You gotta fight for your right(s): street harassment and its relationship to gendered violence, civil society, and gendered negotiations

Nadia Ilahi

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YOU GOTTA FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHT(S): STREET HARASSMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO GENDERED VIOLENCE, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND GENDERED NEGOTIATIONS

A thesis submitted to

The Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology & Egyptology

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Masters of Arts

In Sociology-Anthropology

By Nadia Ilahi

Under the supervision of Dr. Helen Rizzo

December 2008
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Dr. Helen Rizzo
Thesis Committee Advisor ________________________________

Dr. Adrienne Pine
Thesis Committee Reader ________________________________

Dr. Martina Rieker
Thesis Committee Reader ________________________________

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I owe many thanks to my supportive committee: Drs. Helen Rizzo, Martina Rieker, and Adrienne Pine. I am indebted to Dr. Helen Rizzo, my advisor and friend, has been a tremendous help to me in more ways than one. Thank you for your unending support throughout this whole process, for your helpful comments and encouragement. I am grateful to Dr. Martina Rieker was so helpful in leading me to a variety of helpful resources and introducing me to fascinating scholars who inspired my work. I want to thank Dr. Adrienne Pine for her enthusiasm, helpful criticism and patience with me during the lengthy writing process. I owe very special thanks to Dr. Sherine Hafez for her assistance as a mentor whose questions allowed me to further develop my theoretical arguments and whose belief in me as a student lead me to set and attain higher goals.

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I dedicate this work to all of the women in Egypt-foreign and Egyptian-working, surviving, walking, fighting and hoping.
ABSTRACT

The American University in Cairo

YOU GOTTA FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHT(S): STREET HARASSMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO GENDERED VIOLENCE, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND GENDERED NEGOTIATIONS

Nadia Ilahi

Under the Supervision of Dr. Helen Rizzo

This Thesis explores particular dimensions of street harassment against women in Cairo, Egypt investigated in three ways:

Paying attention to how gender, race and class intersect, I found Egyptian and foreign women utilize various strategies in order to cope with street harassment such as verbal silence, modifications their bodily movements and appropriated styles of dress which in turn strives to maintain a sort of mobile private space that maintains their respectability. However, paying attention to the discontinuities found within normative ideas of gender, I argue that women at times transgress the boundaries of it and fight back to the harassment they unwillingly receive by employing violence and class-motivated forms of protectionism.

Secondly, I explored the relationship between street harassment and masculinity. I identify how social constructs of gender in Egyptian society are used to reinforce and at times encourage particular behaviors among men and women. Those notions normalize violent behaviors of men unto women and restate an ideal women's subjectivity to simultaneously remain silent and honorable. Arguably, street harassment against women is a form of violence, which, enacted by men serves to reinforce notions of a hegemonic masculinity. I like others, argue that the preoccupation with women's bodies in and outside of the Middle East, de-limits both their rightful access to public space and to safety.

Lastly, I examined civil society's role in particular feminist desires of space. Focusing on an Egyptian NGO, The Egyptian Center for Women’s Rights-ECWR, I examined their relationship to the Egyptian state and their role in aligning themselves with particular Western feminist ideals. I grapple with their overarching platform of naming harassment, 'Sexual Harassment.' I maintain that although they champion women's rights, they must be careful in how they construct particular terminologies. I argue that the problem needs to be understood and tackled in cultural-specific terms designed by Egyptian women themselves. If not done carefully, we fall into the theoretical trap of representational politics of non-Western women and Egyptian society will continue to be split in believing that harassment is a problem worth solving.
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### ABBREVIATIONS

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<tr>
<td>AUC</td>
<td>The American University in Cairo</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
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<td>ECWR</td>
<td>The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organization</td>
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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Introduction
We as a society have neglected public harassment, especially the heterosexually romanticized public harassment that women experience from men: the vulgar slur that pretends to be flattery, the act of caressing a breast or buttock that a man might explain was compelled because the woman was so alluring, the screams and blows from playful men who harry women because men believe them lovely—or because they believe them to be no better than dogs [Carol Brooks Gardner 1995].

Street harassment in Egypt is a widespread phenomenon that women from a variety of backgrounds, circumstances and social locations experience on a daily basis. Harassment hinders women's mobility and infringes on their access to public spaces. Gender inequity and multiple exclusions of women from public spaces produce a masculinisation of these spaces in urban settings. In this, women are forced to perform a model femininity to retain their respectability in the street which reduces them to socially constructed, normative aspects of their gender. Daily harassment is not a phenomenon strictly experienced by women only. Men are also harassed on the streets of Cairo in different ways and for other reasons. The harassment can also be sexual in nature, racially motivated, or a bi-product of the intervention of the Egyptian state and the role it plays in defining secular 'non-threatening' subjects from those who appear more Islamic in ways of dress and behavior read as 'threatening'. Yet women do publicly harass. Often female harassment is milder; sometimes gender is the focus, but more often it is race or ethnicity, sexual preference or disability (Gardner 1995:9). Additionally, it does not convey the same sense of fear and shame upon men that women feel on a daily basis. Rather, I hope to reveal the ways in which Egyptian and non-Egyptian women negotiate street harassment as a normalized behavior so prevalent in Egyptian society.
Examining the ways in which street harassment crosscuts gender, race and class and the role civil society plays in fighting it should illustrate the myriad of forces that shape an understanding of why it is a social problem which demands immediate attention. Harassment is a problem that ties into discourse on the state, megacities, issues of modernity and male and female subjectivities.

Twice in the past three years, veiled and non-veiled women were publically attacked on a large scale in the streets of Egypt during the Eid Al-Fitr holiday which follows the Islamic holy month of fasting, 'Ramadan.' The events that occurred in 2006 transpired around the opening night of a new film in downtown Cairo. Dina, a famous Egyptian belly dancer was purported to have been there dancing 'wildly at the entrance of the cinema with scant regard of the professional etiquettes expected of artists' (Leila 2008). It is then understood that when the movie sold out, the men who could not get in rioted, first charging the box office and then attacking veiled and un-veiled women passers by. Officials stood by as men in the streets charged women passersby claiming, in weak defense, that Dina incited the crowds ([http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2008/917/eg6.htm](http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2008/917/eg6.htm)).

Egyptian Bloggers were among the first to lament on the fact that state media ignored the issue and when finally confronted and forced to respond, they talked about public harassment as an isolated incident rather than a widespread, urban social issue. The bloggers criticize Egyptian society as a whole for its myopic attitude towards harassment of women. One, in an email casts Egypt as an 'imaginary' and 'traditional' society. The email laments on the fact that state media ignored the issue and when finally confronted and forced to respond, they talked about public sexual harassment as an isolated incident rather than a widespread, urban social issue.

Perhaps the writer criticises Egyptian society as a whole for its myopic attitude
towards harassment of women in that she casts Egypt as "imaginary" and "traditional." These two terms are then played against the contradictive images of Egypt- a place that is dialectically juxtaposed between tradition and modernity; culture and religion.

Current newspaper reports reveal, "Mobs of around 100 boys and young men attacked women on the streets of Mohandessin, ripping at their clothes in the country's worst sexual harassment incident since the Oct.24, 2006, downtown Cairo attacks" (Mayton 2008). Contrary to the 2006 mob attack, this year's incident was met with police forces arresting men accosting women. As this may be read as progress, the state has yet to enact a law against harassment which would enable more women to report the incidents thereby, restructuring aspects of claim to space. Yet, Egyptian society still tends to blame women for the attacks they incur or plants more social pressure on women's bodies to soften the blows of harassment, minimizing men's actions.

However, the recent story of a young woman, Noha El Ostaz [also goes by the name Noha Rushdy]; a young Palestinian actress/film maker was awarded justice in a recent harassment case in Cairo. (See http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7682951.stm, http://www.metimes.com/International/2008/10/22/egyptian_gets_jail_for_sex_assault_in_milestone_case/8754/). Noha's story garnered both international and local media attention as she took her case to court against Sherif Goma'a, a man who groped her repeatedly from inside his car while she was walking down one of Cairo's busy streets (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7514567.stm, http://www.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=45178 ). One of the newspaper reports meant to defend her, yet still felt it necessary to mention what she was wearing at the
At the onset of her pleas at the police station, Ms. Ostaz was met with disapproval from the local police telling her to bring the perpetrator in. After returning to the scene of the incident, she sat on his car, ultimately forcing him inside the police station. The recent court case ordered Goma'a to pay a fine of near $1,000 plus serve a jail sentence with hard labor. A private Egyptian television station, El Mahour recently aired an interview with Ms. Ostaz about her incident days before the court case. As her narrative draws in the discussion about the passive attitude of the state and the lack of legal recourse against harassment available to women in Egypt, mysterious phone calls from men claiming to be from Egyptian State Security contacted her days before the trial, belittling her as a "whore" and "deserving of what she got," furthermore, threatening to scandalize her reputation if she did not keep quiet. The backlash is unsurprising: Since the case, a number of conspiratorial statements have been made about Ms. Rushdy claiming that she is really an Israeli citizen who lied about the incident all together to tarnish the reputation of Egypt and benefit from the justice claim (Mayton 2008 and Abdel Rady 2008).

Noha's case is very inspiring to all women in that it is the first case involving harassment where the harasser is held accountable. Because of the international attention focused on Noha, I believe that helped her immensely. She set precedence for all women however, urging them to report these cases. At the same time, mounting societal pressure through various social campaigns urges women to enact forms of modesty by using particular bodily practices [which suggest behavioral implications] in order to deflect harassment. For example, an email campaign urging women to veil in Egypt warns, 'A veil to protect or the eyes will molest' (Knickmeyer 2008). The picture attachment accompanied by the email oddly compares men to flies.
and women to pieces of candy. The first of two images shows a veiled woman representing a piece of untouched and covered candy representing the ideal veiled Muslim woman. In the next image, silhouettes of unveiled women wearing tight clothing are compared to sticky, pieces of uncovered candy. This message clearly links women to notions of sexual chaos, because of their sexual powers held within notions of their femininity, men become unable to control themselves.

The city offers untrammeled sexual experience; in the city the forbidden-what is most feared and desired-becomes possible. Woman is present in cities as temptress, as whore, as fallen woman, as lesbian, but also as virtuous womanhood in danger, as heroic womanhood who triumphs over temptation and tribulation [Wilson 1992:6].

What alienates women from participating equally in various religious, political and social public spheres sits firmly on an agenda to eradicate presently. The public sphere in Habermasian terms denotes, 'The entire realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed' (Habermas 1964:49). Furthermore, the public sphere embodies a space of debate and deliberation as well as the construction of 'public subjects through techniques of marking, differentiation and identification' (Ismail 2007:7). In what ways are the experiences of urban spaces gendered? Wilson argues, 'Both western and non-western societies have regulated women's movement in cities, although to varying degrees' (16). In fleshing out the gendered ambiguities cities have come to clutch, Wilson draws upon the notion that women nefariously represent urban chaos in opposition to their male counterparts. Tracing the city from eighteenth century London to postmodern L.A., the city is rendered an ambiguous place. Wilson's reading of the 'flaneur,' as strollers and loiterers etch into context, the gendered notion of such an experience:

George Sand was one of the most successful of nineteenth-century French writers...She described how, disguised as a man, she could experience the pleasure of being a flaneur-a stroller, that quintessentially Parisian way of relating to the modern industrial city of the nineteenth century: 'no one knew me, no one looked at me...I was an atom lost in that immense crowd [52].
Much of what Wilson purports necessitates the need to explore women's relationship to and notions of gendered harassment. The female flaneur in Europe will experience the aspects of city streets differently than in parts of the Middle East. In Egypt, Cairo's streets are a major point of convergence for all people. The streets attest to the unrelenting human and automobile traffic at all hours of the day and the social activities they host not limited to the selling and purchasing of goods, people watching, and even protesting. As women are commonly seen outside in Cairo's streets undisguised, they face gendered hostilities. According to Wilson, "Women posed the presence as a problem of order, partly because their presence symbolized the promise of sexual adventure" (6).

The idea of early twentieth century Europe that viewed women as problematic with their unbridled sexuality still holds to justify masculinist understandings of women in public spaces in parts of the Middle East. According to masculinist-appropriated Islamic doctrine, the charms or seductive powers of women are viewed as a source of 'fitna' or social chaos that usurps the rightly guided rationale of men. Mernissi (1987) identifies this notion in her critique of masculinist interpretations on women in Islam. Al-Ghazali, an Islamic theologian, depicts of women as fragmented beings-vessels for humanity but also contaminants of it. Mernissi argues:

Ghazali's conception of the individual's task on earth is illuminating in that it reveals that the Muslim message, in spite of its beauty, considers humanity to be constituted by males only. Women are considered not only outside of humanity but a threat to it as well [45].

Pertaining to earlier Islamic societies, Dunne (1998) adds, 'Social segregation was legitimized in part by constructing "male" and "female" as opposites: men as rational and capable of self-control; women as emotional and lacking self-control, particularly of sexual drives' (9). So, if women in many cases still represent a particular cogent
discord in the Middle East, masculinity in many ways is shaped in opposition to the feminine.

Discursive behaviors of men and women are centered on particular appropriations of gender. Butler (1988) frames the notion of gender performativity in this example as demonstrating ways in which 'reified and naturalized conceptions of gender might be understood as constituted and, hence, capable of being constituted differently'. Gender in a Middle Eastern sense is not perceived as fluid, rather more narrowly understood as either male or female. In those narrow confines are ascribed aspects of behavior. Gender performance is one means of locating sexual harassment in Egypt as described in Butler’s terms, 'Those who fail to do their gender right are regularly punished'(522). In the nascent stages of this research, I found that women who respond verbally or physically to men who harass them are seen as acting outside of their appropriate gender category as females when local practice dictates women should ignore them and walk away in order to retain their respectability.

Within the past few years in Egypt, scores of academics, bloggers, activists, discussion groups and women's organizations have taken interest in the topic of harassment against women. In this work, I focus on capturing the dialogue of these groups to expose their relationship to the discourse on gender in Egyptian society.

This paper explores street harassment and its implications for social change on a small sample of foreign and Egyptian women. Research draws heavily upon data gathered from Fall 2006-Spring 2008 from textual analyses, in-depth, informal interviews conducted in English and Arabic with men and women, and previously collected data from a small sample of surveys distributed in the fall of 2006 around various parts of Cairo. The street is a gendered space that operates within notions of class and race forging interactions between many groups of people. For this reason, I
explore harassment within the context of the body politic to its local and global implications. I compare the relationship of the Egyptian state to feminist agendas operative within civil society. I also examine the intersections of gender, race and class within it. Women's responses demonstrate discursive ways in which they negotiate urban spaces through a multitude of practices. This examination of street harassment is an attempt to underscore and further understand the collective experiences of women in their everyday lives as social actors, negotiating public space. In turn, their behaviors at times contest the framework of what constitutes masculine and feminine by reshaping what their very presence means in urban areas.

**Research Questions**

In order to gain a sense of how women viewed street harassment, I inquired about their daily activities, how they maneuvered through public space either by walking, using public transportation or their own vehicles. From there, stories came pouring out about how they experienced harassment, defined it and what they thought to be the reasons of why it is so prevalent. These aspects are further fleshed out in the methodology and discussion sections. To get a better sense of the term 'negotiation,' I wondered how women responded to street harassment. What are the strategies they employ in order to deflect unwanted male attention? My findings do not suggest a vast class difference in the ways women respond to it, however, one's membership inside a particular social class affords them different privileges associated with mobility. Furthermore, since the inception of the ECWR's 'Campaign to End Sexual Harassment,' I am concerned with the constituency of voices that actually represent the concerns of women in Egypt across class boundaries.

I understood women's coping mechanisms to be embodied within notions of feminine normativity. Averting eye contact, refusing to respond to harassment,
modifying bodily movements and adopting more conservative dress were among the themes which stood out in my data. I read these as particular forms of agency women employ in order to both create a mobile private space [as they read their bodies as private property, not to suggest women strive to maintain the dichotomous public/private divide] and maintain a sense of what Chahidi (1981) calls, 'fictive invisibility,' where women methodically try to draw less attention to themselves from men in order to maintain their respectability while attaining more public freedom. This is not to say that by enacting particular forms of modesty, women are submissive subjects or lack a sense of agency in their lives. Instead, the women in this study reminded me that they are constantly making mental evaluations of how to assess situations of harassment. They measure their safety and perform their respectability in such a manner to curtail violence. Gardner (1995); Phadke (2007) and Guano (2007) illustrate this example succinctly in their respective works on the issue.

On the other hand, much of the preoccupation with women and modesty I briefly mentioned above in the sentiments of veiling concerns me on a number of levels. Firstly, performing one's respectability creates a dichotomous relationship between women's right to space and safety. Gardner (1988) draws on this notion acutely borrowing from Goffman's work on relations in public in which he locates women as "open persons" because the male view of public places defines her as at least marginally out of role in the first place (Gardner 1988:387). In this, Gardner traces gendered aspects of public space. She demonstrates aspects of power and privilege located within various gendered behaviors arguing, "Public space can never be gender neutral"(394). Gardner notes (Lamb 1981) "men use gaze to maintain status and power over women". Also, according to urban etiquette regarding public space, Gardner argues women are dually faced with the challenge of "withholding
information" while gauging men out as "potential acquaintances" (386). Moreover, Gardner's research shows how men's perception of women as "open" reifies gender behaviors that make women cautious about harassment in public places. Phadke (2007) asserts the maintenance of gender-appropriate behaviors among women consequently renders them as marginal within gender hierarchies in public space.

Phadke argues that women need the right to take risks and that by making a claim to take risks in public space rather than petitioning for safety might take women further in the struggle to access public space as citizens (1510). Phadke identifies four major risks to women in relation to public space:

1. The risk of potential physical assault.
2. The risk to "reputation" as sidestepping normative gender roles linking women to the 'private space.'
3. The risk of being blamed if attacked.
4. The risk, should women choose not to access public space more than minimally, of loss of opportunity to engage city spaces and the loss of experiences of public spaces. This also includes the risk of accepting the gendered status hierarchies of access to public space and in doing so reinforcing them [1511, 1512].

She builds a persuasive case, building on Gardner's duality of meaning of public space drawing on how women are cast as dichotomous social actors in various modernity projects. Phadke situates this by playing on the socially constructed meanings of cities and gender ideologies where, the city is seen as a "dangerous space for women," yet, the symbol of the middle-class woman garners importance reflecting types of women as "professionals and consumers" (Phadke 2007: 1511).

Phadke's work raises questions about women's rights to public space. Phadke designates the risks women face if they enter public space as well as if they do not. Her work traces the notions of reputation and respectability, which hinder women's engagement within public space in Mumbai, India. Instances of performing respectability and virtue represent added "pressures" women must conform to. Moreover, vying for safety reifies traditional gender roles of men as
aggressive/threatening and women as weak. Performing respectability then hinges upon acts of negotiating public space as a woman where one must "demonstrate that one is worthy of being protected" (1512). Various symbolic markers that position women as respectable rely on their dependence on the safety and protection from male relatives or companions as well as their abilities to demonstrate a purpose to be in public. The point Phadke successfully argues is that the preoccupation placed on a woman's respectability takes precedence over the value placed on her actual safety. For this reason, "The discourse of safety then does not keep women safe in public; it effectively bars them from it" (1512).

Guano (2007) draws on a variety of interesting parallels in her exploration of public harassment in Genoa, Italy. While examining the discourse and practices associated with gender performance, Guano examines how middle-class women enact a classed notion of femininity described as 'bella figura.' 'Bella figura' embodies notions of middle-class feminine refinement associated with 'good taste' reinforced through grooming and social behavior (51). Guano argues that women modify their public behaviors in order not to draw unwanted male attention therein resisting ‘their exclusion from the public domain even as they reproduce the restrictions that weaken their claim to it’. Guano’s insights are particularly relevant and useful in the case of street harassment in Cairo, where traditional gender binaries between men and women perceived largely through performance seemingly exclude women from the public sphere that is largely marked as masculine (50).

Gardner's extensive work on public harassment in America situates an appropriate meaning of the term. She traces the public treatment of American women through the influences of tradition, custom, law and even medical and psychiatric labels (1995:17). My work departs from hers as I look at the relationship between street
harassment as it intersects with gender, race, class, masculinity and civil society in Egypt. Although much of the influence is the same, religion in the Egyptian context inserts itself into the equation as there is an upswing in religious conservatism. I outline this relationship and return to it in the discussion section. I also build on and depart from Phadke and Guano in terms of how they construct the notions of male spaces and the critique of feminist strategies to enhance women's power in these scenarios. I am very intrigued with Phadke's sentiments as they urge me to evaluate the terms of the campaign to 'Stop Sexual Harassment,' articulated by the women's NGO, ECWR-The Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights.

In what ways do actors within civil society in Egypt shape particular feminist desires of space? Furthermore, what is their relationship to the state as they vie for primacy of women's rights within the nationalist project? Women oppose the exclusions which minimize their roles as citizens in various ways. That being said, the notion of the professionalization of women's rights can be further deconstructed through the development critique. Drawing upon epistemological questions raised within the development discourse, Murdock (2003) argues that in seeking to identify the efficacy and ethical questions of an NGOs progress, "our negative evaluations of professionalized NGOs may do them harm before they are able to counter the negative effects of professionalization or resist it altogether" (510). Furthermore, Murdock notes in the case of feminist NGOs, "Women working there are engaged in conscious dialogue and debate; their interpretations of the structural forces they face, and the strategies they ultimately choose, are formed in concert with others."

I depart from this a bit in my research in that I critique the notion of grass roots in a local Egyptian-feminist NGO in order to understand how gender and class are structurally embedded in their agenda further entrenching western feminist politics
within the debate. I formulate my understanding of this through a series of dialogues I partook in with program managers, activists, and volunteers of the ECWR. Their campaign to "Stop Sexual Harassment in Egypt" is part and parcel of my theoretical argument which grapples with their aim to normalize the term 'sexual harassment,' a conceptually contested term that requires definition in relation to local practices and discourses. Obiyan (2005) notes, "NGOs have been credited with many advantages in relation to the state. These merits include the claim that they are close to the poor; encourage popular participation, flexibility and innovation, sustainability…" I consider Obiyan's critique of development organizations such as NGOs and GROs-Grass root organizations in Sub Saharan Africa and Asia where the idea is to go beyond examining developmental efficacy but to consider their impact on and relationship to the State. By gathering women's vignettes on how they experience public spaces, harassment is further rooted in aspects of structural violence.

Structural violence is manifest in ways that many women who define their experiences as harassment feel excluded from public space. On the other hand, some women namely those from the Egyptian, lower-working classes do not necessarily align themselves with the discourse surrounding harassment in Egypt or they lack the privileges which come with class in order to negotiate their rights. Therefore, the concept of class raises questions in how women, regardless of class can feasibly access rights to public space using legal recourse. By adopting a western discourse in order to simultaneously promote societal change and encourage gender equality, I argue that the project to end what is contested by some as 'sexual harassment' falls into theoretical traps of excluding particular classes of women from public spaces.

In light of the contentious public space I present, where do men fit into the equation? The construction of masculinity in urban space also takes that into
consideration. By deconstructing operant masculinities at play, I sought to understand the relationship of masculinity to street harassment. So situate the dialogue, I met with men I interviewed on their terms as long as I deemed the situation safe for myself. Much of my interactions with the male informants I spoke to took place in spaces traditionally designated as 'male spaces,' such as the 'ahwa,' or cafes for smoking shisha [water pipes] and socializing. To understand how men viewed their masculinity I began asking them questions about earlier memories from their childhoods probing, "What is your earliest memory of being taught how to be a man?" Or, "Can you remember a time during which you were younger, being reprimanded for something you did because it wasn't appropriate for boys to do?" I asked questions of men such as how they viewed their sense of space as men. How did they see their actions and the actions of other men in terms of harassment? In their opinions, what are the factors that shape harassment? Of the men I spoke to whom admittedly harass women, I wanted to know what kinds of women they targeted and why? These interviews led to some pivotal conversations in the dialogic moment of understanding.

Additionally, I consider my positionality as a Pakistani-American-Muslim woman in this research. Autoethnographic writing as conducted by Altorki (1988), Caton (2005), Lau (2002), Abu-Lughod (1986) and Spry (2001) to name a few, locates oneself as a researcher within the personal narrative of study. I reflect upon the ways in which my subjectivity and social position frame my understanding of street harassment and my personal experiences with it. I am an outsider to some degree yet at the same time, my subjectivity is flexible. My religious-cultural claims resonated well with many of the Egyptian interviewees I spoke with. At the inception of interviews, my identity mixed with my competency in Arabic perhaps put people at ease. Although I am still very much a student in continual learning of the language, I
do feel that having a confident command of what I know thus far opened doors for me, allowing me a very special access into men and women's worlds respectively. Drawing upon the autoethnographic approach affords me the opportunity to further explore my biases built up within my understanding of gender violence. By drawing upon a number of methodological approaches both qualitative and quantitative, I reveal the discontinuities in gendered violence which takes place through harassment.
Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Dichotomies of Public/Private, Male/Female

The public/private dichotomy manifests itself discursively within the dialogue of gender and space as harassment is symbolic of re-establishing that divide between men and women. El Guindi (1999) maintains, "The paradigm public/private, and its corollary honor-shame, is the one most commonly imposed on Arab and Islamic cultural space to describe the division between the sexes" (79). Day et al. (2003) state, "The production of gender is intimately tied to the production and use of space" (313). Taking this into consideration, Ortner (1972) draws upon the ways many cultures discursively shape the gender binaries of male/female rendering men 'naturally dominant over naturally subordinate women' (9). Here, she locates a universal assumption that traces the devaluation of women through their contentious relationship with nature and culture through their bodies and the socio-structural meanings these processes arrive at. "Woman could be accounted for, quite simply, by postulating that woman is being identified with, or symbolically associated with, nature, as opposed to man, who is identified with culture" (12). Gardner (1988) attests to this argument as well in dissecting the way women re-enact forms of privacy through bodily movements or adopted styles of dress in order to move through public spaces rendered male. Arguably, Nelson (1974) considers the problematic nature within the assumption Western scholars assume on power as an adjacent concept between the categorization of man/woman which inculcate the male sphere as public and female as private.
The social constructions of the public/private divide serve many purposes; such as in maintaining the foundation of enacting proscribed gender roles which have, as Howell (2007) notes, "has allowed civil society theorists to evade tackling the question of how the engendering of men and women shapes States and civil societies" (419). In contrast to the Western feminist approach, Joseph (1993, 1996, and 1997) illustrates the imagined notion of this concept, in arguing that, 'the public/private divide, central to classical Western constructs of citizenship and nation/Statehood, is also constructed as an imaginative enterprise' (1997:73). The social constructs of male/female as a formation within patriarchal connectivity, Joseph's notion reveals aspects of gender construction in reproducing traditional ideals of patriarchy, and brothers take on paternal roles to their sisters. I refer to the notion of patriarchal connectivity in my research to examine the ways in which the construction of gender reinstates normalized, rigid behaviors and roles between men and women in public spaces in an Egyptian context. In order to flesh out the ways in which one can understand the polemics of women's presence in public space through the repetitive binaries of public/private, male/female, etc…I draw upon the abovementioned theoretical concepts in how they give rise to the meanings of this issue yet at the same time, force one to remain uncomfortable, grappling to locate a local understanding vis-à-vis its global counterpart.

**Public Space-A Conceptualized Understanding**

And there's the male sense of entitlement on the street, men march boldly down the middle of the sidewalk, swinging their arms and looking ahead, swerving neither to left nor right for oncoming pedestrians. Women scurry along, clutching their shoulder bags, head down, weaving a zigzag path through the crowd while murmuring 'Excuse me.' [Leblanc 1999:200].

Importantly, de Certeau et al. (1980) Goffman (1959, 1999), Lefebvre and Smith (1991) and Lefebvre and Levich (1987) philosophically underscore the
processes of human social interaction, considering them in a sense of the "everyday."

Goffman's efforts dovetail aspects of gendered interactions in public space noting:

> A more contemporary version of this courtesy [of women being accosted in public] is found in the tack occasionally taken by a man passing a strange woman at night on a narrow isolated walk: instead of conspicuously according the female civil inattention, the man may proffer a fleeting word to show that, unlike a would-be assailant, he is willing to be identified [Goffman 1999:128].

Lefebvre exhaustively traces meanings of space that enjoin it to praxis. Invoking Hegelian concepts of the State, Lefebvre captures a meaning of space that is dialectic to it, mentioning, "...the rationality of the State, of its techniques, plans and programmes, provokes opposition. The violence of power is answered by the violence of subversion... This is a new negativity, a tragic negativity which manifests itself as incessant violence" (23).

Public space engenders meanings of power and visibility. "It is also a mastery of places by vision. The partition of space permits a panoptic practice in which the look transforms strange forces into objects which one can observe and measure, therefore controlling and "including" them in one's vision" (De Certeau et al.1980).

In the case of street harassment, it is imperative to conceptualize a definition of public space. Previously, I touched on aspects of the Habermasian notion of public space that incorporated the realm of one's entire social life. Habermas and Burger (1989) formulate an understanding of the public sphere in class-based terms revolving around the 'aristocratic society,' revealing, as a part of civil society, also opposed to the State furthermore noting, "The public sphere itself appears as a specific domain-the public domain versus the private (2)...women went on under the aegis of the master's domination; birth and death took place in its shadow; and the realm of necessity and transitoriness remained immersed in the obscurity of the private sphere (3). As the authors weave a definition of public space throughout various political and social processes demarcating the public from private, they fail to conceptualize..."
the gendered aspects the public sphere takes on as women are not merely beings contained to the house. Ryan (1993) succinctly illustrates this critique arguing, "Women were patently excluded from the bourgeois public sphere, that ideal historical type that Habermas traced to the eighteenth century, and were even read out of the fiction of the public by virtue of their ideological consignment to a separate realm called the private" (260). Ryan centers a critique of the public sphere largely around the contrasts of the public/private dichotomy, and illuminates the dialectic between woman and nature, and the Western feminist project that vies for the inclusion to public space. Although Habermas had little regard for women in his conceptualization of the public sphere, Ryan underscores other considerations applied to the State which Habermas outlined and American feminists appropriated:

Habermas's construction of the public sphere had a singular advantage for feminists: it freed politics from the iron grasp of the state, which, by virtue of the long denial of the franchise to women and their rare status as public officials, effectively defined the public in masculine terms. The concept of the public sphere was suffused with a spirit of openness that feminists found inviting. (The second sentence of the encyclopedia article read, "Access is guaranteed to all citizens.") [261].

Phadke (2007) renders public space as: "including sites like streets, public toilets (in neighborhoods, on streets, and railway stations), market places ('bazaars' and malls), recreational areas (parks, midans [squares], restaurants, cinema houses) and modes of public transport (include buses, trains, taxis and rickshaws) as well as sites like bus-stops and railway stations" (1510). Gardner (1995) also situates a proper definition of public places meaning, "those sites and contexts that our society understands to be open to all; our characteristic behavior and appearance for public places do and are meant to vary from those private dwellings" (3). I draw upon Phadke's and Garner's usage of public spaces, because they embody an axis of convergence between people. Secondly, this further enables me to pin-point the street as a site of discourse which conflates the
contentious relationship between civil society and the State to paradigms of gender, race, and class.

**Conceptualizing a Framework that ties Civil Society, the State and Citizenship Together**

Many of the concepts require definition in this work. In order to better situate this study of gendered harassment, I reflect upon particular usages of terms over others to reflect a work that aims to tie in aspects of Egyptian society such as religion, feminism and the notion of citizenship to larger conceptualizations revolving around the 'Nation State' and 'civil society' as defined by many, but better captured by a few.

Appropriating the terms 'State' and 'civil society' are problematic in the respective discourses surrounding gender violence. Sharabi (1988) outlines formations of the neopatriarchal States of the Arab world. Neopatriarchy comprises modernity and patriarchy. Sharabi situates modernity as a position of being in a particular, local context versus a teleological notion and patriarchy, "whether conservative or progressive, is the dominance of the Father, the center around which the national as well as the natural family are organized" (7). The neopatriarchal State is ruled by, a hybrid, dominant class otherwise known as the petty bourgeoisie. He goes on to describe the petty bourgeoisie as having a schizophrenic duality, "In this class can be found the most contradictory values and tendencies coexisting without conscious resolution or synthesis, producing the kind of disjointed and contradictory structures and practices that are most typical of this society" (8). This narrates the State's power in Gramscian terms of appropriating hegemonic authority:

Under the hegemony of the petty bourgeoisie not only did the revolution and Arab unity suffer defeat, but political life in the Arab world disintegrated into domestic authoritarianism and rivalry between antagonistic regimes. The movement of social change and development faltered, leading by the 1970s to a kind of state-capitalist consumer society in the "progressive" states and a distorted free-market capitalism in the conservative ones. Petty bourgeois rule in the former (and its cultural dominance in the latter) contributed to the spread of a peculiar kind of anomie, giving rise to a clear class split between the new petty bourgeois power elite
in the "progressive" regimes (in the conservative regimes, the new rich) and the underprivileged and increasingly alienated petty bourgeois proletarian masses [9]. Sharabi argues Arab States are stuck in 'heteronomy,' a social state based on subordination and obedience and upholds ethics of authority (43). Tying into this notion of State power and subject docility, Abdelrahman (2004) tailors multi-layered meanings of both 'State' and 'civil society.' By adopting Weber's definition of the modern State situated in violence and territoriality, Abdelrahman, regards the historical processes that further shape the State by way of neo-liberal ideology and a Gramscian notion of hegemony- a form of social control based upon normative consent of the subordinate class (23). Moreover, Abdelrahman citing Weber notes, "the State is a relation of men [and women] dominating men [and women], a relation supported by means of legitimate (i.e. considered to be legitimate) violence" (12). However, she notes that the State is not a monolithic body. It embodies and represents different interests, which change over time (18). Using Egypt as the case, Abdelrahman illustrates the many ways these terms are employed as well as reduced: "Despite the continuous attempts to define civil society it remains an elusive terms and a residual category. Often, everything outside the domain of the State is labeled as civil society" (10). Habermas and Burger (1989) also flesh out a dialectic notion of civil society between Hegel and Kant where, "the prohibition of publicity impedes the progress of a people toward improvement"(116).

According to Sullivan and Kotob (1999), "Civil society is more than an admixture of various forms of association, it also refers to a quality, civility, without which the milieu consists of feuding factions, cliques, and cabals"(3). The authors highlight the term as a Western concept, yet should not be disconnected entirely from an Egyptian or non-Western setting. Idealizing the works of Chatterjee (1990), they
recall, "although civil society is quite limited to the Western experience, it is
nevertheless a particular form of a more universal concept: community." Constituted
as an 18th Century ideal inspired by thinkers such as Locke, Hobbes, Madison and
Montesquieu, Fahmy (2002) argues that the pluralist philosophy and its
manifestations such as liberal theory of development are not of much relevance to
Egypt. Specifically in its explanation of the relationships between State and society,
she argues that in Egypt the State shapes society, which competes with Marx's class
based concept of the State (13).

Leve and Karim (2001) underscore the notion in how development as a topic
of study in anthropology has evolved from measuring efficacy of NGOs towards
understanding power relations. Interestingly, "NGOs are not reducible to mere service
providers; rather, they are to be seen as producers of social meanings and of self-
making possibilities for various groups, both internal and external to the State." Rizzo
et al. (2008) underscore the role of non-Western "high risk social movements" in
relation to the State, and social/cultural change. Focusing on the NGO the ECWR,
Rizzo et al. illustrate through their knowledge of the literature, how civil society
actors representing women's rights negotiate their relationship with "repressive
regimes" in order to increase the efficacy of particular movements aiding women. In
this case, the movement is not so much about affecting state policy but, it is one
which aims to influence cultural change by implementing the state as an ally (9).
Citing ways in which the State, on some level, facilitates women's advances within
the political sphere, the authors locate the contentious space in which NGOs operate.
Interrogating development and the role it plays with the State ties into considering the
role of women as citizens in a nationalist framework. Nation-State ideologies locate
the concept of the nation in gendered terms that reflects its masculinist construction.
Such ideas have been deconstructed in a body of works surrounding gender and citizenship.

Citizenship has been defined to encompass many meanings moving towards the realm of multiple, imagined subnational boundaries (Joseph 1997). These boundaries contain constructed binaries only allowing access to citizenship to certain types of people. Women often do not fit the criteria to possess citizenship in the same ways as men. Ryan (1993) as mentioned above links together the notions of public space as appropriated by Western feminists as well as the constructions of citizenship that are masculinist. Underscoring the actions of women's rights advocates throughout American history dovetails the strategies women employ to "subvert these restrictions and to be heard in public [that] testify to the power of public ideals, that persistent impulse to have a voice in some space open and accessible to all where they could be counted in the general interest" (284).

Baron (2005), Badran (1995) Ahmed (1992), and Al-Ali (2002) have all tackled the "woman question" in taking a gendered approach to understanding the processes that implicate women in the Egyptian Nation-State. Baron's work in Egypt underscores the fact that women represent national honor in a number of ways and through this representation, women are located within State participation as markers of national and cultural loyalty. The nation serves as a metaphor for the family. Importantly, a woman's loyalty to her family is transferred into her allegiance for her nation. Honor is dually invoked to tie concepts of women's family involvement in order to "elevate the concept of family honor to the national place, using the rhetoric of honor to mobilize the population" (Baron 2005: 55). These gendered symbols of nationalism through honor did not transfer onto Egyptian men. Rather, men in both
secular and religious projects within the nation appropriated these ideals as a means to keep women's movements and their agendas separate from their own.

Wherein women's political rights are purportedly equal to men, Voet (1998) argues, however, women still face conditions that hinder civil and social rights …civil rights are not guaranteed within the family, further pressing the divide between public and private spaces. The liberal disparity between public and private according to Pateman (1989) denotes, "The public sphere, and the principles that govern it, are seen separate from, or independent of, the relationships in the private sphere." State, religious and some feminist practices centered on the ideologies of biological difference legitimize the separations between the home and the public or nature and culture. Secular, Islamic and feminist frameworks in Egypt underscore the female body as a site of reproduction. Whether the goal is to establish equal rights through this lens or limit rights given, there is no denial that marking female citizenship through the body falls into maintaining established gender norms and constructions. Such contentions establish automatic gender divides in the operational aspects of civil society.

Howell (2007) maintains that civil society has not been understood through a gendered lens. She locates the problem of conceiving civil society has not been considered through a gendered scope, arguing, "Civil society theorists succumbed to the same trap as their predecessors. That is, they took the family to be merely a boundary-marking device that had little relevance to understanding the relationship between the State and civil society" (422). Howell suggests connecting feminist theories of civil society to conceptualized gender issues within it. For feminist theorists, the key conceptual divide lies between the public (State, market, and civil society) and the private (family) as socially constructed sites. Notably, she points out,
"Civil society has not been a conceptual reference point for theorizing gender relations, even though women activists have used the language of civil society in their rhetoric" (417). I pay particular attention to Howell's four sited model in conceiving of the relationship between gender inequality and the action of those involved civil society's aims to merge a better understanding of the two. Here she focuses on power relations between the State, civil society, market and household. I diverge from Howell's contention a bit wherein she maintains that, "By conceptualizing gender relations as a circuit, we free it from any essentially given location. Doing so unhinges gender relations from the family" (426). Although her findings are relevant and helpful, they appear out of their own historical, contextual and cultural moment. By saying that, I do not divorce the concept of gender in an Egyptian sense from the family. I consider the discursive practice of learning and performing gender to be highly associated with the family. Therefore, I keep in mind Joseph's sentiments on the shaping of gendered selves which operate within the sphere of the family through patriarchal relationships of reflexive power and the direct relationship that has on Egyptian male and female actors in civil society.

In sum, categories that define the public sphere shape the process of understanding women as citizens and as key players in civil society. I aim to weave a dialogue between women situated in one of Egypt's most dynamic feminist movements to conceptions of their rights, access to public space and how historically portraying the semantics of language around dialectic understandings of 'sexual harassment' positions them as subjects in the quest for rights.

**Defining the Problem**

Street/public harassment against women is burgeoning as a topic of interest in current academic scholarship. Scholars such as Gardner (1995); Nielsen (2000);
Bowman (1993); Walkowitz (1998); Di Leonardo (1981); and Kissling (1991) highlight the gendered aspects of the problem. However, no literature specifically devoted to the topic of street harassment presently exists within a regional context of the MENA-Middle-East/North Africa region. Therefore, I find this challenge as an opportunity to contribute to the changing discourse on gender issues, pinpointing street harassment as an emerging theme which demands immediate attention. The large scale incidents of street harassment in downtown Cairo pushed many groups of activists, bloggers, and scholars to expose it as a societal endemic arguing against the State's understanding that the occurrences are isolated incidents. Laura Beth Nielsen argues that 'members of traditionally disadvantaged groups [i.e. women] face a strikingly different reality on the street than do members of privileged groups [men]. She explains the tension women and African Americans feel in their encounters with street harassment, which involves being targets of hate speech in public places. In a study involving in-depth interviews with people in Northern California, Nielsen concluded that acts of hate speech, like street harassment, are not ‘isolated incidents; rather, they are embedded in social structures and hierarchies' (279).

Women face similar circumstances globally in being targets of public harassment. Tying Nielsen's study into my own, I am critical of how the State minimizes the seriousness of violence against women in caricaturizing harassment as isolated incidents. Harassment against women in Egypt is so endemic; women constantly vent to me how they cannot simply walk in the streets in peace. Selma, a student at Ain Shams University commented, "You have to psychologically prepare yourself to go out and run a simple errand because of the harassment you are most likely going to face," (Ilahi 2006 Personal Communication). By tracing global and local forms of the term, street harassment operates as a process which produces and
reproduces asymmetries of power. Girl watching and cat-calling are among various forms of harassment men employ which aim to break the boundaries of privacy existing between themselves and the women they engage with in Egypt.

Kissling (1991) argues, "Such acts serve multiple functions of social control regardless whether men issue what they believe to be compliments or insults" (454). Interestingly, Kissling's analysis draws upon women's global experiences from Latin America to the Arab world in pointing out the bottom line of what many women feel when being "flattered" or "flirted" with: "Both the derogatory and the 'flattering' behaviors are frightening and threatening to women" (455). Kissling claims that the multiple functions of street harassment which range from complimenting women to social control all 'work together to produce an environment of sexual terrorism’ Earlier definitions of sexual harassment traditionally stem from Western women’s experiences in the workplace which draw upon unwanted touching and invasion of personal space (Uggen and Blackstone 2004). Welsh (1999) illustrates the need to further investigate harassment, admitting social research is still in its early stages. The author validates the need to incorporate a more systematic understanding of harassment through societal, individual and organizational level approaches (169).

A number of current works suggest that street harassment is a major concern which coincides with the decline of women's mobility (Dunne 1998’ Hoffman-Ladd 1987’ Reproductive Health Matters 2001, and Sylomovics 1995). Street harassment variously includes many behaviors, such as staring, following, catcalls, comments about a woman's appearance, touching and indecent exposure. Quinn (2002) and Bowman's (1993) work examines street harassment/sexual harassment as a social practice embedded in notions of masculinity and practices of power. Quinn investigates the notion of 'girl watching' by men as a form of sexual harassment.
against women which is reinforced by notions of western masculinity. A definition proposed by Bowman locates street harassment as verbal and nonverbal behavior, where the targets of such harassment are usually female, the harassers are both male and strangers to their targets, and the encounter is forced on the part of the male and in public places, such as the street, sidewalk, or metro station (523-524). Although Bowman's work was based on street harassment in the United States, the reflections of women and her theoretical grounding of the issue congruently fit the characteristics of street harassment in Cairo. Bowman argues street harassment hinders women's mobility and public participation. This "subtle form of violence, accomplishes an informal ghettoization of women- ghettoization to the private sphere of hearth and home" (520).

Guano (2007) draws on a variety of interesting parallels in her exploration of public harassment in Genoa, Italy. While examining the discourse and practices associated with gender performance, Guano argues that women modify their public behaviors in order not to draw unwanted male attention therein resisting "their exclusion from the public domain even as they reproduce the restrictions that weaken their claim to it" (66). I rely on Guano’s insights as particularly relevant and useful in the case of street harassment in Cairo, where traditional gender binaries between men and women perceived largely through performance seemingly exclude women from the public sphere that is largely marked as masculine (50).

It is therefore necessary to examine this practice without overlooking various forms of power, subjectivity and agency at play within local practices and knowledge. In differentiating between sexual harassment and flirting, Herbert (1997) alludes to the notion of power between the two where sexual harassment is the uninvited, unwanted sexual attention versus the “friendly behavior or sexual attention that is
welcome and mutual” (30). I do not intend to create a binary between harassment and flirting, however, I find it necessary in this circumstance to make note of the fact that not all people agree on the meaning of the aforementioned terms. And overlooking the notion of sexuality and forms of gendered communication renders a rather myopic understanding of the process. I flesh out this argument further in the discussion section. A major drawback in avoiding the possibilities of agency, negotiation and power at play would be reductive, further homogenizing Egyptian and non-Egyptian women into a shared experience which lacks any synthetic understanding. On the same note, public harassment should not be conflated as something that only men from lower situated socio-economic classes perform. Multiple reasons as to why it happens should not be examined through reductive explanations such as sexual repression or the inability for men to marry at an appropriate age. One must be cautious when assigning certain forms of public interaction between men and women as a form of violence against women. Although I interpret street harassment as a form of violence, I do not read the silence women employ as disempowering to them. This undermines the aspects of negotiation, power and resistance women maintain throughout various spatial encounters. It is also useful to interrogate the efficacy and downfalls of Western feminist scholarship linked to development and civil society practices in a project aimed at Egyptian society.

**Street Harassment/Sexual Harassment…What's in a Name?**

Development NGOs, for example, The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR) and other activist and student groups like the “Bussy Project,” (meaning "look" in Arabic) at the American University in Cairo have coordinated efforts around normalizing the term sexual and street harassment in Egypt. Their terms are conceptualized as drawing from a range of women’s experiences in public and urban
spaces. These organizations are rooted in particular aspects of Western feminist ideology and desire. Ahmed (1992) reflects upon ruptures within the discourse on feminism as a position in Egypt during its break from British colonialism stating:

The dominant voice of feminism, which affiliated itself, albeit generally discreetly, with the westernizing, secularizing tendencies of society, predominantly the tendencies of the upper, upper-middle, and middle-middle classes, promoted a feminism that assumed the desirability of progress toward Western-type societies.

Egyptian feminism in the time of independence articulated itself differently from that of its Western counterpart. Their rights as women did not take precedence as part of the movement, but were part and parcel of an over-arching platform to reform Egyptian society in terms of "social, cultural and religious renovation" (Ahmed 1992: 174-5).

Feminist movements in Egypt continue vying to make social-cultural changes. As some organizations receive money from foreign donors, they seek to secure funding for programs that reach larger segments of Egyptian society that implement relevant Western feminist concepts and practices. To illustrate, the mission to fight for women's rights to public space as advocated by the ECWR applies Western definitions of public harassment labeled as 'sexual harassment':

Unwanted sexual conduct deliberately perpetrated by the harasser, resulting in sexual, physical, or psychological abuse of the victim regardless of location, whether in the workplace, the street, public transportation, educational institution, or even in private places such as home or in the company of others such as relatives or colleagues, etc. any uninvited behavior that is sexual in nature and makes women feel uncomfortable or unsafe [2008 ECWR published document].

Civil society NGOs and local activist movements sprouting from Western-based theoretical schools of thought face the risk of minimizing a space for a local understanding of the problem. This is so because of the implied meaning 'sexual harassment' denotes when translated into Arabic. From the inception of my study, Egyptian men and women were reluctant to call it 'sexual harassment' or in Arabic,
'taharush-al-ginsy,' because it renders serious and negative connotations linked to forceful sexual assault or rape. So part of the problem the ECWR faces is being able to normalize the term 'sexual harassment' just as the behavior of it has become so. For the purposes of my research, I adopt the term street harassment which fits the definition proposed by anthropologist, Michaela Di Leonardo:

Street harassment occurs when one or more strange men accost one or more women…in a public place which is not the woman's/women's worksite. Through looks, words, or gestures the man asserts his right to intrude on the woman's attention, defining her as a sexual object, and forcing her to interact with him [Di Leonardo 1981 51-52].

Sexual harassment, like street harassment is linked to the exercise of power over women. Joseph and Najmabadi (2003) argue, "Sexual harassment is not an issue of sexuality per se, but rather an issue of male domination over women…about putting women in their places" (373). However, too often, the discourse surrounding sexual harassment is linked to the workplace. I argue to incorporate notions of male harassment of power over women in order to conceptualize a better definition of the issue, going beyond the workplace and into public spaces like the street.

Like Mohanty (1984), I too am concerned with the construction of knowledge around other cultures deemed "The other" or "Non-white" as in opposition to the West. Mohanty points to the discourse regarding construction of other terms such as "Third World" and "Third World Woman," arguing that through the feminist production of the "Third World Difference"-a process of homogenization that appropriates and "colonizes" the fundamental complexities and conflicts which characterize the lives of women of different classes, religions, cultures, races and castes in these countries (335). The normalization of certain concepts from Western scholarship involving the usage of such terms denotes homogeneity of a people. This is especially an issue of concern in the case involving the standardization of the
concept, “sexual harassment” if it does not occur within the context of local practice and knowledge. The term 'sexual harassment' is a new concept to emerge in Egypt. Commonly referred to as a Western concept, a more nuanced examination of the term is required in order to understand its use and efficacy in a wide range of cultural settings. “Street harassment," is a somewhat new and ambiguous term. It lies within a particular nascence and assimilated understanding from a more Western-definition adopted in the Middle-East. To restate, the meaning of the term 'sexual harassment' translated into Arabic presents a quandary to Egyptian society; not only in how to name it, but how to adopt appropriate measures that move to eradicate it rather than encourage it. If a movement so large that is gaining popularity refuses to include representative voices of diverse women in Cairo, we fall into the trap of reproducing hegemonic discourses which reflect theoretical leanings of what Geok-Lin Lim (1993) coins, AEA-Anglo/European/American feminism. In this, the pitfalls are serious and belie the notion that Arab women as a subaltern category can speak for themselves.

The parameters which encapsulate public harassment against women undoubtedly arrive from a hegemonic, Euro/American definition. To locate street harassment as a form of sexual violence against Arab and non-Arab women in a Western understanding of the term sets limitations for a culturally-based explanation of the issue.

**Ambiguities of Violence**

The Western project of producing knowledge and discourse surrounding violence against women in the global South harks back to Spivak's notion of the term, 'epistemic violence'-which reads as projecting a Eurocentric epistemology of oppression onto the rest of the world, namely the global South or contestably called, the "Third World." I argue that seeking to explore violent practices against women of
other cultures such as street harassment must be done so as to position the problem in its particular local, cultural context. A project such as this must be executed carefully so as not to reproduce Western, hegemonic notions which stereotype women in Egypt.

In this section I trace the limitations of feminist theory as it moves into non-Western regions such as the global South. In doing so, I highlight the ambiguities of violence that are located on the female body in discursive practices which are contestably argued and defended. Moreover, Western feminist ideology is further problematized as a position located within the human rights debate. In this analysis, I draw upon complex and difficult epistemological questions violence raises as it draws upon domination locally and globally by men and women. Namely, questions such as "who is speaking for whom?" concerning the politics of representation among "Third World" women along with notions of social responsibility must be scrutinized in order to situate and convey their lived experiences. At the same time, one must remain critical of Anthropology's tendency towards cultural relativism and careful to create a balance which links the notion of Western social responsibility to the ways in which other cultures position themselves amidst particular issues of interest.

**Western Feminism on "Other" Women's Bodies**

Current projects which seek to locate an epistemological understanding of violence against non-Western women take form all over various parts of the world. In teasing out how violence is a form of gendered embodiment, I frame this discussion around the female body and geographic position. Bodily practices tying into notions of modesty and womanhood such as veiling or female circumcision fall under Western-dominant constructions of violence and oppression against women. Complexities existing within the debate further underscore how Western, feminist
appropriation of the body reify notions of cultural dominance by framing non-Western women as powerless- rendering them silent.

The position of women as argued by Abu-Lughod (2002) cooke (2002); and Hirschkind and Mahmood (2002) in Post 9-11 Afghanistan resulting in the "War on Terrorism" and in societies where female circumcision is practiced echo the sentiments argued against the Hindu practice of suttee- or 'voluntary' widow burning at the funeral pyre of Spivak's (1988) "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Western perceptions conceive dangerously of Taliban inspired versions of Islam that continue to keep women oppressed, burqa-clad and out of public space along with continued efforts of 'female genital mutilation' practiced in parts of Africa and the Middle East. Abu-Lughod responds to the surprise of many at the continued use of the burqa by Afghani women (Post 9-11) by asking:

Why would women suddenly become immodest? Why would they suddenly throw off the markers of their respectability, markers, whether burqas or other forms of cover, which were supposed to assure their protection in the public sphere from the harassment of strange men by symbolically signaling to all that they were still in the inviolable space of their homes, even though moving in the public realm [785]?

Western feminist projects situated in theorizing violence are steeped in ambiguity. Social researchers and academics lament on dilemmas particular Western feminist projects pose in how they locate women. Fernandes (1999) argues that a feminist project of representing violence against women contains within it the potential for reinvoking orientalist narratives, in particular, by marking the "Third World" as the naturalized site of an unrestrained violence" (136). Tracing constructions of the "Third World Woman" Mohanty (1984) attempts to locate and problematize specific blurred conceptions of violence as they are marked through the body.
Hirschkind and Mahmood (2002) bring to light that, "Following the September 11th attacks, the burqa clad body of the Afghan woman became the visible sign of an invisible enemy that threatens not only "us," citizens of the West, but our entire civilization" (341). Yet, the Islamic form of veiling or "hijab" underscores how women negotiate particular aspects of modesty and agency. Furthermore, the bodily practice of veiling extends beyond religious dimensions of piety as women who don the veil in Egypt for example, enter public workforces and political arenas in high numbers.

Commonly understood as an object of oppression by many Westerners, veiling as a contested practice re-emerged in Egypt as a national symbol in opposition to western, secular values. The rise of Islamist groups in the late 60s brought back the popularity of the veil and issues of Islamic piety for women (Ahmed 1992). As it grew in popularity along religious and social lines, women also saw it as a way to escape unwanted attention from the leering eyes of men. Ahmed contends that the popularity of Islamic dress is implied to "denote an affiliation with "conservative" ethical and social habits…and the affiliation automatically connote support for male dominance and female subservience" (226). Hijab, understood as a universally oppressive practice is a reductive argument that undermines the women who ascribe to it. Abu-Lughod (2002); Altorki (1988); Macleod (1992) and Mohanty (1984) contextually argue the ways in which hijab is not synonymous with the private sphere or lack of empowerment. Other bodily rituals which mark female bodies require deeper contextualization outside of the confines of Western feminist ideology. Walley (1997) adds to the argument in pointing out how feminist positioning of women into generic groups of "we" or "they" in terms of who does and does not practice controversial practices surrounding female circumcision, "overlook the diverse
Female genital circumcision is a highly contested practice both by women in and outside of the West. On one side, circumcision is regarded as a barbaric practice, a mutilation which seeks to further guard patriarchal control over women's bodies by their fathers and husbands. Conversely, the practice dictates a form of stoic, cultural passage into womanhood steeped in tradition, formation of ethnic identity (Boddy 1991) and in some areas, religious Islamic belief. Problems which arise from the arguments critique the recent death of Bodor Ahmed Shaker, a child from the village of Maghagha in Minya, Egypt who died while being circumcised, has local NGO, The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR) and other local activist groups in an uproar. Locally, the ECWR constitutes many Egyptian and non-Egyptian women on the level of feminist activism which seeks to promote a universal form of human rights.

Feminists against the practice argue, "Those Western women who say that female circumcision is just another cultural practice or cultural relativism is just another example of arrogance as if Western feminists are saying: OK, a whole set of norms apply to us and our culture, and a whole set of norms applies to these cultures." (Spadacini and Nichols 1998: 45). Part of the feminist agenda of the ECWR pushes for policies which adopt a law that criminalizes the practice of female circumcision, subscribing to the term, 'female genital mutilation' or 'FGM' and hold accountable the doctors, hospitals and clinics who continue to practice it (2008 http://ecwronline.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=193&Itemid=64).
Boddy (1991) criticizes scholars who are quick to reduce the practice of female circumcision to patriarchal violence and argues in favor of anthropologists who seek the need to further understand female circumcision in opposition to condoning it. Furthermore, others maintain a stance that female circumcision is an important cultural ritual of transitioning girls into womanhood. Boddy (1982) illustrates this contention in an ethnographic examination in a small Sudanese village. In her exploration, Boddy comes to reconsider her own opinions on the issue of female circumcision as the practice under investigation begins to reveal much about feminine embodiment. Boddy maintains, "The operation, however, renders her marriageable; undergoing it is a necessary condition of becoming a woman, of being enabled to use her one great gift, fertility" (683). Additionally, aspects of female subjectivity and notions of agency render multiple understandings of circumcision:

Circumcision as a symbolic act brings sharply into focus the fertility potential of women by dramatically de-emphasizing their inherent sexuality. By insisting on circumcision for their daughters, women assert their social indispensability, an importance that is not as the sexual partners of their husbands," nor, in this highly segregated, male-authoritative society, as their servants, sexual or otherwise, but as the mothers of men [687].

There are multiplicities of subjectivities to explore in contexts of violence against women. The aforementioned example illustrates the need to analyze our perceptions of 'violence' in comparison to local, cultural constructions of it. Moreover, the way in which violence against women is located by feminist research should focus more closely on State discourse and practice in situating the variant contexts and processes in which violence lays. By ignoring the ways in which non-Western women negotiate and perform aspects of agency is to do a disservice upon them.

Politics of Representation

Problematic to the discussion are the ways in which theoretical concepts of feminism geographically position women in an East vs. West fashion. In further
examining the complexities contestable practices such as female circumcision convey, Walley (1997) poses the problem of ambiguity within violence by asking the question: "Why is there a tendency to understand female genital operations in "either/or" terms, in other words, in terms of either cultural relativism or politically-informed outrage? Arguing that the binaries constructed further widen the rift between the East and West or "us and them," Walley demonstrates the need to remain critical of culture yet possess a certain level of sensitivity which draws upon common links between all women. Additionally, domination of non-Western women is located within local and global matrices of power.

Western, feminist production that demands equality and human rights for women risks doing more violence unto women in its attempt to give voice to women of other cultures. American feminism in its early production was more so regarded as a movement that sought equality of middle-class white women whereby failing to integrate other women of color. Similar to the argument in how feminism is guilty of silencing women of non-Western cultures, hooks (1986) concludes:

For the most part theoretical writing by less known or unknown women of color is ignored, particularly if it does not articulate the prevailing ideology. In women's studies classes throughout the US theoretical feminist writing by women of color is often ignored and attention given rather to works of fiction or confessional autobiographical writing [126].

Complex and difficult questions around the politics of representation draw upon productions of domination locally and globally. Namely the question, "Who is speaking for whom?" frame the problem of various projects that seek to give voice to women located outside of the West. Moreover this notion harks back to Spivak's aforementioned notion of "saving brown women." cooke (2002) harshly critiques projects such as the ongoing "War on Terrorism" in Afghanistan that are fueled by racist ideologies fixed within dated notions of social evolution. cooke argues a main
aspect in constructing difference between white and brown women lies within the notion of "civilization." Quoting First Lady, Laura Bush, cooke mentions, "Civilized people throughout the world are speaking out in horror not only because our hearts break for the women and children in Afghanistan, but also because in Afghanistan we see the world the terrorists would like to impose on the rest of us" (470). A major drawback here indicates domination occurs simultaneously by local and international practices.

The hegemonic Western knowledge-power episteme in its practice carried out in particular forms of feminism presents difficulties in that the relationship between feminists/activists and non-Western women represents one of dependency. False conclusions about veiling or the practice of female circumcision mirror early colonial projects which further marginalize women in projects which seek to give them voice. For example, cooke (2002) links the Western discomfort with veiling to suttee:

The burqa recalls suttee and the four-stage gendered logic of empire: Women have inalienable rights within universal civilization, (2) civilized men recognize and respect these rights, (3) uncivilized men systematically abrogate these rights and (4) such men (the Taliban) thus belong to an alien (Islamic) system. Imperial logic genders and separates subject peoples so that the men are the "Other" and the women are civilizable [cooke 2002: 469].

Similarly, Western-feminist and State projects may fall into the same trap of "civilizing" women but under the auspices of their own political interests. In addition, Strathern (1987) comments on the complacency earlier forms of Anthropology undertook in that it overlooked feminist explanations within its study. Ways in which feminist anthropology has come under scrutiny are in part, due to applying similar notions of oppression to women universally. Part of this lies in the desire to promote universal forms of human rights. Walley (1997) mentions the ways in that:

Such rights include, or exclude, women; the cultural rights of minorities as immigration increases in Euro-American countries; and, ultimately, the meaning and viability of "multicultural" societies [406].
Paying close attention to State practices and Western liberal projects, women fall into multiple forms of violence. The relationship gender violence plays within variant forms of the Egyptian Nation-State suggest the need to locally explore the multiple subjectivities of women who undergo State sanctioned violence. Das (2007) reminds us that, "The violations inscribed on the female body (both literally and figuratively) and the discursive formations around these violations, as we saw, made visible the imagination of the nation as a masculine nation." By analyzing the discontinuities in gender as it shapes citizenship in Egypt, we can then begin to understand how local views of citizenship are inculcated within gender violence. The dichotomies between religious and secular underscore part of the larger problem of women's domination at both local and global levels. Because of this, Merry (2001) notes, "Each develops in opposition to the others: Secular States feed on demonic images of religious fundamentalism and ethnonational violence, while religious States decry the social chaos, divorce, immorality, and violence of secular States" (40).

The inability to bridge local culture to existing forms of human rights is part and parcel of the ambiguity Western forms of activism are fraught with. For example, CEDAW, 'The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women' symbolizes an international bill of rights for women. Interestingly, it presents a quandary involving the tenuous relationship between religion and culture in that particular aspects regarding justice require women to dissociate themselves from cultural practices. Merry (2004), draws upon certain notions that aim to separate culture from human rights. In how the culture of the current human rights framework is western and creates its own elitism, Merry succinctly demonstrates tensions within the debate in that, “the language of human rights is a powerful discourse to promote women’s status, yet a critique of culture that marginalizes poor and rural peoples or
immigrants risks replicating colonial discourses…The fight against “culture” is a deeply cultural one” (100, 102).

By not operating as a flexible position, Western branches of feminism risk theoretical stagnation by naturalizing certain notions of non-Western women, forcing them to choose rights over culture. Moreover, the fight for recognizing women’s rights as human rights in Muslim countries is mirrored with the same tenuous relationship between Islam and feminism. As Merry mentions the delicate balance needed between culture and religion within a human rights framework, many women reformers in Muslim countries still feel they must divorce themselves from religion and culture. Merry (2004) illustrates this in using the example of a Fijian traditional, village-based form of reconciliation known as bulubulu. Traditionally used as a symbolic form of apology in which the offender presents a gift of a tabua (the tooth of a sperm whale) to the victim's family. Merry notes the contention with bulubulu in the case of rape whereby the practice of bulubulu concerns only the rapist and the girl's family. Merry notes:

A bulubulu ceremony is performed and the rapist will come to the family and present it to the father. The girl isn't even discussed in this. If the family accepts the bulubulu, the girl must accept that. And then they try to get it out of court. If it has already been reported, then they go to court [126].

The tension lies in this as a practice CEDAW contested due to the fact that it was used as a method in resolving rape cases which many times leave the victim unfairly compensated while slapping minimal prosecution on the offender. CEDAW believes that here, culture hinders the ability of a human rights discourse to thrive and wished to eliminate the practice of Bulubulu all together. Consequently, bulubulu exists as a crucial ritual aspect in Fijian culture and in the context Merry highlights, it is impossible to erase. Women then are caught between societal pressures of reproducing culture and assimilating to new adaptations of it. Merry (2004) alludes to
the quandary in that, "The CEDAW committee is not deliberately promoting a universalistic transnational modernity, but is part of a process in which the convention itself is the moving force toward transnational modernity (13).” Harkening back to Merry’s position, that in order for human rights ideas to become part of local rights consciousness, they need to be adapted to local circumstances (223).

Ways in which the assignation of oppression and violence against women are framed out of a Western theoretical ideology must take into account the particularities of culture on a local level. The dilemma exists threefold: within societal understandings of a given issue, State policies which aid in culturally appropriating it and the body of Western, transnational theory that discursively locates violence within a limited conceptual framework.

In a project examining street harassment against women, the ways in which harassment are defined and understood as violent should stem from local understandings and formations of knowledge. Borrowing theoretical concepts from feminist and anthropological theory concerning harassment will then help to formulate an understanding that bridges variant discourses. Critiquing State practices that enable men to harass is one way to further engage the problem. To further veer from Eurocentric productions, it would be effective to analyze local forms of justice women employ that are unrelated to legal practices in order to curb harassment. These are notions which may reveal more on the tensions Merry (2001, 2004) touches upon in examining the rifts between culture and justice.

Furthermore, a project such as this, in framing women's rights to public space as human rights should be weary of reproducing stereotypes of women in violent contexts within the Middle-East. Moreover, binaries between man/woman and male/female should not aggravate street harassment to a level that is anti-male. Avni
(2006) argues in mobilizing hope rather than shame in, "Condemning, isolating, and punishing actions rather than actors means treating even the most grievous violators as evolving individuals capable of change" (209). Perhaps this belief is one that would bridge well the incorporation of social responsibility and justice at a local level.

**Social Responsibility vs. Romanticized Voyeurism**

Scholars like Abu-Lughod (2002) remind us to be critical of our own intentions in the formation of projects centered on violence against women outside of our own social contexts. Rendering non-Western women subjective positions of inferiority and powerlessness may play into the hearts of others yet however, reifies semantics of dominant behavior which romanticizes and naturalizes violence used against them. The deployment of scholarship and activism is then entangled in its own reproduction of violence and voyeurism.

A recent article in the New York Times travel section titled, "Slum Visits: Tourism or Voyeurism?" demonstrates the notion that Westerners are more aware of the growing disparities in equality across the globe, but perform more injustice and violence upon people in less privileged parts of the world by exploiting them through tourism. "Slum tours" have become the hip, underground form of tourism that takes vacationers on virtual tours through cities of the world scorned by poverty and violence such as Rio de Janeiro or Johannesburg. It is now fashionable to mimic the anthropologist and "experience" other cultures, ignorantly and at their own expense. One tourist's account reminded me of Brazilian film, "City of God," based on a true story that captures the world of two young men engrossed in poverty, drugs and violence in a slum-city of Brazil-or 'favela' ironically named, "The City of God." Here the tourist recalls, "A young man approached the group, smiling and holding a cocked gun. Ms. Bhasin (the tourist) said she didn't exactly feel threatened, 'Just very aware
of my surroundings, and aware of the fact that I was on this guy's turf." To a large
degree, the media is constructive in promoting an awareness of global inequalities
linked to violence, however some of the practices carried out backfire, further
endorsing exploitation and indifference.

how the discourse of human rights groups reaches particular audiences through media.
McLagan further expounds upon this notion in remarking, "In today’s globally
mediated world, visual images play a central role in determining which violences are
redeemed and which get recognized" (191). In the exploration of how media shapes
issues of human rights visually, McLagan and Gregory's work draws upon Northern
human rights activists' adoption of local knowledge through notions of "witnessing"
and "testimony" by 'local actors.' Media plays a powerful role in the production of
how messages are carried out on an emotional level. This concept, referred to as the
“mobilization of shame,” rests on the notion that, by exposing the gap between self-
professed norms and behavior, activists can actually “shame” States into changing
their behavior.

On the contrary, the scores of documentary films highlighting violence such as
within the Palestinian conflict or the war in Iraq are not always efficacious in
changing conceptual views. Avni considers apathy amidst the tension of human rights
projects and urges human rights advocates to ask: "What else might motivate
concerned audiences to hold individuals or institutions accountable for destructive
behavior, and under what circumstances (207)?"

Social responsibility is a key feature which must not be side-stepped but the
way in which it is performed must be critical in and of it so as not to further reify the
dangerous aspects it seeks to eliminate. Abu-Lughod (2002) additionally argues two points:

Rather than seeking to "save" others (with the superiority it implies and the violences it would entail) we might better think in terms of (1) working with them in situations that we recognize as always subject to historical transformation and (2) considering our own larger responsibilities to address the forms of global injustice that are powerful shapers of the worlds in which they find themselves [Abu-Lughod 2002: 783].

So while highlighting global injustices such as public harassment/ street harassment, we are urged to understand our own positionality as feminists/researchers of particular social processes when embarking on academic/activist missions to incorporate a Western-transnational tailored approach towards understanding gendered violence. Aware of the pitfalls of Western feminism, Marrero (1994:124) advises academics to be aware of the language they use in aims to represent sample populations claiming, "… this work needs to be generated and interpreted through a uniquely Mayan perspective that encompasses all women (traditional as well as radical)-not as a mirror of the needs generated by theoretical Western feminism." A Western-inspired remedy or theoretical notion to overcome or understand violence is not necessarily wrong; it is however important to consider the transformative implications it has on the population it seeks.

Central to this analysis are the implications geography has on gender. Socio-cultural binary constructions of the East and West frame the problem of hegemonic theory and its importation onto specific parts of the world. It may be more efficacious incorporating the works of relevant feminist thought to local knowledge and understandings on violence. Feminist geography for example, incorporates the study of gender processes in particular locations of space and time. According to Staeheli and Martin (2000), "Feminist geographers, then, have a particular interest in understanding how place and space interact with the construction, practice, and
politics of gender." In understanding how particular processes perform violence against women, Ortner's (1972) ideas allow one to review the data sets which assign female cultural groups as subordinate or oppressed such as:

a) Elements of cultural ideology and informants' statements that explicitly devalue women, according them, their roles, their tasks, their products, and their social milieu less prestige than men and the male correlates; b) Symbolic devices, such as the attribution of defilement, which may be interpreted as making a statement of inferior valuation; and c) Social rules that, prohibit women from participating in or having contact with some realm in which the highest powers of the society are felt to reside [7].

Works that draw from a variety of social/theoretical milieus may sharpen future projects located within the paradigms of Western feminism/activism. Although women do not share a universal or "common oppression" (hooks 1986), maintains that we can lessen the divide that springs from our differences namely by dissecting gender inequities located within them. Western feminism and activism are guilty of exclusion based on issues of race, ethnicity and class. However, new approaches towards understanding violences against women that merge self defining, local understandings of the problem to discourse may strengthen future projects.

I argue sexual harassment as a phenomenological condition of research must not overlook particular Egyptian societal processes concerning the role of religion, public space, socio-economic conditions and how the use of these translate into a gendered understanding of the concept. Furthermore, notions of masculinity should be underscored as a major portion of study regarding public harassment. Importantly, one must deconstruct the processes of masculinity in Egypt through various research methods, which highlight men’s views and opinions on the subject in order to more fully investigate local practices and knowledge.

**Intersectionality of Class, Race, and Gender**

Similarly, the dichotomies between public/private and male/female are very much a manifestation of social constructs conflated within gender, class and race which are
largely at play in the Middle East. Instead of drawing upon these aspects separately, I rely on examining the interconnectedness and generated hierarchies of these processes through theoretical frameworks of intersectionality as mentioned by Anderson and Collins (1992). In other works, Collins (2000) argues that intersectionality enables one to extrapolate new forms of knowledge within this particular interpretive framework. The exploration of structural differences which shape black women's experiences in America is illustrative of how Collins use of intersectionality dovetails issues of oppression women face, then allowing different understandings and formations of feminist thought. Making mention of this scholarly work posits that intersectionality is useful in posing the ways in which street harassment is racialized on a number of levels that simultaneously conflate class with it.

Class, like race, is also embedded within notions of public harassment. It is linked to certain privileges or disparities among certain groups, upper class women, depending on the time they spend walking in the city are not protected by their social status. Phadke (2007) demonstrates the division of public space through class arguing that women are barred from public space but not in the same way. Because of access to economic capital through private infrastructure and cultural capital through education, middle class women have greater access to public space (1513). As class embeds itself within the narratives of men and women in this study, I gather it is useful to draw upon Bourdieu's framework of class as it ties into particular formations of subjectivity. As a concept, Bourdieu (1984) likens class to social space as "bound up with the systems of dispositions (habitus) characteristic of the different classes and class fractions" (6). This is particularly relevant in the case of Egypt in the way that Bourdieu's study equates the concept of taste to a realm of social conditioning beyond one's control reflective of his/her habitus. He maintains, "Taste is amor fati, the choice
of destiny, but a forced choice, produced by conditions of existence which rule out all alternatives as mere daydreams and leave no choice but the taste for the necessary" (178). I rely on Bourdieu's usage of class to locate a sense of the everyday habitus in Egyptian life that locates the disparity between the rich and poor; between need and want; between male and female which is then operative of a multitude of processes centered on space and reflective of desire and gaze.

As it applies to my study, Rospenda et al. (1998) consider the power dynamics involved within sexual harassment in an institutional environment. Understanding the power dynamics of harassment encourages one to reflect on the ways in which on one hand, a particular act of gendered violence is performed, however embedded in a matrix of ways in which women assume agency. I find this pertinent regarding the ways in which women in Egypt respond to and view harassment. As it is bound within notions of class, the reductive assumption locates a type of man to be a harasser-uneducated, poor, and sexually frustrated. Although this is not always the case, issues of gender, race and class cross-cut the notion of rights available to women of various social categories in Egypt. Furthermore, this allows me to elucidate the ways in which examining harassment must go beyond the lens of viewing it as man vs. woman and underscore the myriad of power ensconced within the practice of it.

**Drawing Men into Question: Masculinities in Local Contexts**

There is a need to produce scholarly work engaging in social constructions of masculinity and how those representations are ensnared within gender relations in public places such as the street. Others have suggested a need to critically examine men's lives and the facets that shape masculinities in order to better locate gendered inequities (Bannon and Correia 2006’ Connell 2001, (2005, Jones 2006 and Whitehead 2001). Gutmann (1997) critiques how earlier anthropological science as a
form of knowledge production failed to place masculinity within a contextual, ideological force and rather as just an inherent practice linked to one's setting.

Moreover, Gutmann argues:

A quick perusal of the indices to most ethnographies shows that "women" exist as a category while "men" are far more rarely listed. Masculinity is either ignored or considered so much the norm that a separate inventory is unnecessary. Then, too, "gender" often means women and not men [Gutmann 1997:403].

Connell (1993) contests masculinity is not a uniform concept and that twentieth-century research failed to produce a coherent science around it (67). Furthermore, Connell maintains that in order to locate a concept on issues of masculinity, "We need a three-fold model of the structure of gender, distinguishing relations of (a) power, (b) production and (c) cathexis (emotional attachment)" (74). Implementing this model while studying masculinity as a concept in the Middle East better demonstrates the intersectionality of gender, race and class as embedded within notions of power, gender roles and sexuality. Interestingly, Connell outlines forms of masculinity which are regionally, racially and class specific.

Ethnographies of men that are contextually located better illustrate the lived experiences of men. Ali (2002), Baobaid (2006), De Neve (2004), Gutmann (1996), Herzfeld (1985) and Long (2006) give rise to what it means to be a man in various cultural settings from Mexico, the Mediterranean, to the Middle East. Touching upon inscriptions of manhood within notions of violence to concerns in fertility decisions, new understandings formulate the study of masculinity from a global to local paradigm. Unpacking the popular icons of manhood that carry over within different cultural settings, Gutmann (1996) notes:

Among the young in Mexico City the model of aggressive masculinity is no longer the pistol-packing charro cowboy of yore looking for a tranquil rancho where he can hang his sombrero. He has been replaced by the submachine-gun-spraying Rambo launching assaults on the Vietnams or Afghanistans of the moment. No one would suggest that Rambo is a product of Mexico, yet there as in his land of origin, is he not
known as the ultimate macho? Local symbols become globalized and then
relocalized and reglobalized [6].

This notion is especially fascinating in an Egyptian context in as such aspects
of masculine identity are formulated within and around global images then
reconstituted as local. I further draw upon these notions in the ethnographic narratives
of Egyptian men that discursively trace an understanding of masculinity and sexuality
through a contentious relationship with the West.

Masculinity as a concept of study in the Middle East harks back to notions of
patriarchy that imply total male superiority and female subordination. However, these
notions are misleading in that they overlook the complexity in understanding the
matrices of negotiation and power involved. On one hand, masculinity is bound
within notions of honor and shame legitimized through religion and culture. For
example, Abu-Lughod (1986) notes the Awlad Ali Bedouin construct locates honor
through female sexuality in remaining a chaste virgin until marriage and loyal to one's
husband after marriage. In the socialization through notions of honor, men of the
Awlad Ali in Egypt connect women to nature and animalistic sexuality. The
maintenance of honor in this case rests upon women and the efficacy of social control
their male relatives have over them. On the other hand, the belief that social control
symbolizes male dominance over women is part and parcel of a larger process of
gender negotiations. Another level, which I want to emphasize here, is that in order to
produce new forms of knowledge and understanding on processes that shape
masculinity, scholarly works should deconstruct notions of patriarchy. For the term,
'patriarchy' in its overuse renders men as invisible subjects with unlimited power.
Patriarchy conceals men's worlds as normative by neglecting to appropriate male
struggles and experiences of their lives as part and parcel of what shapes their
manhood. Men too, make negotiations.
Operating in and outside of the public sphere, the term 'patriarchal bargain' Kandiyoti (1988) reflects on the complexity of gender roles and responsibilities within the traditional framework of patriarchy to suggest that women may undertake passive forms of resistance in holding men accountable to specific responsibilities claiming their half of this particular patriarchal bargain—protection in exchange for submissiveness and propriety (283). Examples linked to this such as appropriating the veil in order to maintain markers of piety and modesty further inculcate the notion that women's movement within the public sphere is limited and that by adopting the symbolic means of the veil, "they are thus exposed…and must now continue to be worthy of protection." Veiling as a means used to display piety or a form of identification as a Muslim in Egypt is ubiquitous but not mandatory. However, the forms of Kandiyoti's 'patriarchal bargain' converge within Christian and Islamic faiths in Egypt. In this, women draw upon notions of feminine embodiment related to respectability that reproduce masculine behavioral notions to harbor and protect them. Urban spaces illustrate the tenuous relationship between traditional understandings of masculine and feminine.

Masculinity as a construct observes heterosexual manliness as dominant over woman and even in homoerotic cases, over man. Remarkably, masculinity as a construct in the Middle East differs from its western understanding. For example, a man who partakes in a homosexual act with another man so as long as he is not in a submissive position (more symbolically that of a woman who is penetrated) is not considered homosexual by any means. Sexual behavior is an aspect of gender in Egypt which, according to Dunne, is linked to, "The centrality of penetration to conceptions of sex [and] the radical disjunction of active and passive roles in male homosexuality."
Male harassing of women may be one way that men produce "justifiable" violence against women. Dunne notes, "The persistent notion that women lack sexual control affords broad scope and social sanction to aggressive male sexuality." Because of this, Dunne further argues, "Women alone bear the blame-and the often brutal consequences evidenced by honor crimes-for even the suggestion of their involvement in illicit sexual activities" (11).

Masculinity is discursively woven around concepts of sexuality which emphasize notions of gendered citizenship/subjectivity and performance localized within harassment. Hewamanne (2008) illustrates the contentious relationship female Sri Lankan garment workers surrounding the Katunayake FTZ-Free Trade Zone. Commonly labeled as "women with loose morals due to their position as young, unmarried women who lived away from their families in an urban area and the unique way they negotiated city life," they underwent various forms of harassment when out in the city. Furthermore, the "FTZ workers’ appropriation of the streets provided them only an ambiguous and contested space for social participation." Such ways in which they behaved challenged traditional notions of femininity and moreover, the nation's purity (Hewamanne 2008:18).

Importantly, this work underscores gender performance, subjectivity and how gender is negotiated in urban spaces. In outlining very briefly my theoretical leanings and review of the literature, I aim to provide a well-balanced examination of various issues related to public harassment as it is regarded as 'sexual harassment' in some circles. The upcoming analyses in the following sections explore the contestations and discontinuities of gender and violence as they cut across various categories I sought to identify. I consider the multiple definitions of harassment in relation to the historical
processes at play currently. In doing so, I reveal a matrix of strategies women employ in order to negotiate their mobility in the streets—a contentious, masculine space.
Chapter Three

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

Sample: Selection, Size, and Theoretical Ruminations

In order to engage in this ethnographic study of foreign and Egyptian women's experiences of street harassment by men, I drew upon a number of methods. Bernard (1998) argues that for ethnographies to be strong, they should utilize a number of methodologies, both qualitative and quantitative. My research relied upon the use of textual analysis, survey, interview, and participant observation. I incorporated data from surveys given to men and women on harassment distributed by the ECWR. To further understand the semantics of their relationship to the State, I interviewed program coordinators and volunteers from the NGO as well.

I employed snowball sampling to obtain a sample of 40 female survey respondents at a median age of 25 years. Approximately 53 percent of my sample was comprised of students while the remaining 47 percent of the sample were employed in particular sectors of work in Cairo, mainly administrative or governmental positions. 43 percent of the participants in this sample were Egyptian while the remaining breakdown lists as follows: 12 percent European, seven percent African origin and 35 percent identified as being of "other" nationality, namely American. Further snowball sampling allotted me an ethnographic population of ten foreign and Egyptian women and eight Egyptian men ranging in age and class respectively. The men and women in the ethnographic portion of this study ranged in age and social class from barbers, tailors, and bawabs [doormen of apartment buildings], to Baladi women, maids, university students, activists, bloggers, and working professionals.
I found some of my informants through referral. For example, women who worked in the informal sectors of Egyptian society such as "shagalaat" or house keepers were referred to me through their employers who I knew on a personal level. Other women I met were through the ECWR, in online forums or by introduction from a friend. Through similar circumstances of online discussions and referrals, I met the men I interviewed for this project. As I was engaging men and women with sensitive questions around harassment I found it easier to gain more respondents through their referrals rather than randomly try to sample people who were not familiar with me. I met my informants at the places of their choice. Some came to my home, others I met at 'ahwas' [Egyptian coffee houses], and a few I'd met with at their places of employment. All interviews lasted around an hour and a half. At the inception of each interview, I briefly described my research objectives and goals and promised each respondent I would use my discretion wisely to ensure his/her confidentiality. I treated all individuals I met to coffees and snacks when we met in cafes. I tried to give money to the cleaning women I spoke with. I say 'tried' because out of being polite, they refused to take my money. I did manage to persuade one woman to accept pay after a lengthy argument where I implored the invocation of god by saying "La wallah" repeatedly--meaning, "By god I swear," a term widely used in Arabic when one conveys a sense of seriousness and honesty.

Although I could not compensate everyone financially for their participation in my research, I was clear in stating how crucial their voices were in adding to the scholarship and promotion of social change in Egypt. It afforded women a venue to safely discuss their experiences-which ranged from humorous to terrifying, without any judgment or shame. That being said, one cannot negate the fact that the images
conjured up from the memories of harassment leave a lasting impression on a person. I often felt like I was exchanging war stories with women as we retold our narratives of harassment to one another. As women, we often grappled with the shame, hurt and anger we felt towards both our harassers and ourselves. This process of questioning will hopefully lead us towards revolutionizing and altering gendered behaviors.

**Data Recording and Analysis**

The data came from surveys, observations, participant observation and open-ended interviews all which I gathered since the fall of 2006 until the summer of 2008. Three of the interviews were in Arabic. One was performed with a tailor in Hussein with the aid of a translator. Hussein is an area located in Islamic Cairo which serves as a popular tourist destination with its famous Islamic monuments and open air market. Hussein is truly a place up all night, filled with cafes once known to host Egypt's beloved writer, Naghuib Mahfouz. Its narrow alleys are bustling with jewelry hawkers, Sudanese women painting henna and a variety of places to sip mint tea in glass cups or puff on a bubbling apple flavored hookah. The other two interviews in Arabic came from conversations I digitally recorded with cleaning women employed in the informal sector. In all of the interviews, I took tedious notes, making note of respondent's accounts. Shorthand style note taking ensured me the ability to transcribe with ease and efficiency and in the instances of using the audio-digital recorder, I was dually ensuring better gathering of information.

I examined survey answers using SPSS computer software. This allowed me to create Chi-Square tests to investigate the relationships between harassment and hijab [the Islamic veil]; between harassment and racial factors; and between harassment and class-related issues. This in turn validated or retracted some of my earlier theories. In terms of coding, Strauss and Corbin (1998) remind the analyst that
in conceptualizing data, "Meaning is defined and redefined through interaction"(9). Furthermore, Michrina and Richards (1996) stress, "Fieldwork using the dialogical hermeneutic method is largely an experience of personal feelings and interpersonal interactions" (73). In essence, this urges the researcher to strengthen her/his own competency in analyzing data while taking into account the researcher's biases along with informants' credibility. Michrina and Richards suggest following the analytical framework as such: "analysis of the ideal/real culture contrast, event analysis, process analysis, emotion analysis, and metaphor analysis" (84). In assessing the data from the qualitative interviews, I adopted analytic practices that aligned me with aspects of the dialogic hermeneutic method. I further ruminated on my fieldwork in a reflective journal. In this, I referred back to my field notes a number of times, making memos, indexing the margins and coding them with symbols in various categories. I then further broke down the categories and looked for emergent themes and patterns in my interviewees' responses. Throughout the whole process of data analysis, I wrestled with my subjectivity as a Western anthropologist producing knowledge and as a woman in which my subjectivity and experiences of the street are manifest in other women's experiences of it also.

**Methodizing Masculinities and Participant Observation**

In the exploration to understand women's experiences and negotiations of public space, it is imperative to deconstruct femininity and masculinity. Men should not be left out of the analyses of gender inequalities and violences against women. Ignoring the question, "Why do men do what they do?" normalizes their behavior to a certain extent and naturalizes violence against women. In this section, I briefly
examine various studies of masculinity in order to show how it is captured contextually and how conceptualizations of it compare and contrast to my project.

In analyzing the significance of Connell's term 'hegemonic masculinity,' Bird (1996) draws upon survey research of heterosexual men from academic backgrounds in a small city in the United States. This methodology probed the relationship between American men's individual conceptions of masculinity alongside the perceived consensual or hegemonic notions of masculinity. However, the inquiry represented a small sample of men, mostly white and all heterosexual. In doing so, Bird still takes into account notions of American masculinity which are heterosexually privileged and racially distinguished. Men were questioned in ways to reveal notions about "their beliefs, attitudes and expectations of the group and society" (124). The respondents were asked questions about relationships they found most desirable in situations unrelated to work. Bird found that the men commonly found the topics of sports, women, business, politics and drinking to be most popular for discussion. Additionally, another set of men were observed at a local bar to record behavior and conversation during casual hangouts. Through these observations and discussions, Bird gathered the subtopics of emotional detachment, competition and sexual objectification of women which centered on male interaction.

From this, masculinity is in part shaped by detachment from that which is feminine such as emotional intimacy. Bird's theoretical insights are useful in discerning ways to apply concepts of hegemonic masculinity to my study of Egyptian men. Borrowing the idea of hegemony from Gramsci which refers to "the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life," hegemonic masculinity can be defined as a position that legitimizes certain gender practices which reproduce the dominant position of men and subordination of women.
The importance of this concept lies within the fact reiterated by Connell (1993) that, "hegemonic masculinity embodies a currently accepted strategy…the dominance of any group of men may be challenged by women. Hegemony, then, is a historically mobile relation" (77).

What is interesting are the ways in which notions of detachment overlap and contrast the American example. Also, homosexuality as a practice conceived of differently by some men depending on who is in the dominant position may lend an alternative explanation towards discussing masculinity. I found Egyptian notions of hegemonic masculinity shaped itself in terms of detachment from that which is feminine such as emotional intimacy. I will return to this point later in the paper.

Bird demonstrates methods of thorough data gathering in both survey and participant observation. A drawback of Bird's research revolves around the use of survey research. As the researcher has access to asking any question with relative anonymity on both ends, questions may still be difficult to answer depending on how language is appropriated. If not worded in ways that are easily understood, then they data will be useless because the question will either be left unanswered or vague. Survey research is also limiting in that more in-depth questions cannot be asked to provoke a more thorough understanding. And since the interviewees surveyed differed from those observed, the former could not be questioned as in depth as the latter. For this reason, I chose not to survey men.

Additionally, this study relied heavily upon the component of participant observation. DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) contend that this method includes, "the explicit use in behavioral analysis and recording of the information gained from participating and observing"(259). In this process, I observed men in many contexts, asked questions and took meticulous notes. DeWalt and DeWalt additionally point out
various situations in which participant observation takes place, "By living in the community, taking part in usual and unusual activities, "hanging out," and conversing (as compared to interviewing) while consciously observing and ultimately recording what was observed" (261). Situations in which I felt I could comfortably observe men lie within public places such as Egyptian cafes (ahwas) commonly known as places for smoking shisha, drinking tea and discussing politics. Cairo hosts a number of cafes open to both men and women, but many operate largely as spaces that appropriate men only. As participant observer, I assumed a degree of being a part of the group I study, however tenuous that may be.

Babbie (1998) dovetails this notion in that "genuine membership can present specific scientific problems. The attempt to observe and record everything can result in a situation of unconscious bias for selection" (34). It is not impossible however as Bird (1996) illustrates the gathering of men's experiences in researching masculinity through participant observation. Bird does not allude to her presence as a woman as either unimportant, rendering her temporary status of 'honorary male,' or causing any interruption because she is a woman studying gender issues through a feminist lens.

My presence as a woman makes me a bit less threatening but exhibits problems nonetheless. In order to gain men's trust and gather quality data, I carefully chose well-suited research methods. In addition to observation, I conducted a series of open-ended interviews with men in order to better suite my project ethnographically.

The Open-Ended Interview and Dialogic Approach

I'd met and interviewed all of my respondents more than once. This allowed us to establish a deeper sense of trust, disclosure and a closer rapport. The better we got to know each other, the more I looked forward to seeing and talking to them. The interviews came to represent the kind of social interactions involved in fieldwork.
many of us anthropologists jokingly refer to as, "deep hanging out" in respect to Geertz's (1972) "deep play." Throughout the interview process open-ended interviews with Egyptian men and women granted me access into understanding women's experiences of street harassment and male performative gendered behaviors.

Importantly, Bernard (1998) notes, "Person-centered interviewing requires excellent rapport, and fluency in the local language" (25). I feel both of these aspects are strong qualities I possess, but I admit that my social skills in establishing rapport outweighed my fluency in colloquial Egyptian Arabic. As a functional Arabic speaker, I did not always feel confident in my abilities to fully understand some of my respondents. However I accessed Arabic translators during some interviews to make up for the short-coming.

Open-ended interviews as a method of research seek to frame my project within a dialogic approach. Largely centering on the hermeneutic approach, Michrina and Richards (1996) describe dialogical hermeneutics as, "A scientific method that negotiates the process of understanding of a particular process or phenomenon through an incremental analysis of information"(7). Both argue that the rigors involved in this method strengthen the use of ethnography and that understandings "do not suddenly become clear, distinct and well-defined, but emerge over time" (50).

Dwyer (1987) demonstrates the effectiveness of the dialogic approach in that it involves a degree of mutual understanding between informant and researcher. Aware of his positionality as a Westerner in Morocco, Dwyer recalls events which took place through dialogue and constantly refers back to his potential biases in his further analyses. In doing so, he takes into account ways in which to approach future interactions with participants which derive a less clichéd understanding of anthropological writings. Importantly, Briggs (1986) refers to the difficulty in
communicative events as they are guided by certain cultural norms and argues if the fieldworker is not sensitive to the cultural nuances in communication, "failing to see how native communicative patterns have shaped responses, this will lead the researcher to misconstrue their meaning" (3). The ethnographer asks questions and must continuously refer back to her/his own understanding of the answers which involve a process of negotiation with informants. This method enables a degree of ethical visibility while redistributing power from researcher to informant. (Michrina and Richards1996:24).

Lastly, in selecting an appropriate research design I applied aspects of feminist methods in studying gender inequality among a range of other behaviors. Gailey (1998) argues, "Methods in feminist anthropology aren't distinct from those of other critical methods in anthropology." However, what makes these methods unique are the ways in which the everyday aspects of human behavior are decompartmentalized within the notion that "the personal is political" (207). A project like mine which locates harassment as a form of violence against women renders my personal experiences with the subject even more critical in shaping my knowledge of it. Factors that imply this project as feminist according to Gailey are, "1) the focus on gender as a salient analytical category and 2) the purpose in contributing to an overall effort to dismantle gendered forms of oppression and exploitation" (219). As a researcher, I regard men not as independent units from women but in terms of underscoring gender difference, I will critically examine the intersection of hierarchies that exist in public spaces such as the street. Because of this, I have to be aware of my own biases tied up within my positionality as a western woman, feminist, Muslim and so on.
Positionality and Entrance to the Field

In drawing up my plans to undertake my research which examined both the construction and performance of masculinity and women's experiences of space vis-à-vis through street harassment, I must consider my role as a female non-Arab researcher in Egypt. Every researcher has a unique story relaying the ambiguity he/she felt when first entering the field. I did not anticipate my presence in the field to conjure up like experiences of initiation such as Geertz's (1972) anthropological account of the Balinese cockfight. As Geertz describes his earlier existence as a "nonperson, specter, or invisible," my positionality as a female and foreigner in Arab society at times drew more curiosity at first glance. Being an outsider can sometimes allow more flexibility in being accepted into a community. Because my research primarily dealt with face to face interactions, I am dually privileged and disadvantaged in various ways.

Similar to Abu-Lughod (1986), my presence of being a woman in an Islamic/partially sex-segregated society is reflected two-fold: 1) as an American-Pakistani (or as Abu-Lughod coins the term 'halfie') and 2) my identity as a Muslim. On some levels, Abu-Lughod's acceptance into the Awlad Ali Bedouin community as a daughter reflects similar notions of my acceptance into various Egyptian circles. My membership into two cultural worlds reflects on some levels my point of relation to my site of research: I am a Muslim, my father is Middle Eastern and I speak a fair amount of Arabic.

Like Altorki and Abu-Lughod (1988), my positionality as a woman in the field already conjures up pros and cons in my research. My situation is complex in that I am a partial outsider which suggests some degree of difficulty gaining entry into the field, particularly into men's worlds. Unlike Altorki, I am not limited by particular social constraints in accessing information from men as Egypt is not as conservative a
society as Saudi Arabia. Yet, as a non-Arab, I face a degree of socialization similar to her experience as a native. First, my status as a Western researcher abroad affords me socio-economic status which translates over into a certain form of class power over some of the men I studied. However, it did not render me powerful or shield me from particular forms of harassment at the same time.

Sharp and Kremer (2007) demonstrate the ways in which researchers in the field face particular issues which can compromise one's safety such as the possibilities of warfare and sexual violence. They focus on this underscoring the ways in which gender impacts the field experience noting, "In some cases the characteristics of the researcher with respect to participants may create the conditions for harassment or violence in the field" (318). This contention rang true in the process of my fieldwork only to remind me of the sheer normalization/routinization of violence harassment conveys in both local and global contexts. Some of the male subjects I interviewed or had dialogues with on the subject either outright harassed me or minimized my role as an anthropologist trying to uncover the social/cultural conditions surround it. At a conference in November 2007 held at the American University in Cairo entitled, 'Social Space and Identity in the Middle East,' I presented some preliminary findings on my research around some of the socio-economic issues currently plaguing Egyptian society. A young Egyptian male in the audience surprised me much to my chagrin when he asked, "Don't you think you're overreacting about this harassment thing?" I was at a loss for the appropriate response and felt momentarily defeated. In other instances, my credibility as a Muslim along with my theoretical beliefs on harassment were denied by some because I do not wear hijab and therefore, do not correctly perform my respectability as a proper Muslim woman. The following summer, while exiting a taxi on my way to an interview, I was followed outside to an
open area shopping center by the driver, angry over a taped bill I gave him in payment. He grabbed me by the arm shouting at me, drawing a crowd of curious onlookers who then formed a circle around us. We began arguing loudly, and I hastily pushed a different five pound note into his hand. He then slapped me hard against my face. No one did anything, not even the police officers nearby watching. I felt at that time, my ability to pass an Egyptian woman actually hindered me greatly. Had I looked like a stereotypical Western foreigner, I believe that he would not have gone so far as to hit me because tourist police take the safety of foreigners into far greater consideration than Egyptians in my opinion.

I admit this preoccupation I have with inserting my own voice into the ethnography stems from my concern as an academic in a privileged position within the larger dialogue on the production and construction of knowledge. To insert myself and my personal experiences into the larger narrative surrounding male violence reflects my positionality as a liminal insider but also, to some extent, the autoethnographic tone this piece takes. Other scholars position themselves contextually vis-à-vis their subjective experiences in their research (Altorki 1988, Caton 2005, Lau 2002, Abu-Lughod 1986 and Spry 2001). Autoethnography can be defined as a self-narrative that critiques the situatedness of self with others in social contexts (Spry 2001:710). It is described by Lau(2002) as seeking, "To make sense of the often contradictory relationships between self and culture that so acutely mark the postmodern predicament while also exerting a very real influence on the politics of representation and scholarship" (244). In this, Lau draws upon the notion of her mixed heritage and in a sense, grapples with how the many aspects of the self are reconstituted in pursuit of understanding other cultures. Our claims of authenticity are dually tested and recognized as multi-cultural scholars due to the relationships and
identities we take on as part of larger cultural flows between the east/west. We become actors/subjects within the larger discourse urged to deconstruct our own voices and standpoints within dialogic hermeneutics. Spry considers the performative aspects of autoethnography urging us to consider our roles as we as the reader/researcher are incorporated into various narratives. Our positions in the social narratives we weave strongly hark back to Spry's understanding of representational politics where "autoethnographic methods recognize the reflections and refractions of multiple selves in contexts that arguably transform the authorial "I" to an existential "we" (711). Among the many considerations noted here, it is crucial to discuss my role as an ethical observer.

A Few Words on Ethics

A drawback in revealing my research interests to some people reduced their willingness to talk to me. The language of the discourse I employ largely hinging on women's rights and violence made a few people uncomfortable early on. Some were reluctant to get into a dialogue like this with me. I respectfully withdrew, but felt beset with choices in selecting and articulating which voices would be heard throughout the ethnography. Nevertheless, in speaking to men and women about harassment, I gathered the complexities of Egyptian society that are bound within markers of gender performance. While further deconstructing multiple dimensions of power, I reflect on particular ethical issues which may arise in the study of street harassment. Michrina and Richards (1996) remind one to consider her/his authority in the acquisition of data with subjects because power relations can lead to ethical problems. Hauser (1997) engages in this discussion arguing that feminist research can be strengthened by acknowledging the myriad of power that is all around us. Hauser reinstates the fact that power/positionality exists in all relationships and it is
critical to include that recognition in the space in which any relationship is created" (125).

The process of all social research holds ethical notions of power between the investigator and her/his subjects. Promoting a sense of full disclosure and trust better ensured this project's success. Providing all information to my informants as to what I aimed to know and why was crucial in ensuring a mutual sense of trust and flow of information. Awareness of one's posture so as not to assume a stance of authority like standing while the participant is sitting and using respectful language are among things to keep in mind while doing participant observation and interviews. As I carried out my research outside of my native country in a place deemed 'developing' or 'Third World' by some, my responsibility to my subjects is to be protective of the information they reveal so as not to breech codes of confidentiality and trust. Although I am critical of certain masculine behaviors relating to violence, I am concerned with what Michrina and Richards suggest to "keeping oneself humanistic and humble during the research process." Ways in which to do so imply keeping in contact with informants during analysis and writing phases and reading over personal notes and anecdotes from interviews in this phase to keep in mind the human feelings that you felt as a consequence of your relationship with your friends (107). Whether or not the identified methodologies fully captured the essence of how masculinity is produced in Egypt, the process of engaging in such a project revealed many insights valuable to the field.

The results of my fieldwork are snippets of vignettes interwoven within the discourse on Western and local Egyptian perceptions of 'sexual harassment,' productions of masculinity, and the notion of women's rights. In the analysis section, I constantly refer back to the epistemological questions around the issues I raise
concerning the contentious status of women in public space and how particular gender performances reinstate normalized notions of violence on the female body. Furthermore, among the objectives in the analysis which aim to answer particular questions, I leave open a space for questions to further ponder on the role of women's rights to public space in Egypt.
Chapter Four

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Perceptions of Street Harassment:

Nostalgia for the Past, Socioeconomics, Religious Conservatism and the Polemics with the West

Conversations with both men and women indicate growing frustrations with street harassment. Major themes in discussions with Egyptians on the topic of why men harass are linked to topics that continuously hark back to a time in people's memories 10-20 years ago when harassment in their opinions, did not occur. By incorporating memory and the use of nostalgia, they try to make sense of why Egypt is undergoing particular negative changes. Issues surrounding political economy and gender/socio-cultural disparities are various themes that interweave with local explanations as to why harassment has become so much worse. Although I did not test for the statistical significance of these particular variables, they are ensconced within the narratives of those I interviewed. These themes are further underscored in relation to the concern around rising unemployment, religious conservatism and women's dress, and a criticism of Western influence that people feel inculcates Egyptian society at many angles. It is then appropriate to say that these themes suggestively reflect public opinions on harassment.

In a lecture I attended on street harassment in 2006, Dr. Galal Amin, a professor of economics at the American University in Cairo drew on some interesting socio-political implications. First, he mentioned the likelihood of the violent attacks on
women which happened over the Eid holiday 2006 would have been unheard of 10-15 years ago. These sentiments were reflected over and over again with every Egyptian person I spoke with irrespective of their age. Discussions with both young and old indicate a loosening of morality within society regardless of the rise of religious conservatism. Legg (2005) illustrates particular representations of historical geographical nostalgia in this light where, noting Turner's (1987) four dimensions of nostalgia he reflects:

Turner stressed the feeling of historical decline but took this to the second, intimate level of the loss of personal wholeness and moral certainty. This combines with the third level that of mourning for lost individual autonomy and freedom within an increasingly bureaucratic State [486].

Young people lamented, "Our mothers never experienced this type of treatment. They were in short skirts, walking along the Nile with their hair out" (Ilahi Personal Communication 2006, 2007, 2008). There was a strong emphasis on the way women used to dress in the past and the memory attached to it shapes the way many people currently draw upon issues revolving around harassment.

The global crisis of rising food and gas prices along with high rates of unemployment in Egypt are reflected in people's attitudes explaining the increase in harassment. Amin (2006) underscored this notion in his talk on Egypt's high unemployment problem which started in the late 1980s spawning from a decreased migration of employed workers in the Gulf region of the Middle East. And since that time, Dr. Amin noted the rise in population by 50% which among these numbers, youth between the ages of 15-24 years old spend their time idle out of school and in the streets. From the financial woes, men and women face higher delays in marriage because of the expensive costs in securing housing, furnishings and basic security. Both men and women I interviewed recall the disparity in young people being able to
afford getting married because of the high costs involved in the process. A New York Times article recently noted, "Here in Egypt and across the Middle East, many young people are being forced to put off marriage, the gateway to independence, sexual activity and societal respect. And so, instead of marrying, people wait and seek outlets for their frustrations" (Slackman 2008). Respondents in my study link harassment as one of the outlets because of the growing frustration of sexual repression caused by staving off marriage. Sex before marriage in Islam is considered a sin, and punishable by law in Egypt. Religion discursively dictates behavioral practices of men and women. With the rise in religious conservatism throughout the years, markers of Islamic piety as seen through the veiling practice of hijab are increasingly popular. Some suggest the hijab aids to empower women in particular ways yet leaves them open to street harassment.

Over the years Egypt has undergone a significant series of change. On the one hand, the influx of satellite television and internet give way to marked technological advancements while on the other hand, the rise of religious conservatism or the Islamic movement connotes a backlash to the ills of Western modernity. One of my male informants, Tamer had much to say in his observations relating street harassment to notions of western influence on Arab media. "We have over 300 satellite channels here in the Arab world. If you watch some of these films and music videos especially, like Western women, Arab women are portrayed as highly sexualized" (Ilahi 2008 Personal Interview). Further probing this issue, he too nostalgically looked back on the past when Egyptian women were dressed in Western fashion, but without the objectification. He sees his own society as being pulled in opposite directions: on one hand to continue culturally modernizing in ways accordant to the West, and on the other, to become more conservative and fall in line with aspects of Islam deemed
fundamentalist in certain respects to the Egyptian State. Although adopting various aspects of Western culture is not mutually exclusive to remaining a religious Muslim, in Tamer's opinion, it is an either/or decision he links to disparities in access to wealth and education which further divide portions of Egyptian society.

People often vent of the diminishing respect and accordance to religious custom which they believe fuels harassment. Interestingly, the above mentioned article portrays more and more young people adhering to a more traditional Islamic lifestyle as a way to cope with economic instability. Slackman (2008) states, "More young people are observing stricter separation between boys and girls, sociologists say, fueling sexual frustrations." Although I cannot determine the relationship between the rise in religious conservatism and harassment, I do consider the possibility of such a relationship by exploring the Islamic practice of veiling-hijab in a particular historical context alongside it.

The 1970s made way for the Islamic movement in Egypt. El Guindi's (1999) ethnographic exploration of the veil historically captures the renewal of veiling in that moment: "The subject of the hijab was revived in the 1970s in the context of an emergent Islamic consciousness and movement that spread steadily throughout the Islamic East" (143). In this, she locates the veil as a gendered marker for both men and women. Veiling for both men (wearing the kuffiyah over their heads with loose fitting gallibayas) and women came to embody notions of privacy, humility and piety for men and women. The veil as a national symbol in Egypt re-emerged in opposition to western, secular values. The veil as a national symbol connoted certain practices of gendered embodiment of what it meant to be female. The rise of Islamist groups in the late 60s brought back the popularity of the veil and issues of Islamic piety for women (Ahmed 1992). Islamists saw marked differences between men and women. Female
bodies by the necessary appropriation of the veil embody what Islamists (and perhaps other citizens who do not identify necessarily as being Islamist) see as ideal Muslim women. As it grew in popularity along religious and social lines, women also saw it as a way to escape unwanted attention from the leering eyes of men. Ahmed contends that the popularity of Islamic dress is implied to "denote an affiliation with "conservative" ethical and social habits…and the affiliation automatically connote support for male dominance and female subservience" (226). The popularity of veiling is increasing in Egypt and with that, women are gaining on men in terms of educational and job opportunities. These privileges create a greater sense of mobility and purpose for many women. The appropriation of the veil and other markers of piety by some Muslim women is one way in which the visible signs of one’s religiosity argue her right to public participation (See El Guindi 1999, Hafez 2003, Mahmood 2001). Ismail (2007) equally mentions, “That such practices discipline the self while also opening up spaces for resistance” (15). Importantly, I must note that not all Muslim women veil and that the practice of veiling does not necessarily imply a particular political position. The practice of veiling in Egypt demonstrates that the veil is co-opted by some women to reaffirm religiosity or to contest exclusion and harassment within public space. In conceptualizing dress, veiling is still a practice in which women confront gender inequity in public spaces.

The veil and its growing popularity is one of the ways in which women renegotiate moving through the public sphere. MacLeod (1992) interprets the prevalence of veiling in Cairo as ‘accommodating protest’ in terms of women's simultaneous resistance and subordination to gendered dimensions of power. In a cultural study of working class Muslim women in Egypt, Macleod focuses on the veiling movement in Cairo in order to situate women’s decisions to veil within the
matrices of “power, protest and accommodation” (535). Within this practice, the working class women ascribe to Islamic notions of femininity while appropriating the veil to maneuver through space, attain employment and protest their identities as being rigidly defined by others as oppressed and confined because they veil. The practice of ‘accommodating protest’ by veiling serves as a way for women to renegotiate their presence in public spheres, making it somewhat easier for these women to move about freely without needing men to protect them. Veiling and avoidance of eye contact serve as a form of what Chahidi (1981) calls 'fictive invisibility,' where women methodically try to draw less attention to themselves from men in order to maintain their respectability while attaining more public freedom.

Although they are supposedly free to walk uninterrupted in the public realm, the increasing acts of public harassment taking place all over Cairo, give way to a heightened sense of discrimination, objectification and fear for both veiled and non-veiled women by way in which urban space is usurped by men. Shukrallah (1994) illustrates this point well in noting how, 'By selectively appropriating this past, lending it divinity and imposing it on the present, the struggle of socially disadvantaged groups and classes is diverted from the centers of power to 'imagined' areas of conflict (e.g., women's dress).

Religious responses to harassment continue to urge women to veil in order to evade harassment. However, central to the discussion, the absence of veiling becomes a tool to blame women for being harassed. A sermon given by the grand mufti of Australia, Sheikh Taj el-Din al Hilali compared unveiled women to 'uncovered meat' asking, 'If you take out uncovered meat and place it outside…and the cats come and eat it…whose fault is it, the cats’ or the uncovered meat?’ (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6086374.stm). Furthermore, his statements
were taken as offensive and blameful of women who were sexually assaulted. Yet according to Mona Eltahawy, a prominent Egyptian blogger, "80% of all women in Egypt adhere to some form of veiling" (http://www.monaeltahawy.com/blog/?p=63).

In a similar vein, an email campaign urging women to veil in Egypt warns, "A veil to protect or the eyes will molest" (Knickmeyer 2008). The accompanied picture oddly compares men to flies and women to pieces of candy, read: objects of satisfaction and pleasure for men. The first of two images shows a veiled woman representing a piece of untouched and covered candy representing the ideal Muslim woman. In the next image, silhouettes of unveiled women wearing tight clothing are compared to sticky, pieces of uncovered candy (See figure 1). This message clearly links women to notions of sexual chaos, a type of fitna where because of their sexual powers held within notions of their femininity, men become unable to control themselves. Amidst the anonymous email campaigns referring to harassment of women, other forms of media have grown in the involvement with this debate.

Figure 1: ‘A Veil to Protect’

A Dialogue Within: Listservs and Bloggers on 'Sexual Harassment'

I've traveled to over 30 countries including ones in the region, and never experience it like this anywhere. Not Syria, not Lebanon, not Jordan and not in the West Bank. Cairo is in a league all its own. To say that it's like this "wherever you go" is being nihilistic, and avoiding a real problem [Cairo Scholars Listserv June 24, 2008].

It is understood that internet activity may be monitored by State security in Egypt. However, this does not stop activists and bloggers from organizing and criticizing the State for not coming down harder on harassment as an endemic, solidifying laws to guarantee citizens access to recourse. 'Sexual' harassment in Egypt is now emerging as a topic of interest taken on by underground bloggers, academics, and parts of civil society. Even Facebook, a popular social networking site has several groups enlisted towards ending 'sexual harassment' in Egypt. Ongoing debates about harassment against women in Egypt caught my attention on an internet listserv named 'Cairo Scholars.' The group consists mainly of foreign students and professionals from all corners of the earth who network various sources of information pertaining to life in Cairo. Over the summer of 2008, a discussion group formed named 'Khalas,' meaning 'Enough' in Arabic. Wary of the day to day themes revolving around harassment, the group formed as a space to vent frustrations and towards developing coping strategies for men and women. The host of the group communicated this in an email:

I was wondering given the experiences documented over the last few days if it would be worth creating some kind of permanent support network, especially to benefit those who are new to Cairo, or who need to live here for their work/study and are struggling with the level of harassment. I certainly wouldn't want to host something that was purely about moaning or fostering a culture of victimhood [Ilahi 2008 Personal Communication].

This contention came out of after a number of discussions where women on the listserv shared their experiences of harassment. Frustrated as some of them were and validly, the debate discursively moved from blaming Egyptian men, Egyptian
culture, and the State. This took on a heated tone where people were accusing one another of being racist. The following email response of one woman drew upon the series of debates where she noted:

There is a great deal of explaining, apologizing for and blaming of Egyptian males, lots of political and ideological theorizing, but zero inquiry as to why the women who are victims of harassment perceive their assailants as they (variously) do, perceive Egypt in so negative a way as to warn others against it, and perceive their own speculations as to harassment’s causes as valid, politically correct, helpful, righteously indignant etc. etc. No questions are being asked about the cultural formations that produce these various perceptions and explanations. I find the attitudes quite extraordinary. I sense a great deal of anger, fear and self-loathing that transcends the issue of Egypt or Egyptians [June 28, 2008].

Many of the women participating in the dialogue grapple with a sense of how to respond to harassment. Some note the uneasy changes in their own behavior as they recall their reactions turning from "assertive to violent," as one woman mentioned. This same woman's comment is interesting because she touches on the issue of conceptualizing just what kind of harassment is taking place in relation to Egyptian maleness as well as the dual acts of violence which take place-the act of being objectified and her aggressive response to it. In the end of her statement, she declares that he is 'sexually harassing' her:

It began by chasing and throwing rocks at the young men who grabbed me. In private space, to those close to him, he might share the vulgarity of his experience. It is not my desire to implant a violent solution and, believe me, I feel horrible for having acted as such. At the same time, that man deserved to be punished and informed that speaking to any woman in that way is not okay; it is sexual harassment [June 24, 2008 subject line:"Spitting is not Ok"].

Egyptian bloggers are also very much interested in the polemics of the issue. Bloggers were among the first to report the 2006 Eid attacks against women in downtown Cairo, near the Metro Cinema complete with uploaded mobile pictures of women being cornered by throngs of men and accosted. They quickly slammed the Egyptian State for refusing to arrest the men accosting women publicly in the streets. Egypt's Ministry of Interior quickly denied the presence of the attacks claiming no
complaints of charges were filed. Thronges of police were present, yet did nothing to break up the crowds. International news stations like BBC caught wind of the story and published a piece revealing the images and sentiments captured by bloggers (Abdelhadi 2006).

In 2007 I interviewed a young man, self-described as a leftist blogger who wrote on various socio-political issues under the alias of "MaLek X." He was just released from jail for questioning about his writing the day before we met for the interview. As a witness to the 2006 Eid mobbing, he described the scene in his own words as,

   Chaos. Pure chaos. Groups of young men surrounded women wearing the hijab and those unveiled too grabbing at their bodies from all directions. One woman's blouse was completely ripped and I saw her flee into a local merchant's shop and he quickly tried to lock it up before anything worse happened to her. Some men were trying to aid women and get them out of there fast, but they were met with opposition from these guys. Another woman I saw ran into a taxi to attempt to flee, but more men surrounded the car disallowing it to pass [Ilahi 2007 Personal Interview].

Other Egyptian bloggers like Mona Eltahawy, a renowned columnist based out of New York and Wael Abbas, known as 'Misr Digital' add much insight to the issue with the way they theorize the problem of harassment. MaLek X, Eltahawy and Abbas consider the actions of street harassment as 'sexual harassment.' As an Egyptian living abroad, Eltahawy reflects on her own experiences of harassment in and outside Egypt, from being flashed by an older man when she was only four years old, to being groped when performing Hajj, the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. Her ambivalent attitude towards the Egyptian State is reflective of her understanding on how religious and political messages continue to shame Egyptian women for the public wrongs they purportedly incur. In her blog she captures the relationship between harassment and the State arguing:
The State itself taught Egyptians a most spectacular lesson in institutionalized patriarchy when security forces and government-hired thugs sexually assaulted demonstrators, especially women, during an anti-regime protest in 2005, giving a green light to harassers [2008 http://www.monaeltahawy.com/blog/?p=63].

Eltahawy considers the dynamics of particular economic problems to the rise of harassment in Egypt as she illustrates similar happenings of harassment in India citing Wax (2008) known as 'Eve-Teasing,' "When men on the street spew lewd comments or aggressively paw women's bodies"

In Abbas's blog, he thanks the Egyptian State regulated newspaper, Al-Ahram for printing an article in 2006 called, "Sexual Harassment in Downtown!" For, the State largely ignored condemning the issue for quite some time and when they did give attention to it, they remained silent in admitting it was a societal issue versus just an isolated incident (2008 http://misrdigital.tk/).

Muslimah Media Watch is another blog devoted to investigating the representation of Muslim women in the media and popular culture. While recently perusing their blog, I came across a piece drawing Egyptian men into the equation of 'sexual harassment.' The blog entitled, "Taking Down Sexual Harassment," focuses on a volunteer group recently profiled in the Los Angeles Times and sponsored by an Egyptian youth magazine, 'Kelmetna,' [in Arabic, Our Word]. Criticizing the myopic solutions toward ending harassment that actually shame women, Muslimah Media Watch lauds the efforts of this group as the male members of it challenge particular aspects of masculinity, such as harassment. Below they mention:

One of the great aspects of this group is the focus on men’s role in stopping sexual harassment. The slogan of the group’s campaign is “Respect yourself: Egypt still has real men.” [Ihtaram nafsak also found on Facebook] I love this slogan for two reasons. The first is that it challenges one of the core values of traditional notions of masculinity: sexual power over women. Harassing women is not a sign of masculinity; it’s a sign of cowardice. It’s great that Muslims are beginning to recognize this [http://muslimahmediawatch.org/2008/08/13/taking-down-sexual-harassment-2/].
Egyptian writers undoubtedly have much to say on this issue of harassment. By dovetailing the sentiments of a few, I further expand on the opinions of everyday men and women in and outside of the sphere of activism and academia as related to the issue. Locating the differences in how some men and women view street harassment pin-points a distinction in how men perceive their actions. As a result of becoming normalized, it reifies traditional gendered behaviors between men and women.

**Contested Perspectives on Harassment**

When we see an attractive woman walk by, my friend and I for example will comment on her body subtly without her knowing it. For example, I might say, "Oh look what time it is." And my friend will answer, "Al-sa3a bizubt," meaning, 'the time is exact,' [in Arabic, my translation] referring to how exactly shaped and sexy her body is [Maged-Tailor in Hussein].

In some of my discussions with men, I came to gather they too had difficulty accepting their behavior as a form of harassment. I met Maged, a tailor from Cairo working with his uncle making and selling traditional Egyptian clothing in the district of Hussein three years ago in 2005 when a friend purchased some gallibayas (Egyptian traditional clothing) from him. Since then when I am in Hussein, I make it a point to pass by his shop and say hello. Maged is an attractive man in his 30s, full head of black hair surprisingly without any gel in it, wearing eye-glasses, usually dressed in baggy jeans and a Nike t-shirt. When I first came into his shop with my friend in 2005, he struck me as shy and uninterested in women. I was taken aback by some of his answers during our interview in 2008. Joyful, yet serious in his demeanor, he greeted my translator and me offering us beverages and cigarettes and right away, we got to talking. When I made mention of the term harassment, he smiled and said, "Kullu Masryeen andena dum kha3if," meaning, "All of us Egyptians are light-hearted," implying Egyptians have a good sense of humor and do not fear showing so publically. From there, Maged described what I saw as harassment in his
own words, as a particular form of social interaction having purpose to either 1. Engage in sexual discussion or 2. Have fun and flirt with a woman. While I tried to challenge him by listing instances naming why it made women uncomfortable, he exhaled on his cigarette and leaning in towards me said, 'They say no, but they mean yes. These women walk suggestively, wearing revealing clothes, makeup and we men are supposed to just ignore it' (Ilahi 2008 Personal Interview). Ayman, a bawab (doorman) of a local building in my neighborhood noted through his observations a rise in harassment much different from his home village in southern Egypt. Ayman described harassment as more of an urban problem further echoing Maged's statements by contending:

Women in my village don't dress like the women you see in the streets here. Although many women are veiled, not all of them are modest in the way they dress, and they want attention from men. They want men to look at them. Why would they wear those clothes if not [Ilahi 2007 Personal Interview]?

As a result, I problematize the ways in which particular aspects of socio-cultural interaction are gendered and may vary culturally to some extent, which in turn do not render upon men the notion that they are harassing women. In this brief section, I highlight various discussions I had with Egyptian men and women to capture a sense of how the term 'sexual harassment' is problematized in a culturally specific sense. In the case of Maged and other men I draw upon, this is a suggestive form of 'verbal dueling,' which originally in other contexts is a male practice described by Kochman (1983) and Dundels et al. (1970). However, by drawing females into it, men who harass in some cases see themselves as testing interpersonal dialogic limits with women. Forms of flirting combined with harassment have been described by others as, 'Eve-Teasing' (Wax 2008), 'sooting' (Yelvington 1996) and 'tuning' (Osella 1998). Moreover, considering 'verbal dueling' as a form of harassment demonstrates how it reifies notions of aggressive masculinity and passive femininity.
Kochman (1983) and Dundes et al. (1970) demonstrate this notion of 'verbal dueling' in racialized, gendered and specific cultural contexts. Kochman departs from notions of "play" and "fact" as mentioned by Goffman (1974:40-123) arguing the way the notions 'play' and 'fact' in terms of personal insults which take place among black youth have come to be understood in black communities in the United States "have ended up misrepresenting the actual boundary between "play" and "the serious," at least that boundary manifests itself in the context of black verbal dueling" (330). To depart from the central argument, Kochman considers a form of verbal dialogue among youth [mostly males] that "is a process that works to raise thresholds of tolerance and endurance by learning to take what is normally serious as play, until it can, more comfortably, become play" (334). Dundes explores the dynamics of gendered aspects of manipulating language among young men in Turkey. With the issue of 'verbal dueling,' he states, "One of the most important goals is to force one's opponent into a female passive role. This may be done by defining the opponent or his mother or sister as a wanton sexual receptacle" (326). In doing so, a boy then linguistically embarks on methods to prove his manhood, reify his dominance and challenge the linkage to feminine passivity. In the same vein Melhuus and Stolen (1996) liken gendered 'verbal dueling' to the Mexican notion, 'albures', "a public ritual where reference to the body are used as metaphors" (96). In this, male and female bodies are objectified variously and importantly, the male body is seen as closed and the female body as open, or as opened by a male (96). Interestingly, this notion of openness was expressed by most of the Egyptians I interviewed. They liken part of the process of gauging prospective interaction with women as "a challenge" or as Fatima, a female informant I spoke to put it, "testing a woman to see how open she might be to the interaction" (Ilahi 2008 Personal interview). A male informant named
Hamid, confessed to me in an interview that he routinely harasses women. He shared with me this instance:

My friends and I like to go cruising in the car and I admit, we routinely holler at girls. I was parked on a busy street in a shopping district and saw this girl walking, her hair covered by the hijab. I could tell she was a prostitute. So, I called her over to talk. She came over to the passenger side door of the car and got in. I was astonished at her boldness. I panicked and told her to get out of the car, laughing about the situation with my friends [Ilahi Personal Interview 2008].

When I inquired how he knew she was a prostitute he replied, "You can tell the type of girls that are looking for it. You can feel it off of them. They walk swaying their hips and looking at men. A woman who doesn't want to be approached would not do that" (Ilahi 2008 Personal Communication).

This notion was repeated throughout my conversations with men and women. Baladi women's narratives took on a number of interesting takes on how they perceived and dealt with harassment as an everyday experience. The term 'baladi' signifies a typology of class in Egyptian society. Early (1993) conceptualizes the meaning of baladi in her ethnography as:

A rich cultural concept based on a series of traditional: modern (baladi: afrangi) oppositions, which contrast baladi people (who are resourceful, authentic, religious and honourable) with afrangi people (who are gullible, superficial, nonreligious, and pampered) [51].

It is crucial to bear in mind what kind of effect the language and discourse on human rights and women's rights has on particular classes of Egyptian society. Women of lower classes are made new to thinking about their bodies as political tools to challenge the State. I will expound on this idea later in this paper. Um Khalid (meaning, mother of Khalid), a middle-aged baladi woman I met with had a really interesting take on harassment. Um Khalid works as a maid for a family in Zamalek, an island in the Nile nestled comfortably between Cairo and Giza. A widow and mother of eight children, she relies on the city bus and available microbuses each day
to get to work in order to support her family. We talked at length about harassment and what it means to different people. She identified it right away urging me to leave it to be called, 'Muaksa', literally meaning, harassment in Arabic. In this, she noted several ways men harass women verbally making kissing noises at them, commenting on their body and by touching them. Although she sees harassment as problematic, she believed women brought it upon themselves by being open to it. When I asked, "Who is at fault?" She comically replied:

Women. It's their fault. Labiseen Maskhara (they're wearing nonsense). They provoke men with the clothes they wear. They've got these tight clothes, the tank tops and jeans which say, "Look at me, I'm here." You see the way some of these girls walk? They walk swaying their haunch (to emphasize their buttocks…which she imitated) [Ilahi 2008 Personal Interview].

In the same vein, she characterized men harshly. Making a series of kissing sounds as if to call a dog over, she emphasized, "Men are like kilaab (dogs), if you give them what they want, they'll keep coming back. If you wear clothing revealing your breasts, it's like giving treats to a dog. Of course he'll follow you. They're worthless" (Ilahi 2008 Personal Interview). This echoed similar sentiments other baladi women carry of men conveyed in Early's work, noting, "Baladi women form few if any close relations with men; their brothers tend to be their closest male friends, and their natal family is their refuge in times of trouble. They quip that men are, "made of paper" and count for naught" (132).

Three years ago when the language of sexual harassment was being introduced from concentrated efforts of the ECWR, many young women I spoke with revealed their uneasiness with the expression. Some said, "It's merely flirting" or "It's not sexual harassment, it's just irritation" (Ilahi Field notes 2006). A recent study garnered by the ECWR surveyed a sample of 2,020 Egyptian participants (half male, half female) which also included 109 foreign women living, working or on holiday in Egypt. Their findings concluded a number of interesting perspectives. Namely,
foreign women were viewed as more aware of more forms of harassment than Egyptian men and women... "Foreign women indicated that sexual harassment also includes: ...sexual jokes or stories that have more than one meaning" (2008 ECWR published document). Egyptians are surrounded by barrage of Western discourse that identifies the term, 'sexual harassment.' This is further problematic in formulating a cohesive conception of 'sexual harassment.' As a contested notion, many are torn from including certain behaviors such as verbal harassment from a local understanding. Moreover, what some men and women view as harassment, others perceive as flirting or do not view as seriously as others.

Yelvington and Osella (1999) Osella (1998) and Hewamanne (2008) describe the content of flirting in connection to the constructions of romance and male/female sexualities in India. Osella (1998) reveals the way young men in rural Kerala, India subvert notions of class by outwardly flirting with young women. Similar to notions of 'verbal dueling,' Osella describes this style of flirting/romancing as 'tuning:

A tentative exchange between the two and often stops at this point if the girl fails to respond to the youth's opening questions. If she proves ready to speak and take things further, the two have a line, a mutual agreement to speak (and exchange glances) when they meet by chance, and possibly to send letters and cards [193].

Although flirting may differ from harassment in some cases, Yelvington and Osella (1999) and Osella (1998) do not separate the two because the actions are dually performed by men to get the attention of prospective lovers. Where Yelvington argues flirting reproduces gender hierarchies, Osella depart from the notion, understanding the forces of power as reflexive between man and woman. Hewamanne draws upon the subversive ways female FTZ migrant workers in Sri Lanka contest space by challenging traditional meanings of womanhood through assertive behavior and flirtation (18). At times, the FTZ workers were challenged by harassment from local men. Hewamanne grapples with the meanings of a particular scene at the beach where
a series of group flirtations between the female workers and a group of local men resulted in some of the men dragging women in the water. Although the women came out laughing and exhilarated, Hewamanne reflects, "I could not help but wonder whether this symbolized a communal punishment for women who transgressed"(23). In the same vein, Hewamanne suggests the dual flirting/harassment in this case are bound within notions of gender subversive activities and ideas of self-hood:

Workers, however, refused to acknowledge the incident as humiliating or as an act of violence against them, opting instead to recognize it as a mutually pleasurable game. In this way they not only refused to be victims but embraced the consequences of being identified as FTZ workers—in other words, as women who transgressed [25].

Some women departed from the notion altogether that harassment was a serious issue in their daily lives. Although public harassment/street harassment may not be labeled as 'sexual harassment' by the greater majority of Egyptian society, aspects of male/female sexuality intertwine with the local discourse. Particular instances of flirting and harassment in particular contexts may shape alternative notions around power and sexuality. A discussion I had with a colleague of mine reflected this idea pertaining to Egyptian baladi women:

Some women from the lower, working class neighborhoods who wear various forms of hijab-(Islamic veiling) do not necessarily take offense when a man calls them "Ya asl"-honey or "Ya moza"-hey sexy. Instead, some of them are not granted the privilege of intermingling with men like the young women who are seen on the AUC campus or smoking shisha with their male friends in expensive Cafes [Ilahi 2007, Personal Communication].

El Guindi (1999) citing El-Messiri (1978) brings to light the aspect of 'sensual playfulness':

"walking coquettishly" in a manner that makes a woman's hips seem to "roll" to the rhythm of her "clicking high heeled sandals, tinkling anklets, and the little bursting noises of chewing gum bubbles," a dress that combines sexual glamour and modesty" [El Guindi 1999: 137].
I highlight these instances to reveal the many ambiguities within arriving at the notion of what constitutes harassment. If flirting and harassment revolve around power relations within fixed hierarchies of gender that are detrimental to women, Egyptian feminist activists are plagued with the duty of re-defining how harassment undermines women's power. In a dialogue between authors Yelvington and Osella (1999), Osella argues that flirting is embedded within notions of power however, not a one-dimensional form. "We see power, as we surely make clear, as oscillating precariously between flirting pair, who do not stand in a stable relation of dominance and submission" (459). In this, they importantly trace ambiguities found within separating flirting from harassment. For, aspects of agency vacillate between a pair in that, "It is players themselves who decide what constitutes an unwelcome incident, an assertion that seems almost banal in the face of socio-linguistic comparative evidence" (459).

In a different case, Fatima, a young working-class, Egyptian woman from Dar el-Salaam agreed to meet with me one day in a café near the American University campus. She sat opposite me in a table at the café, her outfit impeccably matching her layered grey, black and pearl-colored hijab; she struck me as a young, fashionable Egyptian woman, smart and opinionated. At first I felt an uneasy sense from her when I asked her if I could interview her for my research. She agreed with no hesitation but did not feel that harassment was something that hindered her mobility. Upon meeting, she abruptly asked me, "So what's the big deal with harassment? Do you really think it will change? I'm not really concerned about it" (Ilahi 2008 Personal interview). I prodded her a bit asking, "Each day before you leave the house, do you consider what the walk to the metro station will be like?" She thoughtfully considered my question then, responded:
Yes. Each time I go out, I'm aware of how I'm dressed and I make it a point to not look at men or even stand too close to them when I'm waiting for the metro. I'm not personally scared for myself when I see a man staring at me. I mean, I'm uncomfortable with it, but I guess I'm more scared from the things I read in the newspaper. This is a normal behavior of men and I guess for me, I've come to just accept the reality and move on [Ilahi 2008 Personal Interview].

I realized part of the discomfort we both felt was due to the way I referred to terms surrounding my research, likening street harassment to sexual harassment in a way that made it contentious to discuss. I reflexively referred to street harassment at times using the Western term, "Sexual Harassment," and that for many Egyptians I've talked to relays a very different understanding than it does for those in the west. In this case, according to Fatima, "To say 'sexual harassment' here implies notions of serious sexual assault or attempted rape." So part of the problem with being able to normalize the term 'sexual harassment' lies in conceptualizing the normalized behavior associated with it. Fatima suggested coining the term "sexual harassment" differently to convey a more culturally appropriate meaning. One example she gave, 'street annoyance' was interesting but I feel on both ends women will be stuck with an ambiguous meaning of either conservative or avant-garde terms.

Tamer, an Egyptian male I met with several times throughout the final stages of my research differed from Fatima in his opinion on the seriousness of harassment arguing that it is a societal problem. As a witness to a female friend grabbed by a man on a bike, he spoke passionately that harassment is definitely a problem, but also felt it problematic to label it 'sexual harassment' because in Arabic, it would only take into consideration the unwanted physical contact between a man and a woman, excluding the verbal instances of harassment.

It many cases, the lines are blurred between public verbal harassment and flirting. Although contextually in a Muslim country like Egypt, it is socially inappropriate to publicly approach a woman and flirt with her, yet those boundaries
are crossed. This gives rise to locating the many ways women define for themselves what the processes are at play-especially those which extend beyond the bounds of verbal "play". Also, in the upcoming sections, I hark back to flirting and its relationship with harassment to underscore women's roles as subjects in it.

Furthermore in moving towards an understanding of street harassment as a form of gendered violence, women present this notion clearly throughout their narratives however, remaining anything but silenced from their responses and actions.

**Women's Responses to Street Harassment: A Multitude of Negotiations**

Drawing upon survey and ethnographic data, all of the women in this study were concerned about daily harassment to various degrees. Considering women's perceptions of safety and fear were central to the discussions because that determined the strategies they employed in their respective circumstances to fend off or negotiate through harassment. De Certeau et al. (1980) characterize strategies as actions which, "dependent on a space of power (or one's own spatial "property"), are able to project theoretical spaces (totalizing systems and types of discourse which can articulate the ensemble of physical places where force is distributed" (7). This section builds on the fact that women strategically negotiate what I argue to be contested male spaces, primarily the street. Statistically, the ECWR pinpoint the street and public transportation as places where 91.5 % of Egyptian and 96.3% of foreign women receive the highest rates of harassment (2008 Sociological Study Published by ECWR). Locating the street as a site of discourse merges with relevant theories on space, gender, race and class as well as masculinity—all which aid this particular analysis.

All of the women I interviewed whether foreign or Egyptian were aware that certain forms of dress can exacerbate harassment. Women's dress and behavior come
under scrutiny and criticism within the discussion. Because of this, many modified the way they dressed when embarking through the streets. Save for the women who adhered to the practice of hijab; they did not claim to modify their dress as the hijab is a constant daily bodily practice in public spaces. The women I came to know were familiar with various forms of public transportation and most of them relied on it.

Aisha, a young middle-class Egyptian woman working as a fitness trainer noted:

> When I ride the bus to work, I usually wear a shawl over my t-shirt or make sure to have a loose fitting jacket on so as not to attract attention to my body. But there are still times when upon exiting the bus and walking the extra five minutes to work I'll hear a guy say, "Oh my god, look at those tits," as if to sort of tease me or something [Ilahi 2008 Personal interview].

Donna, an American woman teaching at a private university referred to this as dressing down, i.e. not wearing sexy or revealing clothing when out in public space.

Adrienne, an American survey respondent studying at AUC alluded to changing particular modes of dress and public conduct such as jogging outside in order to be respectful of Egyptian cultural mores and to be taken seriously:

> Here, for the first time, I do not feel that it is my right to conduct myself as I please; I never thought I would feel like to be myself would be to invite harassment, and I know that I have to behave and dress “appropriately” in order to be confident that people would come to my aid in the event of harassment against me [2006 personal correspondence].

The increasing pressure placed on young Egyptian women to veil in order to escape harassment is reified through email campaigns and Islamist ideals. Macleod (1992) alludes to the hijab as an aid from street harassment as a "protection from annoying people on the street" (18). Conversely, hijab no longer shields veiled women from harassment as they too find themselves victims of attacks. Bullock (2002) makes interesting use of this notion arguing that hijab does not free women from the negative effects of the male gaze and aggression. Furthermore, in this case, the presence or absence of hijab as understood by many harassers absolves men of their responsibilities. In fact, the findings mentioned by the ECWR along with my own on
the subject of harassment and hijab suggest forms of veiling to be fetishized. ECWRs study found that 72% of the women harassed were veiled (2008 ECWR Unpublished Document). Veiled women in my study too found themselves objectified while wearing hijab. Referring back to the discussion I had with Maged the tailor, he articulated his fascination with the niquab (face veil) in revealing, "I want to know what's under there. A woman in wearing niquab appears alluring and if she's looking at you suggestively with her eyes, she's doing fitna"[misbehaving or stirring up a type of sexual chaos among men] (Ilahi 2008 Personal Interview).

The notion of veiling reinstates other strategies of maneuvering through spaces co-opted by veiled and non-veiled women. Khuloud, a working-class, veiled Egyptian woman employed as a cleaning woman in a fitness gym illustrated her frustration toward men who harass her even though she is modestly dressed:

I'll be on my way to work, and as soon as I'm not in my neighborhood, I notice that's when the harassment usually occurs. I try not to make eye-contact with men, but it still happens and they blame me. Once, during Ramadan (the Islamic month of fasting), a guy was staring at me saying, "Haram aleyky, ihna fee Ramadan, labisa keda ley?" (Shame on you, we're in the month of fasting, why are you dressed like this?) I was veiled and wearing jeans and a top. I then responded, “Enta malek? Fee eh?” (What's wrong with you? What's your problem?) [Ilahi 2008 Personal Interview].

Ignoring harassment, avoiding eye-contact and changing places in the street are among further measures women undertake to avoid unwanted male contact. The refusal to acknowledge a harasser were seen at times across the board as practices all women undertook in their respective experiences. Some indicated that they do not respond for fear that they may suggest their interest in the harasser. Aisha was fearful that if she responded angrily, she could be met with violence adding, "I used to respond to the vulgar insults by saying things like, "Stop it or I'll kick your ass," but now I ignore it. People have changed; they're more violent and aggressive now" (Ilahi 2008 Personal Interview). Other women commented that they just didn't have the time
to engage every verbal insult that came their way, for it would take up a lot of the day spent arguing. Carol, an American woman working in Egypt for the past 15 years revealed a more lax attitude she took on over time:

Of course this may be partially due to me being de-sensitized to the harassment and the fact that I don't live in Mounira (a neighborhood of Cairo near AUC’s downtown campus) anymore. God I can remember the gauntlet of abuse I used to incur from the boys' school when I walked home from AUC down Falaky Street. I remember once hearing a guy yell out of a window, "I want to butt fuck you!" I was rattled by it then, but now, I create my own little world and ignore it [Ilahi 2008 Personal Interview].

On any particular day, the whole sample of women I spoke to relied heavily on wearing sunglasses, listening to walkmans to block out noise, and were quick to change pathways in the course of their walks in order to avoid potentially dangerous men.

Donna’s way of coping with the stares and unwanted comments rely on her ability to “turn off.” She describes this as if it were some kind of skill she developed over time, as, “A sort of curtain to drop and not notice people noticing you” (Ilahi Personal interview 2007). In our last interview together, I asked her to go into a bit more detail on the process of turning off. Below is part of the dialogue:

**Me:** So I wanted to recall from a previous conversation we had where you mentioned how you are able to “turn-off” when out in public doing things like riding the metro. Can you explain that to me? The process and how you do it I mean.

**Donna:** Sure, yeah, like I said before, it’s taken about 2 years for me to really get good at this and just block people out. I like to be able to sit on my balcony and just have a thought or think to myself. I like to sit alone and think to myself. So since I don’t know the language, I can just shut out those around me. Maybe it’s a snobbish thing about me, but I just don’t pay the men around here any attention. When you go outside, you’re exposed to a lot of stimuli and you know one of the differences between living in the West is that it’s kind of boring there with the routine and all and here, it’s like, you walk out of your house and it’s immediately entertaining. So when I ride the metro nowadays, I don’t even notice or rather, I don’t pay attention to people staring at me. For example today at 6:30am I was riding the metro to come to work and I was the only woman in the men’s car and I could see them all looking at me and you know they lack manners. In every country it’s impolite to stare at a woman.

**Me:** Does it bother you when they talk to you or shout things at you?

**Donna:** perhaps because I don’t know the language, it doesn’t get to me.
There are a number of defense mechanisms women employ that extend beyond ignoring harassment. In some cases, women respond verbally and physically. Aware of the fact that this may intensify the level of abuse, women measure for themselves when it is appropriate to act defensively violent.

Nora, a working-class Coptic-Egyptian woman from Shobra, a very crowded district of Cairo relies on the use of public transportation each day to get to work in downtown Cairo. While riding a microbus one day she recalled being felt up by a man sitting behind her. "I quickly turned around shouting at him, "Ya hiawan!" (You animal) and then I slapped him. At that point, people were separating us-they kicked him out of the bus" (Ilahi 2008 Personal Interview). Some women are angered to the point of spitting. A young woman's narrative from the Cairo Scholars listserv finds herself struggling with how to respond. It reads:

And now it has regressed further to spitting on those guilty of stepping across my boundaries. Again, I feel immediate therapeutic relief which I later interpret as personal vindication. While spitting on a man's chest after he hisses a "Helwa kitir" [very beautiful] one inch from my body undoubtedly affects how he will treat women in the public space on the proceeding block, it probably instills in him a very negative image of foreign women, if not all women [June 24, 2008 subject line: "Spitting is not Ok"].

I too grappled with the issue of using violence to combat harassment. Similar to the young woman's narrative mentioned above, I spat on a guy who verbally harassed me. However, he spat back on me. It became very clear at that moment that if I further reacted, he could have seriously injured me. Further relating to other uses of violence, a young American woman wrote in an email correspondence, "One of my classmates actually had to use pepper spray on an Egyptian man because he would not stop groping her" (Cairo Scholars Listserv June 24, 2008). Keeping that in mind, for a long time thereafter, I remained very conscience of not reacting to harassment at all. I feared
that I was perpetuating a never-ending cycle of violence. A female, baladi street vendor quoted in an article published by the Christian Science Monitor stated,

"If someone comes up and says something inappropriate to me, I curse at him or head-butt him in the face" (Stack 2008).

In these narratives, women employ violence as a type of vigilante justice or temporary solution perhaps understood to be more viable than complaining to the police. I will further discuss the implications of class tied to women's strategies in my conclusion.

What further problematize this notion are the ineffective police forces that do not serve to protect women's rights, but rather encourage their objectification. However, problematic as a concept in Egypt, harassment is largely overlooked by the State as an endemic form of violence against women. On one hand, it is ignored because women do not commonly report cases of harassment to the police because they are some of the worst harassers and therefore, it becomes pointless to seek help from them. One respondent frustratingly commented, "I live in Garden City where all the streets are blocked off with officers. Needless to say, I am harassed with all sorts of comments from them on a daily basis" (Ilahi 2006 Personal Communication).

Even men feel powerless at times in dealing with law enforcement. In a conversation with Rami, a working-class, unemployed Egyptian man he lamented:

I was walking along the Nile and noticed a man standing facing the water. He had his eye on two veiled women who were seated on a bench nearby. As I approached, I noticed he was masturbating. My first instinct was to react violently, throw him in the river, but I saw a policeman standing nearby. I ran up to him and told him what was going on, sure that he would apprehend the man and make an example out of him. I was so angry when he met my words with a blank face and muttered, "You'll have to find another police officer elsewhere; I don't patrol this area [Ilahi 2008 Personal Communication].

Apathy on behalf of State police and the absence of any anti-harassment laws further complicate the notion of reporting while sending a message to men that public
violence against women is acceptable. The lack of statistics on reporting harassment to the police fails to substantiate it as a problem. Government officials can then vehemently deny the seriousness it carries. Under reporting is done for many reasons, mainly because women who report sexual crimes are commonly blamed because of the way they were dressed or seemingly behaving at the time of the incident. This suggests a tacit acceptance of normalized everyday sexual violence on behalf of the State against all women regardless of their social location. The infantilisation of women thus denies them their basic rights as human beings while sending them the message to ‘Go back home’. This idea of men protecting women from other men is contingent upon the notion of women being socially constructed as weak in opposition to a man.

Observantly, I saw that many women rely on walking with male escorts such as a male relative, co-worker or boyfriend especially at night. Harassment simultaneously infantilizes women in ways that limit their presence on the street because in order for them to stave off harassment, women often feel they require a man to accompany them in public. Bowman refers to this practice as a way of ‘men protecting them from harassment by other men’ (Bowman 1993:540). This strategy may reproduce the gendered notions built up within society about a woman's place being in the home unless accompanied outside by a male. Furthermore, it is not always effective in staving off harassment. Natasha, an African American female survey respondent lamented:

While I'm black and my husband is white, I find that some men like to challenge him when we're outside walking together. It's as if they think I'm a prostitute or something. I'll hear them yell insults like, "nigger or hey dark chocolate," and that angers my husband more so than it does myself. I've come to experience this type of verbal abuse each day without him. Once, he got in a guy's face over it [Ilahi 2007 Personal Correspondence].

Natasha's statement underscores ways in which street harassment is racialized.
What's Race got to do with it?

Almost every day, I saw women being hissed at, stared at, and followed for blocks at a time--and these are only the mildest forms of harassment I witnessed. On a daily basis, my female classmates described progressively more grotesque tales of lewdness--men groping them, making salacious remarks, masturbating in front of them (pardon me for being so graphic, but it is the truth), and so forth. To clarify, I witnessed both foreign and Egyptian women being subjected to this abhorrent behavior, though foreign women--especially those with blonde hair (ridiculous as it sounds) got it the worst [Cairo Scholars Listserv June 24, 2008].

Research undertaken in the autumn of 2006 suggests that race plays a role in street harassment. The sexualization of the female body is a phenomenon linked to street harassment and particular aspects of the body politic. Morrison (1992) argues in the United States, "White and black women stand for woman as Madonna and as whore" (206). I argue this depiction travels into the understanding of woman in the Middle East as the issue of women's respectability harkens back to it. Although race cannot be easily defined, for the purposes of this research, I will situate race as a shared, lived experience by women in Cairo. In the simplest term, race will have to be viewed in terms of what women's narratives say. Case example: Sudanese and other black women lament on a sense of insecurity while moving through public spaces. In a recent thesis, Paldam (2005) comments on the particular forms of harassment Sudanese women encounter such as racist and sexist forms of speech by men. Moreover, lighter-skinned Anglo women and those from working-class backgrounds face different experiences than their upper-class counterparts. Part of this is due to differences in group privilege which afford some women the luxuries of staying off the streets and public transportation, instead riding in cars-self driven or chauffeured.

The many foreign women who took part in my research believed that all women receive some degree of harassment but those whose features stood out more in terms of skin color and ethnicity felt prone to higher and more severe degrees of harassment. This is not to argue that Egyptian women receive harassment to lesser degrees for that would undermine their experiences altogether. Taking the notion of
race into account, one must consider that to be a non-Egyptian may distinguish a person as an outsider, potentially open to unwanted sexist and racist remarks in public places. One respondent observed: "I think skin color makes a huge difference, my women friends who look more explicitly foreign [those who are very white or very dark skinned] get tons more remarks and harassment than I do because I look Egyptian" (Ilahi 2008 Fieldnotes). Street harassment women face in Cairo, I argue, is similarly a form of discrimination as it makes all women feel unsettled about their presence and sense of physical space.

The events of 2005 involving the violent removal of Sudanese refugees camped in Mohandessin, a suburb of Giza, underscores underlying racial tensions in Egypt. Race is a somewhat problematic issue to discuss in Egypt. As a country situated in both Africa and the Middle East, many Egyptians scoff at the idea of identifying as African. Tensions between Egyptians and Africans play out in a range of milieus. In this example, I examine race in a transnational context or to borrow from Collins (1989) position on standpoint, I understand through the intersectionality of gender, race and class, the different standpoints women of color take on by understanding their lived experiences in space. One cannot overlook the treatment of many Sudanese refugees vying for survival while simultaneously facing barriers of harassment and discrimination in Cairo. Al-Ahram, an Egyptian State sanctioned newspaper featured an article entitled, 'Radical Refugees,' underscoring the racism Sudanese asylum seekers faced publicly in parts of Cairo:

'They bitterly complain of the hostility meted out to them on the streets of Cairo. 'We are called names and children make faces at us. We want to be relocated to a country where there is no racism, said one of the protesters. We want to go to a country where no one hurls racist remarks at us'” (Nkrumah 2005).
Other informants in my study recounted racialized harassment in the streets as they described being called names such as *sarmada* [black/dirt], and *abd* [slave] in Arabic racist slang. African-American and women from sub-Saharan Africa attested to similar situations in the street and problematic encounters with men who view them as prostitutes because they are black. Cases like this highlight the objectification and commodification of black bodies. Jane, a young Kenyan woman retold the events of being followed home by a man:

He actually followed me up the stairs to my flat and then took off his trousers revealing himself to me in the hallway. I screamed and chased him out of the building. I was mortified and no one tried to stop him as he fled through the street [Ilahi Personal Communication 2007].

Gender, race and class in relation to harassment bring to light aspects of male privilege associated with space. The good girl/bad girl dichotomy at play makes it difficult to move beyond traditional conceptions of masculinity where "Boys will be boys" and femininity that suggest a silent acceptance of their behavior. Fear acting as a mechanism to drive women back into the dichotomous, private sphere of their homes questions, what are the processes shaping masculinity that reinforce traditional notions of gender and behavior?

**Beyond Moustaches and Circumcision: Harassment as Gendered Performance and the Dislocation of a Hegemonic Masculinity**

In the title of this section I play on the terms 'circumcision' and 'moustache' to signify how men's phenomenological experiences through bodily practices and ritual somehow seem to tie masculinity to traditional notions of honor and shame. Two pieces indubitably reflect these notions. Daoud's (2000) essay intertwines ideals of manhood to the moustache. The moustache as Daoud narrates comes to symbolically reflect in part a sort of longing to grow into a man of importance. He distinguishes a man of worth versus one of disgrace, the former being worthy of his moustache noting:
In the popular sayings and folk tales that have come down to us through the ages a man swears to another man on his moustache, a symbol of his honour and nobility. If it had been possible for professional crooks, scoundrels and the common people to take upon themselves or settle a debt merely by offering this abstract bond, moustaches would have stopped being the distinguishing mark of men and the emblem of their eminence [275].

Helvacioglu (2006), transitions the views of manhood upheld by Daoud locating forms of adherence and resistance to religious forms by either appropriating or doing away with the moustache or beard. Men's facial hair becomes an appendage of "self-supervision" to conform or contest nationalist discourse:

In a protest against the revival of the 'Islamic beard and moustache', several secular men shaved their beards and moustaches on behalf of Western, modern values. On the other side between PKK and Hizbullah led to a peculiar punishment: while one group shaved the beards of rival group members by force, the members whose beards were shaven shaved half of the moustaches of the other group in front of their wives [51-52].

Honor and shame are inscribed within particular practices of masculinity. The second example I draw upon here is the performance of male circumcision. As discussed in the Middle Eastern context, circumcision draws upon ways that locate it as part of the acquisition to adulthood and which masculinizes boys through their bodies, (See Bilu 2000; Bouhdiba 2000; Helvacioglu 2006; Webb 2000). Circumcision as a performance of inflicting pain on a young boy's body re-inscribes notions of honor and bravery-desired traits of the ideal man. Khal (2000) reflects upon a young boy in the Arabian Peninsula about to be circumcised and pointedly underscores his will to endure pain will reflect his family's honor:

I was seized with ardour and shouted at the circumciser without blinking, 'Circumcise, you circumciser, and cut off some more of the foreskin for my uncle!'...I felt sticky blood pour down the lower part of me and flow like little rivers between my thighs...rifle shots and men shouting to one another, 'A man, a man from the loins of a man.' I was seized with ardour and wanted to cut off a part of my body for all those I held dear. I was carried away with excitement, and cried, 'Circumcise, you circumciser...'

Peteet (1994) illustrates how particular aspects of violence done unto male bodies mark inscribe ideal notions of manhood among Palestinian youth. Citing circumcision as one path to adulthood, Peteet contends, "Manhood is always more
than the culmination of a series of biological transformations" (34). However, in locating qualities of masculinity through various cultural experiences through men's bodies, one must be careful not to create dichotomous gender universalisms.

Lindisfarne (1994) poses a good number of questions leading us away from gender universalisms and towards understanding how constructions of what she calls variant masculinities, femininities and personhood are closely bound together in terms dealing mainly with sexuality. Her work is engaging as it provokes us to "treat gender as a contested discourse." Lindisfarne aims to raise new questions on how the discourse focusing on female virginity and chastity, "construct idealized, hegemonic versions of masculinity and femininity" along with the range of gender identities which "emerge in practice" (82). I especially found her critique of Strathern's (1988) ethnographic work relating female virginity to private property intriguing. Lindisfarne asks, "What is the commodity logic which allows men to see women as other men's property and renders women part-objects through brideprices?" Also enticing are such aspects of sexuality which render the masculine or feminine such as "the vagina, hymen and womb" (Lindisfarne 1994: 91). This fetishism Lindisfarne draws on via Strathern's work also relegates men to 'dismembered body parts' like their penises, but illustrates according to Lindisfarne, ways in which "metaphors of property and protection are constituted, experienced and how as they become fetishized, they construe masculinity and femininity in systems which make use of idioms of honour and shame" (84). From Strathern's perspective, Lindisfarne raises good questions in how women become commoditized through notions of honor and shame. She asks, "Protection and predation, responsible and competitive behavior are intimately related aspects of dominant versions of masculinity, then how do men protect women?" (84) Strathern's perception of female virginity as tied to patriarchal ownership rites thus
effectively plays into Joseph's theoretical aspects of 'patriarchal connectivity,' where male siblings reinforce the importance of honor through their sister's virtue.

Lindisfarne's argument which centers on the notion that gender is a contested category also poses questions on the nature of the construction of agency shaped by male/female relationships. Where Lindisfarne suggests, women's behavior tied to their sexuality directly affects men's authority as "successfully or failing to provide economically and politically," Joseph's theory ties into this as women's agency is manipulated in ways that challenge and dually shape male notions of selfhood.

The rites and passages experienced by men that shape them as men are very important to the existing discourse on masculinity. However, so much of the scholarly work that exists continues to reiterate that masculinity is bound within notions of 'honor and shame,' "terms that have been treated as loose categories," Linisfarne argues (82). In order to further understand masculinity as a socially constructed phenomenon, I argue to examine the discontinuities within the narratives to capture how men's experiences further shape their masculinity.

Much ambiguity exists among fleshing out the relationship between patriarchal systems and the construction of gender identities. Hatem (1987) argues the concept of patriarchy is often used to explain the domination of women in Middle Eastern societies, however, "the concept is not well or usefully defined" (814). Presentations of patriarchy that provide useful analysis according to Hatem draw upon linking (1) the textual with the historical and (2) the sexual with the economic. Furthermore, Hatem (1986) identifies more useful ways of understanding patriarchy urging theorists to go beyond identifying sexual institutions of patriarchy. As an alternative, Hatem stresses to explore homosociality, "the nature of relations between women and men and the nature
of their relations with other members of their own sex in a particular social formation at a historical period, in different classes across class lines" (252). Focusing on separate sets of relations among the sexes better suits various understandings on how particular aspects within patriarchy are maintained. In her critique of patriarchy:

One must stop thinking of it as a product of a natural commonality of interests among men which has manifested itself throughout history. Instead of assuming a static, ahistorical, and asocial definition of patriarchy, it is more important to trace historical changes in this system of male alliances and sexual control [Hatem 1986: 252-253].

Honor is an aspect of masculinity in an Egyptian context that assumes male sexual power over women. However, this may mislead understandings of masculinity in that it overlooks forms of agency women employ. In this case, I refer back to notions of honor as one force that shapes Egyptian manhood yet harkens back to male understandings of female sexuality as expressed in certain narratives.

For example, images of masculinity via media and popular culture set in 1950s Egyptian cinema rendered men as dominant over women. Armbrust (2000) depicts the life of Egyptian actor, Farid Shauqi as someone who made popular certain types of masculinity as 'the working-class hero' especially to the lower classes (205). Armbrust identifies how Shauqi refashioned characters embodying a certain brand of masculinity within the cultural milieu. His manliness, often described in academic literature on the Middle East as part of an 'honour-shame' complex" (205) revealed how Egyptian cinema reified dominant images of men over women. Armbrust mentions ways in which Shauqi's characters were not always 'positive masculine heroes' such as the role in the 50s film Hamido where he played a "despicable drug dealer who tries to drown his pregnant girlfriend" (210). Armbrust positions this notion of male actors and characters with Cohan's (1997) suggestion that "the dominant representational paradigm at that time was to construct men as essential beings, no different on the screen than
they were in real life. Women, by contrast, were constructed performatively -- as a shifting series of masquerades" (Armbrust 2000:219). To construct the idea of women as performative in this sense is to cast them as immutable, static, and unreflective of how they are in real life. Films and images portrayed in other versions of popular culture are still a place to portray women as objects of desire, contingent upon the dominant actions of men.

Contrastively, Egyptian women in film are starting to take on edgier roles. *Banat Wist Al-Balad* (Downtown Girls), a film portraying expressions of everyday realities set in Cairo highlights ways in which gender norms on screen are changing as more women are featured as protagonists. Yasmin and Jumana, the film's leading ladies work as maids in Heliopolis who become friends from their daily interactions from the metro. They end up meeting two men and decide to use pseudonyms, pretending to be people they aren't. The film touches on issues of class, sexuality and the notion of honor within the system of Egyptian patriarchy. El-Assyouti (2005) characterizes this in terms of the double-standard created in terms of relationships, noting, "Men can have relationships and still regard themselves as honorable whereas the women with whom they become involved are, by virtue of these premarital relationships, dishonorable.

El-Assyouti's (2005) review of the film criticizes how earlier Egyptian films rendered female sexuality as fatalistic meaning, "that a woman's control of her destiny begins in bed." El-Assyouti lauds director Mohamed Khan for going against the grain of typical cinema in ways that undermine stereotypical views held by most film and TV narratives. El-Assyouti's critique reveals instances of gender inequity bound in honor, pointing out how virginity is linked to the notion of both honor and respectability he mentions:
They fantasize about, respond to, start relationships with and accept invitations to the houses of strangers on the train. None of this, though, impinges on their respectability. They never lose their innocence or honour, those qualities patriarchal society reduces to the concept of virginity [Al-Ahram November 17-23 2005].

This forces me to ask, "In what ways do men's interactions with women underscore relations of power and agency?" Ali (2002) reminds us that gender inequities exist but also, how can we understand how they are maintained and undermined within these forever changing social contexts? Through the examination of particular discontinuities through harassment, alternate forms of masculinity and femininity appear.

There is no unitary pattern of masculinity. Although there are variant forms of masculinity, the term arguably exists in contrast to femininity (Connell 2005:68). Connell provides a useful addition to the production of knowledge around masculinities. I aim to deconstruct the notion 'hegemonic masculinity' in this section, highlighting the ways in which it gains corporeality around the practice of male harassment. However, I cannot say that Egyptian masculinity is located in a purely hegemonic form. Hegemonic masculinity according to Connell is a contested type of masculinity that is neither static in terms of culture or location. Rather, according to Connell and Messerschmitt (2005) hegemonic masculinity was understood as the pattern of practice, "(i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men’s dominance over women to continue. It was not seen as the norm in a static sense, only a minority of men might enact it" (832).

Additionally, 'hegemonic masculinity' is built within confines of rigid gender boundaries and undermines operant masculinities that do not comply to its norms i.e. homosexual masculinities. It is a type of gender apartheid where a minority dominates and influence a majority. They problematize it by drawing attention to how the usage of the concept such as by incorporating Gramscian related term 'hegemony' undermines
how race not only class engender aspects of masculinity (831). Furthermore, 'hegemonic masculinity' overlooks aspects of power and agency between men and women. In order to flesh out features of masculinity, Connell (2005) argued for a three-fold model which better locates gender. The model called for differentiating relations of power, production and cathexis (emotional attachment) (74). Connell and Messerschmitt (2005) call for new ways to distinguish gender by redefining hegemonic masculinity. The four-point model suggests (a) creating a more detailed model of gender hierarchy that highlight women's agency, (b) examining masculinity in various contexts, (c) locating how notions of privilege and power are embodied in certain contexts and (d) to recognize the discontinuities or contradictions and possibilities of a movement toward gender egalitarianism (829). I consider these ideas as I elucidate on the findings of this study.

Rugula, meaning masculinity in Egyptian Arabic is similar in meaning to Monterescu's (2006) interpretation on Rujula in the Palestinian sense. Monterescu argues, "masculinity (Rujula), as a central code of behavior and a dominant category in Arab-Palestinian culture, provides a perspective from which one can examine the politics and poetics of identity in an urban, politically and culturally laden context" (123). Rami, an unemployed 30 year old working-class Egyptian man said to me, "Li kul makan fee ma'aql," roughly translated as, 'In every situation there is reason'. Aql, the Arabic word for 'reason' or 'common sense' renders strong importance here as Rami believes part and parcel of being a man is having the ability to discern social situations with a clear mind. He drew on aspects of his neighborhood in Imbaba, a working-class neighborhood in Cairo with strong adherence to traditional norms of Islam. In this Rami mentioned:

As a Muslim man, I have to be able to provide for my family financially meaning I have to work and it's a sign of weakness if I have to ask for help from another. It
would be humiliating for me to ask for help from my father for he would hold it against me. In our culture if you can't provide for your family, you're not a man [Ilahi 2008 Personal Communication].

"A man's shadow does more for a home than the shadow of a wall"

(Egyptian Proverb in Musk 2005:40)

Rami's narrative is also unique in the sense that it touches on theoretical notions of 'Patriarchal Connectivity' as discussed by Joseph (1999). Ethnographic research exploring gender, personhood and identity in the Middle East also locates a sense of male detachment yet within a matrix of interconnectedness. Joseph builds on the term 'patriarchal connectivity' to imply- relationally oriented feminine and masculine selves organized for gendered and aged hierarchy. Rami, very much concerned about his younger sister indicated many aspects of his manhood relied on making sure she maintained proper etiquette when out in public.

**Rami:** My sisters wear hijab, but I am concerned for them when they go out in the streets. I don't allow them to go out alone or stay out late if I can help it.
**Me:** Do you mind if your sister talks to men in the street?
**Rami:** Yes, very much so. I tell her it's ok to say greetings to acquaintances in the street, to be polite, but to keep it short, yani, don't be rude but remain conservative. Because so much of her behavior reflects back on me [Ilahi 2008 Personal Interview].

Some questions I asked in the stages of my fieldwork to try and get a sense of how men saw their masculinity in relation to femininity centered on memory. To illustrate, while hanging out with Tamer one day, I asked him, "What is your earliest memory of being taught how to act like a man?" Tamer recounted ways in which his mother shaped elements of his manhood that reinforced his sense of control over his female and younger male siblings. His narratives also shaped how he came to understand his sense of propriety in public space.

In the village my family resides in, men typically do the shopping in the market. And it's more common for all women to be veiled than it is in Cairo. You won't see women there smoking shisha in the ahwas or staying out late for it reflects poorly on her family. When I look back on it, I had a lot of experiences from being a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, to staying out all night drinking with my friends. Women in
my village are more conservative but I know they're frustrated; they can't get jobs as easily as men can. It's like they're locked in a cell [Ilahi 2008 Personal Interview]. Both Rami and Tamer's accounts reveal aspects of gender construction through the notion of patriarchal connectivity. In reproducing traditional ideals of patriarchy, brothers take on paternal roles to their sisters. In the beginning scene of Joseph's ethnography, she recalls an event that took place between Hanna, the older brother to his sister Flaur. In this Joseph mentions, "I was shocked, therefore, one sunny afternoon to hear Hanna shouting at his sister Flaur and slapping her across her face…It irritated Hanna when he caught her lingering on the street corner…He would forcefully escort her upstairs to their apartment, slap her and demand that she behave with dignity" (114). Patriarchal connectivity as a process that shapes gender relies very much on forces of surveillance and discipline. So much of the concern of harassment on men's behalf lies within how women behave.

Placing instances of harassment in theoretical context of gendered performance, Butler (1988) locates a conceptualization of self through gendered practices which then become part and parcel of a phenomenological experience. In this, gender is a process situated time and space reified through a series of repetitious acts. Butler dislocates the concepts of 'sex' and 'gender,' where sex is understood to be the invariant, anatomically distinct, and factic aspects of the female body, gender is the cultural meaning and form that the body acquires, the variable modes of that body's acculturation (Butler 1986: 35). In so many words, 'sex' and 'gender' are both cultural constructs where one is not born either man nor woman, rather one becomes man or woman through respective cultural processes (1986: 36). Considering the role of gender performance in relation to de Certeau's ideas of strategy, Morris (1995) rightly points out, "Practices for de Certeau, are not functionally subservient to cultural reproduction but instead are creative gestures incommensurable with, but not completely outside of, structural
principles" (572). Gender norms are thereby understood as culturally shaped but there lies a space within to step out of bounds.

Conceptualizing of the street as a gendered space draws upon the relevance of gender performance and spatial coding Datta (2008) refers to as 'spatialised performance.' In this, physical locations such as the street, the market, or the house where performances are enacted are critical to the construction of 'masculine' and 'feminine' bodies and hence in encoding places. (190). Datta fascinatingly ties in the ideas of gender and aspects of positionality through class, religion and political belief in their relationship to space in India. Recalling a conversation she had with an informant on harassment, she locates three types of gender relations in which masculine norms are constructed: aggressive-pertaining to the harassment from unfamiliar men on the streets; controlling-in relation to the participant's husband who "controlled" her and was wary of her movements across public and private spaces and lastly understanding-pertaining to Datta's male assistant whose masculinity was described as, "a valuable embodiment associated with his social capital," (200) a form of social privilege that enabled the women Datta interviewed about male violence to be comfortable sharing their experiences in front of another man. Although some men are reluctant to view their behavior as harassing, they conceptualize and problematize it similarly to women in the sense that it is somehow linked to women's behavior. Yet, the notion of street harassment is also linked to learned behaviors which reinscribe gender identities. Performing Masculinities

The discourse and practices I examined associated with masculine norms in public spaces such as the street and open cafes in the street gave men a sense of entitlement to public space. Their body movements were much more relaxed in these
areas as opposed to the sense of purpose women seem obliged to maintain when walking in the streets. Dovetailing the notions of risk as women in public spaces must perform their respectability, Ehrkamp (2008) and Guano (2007) cite various ways men's behavior reinforce obedience to gender norms. "Male practices in public space, especially the practice of hanging out in front of teahouses and dominating sidewalks, render women out of place in much of Marxloh's public space" (Ehrkamp 2008:125).

Ehrkamp further reflects upon ways in which young Turkish men perform masculinities to reinforce dominance over women stating, "Talking to young women they did not know, checking them out, whistling after them, and spreading out across the entire sidewalk so that it was difficult to pass" (126). Guano builds on the notion of belonging in public spaces arguing the ways in which performing one's gender and class "complicate the claims of spatial belonging through which men and women in Genoa struggle over their physical and symbolic places in the public realm" (52).

Positing that the Italian streets are a masculine realm, Guano cites ways in which women must perform respectability in order to acquiesce to unspoken rules of 'symbolic privacy' for men: "Public urinals for men only provide their users with, at best, a symbolic privacy, leaving it to respectable female passersby to avert their gaze to comply with the rules of modesty" (52). As both authors draw on the ways space is shaped as masculine, particularly the street, I recall my own experience in Cairo:

As I left my house this morning, I stopped and waited on the corner of my street to hail a taxi. I counted five cars with men driving that slowed down to look at me momentarily, yet felt like I was being scrutinized for hours. I had my sunglasses on, a scarf draped over my chest, along with my iPod to block out noise. One sporty car with two men in their late 20s slowed down and yelled, "Hey Sexy!" Minutes later, a sleek black car chauffeured by a private driver came to a halt in front of me. I watched the scene happen in what felt like slow motion, the tinted window of the backseat passenger side door opened slowly, revealing a man finely dressed wearing a turban gesturing to me to get in the car. I felt mortified and began walking away, pretending to be on the phone (Ilahi Field notes 2008).
Incidents like this are not uncommon to what other women experience in the streets of Cairo. Ways in which public spaces are shaped as masculine draw upon practices of posturing to look intimidating and hanging out in pacts which are ways of asserting power. The dominant group in society thus often assumes the power to define appropriate uses of space and "appropriate public behaviors" Ehrkamp (2008). In an exploration around hegemonic masculinity and sexual harassment Robinson (2005) argues "Sexual harassment and sexual violence become part of the performance of hegemonic masculinity that can cement gendered cultural bonds between those boys and men who take up this form of masculinity as their own, creating a sense of identity"(20) Rather than gloss over masculinity in an Egyptian context as hegemonic, I argue that the performance of harassment takes place within the construction of hegemonic masculinity. This then harkens back to notions of selfhood and how selves are bound in performance.

Furthermore, conversations and observations of men in this project demonstrate that models of masculinity contrast accordingly to class and generation. Ali (2002) emphasizes class disparities between rich and poor in Egypt that further inculcate notions of men as providers. Moreover, rich men are seen in particular contexts as being more masculine for, "they can keep their women happy and provide for their families" (132). This builds on the focus of men in various crises, particular as such in Egypt, the economic crises many experience where estimates reveal about 40% of the population lives on just $2 a day (Slackman 2008). Reflective of this fact, Ali expands on how class conditions affect masculinity. Ali argues that the social and economic inequality faced by the Egyptian poor along with the pressure to control family size is a form of violence that "socially castrates and humiliates men, in the process depriving them of their masculinity and manhood" (133). A conversation I had with Tamer, a working-
class Egyptian man reflected similar sentiments in class disparities but led him to believe that although men from all class backgrounds harass, it is performed differently within this milieu. Tamer's reasoning echoes back to issues of identity within modes of class explaining:

Lower class men are more violent when they harass. They will use dirty language and attempt to touch or grab a woman. Men from upper classes harass women and young girls as well, but they do so differently. Men from more respected social backgrounds will use nicer words and may attempt to pick up a girl from their car [Ilahi 2008 Personal Interview].

Galal Amin, professor of economics at the American University in Cairo, maps out an 'aggressive type of masculine norm' (Datta 2008). Amin signifies ways in which performing harassment equates to forms of hegemonic masculinity. During a talk on harassment Amin mentioned that it is more prevalent to see groups of young men "performing manhood" throughout public places in Cairo mainly by posturing to look intimidating and harassing women. The normalization of public harassment of women is rooted in aspects of hegemonic masculinity. Part of this harassment hinges on the notion of economic instability connected to other various disparities of access. Osella (1998) give reason for this citing Jackson (1990), "With prolonged education and late marriage, in the absence of external structures or validation for their passage towards manhood, the boys turn inwards to the peer group" (191).

Abdullah, an upper-middle class Egyptian man in his mid twenties indicated in his views on the normalization of harassment, linking it to economic inequality which then circles into young men learning from others how to harass: "I see little boys harassing women too. They run up to women and grab them or shout out to them from the high windows of the public schools. It's not just sexual harassment, its guys learning how to act tough, showing off for one another" (Ilahi 2008 Personal Interview). Koskela (1999), Day (2001) and Day et al. (2003) draw upon constructions of masculinity by examining men's and women's perceptions of public space centering
on women's experiences in public spaces shaped around violence and sexual harassment. In terms of gendered power relations, Koskela situates space within its social construction thereby locating fear as a gendered response to certain social practices that take place. Koskela further argues that, ‘By restricting their mobility because of fear, women unwittingly reproduce masculine domination over space’ (Koskela, p.113). Day situates masculinity in opposition to women's fear in public spaces where men as either 'bad boys' or 'chivalrous’ depend on the sense of a woman's vulnerability in maintaining these roles. Day underscores notions of hegemonic masculinity within performative acts of masculinity as embedded within 1) notions of "toughness, bravery and chivalry" and 2) a mechanism which promotes exclusions of underprivileged groups in order to "minimize competition and achieve success" (Day 2001:116). Street harassment embodies aspects of hegemonic masculinity located and performed within specific historical and class settings. Although hegemonic masculinity is a contested notion, it is identifiable in situations involving harassment which then shapes multitudes of masculinities in space.

Hegemonic forms of masculinity enact symbolic violence upon men and women. Bourdieu (1998) posits symbolic violence as, "instituted through the adherence that the dominated cannot fail to grant to the dominant (and therefore to the domination)...the relation of domination then appears as normal and binaries become naturalized" (35). This places men in a precarious position regarding their role as "protectors." Symbolic violence as it pertains to my research is a normalized, "everyday violence" (Scheper-Hughes 2002). Scheper-Hughes read on Bourdieu and symbolic violence recognizes that violence is everywhere and "It is mis-recognized because its very familiarity renders it invisible" (Scheper-Hughes 2002: 31). My conversations with Fatima and other women make clear the usage of symbolic
violence in this case because of how normalized street harassment has become to
them. Not to argue that harassment is something that women somehow encourage or
bring upon themselves, but rather a type of everyday violence found when a man
hisses at, stalks or physically assaults a woman. This is bound within harassment so
much as in the subtle normalities of gender behaviour. Symbolic violence is tied to
agent forming structures of Joseph's 'patriarchal connectivity' as well as Kandiyoti's
(1988) 'patriarchal bargain'- "passive forms of resistance women undertake to hold
men accountable to specific responsibilities claiming their half of this particular
patriarchal bargain-protection in exchange for submissiveness and propriety" (283).
Symbolic violence through performance reiterates Phadke's (2007) arguments in
which the fixation on "the preservation of women's respectability and honor implicitly
outweighs the value placed on actual safety" (1512). I argue the affect of harassment
upon women dually infantilises them and rejects their claims to public space. The
result then is a form of symbolic domination-"the schemes of perception,
appreciation, and action that are constitutive of habitus and which, below the level of
the decisions of consciousness and the controls of the will, set up a cognitive
relationship that is profoundly obscure to itself" (Bourdieu 1998: 37). The
connections between hegemonic masculinity, street harassment and symbolic power
reveal that harassment as a form of symbolic violence privileges male dominance in
public spheres, reducing women to their femininity.

Bourdieu argues that symbolic power surrounds us and cannot merely be
erased through consciousness alone for aspects of symbolic power are deeply
embedded within us. Harassment then becomes a practice on the body through the
body. Robinson (2005) maintains, "Sexual harassment becomes part of the
embodiment of the performance of hegemonic masculinity through these everyday
articulated acts and gestures, constituting boys’ masculine identities in the process” (27).

Within the backdrop of the campaign to stop sexual harassment, backlash occurs. Even those men who view harassment negatively, appearing concerned for women's rights had a difficult time separating themselves from traditional notions of women and victim-blaming mentalities. Harking back to women's behavior as inviting to harassment, Maged the tailor referred to the Eid attacks of 2006 as an isolated incident, blaming it on Deena the belly dancer for provoking the young men present in the streets. Both Hamid, an upper-middle-class Egyptian man who admits to harassing women and Aisha, the fitness trainer concluded in their perceptions that the notion of harassment depends upon the behavior of the woman at risk. Where Aisha revealed her reluctance to respond to harassment for fear of inviting it, Hamid dovetailed this noting, "Harassment depends on the action of the girl. Men are persistent and some won't give up or leave a woman alone. If a woman reacts to harassment, then I know she's interested" (Ilahi 2008 Personal Interview). Wax (2008) characterizes widespread public harassment against women in India as a form of backlash to women's empowerment within the public sphere as competition for jobs and educational opportunities against men. Wax notes:

In many ways, the South Asian woman is out of the oven and into the frying pan," said Ayesha Khanam, president of the Bangladesh Women's Council, which tracks violence against women across the subcontinent. "They bring home money, they share in power in the society. But they are also doing something very powerful that may enrage men: toppling the old family structure [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/24/AR2008082401665_pf.html].

As veiled and non-veiled Egyptian women are gaining on men in terms of educational and job opportunities, I consider Di Leonardo's (1981) argument that the increasing rates of public harassment is due to women's increased presence in public
spaces as workers and participants. Nora, an Egyptian informant communicated similar thoughts on this in a discussion we had focusing on dynamics of power between men and women in Egypt. Interestingly, Nora connected harassment to issues of men's loss of economic power over women. She asserted that more and more women in Egypt are becoming empowered by the freedom that comes with educational and occupational opportunities. "More and more women are doing without men and marrying later in life," said Nora. The loss then felt by many men renders notions of emasculation which Nora argues, "Men then want to protect their rugula (manhood) on so many levels, so by harassing women, some men feel a sense of power over them" (Ilahi 2008 Personal Interview). Long (2006) illustrates this stating, "As the men as by which a member of a dominant social group maintains the daily experience of power become challenged, no longer acceptable as mechanism of absolute control, he often experiences the shift in social reality as 'oppression' (147). Although this explanation is useful, it does not capture the performative notions of harassment across class lines. However, the economic impact on societal change along with the dialectic practice between religious conservatism and Western appropriated modes of fashion and behavior may suggest a rupture in how men view women publically.

Long (2006) locates how men position gender inequality in association to the impact the West has on Moroccan society. Long notes economic changes include:

The commodification of sexuality, a consumerist trend towards Westernized clothing and make-up, as well as other goods, and a perception of the rise of selfishness reminiscent also of Western values of individualism. The result, as viewed by some, is an intensification of the gender war between men and women [156].

Does the conflict against street harassment/sexual harassment constitute a war between genders? As violence ensnares both men and women, harassment is a war to be fought on many fronts: against dominant acts of embodiment that reproduce
violent gender identities; and against a nation-State negligent and purposefully oblivious to the multiple forms of abuse against women.

**Battle cries of the Egyptian Feminist Movement & Their Relationship to the State**

The inability of populist States to incorporate or suppress the new social forces (such as lower-middle and middle classes) that they have helped to generate has led to the growth of civil-society institutions (Bayat 2002: 2). As an independent, development organization, the ECWR aims to create a safer public space by reducing sexual harassment through various means of community outreach such as raising awareness on sexual harassment at a national level, encouraging social policing of harassment to intercede on behalf of women and via pedagogical methods targeting young school children in order to sensitize them to the issue. International coverage of their campaign reaches far to news sources such as the BBC to social networking sites like Facebook. Radio promos featuring the voice of controversial Egyptian talk show host Buthayna Kamel urge people to speak up against harassment of women. On her radio program, Kamel is said to often return to the discussion of violence against women through discussions on sexual harassment and domestic violence (Sawyer 2007).

In a newspaper interview, Nihad Abul-Qomsan, head of the Egyptian Center for Women's rights argued, "Sexual harassment is at the forefront of the issues we deal with. Sexual harassment in public areas is not limited to a specific age category or social class but is a "social cancer" (Leila 2008). The association between gender and civil society draws in a number of factors concerning the State. Namely, the relationship between civil society and the State characterized as contentious in many cases draws attention to the ways women as social actors vie for rights while negotiating a fragile rapport with the State.
Moghadam (2003) articulate the ways in which women's NGOs appropriate notions of citizenship into rights discourse. Moghadam theorizes on how women's organizations in the MENA-Middle East North Africa region contend with gender inequities. Specifically pertaining to women's status as relegated to the private sphere, Moghadam states women's organizations are calling for:

1. the modernization of family laws,
2. the criminalization of domestic violence and other forms of violence against women,
3. women's right to retain their own nationality and to pass it on to their children (a demand mainly of Arab women), and
4. greater access to employment and participation in political decision-making [279].

Currently, the ECWR presents the findings of their research on sexual harassment and has held various talks on the issue urging the Egyptian government to recognize it as a problem and amend the penal code to include the term 'sexual harassment.' The ECWR finds that because current penal code doesn't conceptualize 'sexual harassment' directly, it bleeds into the problem of law enforcement handling it appropriately (http://ecwronline.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1&lang=english). So far, the relationship between State and civil society in this case appears to be amicable. Quoted in a monthly update from the ECWR, MP, Mohsen Rady stated that the phenomenon of sexual harassment is horrible and scary and leads to various other crimes. His reasons determining why sexual harassment occurs harked back to Egypt's political, economic, and social situation which further broke down to an absence of rule of law, lack of societal concern for harassment, people's reluctance to report harassment to police (August 2008 ECWR Update).

However, struggles have played out between the ECWR and key State forces such as State Security. In an interview with Tanya and Hind (pseudonyms), two women highly involved with the sexual harassment campaign from the ECWR, they revealed some of the frustrations that have played out since the inception of the
movement. State affairs can easily alleviate or exacerbate financial problems depending on NGOs actions. Tanya added:

According to NGO law in Egypt, all NGOs have to get approval by the Ministry of Social Affairs for grants. The grant goes into the bank then through a process wherein which the government can stop the flow of funding from reaching an NGO. In that case, you can't access your money and risk closure. In other cases, the government can shut down an NGO if they spend funds in support of a cause deemed non-compatible with State practices [Ilahi 2008 Interview].

Activities created to educate and mobilize people on the issue have generally taken place at cultural centers such as the El Sawy Cultural Center located in Zamalek. This generally draws crowds from the Egyptian upper-middle class and foreigners living in Cairo. A scheduled event at a community center in a lower-working class neighborhood was shut down by State Security hours before the launch. Hind recalled a strange conversation with the landlord of the community center who received a mysterious phone call warning that he would lose his building and others in the community would lose their jobs if they attended the event. Afsharipour (1999) draws upon ways in which NGOs can increase government accountability and implementation through the process of negotiating women's positions as citizens as well as through keeping in line with the tenets of CEDAW. Yet, Afsharipour is also keen on the ambiguous relationship between States and civil society actors, noting, "Women's NGOs, while assisting national governments, must retain their identity as advocates for women's rights and their ability to criticize and exert pressure on governments" (1999: 129). Re-establishing women's role as citizens may benefit civil society NGOs such as the ECWR to make claims to space for women.

Okin (1989) identifies some of the problems of bridging gender inequalities to human rights/justice frameworks as ignoring the basic structural setup of the family. Okin argues contemporary theories of justice, are not inclusive of women and that they falter “by ignoring the family, its division of labor, and the related economic
dependency and restricted opportunities of most women” (9). Looking at the family in a Middle Eastern context, I arrive at the conclusion that women’s lack of access to human rights and justice is related to their limited position of power within the family as which mirrors their position within the Nation-State. Joseph's theory of patriarchal connectivity (1999) argues that as selfhood in some non-western societies is constructed by an individual's relationship to many members of her/his family unit meaning one's sense of self is tied to another. This is expanded in relation to citizenship within the State in that the State comes to represent parts of the family in which "persons are socialized into citizenship…and therefore the public/private boundary is constitutive of the will to statehood" (Joseph 1997: 86, 88). What is importantly noted here is the emphasis on the socialization into citizenship where certain societal values are plucked and placed into the legislation of what defines a nation's citizen. Adding to that notion, what defines a nation’s citizen translates into docility for women wherein which they receive less rights which equals less justice.

Badran's (1995) work resonates with this statement through her analysis of women incorporated into Nation-State projects via feminist and Islamist practices. In this, she conceptualizes the challenges faced by women in the newly formed Egyptian Nation-State such as equal participation in the political sphere as well as recognition of equal status to men in terms of their participation in public and private life. Badran further problematizes the feminist issue of politics of participation in which early Egyptian feminist goals were shaped by an elite, upper middle-class consciousness. This in turn led to "feminists' willingness to discriminate among women according to class" (Badran: 209) in terms of voting policies. Not only were women barred from certain acts of political participation because they were women, but they themselves further divided their ties amongst each other on the basis of class discrimination.
Class translates into Ahmed's (1992) contribution in, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* wherein she links her focus on the ideas of modern Islamist groups to that of the evolving Nation-State. Ahmed traces class membership within the contemporary Islamist movement to both members of the emerging middle classes and those of the lower middle class with rural backgrounds "or come from families that have recently migrated to urban centers" (222). The sharp rise in conservatism associated with the Islamist movement continues to gain popularity throughout Egypt. Irrespective of class, the Islamist movement continues to gain popularity through the growing trend of religiosity. Yet, referring back to Slackman's (2008) piece in the New York Times, connected to the increased economic pressures faced by many Egyptians, it attracts more youth from lower middle class backgrounds in need of social outlets. Traditional gender roles assumed to fall in line with Islamic tenets are adopted. Ahmed problematizes the concept of gender construction in an Islamist framework. This framework locates current applications of Islamist ideology in its move towards national supremacy in that it draws upon problematic notions of women by marking them in an a-historic "original and authentic Islamic way" (238).

Similar to Badran, Al-Ali (2002) scans women's movements in Egypt. In her paper, Al-Ali compares women's activities in comparison to Turkey. She provides insight on the delicate relationship between women and the State in examples of Personal Status Laws dealing with marriage, divorce and child custody. Within the realm of these laws, I argue that gender is not contested and full rights are given to men concerning these aspects. It is crucial in Al-Ali's work that she draws upon how laws further engender society. These laws find their credibility in the social constructions of gender and the symbols tied to them. For example, in the
socialization through notions of honor, men of the Awlad Ali in Egypt connect women to nature and animalistic sexuality (Abu-Lughod 1986). Similar notions of women are applied in State legislative practice such as in Shariah Law in Egypt.

Although the current literature examines the implications of gender and citizenship, none of the abovementioned researchers mention that perhaps notions of citizenship shape normative, social definitions of women and men as citizens by locating them in gendered practices. However, the work of Amina Jamal (2006) in fact traces this very argument. Although Jamal's work took place in Pakistan, I find her theoretical claims importantly aiding my work. Jamal locates the notion of woman as citizen through the theory of erotic autonomy which "signifies the independence of woman as citizen rather than daughters raised and ladies always defined in relation to men" (284). She draws on other feminist approaches which looked at citizenship in terms of the home, family, private and public spaces to posit that these notions "are used to construct different types of women and citizens." She argues those women and other marginalized people who challenge the norms of the idealized Nation-State thereby pose a threat to it. Jamal's analysis of women as citizens in Pakistan reverberates with my contentions of women in Egypt in that religious doctrine is embedded within State practice surrounding Shariah law. I argue that this in turn reproduces ideas of women as citizens identifying them through their fragile sexuality and family relationships in which their brothers and fathers have rights of control over their bodies. Interestingly, Jamal links the practice of Shariah law to the construction of Muslim womanhood and the subjectivity produced from that which is dually bound and policed (289). In evoking conceptual understanding of how citizenship shapes gender roles, the past is not too different from current day practices.
State and Islamist factions in Egypt locate women's access to citizenship along lines of gender differences (Hatem 1992, 1994). In exploration on the differences and similarities within secular and Islamist projects, Hatem (1994) concludes that both secularist and Islamist frameworks situate women in terms that mark their femininity through biological processes such as reproduction. Also important is the finding that the ideal of female domesticity is similar within secular and Islamist notions. Although the state grants space for women to attain employment or rights to political participation so as long as it does not impinge on male privilege and access to power, the ongoing exclusion of women from equally participating in governmental positions suggests still that secularist ideology maintain the rightful place for women is in the home. Shariah law embedded in Egyptian state legislation as noted by Hatem (1994) situates citizenship for women within their role within the family. Similar to secularist practices, women are given the right to work so long as it does not limit her activities within the home.

The selective uses of women in national programs, secular or religious seek to legitimize male power through the display and claim to male power based on ideologies of biological difference to women. Furthermore, problematic personal status laws declared women's equality in relation to men based on differences of gender, racial origin, language, religion or belief, which remained unchanged thereby define women "as the economic dependents of men, unstable emotional beings that cannot be trusted with the right to divorce, and unable to leave a husband without his consent and/or in cases where he is incurably ill or impotent" (Hatem1992). Exceptions to this case lie within law number 1 of 2000 in the Egyptian constitution stating that a woman may "obtain a judicial separation from her husband if she so desires, the only condition being the restitution of the dower to her husband and the
relinquishment of her right to alimony" (Arabi 2001). My interpretation of this law is that while it grants a woman the right to repudiate her husband, by doing so, she gives up her rights entitling her to marital reparations even if the cause of the divorce is the fault of the husband. This suggests a further devaluation of her citizenship status for not only will she be a marked woman in terms of divorce, but she will also face economic challenges in order to sustain her lifestyle. Islamic and secular doctrine are equally centered around maintaining male privilege while diluting women's rights in attaining similar rights to men on the basis of their gender which locates the female mind as weak and irrational in comparison to man.

Voet (1998) sustains, "notions of citizenship in practice and theory are actually based on the male citizen". Therefore, women's political activities and ideologies were used to maintain appearances of a modern, democratic Egypt, one in which woman as a citizen was tied to her interchangeable relationship with the nation by loyalty and honor to her family. Under the surface of a modernizing Egypt, women and their loyalty were linked to the nation by ways of honor and shame which invokes strong ties to regulate female sexuality.

Tying women's loyalty to the nation to notions of honor and shame reduce women from achieving equal status as male citizens while reinforcing socially produced gender roles of being female that limit women's national aspirations to that of the private sphere. Baron (2005) locates the construction of Egyptian national identity through the meaning of honor. Most importantly as she notes Egypt's identity as a woman, honor must be at the forefront of national loyalty in order to defend her.

As men and women both participated in maintaining this construction, honor both served to shape ideal citizens as well as reinforce cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity. In a nationalist interpretation, the nation represents a fragile woman
whose honor need be defended by and controlled by men, the safe guarders of the nation. So the construction of female citizenship as linked to honor reifies notions of female passivity and vulnerability.

The State operates in multiple ways in which women locate a sense of citizenship via gender specific practices. Highlighting honor, shame and motherhood all focus on the female body as a means to empower nationalist ideology. There lies a multitude of ways in which the female body is manipulated in order to strengthen nationalist agendas. For example, previous research reflects differences in the ways secularists versus Islamists conceptualize issues of family planning as they relate directly to women and individual choice the use of population control strategies such as family planning (see Ali 1996; Ali 1997; El Badawy et al. 2000; Govindasamy and Malhotra 1996). Secondly, the contested issue of veiling reflects ways in which the Egyptian State constructs notions of gender through projects that involve men and women's participation as citizens. With regard to difference, humanist feminists as described by Voet (1998) seek to argue for "temporary special rights for women, in order to establish equality, not to protect gender difference." However, gender difference is a main feature as to why gender inequities exist within citizenship rights, so not addressing gender difference in this case can lead to further gender-typing of citizenship in the future.

The nation-state is implicated in preserving gender in its most nascent definitions. I would argue with Joseph (1997, 1999) too that there are different relationships to the state because of subject positions defined by gender, ethnicity, race, religion as structural categories of society, but because of the different constructions of selfhood located within an array of contexts, there are in turn different notions of citizens and their respective relation to the state. Joseph's theory
of patriarchal connectivity (1999) argues that as selfhood in some non-western societies is constructed by an individual's relationship to many members of her/his family unit meaning one's sense of self is tied to another. This is expanded in relation to citizenship within the state in that the state comes to represent parts of the family in which "persons are socialized into citizenship…and therefore the public/private boundary is constitutive of the will to statehood" (Joseph 1997: 86, 88). What is importantly noted here is the emphasis on the socialization into citizenship where certain societal values are plucked and placed into the legislation of what defines a nation's citizen. Many of the values explored within an Egyptian context rely on the differences in gender between men and women, excluding anyone else falling outside of the rigidly defined gender roles. State projects-either religious or secular reproduce fixed meanings of gender, locating the female in a naturalized, maternal framework. Women as citizens in Egypt are narrowly defined as citizens through their gender makeup and biological processes such as reproduction. State claims to modernity and equality are very different from their practices in that through the manipulation of law, men continue to hold privilege in forms of political participation and civil rights because of the state's failure to relinquish equal citizenship to women. Men and women constitute the nation-state and both men and women reproduce normative representations of citizenship through prescribed gender roles such as modesty and shyness or economic autonomy over one's family. Gender is shaped from the ruptures in citizenship practice which maintain special roles for women and men to maintain via the constructions of nature/culture and public/private. In my analysis of these distinctions I find that the state holds on tightly to the dichotomies that separate man from woman without any further thought of those who fall outside of those lines.
Chapter Five

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

Classed/Raced Bodies and (In) Visibility:
What are Viable Options towards Justice for the Working Class Poor?

Risk applied as a gendered concept spells out ways in which public space is dangerous for women. Phadke's (2007) interpretations of risk that women face in public places consequentially threaten women's future possibilities of accessing public space. In 2006, just after the first Eid attacks on women in downtown Cairo, an impromptu protest was staged at the Egyptian Press Syndicate. A large crowd of protesters showed up and were met with a brigade of riot police ready to charge if things got "out of hand." People held up signs rebuking the Egyptian State for its lax attitude toward public violence against women, focusing on public harassment of women. Ironically, in times of protest, the State employs forms of sanctioned violence against male and female demonstrators (See El-Sirgany 2006 http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=1980). As demonstrating in Egypt is quite common, though potentially dangerous, it can lead to effective transformations.

Ehrkamp makes good use of deconstructing how risk is read as empowering. Citing Young (1990:240) she notes, "Risk in Young's interpretation, is positive and opens up opportunities for non-hierarchical encounters with difference" (Ehrkamp 2008: 120). Furthermore, citing the work of Mitchell (1995: 115): "By claiming space in public, by creating public spaces, social groups themselves become public" (Ehrkamp: 120). Importantly, Ehrkamp and others question the efficacy of proponents who argue that risk is potentially advantageous. Ehrkamp's (2008) view on public space as contested gives rise to how marginalized groups face risks of 'becoming public.'
Ehrkamp argues, "Becoming public thus bears the risk of being represented in ways that are different from, and sometimes counterproductive to, the intention of why groups became public in the first place" (120). How are women read as public individuals? Because public space is gendered, how can women in Egypt articulate rights to space which do not seek to homogenize them as vying for Western women's rights? Secondly, how do they evade the pitfalls of their own local discourses that polarize public images of women i.e. veiled: respectable as non-veiled: immodest? What groups is the discourse on women's rights to public space speaking for? I am preoccupied with the role of representation in my critique because I fear the claim to space may not represent women equally across social classes.

Indeed structural violence affects both men and women. In arguing for women's access to public space, I consider issues related to race and class, contemplating how women of difference in Egypt may or may not entitle themselves to these rights. Bridging the discussion of rights to citizenship, Phadke (2007) argues that women should reinstate their right to take risks versus relying on State provisions to ensure their safety. For vying for safety, reinscribes traditional gender norms of men as protectors of women and women as helpless and endangered. Phadke's arguments make for interesting discussion vis-à-vis the movement against 'sexual harassment.' Phadke's narrative tackles issues of claiming public space linked to the sense of belonging. Drawing on the discursive ways that women are barred from public space, however, not equally, Phadke makes the claim that middle-class women actually have greater access to public space because of their status as modern consumers. In Phadke constructs a convincing critique of public space embodying gender norms and classism wherein which she argues:

When there are battle cries to make the city safer for women, it is because a middle class woman has been sexually assaulted. This bring to the fore people's anxieties
about both women's proper place (what was she doing there in the first place) and the presence of other marginal citizens in public space (who constitute the risk) [1514].

The inception of the campaign to stop sexual harassment created by the ECWR formed out of a focus group of a few young foreign women who volunteered there. The more they experienced forms of street harassment, the more interested they became in understanding its affect on women throughout various parts of Egypt. Their campaign has helped create an awareness of what all women experience each day in the streets. Also, they continue analyzing their data to understand how 'sexual harassment' hurts tourism. As they vie for a law to be drafted which criminalizes 'sexual harassment,' I applaud their efforts in publicizing the harmful effects of gender harassment. Yet, my concern is whether a law condemning this sort of violence against women would actually be upheld. If so, that would demand a restructuring of how police forces interact with women, since many of them are accused of harassment. Secondly, would an anti-sexual harassment law be accessible to women of lower classes? Additionally, would the law encourage Egyptian women across all classes to report 'sexual harassment' as a crime? Or would the dilemma of 'sexual harassment' continue to echo bourgeois sentiments from an imported feminist perspective? According to research results by the ECWR, Egyptian women appear to be less aware of their rights than foreign women. A recent report published by the ECWR maintains:

Most Egyptian women interviewed agreed that it is wrong for a woman to go to the police station to report harassment or to talk about being harassed. Some men in the sample both agreed and disagreed with these ideas. Most of the Egyptian women and men agreed that women should be at home by 8 p.m. [Clouds in Egypt's sky report 2008].

Importantly, the parallels I draw in my study to Phadke's sentiments on women and public space echo my concern with citizenship in connection with rights. I
argue that women will not overcome harassment until they reclaim their rights to space as citizens. However, the very notion of citizenship becomes slippery and a woman's reputation takes precedence over her rights as a citizen in many cases. The case of Noha Rushdy is a perfect example of how as a middle-class Arab, foreign woman, she climbed the rungs of Egyptian bureaucracy to attain justice against her harasser. Only now, she is met with possible repercussions from the same system which originally granted her justice on the ludicrous accusation that she is an Israeli citizen. Even if she is, doesn't she have rights to justice? Suzanne Mubarak, the president's wife was quoted in a local newspaper downplaying the seriousness of harassment stating, "Maybe one, two or even 10 incidents occurred. Egypt is home to 80 million people. We can't talk of a phenomenon. Maybe a few scatterbrained youths are behind the crime" (AFP 2008


It's the very notion that Noha's case made international headlines which concerns me for, how many women of Egypt's lower classes are subject to similar treatment, yet cannot and will not go public in the acquisition of justice for their voices are already silenced by a classist society; where the violence done unto them become articulated as 'isolated instances.' It is then so vital to locate a sense of how Egyptian and foreign women appropriate space in the absence of formal laws to uphold their rights in it.

**Multiple Strategies of Women**

Although foreign women I spoke to can attest to many experiences of being followed home and accosted, that is not to say it doesn't happen often to Egyptian women. However, Egyptian women familiar with the city convey a different sense of sensibilities within public space. Depending on their social position in society, they appropriate space accordingly. Egyptian women rely on a number of cultural
networks to appropriate space which foreign women may adopt. For example, many women who work rely on the metro and its women's only cars as one way to stave off unwanted remarks and looks from men. The more familiar one becomes with the nuances of the street, the more she learns to incorporate strategies that best suit her.

Early (1993) illustrates the myriad of ways in which baladi women of Cairo rely on informal networks. Stating, "One ironclad rule in baladi society is that friendships change but neighbors remain civil and rally in crises" (144). Early plays on the meanings of traditional and modern to capture the ways in which baladi women define themselves as savvy noting, "Baladi women constantly move between baladi and afrangi cultural options, blurring the opposition, although they realize that economically much of afrangi life is beyond their reach" (51). Bayat (1997) reflects on the ways in which Cairo's urban poor utilizes informal networks to appropriate survival. Moreover, the strategies of the urban poor have responded to injustices noted by Bayat as, "On-the-spot resistance, legal battles or simply by quiet non-compliance" (54). Community activism related to the sexual harassment campaign has not been advantageous in poor neighborhoods. Focusing on the other forms of agency women employ is linked to notions of vigilante justice relating to the growing demands of the urban poor, or what Bayat (2002) refers to as, "Quiet encroachment," "characterized by direct actions of individuals and families to acquire the basic necessities of their lives (land for shelter, urban collective consumption, informal jobs, business opportunities) in a quiet and unassuming, illegal fashion" (3). In many cases irrespective of class, bureaucratic processes in Egypt are side-stepped by the practices of social networks. To some degree, everyone relies on aspects of social networking Bayat further describes as "informal, individualistic, and even opportunistic ways to cultivate wasta or parti (connection) or bribe the officials" (2002: 10). These notions
Bayat brings up are useful in examining how rights are viewed and constructed within and outside marginalized communities.

Egyptian women utilize cultural informal networks in ways that that locate a sense of the notion of 'vigilante justice' I characterize which falls within the practices described by above by Bayat. I cultivate the usage of this term in reference to an article in the BBC referring to a group of women in India called, "Gulabi Gang" (Pink Gang). Their movement segues nicely into this discussion on women's strategies of acquiring rights. The Pink Gang's practices dually sidestep the Indian State and feminist NGOs. Known for roughing up abusive men with sticks or through shaming practices, the gang's leader lamented, "Nobody comes to our help in these parts. The officials and the police are corrupt and anti-poor" (BBC). Chiding the State's unwillingness to counter violence against women and NGO practices they deem as, "looking for kickbacks when they offer to fund us," the "pink gang" demonstrates the contextual and cultural usage of rights (Biswas 2007). Biswas describes the inception of the "pink gang" amidst the throes of poverty, male domination and sexual violence in India. Sampat Pel Devi, the leader of the gang states, "We are not a gang in the usual sense of the term. We are a gang for justice" (Biswas 2007). While employing their own version of justice and accountability, the gang purportedly invaded a police station, attacking a policeman for refusing to register a case on a man deemed an untouchable. In other cases, they rally for the rightful care of women thrown out of their homes by their spouses. They are known to march to the homes of the women's spouses demanding explanations from them, threatening to retaliate if the girl is not taken back because as the gang argues, "women need men to live with" (Biswas 2007). In this sense, they uphold particular cultural values they see as pertinent to fostering women's rights such as male financial responsibility over women.
Referring back to the baladi woman quoted in the Christian Science Monitor who appropriated forms of violence when harassed when she felt it necessary, made the comment, "I stand up for my rights, but I don't think college girls know how to do that" (Stack 2008). Compounded with this, Mariam, a 46 year old working-class, Coptic Egyptian woman from Haram quipped, "Hukuk al mara? (Women's rights), we don't have rights. We have to take matters into our own hands" (Ilahi 2008 Personal Interview). Retelling a story of harassment, her vignette fuels the issue of access and accountability within rights discourse:

I was sitting on a bus coming home from work one night and this guy across the aisle undid his zipper and started touching himself. I started yelling and slapping him. Of course then, men came over and grabbed him by his shirt. In the end, he was scared, not me. If something happens to me, I will talk back [Ilahi 2008 Personal Interview].

Agency, the Construction of Selfhood, and Gender Transgressions

Although gender is a contested notion theoretically, the performance of normative gender roles renders significant to women as a strategy in itself to undercut notions of hegemonic masculine violence found in harassing women. As Guano's work focuses on how middle-class women perform notions of respectability in order to negotiate a sense of belonging in public spaces like the street, I find women in Cairo irrespective of their class status are bound obey norms of modesty and obedience in public space. Yet, as these notions are also contested discursively within class settings, I find it useful to reiterate that gender is not static in any context. Drawing upon both 'deviant femininities' Datta (2008) and 'victimized masculinities' Ehrkamp (2007) underscores part of the exploration around agency within examining street harassment. Mahmood (2001) situates the politics of the Egyptian "women's mosque movement" in ways that define their agency not as synonymous to resistance but "as a capacity for action that historically specific relations of subordination enable and create" (203). Tying the notion of agency to culture, this point harks back to Merry’s
argument in that it is necessary to see people’s behavior in terms of economics, politics and social class versus merely reducing them to culture. Arguably, socially constructed gender norms in some ways reinforce male privilege within space through the reproduction of certain behaviors. Mahmood makes note of women ensconced within Egypt's mosque movement as, "holding subordination to a transcendent will (and thus, in many instances, to male authority) as its coveted goal" (204). This idea is then bound in certain performances and subjectivities. However, with respect to notions of self-hood and performance, Ali (2002) brings up an excellent point claiming, "Personhood needs to be thought of not as an individualized unit but as inseparable from the social relations in which each person is inevitably bound" (100).

This study focuses on dynamics of interpersonal dialogic exchange between men and women. Behavioral strategies women appropriate such as silence-ignoring harassment, purposely switching places in the street in order to avoid men in abovementioned examples do not render women incapable as agents defining their experiences with multivariate forms of public violence. Instead, women are more often keen on assessing each situation individually as it applies to their sense of safety and culturally bound notions of modesty. Walking fast and keeping their eyes focused straight ahead entails a form of walking with purpose, I dually argue suggests two things. One, the tacit notion of maintaining one's respectability and 'fictive invisibility' as described by Chahidi (1981) and secondly, silence is a non-verbal form of negotiation women invoke in order to shame male harassers. My analysis critiques the adoption of Western, feminist discourse which aims to define public harassment as 'sexual harassment.' In fleshing out a local understanding of harassment, I found that Egyptian society grapples with the issues of how to name it and how to then deal with it. In order to effectively lessen the rates of harassment both foreign and Egyptian
women receive, I argue that the powerful forces behind the Egyptian feminist movement take into consideration the collective responses and experiences of women from diverse class backgrounds. The concept of feminism is not universal so locating harassment in its local, cultural context may prove to be more successful than appropriating it within a discourse that misaligns itself with Egypt's historical moment. In vying for women's rights to space, we need to separate universal from particular in order to better contextualize the issues at hand. Ortner (1972) rightly challenges this distinction of universal versus particular in a number of ways. She argues, “…That each culture, in its own way and in its own terms, makes this evaluation.” There are many operant forms of feminism and the Egyptian feminist movement is proof in itself of the unique ways in which women take from their socio-economic, religious, political and historical experiences to cultivate formations of rights that are culturally relevant to their societies.

**Significance and Critical Perspectives towards the Future**

The three tiered exploration of street harassment in Egypt is an important contribution to understanding the gendered nuances of public space. Examining how women negotiate through public spaces, specifically, the street adds to the discourse which frames the notion of women's rights as human rights. Although I interviewed a range of men and women in my study, I strongly recommend future research on the topic of harassment to further explore class as a major theme. Although I highlight instances in which class conflates with street harassment, it would be useful to conduct a narrower approach of an ethnographic study which connects women from lower-working classes such as baladi women to issues of social space. In addition to this, variant masculinities in Egypt would also be valuable to analyze. Masculinity, like patriarchy is a difficult concept to write about as it requires a localized,
contextual understanding, much like 'street harassment.' I would find it incredibly fascinating to read more on men in crises in connection with aspects of patriarchy particularly in countries like Egypt since so many people link gender inequities to various social, economic, religious and political contexts. Further scholarship on these topics would greatly add to the body of knowledge, dispelling myths and redefining power dynamics on gender and subjectivity in the Middle East.
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