fieldwork in the school. In a best case scenario, it could have been understood as a gift to the school, but certainly in that case, it would be the principal and the principal alone who controlled teacher and student access to it; a process that would have been highly selective so as to reward favored teachers and students and deprive others.

⁷³ Perhaps as Dorman has suggested in relation to [donor-backed] urban upgrading programs, they “failed, in part, because they were implicitly predicated on the logic of dealing with the sha‘b [people] as citizens with rights and responsibilities, as opposed to clients seeking protection and favour” (2007, 255).

different actors. I hope however to invite others to keep going back and trying to get inside the 'black box' of the school.

This research has argued that the secondary school can be seen as a space where the de-facto citizenship projects of the state are lived and official citizenship rights have collapsed under the weight of marketization, informality and the absence of administrative and legal enforcement. The marketization of secondary education in Egypt has only been made possible through the symbolic and physical violence against teachers and students involved in the creation of such markets. The chapters elaborated on the concrete ways in which financial ability become a pre-condition for access to legally guaranteed protective and provision rights in the late Mubarak era. However, this research was not only conducted but also almost entirely written before the removal of Mubarak. It therefore documents some of the discourses and practices of nationhood and citizenship in this critical historical juncture, without the benefit of hindsight or an attempt to reconstruct the Mubarak era after its end. It therefore provides a fine-grained image of key state institutions immediately before 2011; shedding light on some of the underlying patterns that acted as the backdrop of the explosion of January 25. It shows the disintegration and direct humiliation pervading key institutions of the state catering to different classes. The thesis has clearly not dealt with forms of informality or noncompliance in the schools as expressions of counter-hegemonic 'resistance'. The disintegration of discipline in the schools should not be taken as a precursor to the outburst of protest in 2011. It is an indication however of the progressive decline of the authority and legitimacy of the state and its extension across the working and middle classes.

This research has attempted to present a preliminary reading in the understudied areas of education and citizenship in Egypt. It has opened up different lines of analysis on some of the key issues in secondary education and lived and ideal citizenship and nationhood in Egypt, each of which deserves its own detailed analysis. The research is therefore an initial step and invitation for more detailed studies of lived citizenship in schools, paying greater attention to the experiences of students from different ethnic,

regional and religious backgrounds. It is appropriate to highlight once more that the schools in which the research was conducted are relatively privileged by virtue of the upgrading efforts they experienced and of being Cairene schools. As emphasized in Chapter Two, although this work refers to ‘working class’, ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘poor’ students, these students—despite their diminished citizenship entitlements—should not be mistaken for the poorest of the poor or the most disadvantaged children who are less likely to enroll in secondary education (one fifth of children do not access secondary education) or live in urban centers in the first place. Citizenship contracts with the poor in rural areas await extensive and detailed study.

Furthermore, the silence of this research on the experience of Christian citizens of schooling and textbooks saturated with Muslim identity and discourses calls for more detailed work on this front. There is much to explore in terms of the impact of neoliberal policies and the modes of privatization in Egyptian schools on the production of teacher discourses and practices; and their complex insertion into informal markets as well as hierarchies of repressive relations in the schools. My work with students and inside classrooms leaves much unsaid about critical power relations across the school and various levels of administration. Studies of punishment, surveillance and the construction of heteronormativity can also be given more detailed treatment across different kinds of schools. Studies of rural schools and schools in different parts of the country and the system are also greatly needed. In fact, almost every aspect of Egyptian education is understudied and deserves far deeper exploration.

In terms of citizenship, there is great need for work that examines concrete institutions of the state in Egypt and their embeddedness in evolving governance projects and state-society relations. Research is also greatly needed on the detailed working of networks of patronage and corruption across key sectors and public institutions, including the education sector. The workings of these networks would also provide rich arenas for more detailed understanding the nature of the regime and its social contracts with different classes. The field of state-society relations, national identity and political emotions are all areas where further and continuous work would be very fruitful.

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Secondary Education Textbooks

- Nationalist Education for First Secondary Technical Education (for Commercial, Tourism, Professional and Industrial Specializations)
- Nationalist Education for the General Secondary Certificate
- Arabic Language for Second Secondary General
- Arabic Language for Third Secondary Technical for Commercial and Hospitality Specializations
- Arabic Language for Third Secondary Technical for Industrial and Agricultural Specializations
- History for the General Secondary Certificate
- Islamic Religious Studies for Third Secondary General.
- Al-Adwa' for Arabic Language for Third Secondary Technical for Industrial and Agricultural Specializations
- Al-Adwa' for Islamic Religious Studies for Third Secondary General
- Al-Mu'alim for Arabic Language for Second Secondary General
- Al-Mu'alim for History for the General Secondary Certificate
- Al-Mu'alim for Nationalist Education for the General Secondary Certificate