Copyright Statement

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

This thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognize the author's right to be identified as the author of this thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from their thesis.

General copyright and disclaimer

In addition to the above conditions, authors give their consent for the digital copy of their work to be used subject to the conditions specified on the Library Thesis Consent Form and Deposit Licence.
Gender Justice and the Politics of Sexual Harassment

Hala Nasr

A thesis submitted in complete fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Development Studies, the University of Auckland, 2016
Abstract

This thesis aims to understand whether the Egyptian state’s preoccupation with sexual harassment promotes gender justice. It poses the following questions: how women and men’s bodies are constructed and contested in the framing of sexual harassment; what ideological foundations, power relations, and national development goals inform this imagination; and how gender justice is imagined within the anti-sexual harassment agenda. It applies postcolonial feminist thought, alongside the Foucauldian concept of governmentality, to confront the dominant narrative of sexual harassment and expose gaps in the anti-sexual harassment agenda. It is not the intention of this thesis to present a black and white account of feminist praxis or direct criticism towards the movement in a way that promotes or opposes engagement with the state. Instead, it highlights what each of the various positions can bring to the table. This thesis does, however, do two things: first, it allows sexual harassment to be understood in the context of interconnected systems of structural oppression – capitalism, patriarchy, and imperialism. Second, it encourages a reinvigoration of Gender and Development through a return to its radical postcolonial feminist roots. Ending sexual harassment, or achieving gender justice in Egypt, is unlikely without a strong comprehensive vision and strategy that recognises and mobilises around these intersections of oppressions. If one thing is certain, the current hetero-patriarchal capitalist structures governing the exploitation and abuse of women will continue until their foundations are dismantled.
Acknowledgements

To both the Faculty of Arts Masters Thesis Scholarship and the Kate Edgar Educational Charital Trust Masters Award, without which I would have not been able to travel to Egypt and conduct this research.

To Dr. Anita Lacey, for her honest guidance, gracious wisdom, and patience throughout the year. I am also grateful to Professor Andreas Neef whose support earlier in the year encouraged me to pursue a Masters degree.

To a best friend and comrade, Nathalie Jaques, without your sincere assurances and countless edits, this thesis would surely not have seen the light of day.

To my sister, Eman, whose love knows no bounds.

To my parents, Mama and Baba, this thesis is dedicated to you and to all the struggles you have endured in Aotearoa to ensure my education came first.

To Jai Patel, my love like oceans, for being the rock in my life, resolute and true. His love inspires my intellectual curiosity and empasions my commitment to social justice. For that, I am truly blessed.
Table of Contents

Abstract.............................................................................................................................. ii

Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................ iii

Table of Contents ........................................................................................................... iv

List of Illustrations ......................................................................................................... viii

Glossary of Terms ............................................................................................................. ix

Glossary of Abbreviations ............................................................................................. x

Transliteration ................................................................................................................ xi

Chapter One: Introduction .............................................................................................. 1

Thesis Outline ................................................................................................................... 5

Background ..................................................................................................................... 8

Chapter Two: Conceptual Framework ............................................................................. 14

Postcolonial Feminism .................................................................................................... 14

Governmentality ............................................................................................................. 18

Conclusion ....................................................................................................................... 22

Chapter Three: Approaching the Problem ..................................................................... 25

Defining sexual harassment ......................................................................................... 25

Positionalities ................................................................................................................. 26

Research design ............................................................................................................. 30

Interviews ....................................................................................................................... 30

Contemporary primary sources ................................................................................... 36
### Chapter Four: Reviewing the Literature

- **Women In Development (WID)** .............................................. 42
- **Women and Development (WAD)** ........................................ 44
- **Gender And Development (GAD)** ....................................... 45
- **Institutionalisation** .......................................................... 47
- **Empowerment** .................................................................... 48
- **Logic of Rights** .................................................................. 50

### Chapter Five: Dominant Histories of Sexual Harassment

- **25 January Revolution, 2011** .............................................. 54
- **Expressive Justice** ............................................................. 57
  - The collective apology ......................................................... 58
  - The rape trials ..................................................................... 61
- **The Decline of Morality** .................................................... 64
- **Decay of Culture** ............................................................. 65
- **Disintegration of Quality Education** ................................. 67
- **Conclusion** ....................................................................... 70

### Chapter Six: Counter-histories of Sexual Harassment

- **Exposing Denial and Forgetting** ........................................ 72
- **Virginity Tests: The State as the Perpetrator** ....................... 76
Politicising the Collective Apology ............................................................... 78

Gradual, but not new ................................................................. 80

Black Wednesday, 2005: It Has Happened Before ....................... 82

Survivors, Not Victims ........................................................................... 84

Honouring Protest: The Red Line ...................................................... 85

Economic Factors .................................................................................. 87

Conclusion ............................................................................................. 90

Chapter Seven: Governmentalities of Sexual Harassment ............... 91

The Hybrid State .................................................................................. 92

The National Council of Women: in/out-side the state ...................... 95

Disciplining Harassers ........................................................................... 98

Criminalisation ........................................................................................ 99

Specialised women’s police unit .......................................................... 105

Threat of terror ...................................................................................... 108

Disciplining the Harassed ..................................................................... 110

Through nationalism ............................................................................. 111

Through responsibility ........................................................................... 115

Conclusion ............................................................................................. 118

Chapter Eight: Possibilities for Transformative Change ................. 120

Logics of Feminist Praxis ....................................................................... 120

With the state ........................................................................................ 122
Against the state.................................................................126

Questioning Feminist Praxis ..............................................134

Complicating Empowerment .............................................134

Disrupting Rights-based Logic .........................................140

Gendering the Economic Factor .......................................144

Enacting Gender Justice ..................................................146

Conclusion ..........................................................................149

Chapter Nine: Towards Radicalising Gender And Development ....151

References ........................................................................157
# List of Illustrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>List of research participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The structure of an apology</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Egyptian security forces stripping and beating female protester</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>HarassMap's geographic map of sexual harassment incidence</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female officer from specialised unit violently reprimanding a harasser in downtown Cairo</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Imprint’s anti-sexual harassment comic strips campaign in Cairo metro stations</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glossary of Terms

‘Abaya: Islamic dress

Eid: Celebration that marks the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan

Ha’ek ‘alena: The blame is with us

Hijab: Islamic scarf that covers the hair

Infitah: The opening of the market

Kefaya: Enough

Khul’: The right to divorce husband through foregoing any financial claims

Moulid: The observance of the birthday of the Islamic prophet Mohamed

Mu’aksa: Flirtation

Pākehā: New Zealand Europeans

Sa’ayda: Egyptians from Upper Egypt

Sha’by: Refers to shanty towns or more generally, poor or uneducated people

Taharrush: Sexual harassment
Glossary of Abbreviations

ADEW: Association for the Development and Empowerment of Women

CEDAW: The UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

ECWR: Egyptian Centre for Women’s Rights

EIPR: Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights

GAD: Gender and Development

GIZ: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Development agency)

MENA: Middle East and North Africa

NCW: National Council for Women

NDP: National Democratic Party

NGO: Non-governmental organisation

NSVAW: National Strategy for the Elimination of Violence against Women

SCAF: Supreme Council of the Armed Forces

SIS: Official State Information Services

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund

WAD: Women and Development

WID: Women in Development
Transliteration

I have tried to follow the system of transliteration adopted by the International Journal of Middle East Studies, which reduces diacritics to a minimum, to allow for ease of reading for those with no familiarity with the Arabic language. I deviate only to use accepted English spelling for well-known placenames and people, such as Tahrir and Cairo.
Chapter One: Introduction

Many reflections and conversations regarding the gendered impact of the (counter)-revolutionary processes in Egypt begin and end at the problematisation of sexual harassment. Its characterisations give the impression that sexual harassment is a uniquely Egyptian-specific cultural problem. For some, the very existence of public discussion on sexual harassment represents a rupture in the state’s hegemony, following the 25 January revolution in 2011, due to the outright unwillingness to even recognise its existence in the past. The state has made grand proclamations, hailing the criminalisation of sexual harassment in 2014 as a significant step forward for women’s status in Egypt. Reminded of Foucault’s reflections in *History of Sexuality: Volume I* (1976, 36), where he stated, “[it is] as if the fact of speaking about sex were of itself more important than the forms of imperatives that were imposed on it by speaking about it,” it is ultimately a sense of unease with such proclamations of gendered improvement that motivated the direction of this thesis. This unease, like Nadje Al-Ali’s (2014), stems from simplification, where the complex and contradictory ways in which the problematisation of sexual harassment has affected women, men, and gender norms and relations are disregarded, as well as the utter discord with the all-too persistent machinations of patriarchy that continue to be entrenched.

My experiences living in Cairo in 2013, immediately following the June 30 uprising against former President Mohamed Morsi, certainly contribute to this unease. One particularly distressing example was a close friend’s family’s use of female genital mutilation to punish his female cousin. Her crime was the family’s discovery of a photo of her alongside an unknown boy on Facebook. Such experiences,
compounded with the discriminatory personal status laws that privilege husbands in matters of divorce unless wives forego any financial entitlements, the persistence of illegal child marriage and female genital mutilation, the condoning of marital rape, and inaccessibility of safe abortion for most women (see Sholkamy, 2012; Human Rights Watch, 2015; ECWR, 2014) make it entirely pertinent to ask: What led the state to act upon sexual harassment and not other forms of gender-based violence? What really has changed for women? It is the state’s preoccupation with ending sexual harassment, as well as the problematisation of Egyptian ‘culture,’ that this thesis seeks to unpack and analyse.

Sexual harassment intervention is not inherently progressive policy, but a political project that presents a particular gendered vision of development, with its own set of contradictions and contestations. The anti-sexual harassment agenda cannot be removed from the broader political climate that it is propagated within, namely a climate of securitised nationalism and a domestic ‘war on terror’. Hence, it is appropriate to examine the politics of truth, which includes gendered ideals of citizenship and disciplinary technologies of regulation and intervention, constructed and instituted as a result of sexual harassment’s inclusion into the state’s artillery. How are women and men’s bodies (re)-constructed and contested in the framing of sexual harassment? How is gender justice imagined within the anti-sexual harassment agenda? What ideological foundations, power relations, and national development goals inform this imagination? This thesis seeks to answer these questions, grounding analysis in the experiences of feminists and relevant primary sources, in order to reveal contradictions and contestations within the anti-sexual harassment movement.¹

¹ The anti-sexual harassment movement is not a fixed entity or collective. For the purposes of this thesis, it will refer to an imagined collective that includes any state or non-state actors involved in sexual harassment mobilisation or intervention.
By understanding the dynamics underlining how sexual harassment interventions are imagined and enacted, as well as the power relations and structural factors they reflect, it is possible to make conclusions about the whether the state-led/sponsored sexual harassment interventions promote gender justice.

The stakes in the struggle to end sexual harassment are exceptionally high. Findings in the 2013 UN Women report, *Study on Ways and Methods to Eliminate Sexual Harassment in Egypt*, are of no surprise to anyone who has frequented the streets of Cairo or the Corniche of Alexandria. According to the report, 99.3% of women and girls surveyed reported having experienced at least one form of harassment, while 96.5% have been subject to harassment in the form of physical touching (UN Women, 2013). This was not the first time the issue of sexual harassment had been exposed. In 2005, the Egyptian Centre for Women’s Rights (ECWR) launched its ‘Safe Streets for Everyone’ initiative to combat sexual harassment. In 2008, ECWR released a survey detailing that all women, veiled or not, experienced sexual harassment. It claimed 40% of women experienced inappropriate touching, while 30% experienced sexual harassment daily. In the same year, more than sixteen human rights organisations and independent groups formed the Task Force Against Sexual Violence, which released its own bill to amend penal code provisions on sexual violence in 2010. A regional conference dedicated to stressing the problem of sexual harassment, convened in Cairo in 2009, sponsored by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Swedish Institute of Development and coordinated by the ECWR. Despite film screenings, sharing educational materials, and publishing conference papers, the issue of sexual harassment did not become a public one until the January 25 revolution.
It was first propelled into the public discourse in part because of increased visibility of several notorious sexual assaults and mob rape cases during and beyond the revolution. These events occurred under the watch of former president Hosni Mubarak, the SCAF council, former president Mohamed Morsi, interim president Adly Mansour, and current president Abdel Fattah el Sisi. It was, however, the brutal sexual assault of a 42-year old woman in Tahrir, as she and millions alongside her celebrated President Abdel Fattah el Sisi’s inauguration that led to an unprecedented move by the state. In a televised visit to the survivor in hospital, Sisi apologised to her, urged every soldier, policeman, and chivalrous man to become agents of change, and declared war on sexual harassment.

The state has since employed a number of interventions. The first was the introduction of a presidential decree to amend the penal code. The decree changed the definitions of sexual harassment to any sexually unwanted behaviour, which includes sexual, verbally obscene, physical touching, through gestures or body language, or via technology. Harassers could be sentenced from six months to five-year imprisonment and/or a fine of 3000-5000LE (around $600-1000 NZD). Sexual harassment cases where the offender ‘intended to receive sexual gratification from the victim’ increased the penalty to at least one-year imprisonment and/or a fine of 5000-10,000LE (around $1000-2000 NZD). The decree also increased penalties to sentences of two to five years and a fine of 20,000-50,000LE (around $4000-10,000 NZD) for harassers in positions of power or authority over the survivor, such as through family or employment relations, if there were multiple individuals involved, or if weapons were used.

Other interventions were also pursued. A ministerial council was established, including the Prime Minister, the ministers of Interior Affairs, Education, Social
Solidarity and Religious Endowments, as well as the head of the National Council for Women, and representatives from Al-Azhar Mosque and the Coptic Orthodox Church. They proposed increasing security for women in public squares and celebrations, as well as raising awareness about harassment through media campaigns and schools. In response, the National Strategy for the Elimination of Violence against Women (NSVAW) was introduced on May 7 2015. Drafted by the National Council for Women with the cooperation of women’s organisations, it is a five-year strategy (2015-2020) that aims to coordinate the efforts of several ministries to raise awareness, standardise responses, and provide support for survivors of such crimes. A specialised all-women police unit to patrol public spaces was instituted and increased attention has been given to building the capacity of state institutions to respond to sexual harassment.

**Thesis Outline**

In the following chapter, the postcolonial feminist and governmentality infused conceptual foundations for this thesis are outlined. Their distinct characteristics, as well as their compatibility, are also discussed and justified in light of this thesis’ research questions. In addition, the conceptual positioning, predicated on revealing the interconnections, multiplicities, and complexities of women’s lives, helps to justify my approach to gender justice as being an anti-capitalist, anti-racist, and anti-sexist struggle against all forms of oppression.

Chapter Three details the methodological approach taken. Because this research is inherently qualitative, two tasks are undertaken: an analysis of contemporary primary sources pertaining to sexual harassment interventions and primary research in the field, for which the key method employed was semi-structured interviews. Before these are examined, the working definition of sexual harassment is
presented, using Mariz Tadros’ (2013) framework that differentiates between social and politically motivated sexual harassment. Finally, the chapter ends by discussing several ethical considerations, including various delegations of risk ascribed to aspects of the research process (Third World risk, security risk, and personal safety risk) and the proclivity for disclosures of trauma relating to sexual violence.

Chapter Four reviews the literature as it relates to three key areas of this research: gender justice, rights-based approaches to development, and gender and nationalism. It begins by tracking the contestations and continuities in the visions of gender justice across the three main frameworks of Women in Development, Women and Development, and Gender and Development. Three main contemporary issues (the institutionalisation of gender, empowerment, and the logic of rights) in feminist praxis are identified through this discussion and examined as relevant to my central research questions.

Chapter Five presents the dominant historical narratives surrounding sexual harassment. It is arranged around three key moments: the 25 January revolution, expressive justice through the collective apology and publicised rape trials, and the decline of morality. These moments were not identified as the sole drivers of the social imaginary of sexual harassment, but were useful in highlighting the relationship between power and historical production. Essentially, it will be argued the dominant historical narrative constructs a welcoming environment for punitive and cultural intervention.

Chapter Six complicates the social and political imaginary of sexual harassment by posing counter-histories that demonstrate silencing within the dominant historical narrative. These are arranged around four key junctures – exposing denial and forgetting, politicising the collective apology, challenging
misrepresentations, and presenting a nuanced economic argument. It explains the state’s involvement in sexual harassment intervention as not simply being about ending sexual harassment, but as having more to do with control – controlling acceptable perpetration, use of public space, and the direction of feminist praxis. The junctures are, therefore, imperative to highlighting the underlying ideological foundations and power relations, which in turn can inform novel possibilities for the feminist praxis that resist purely cultural arguments.

Chapter Seven reveals the nuts and bolts of the governmentalities of sexual harassment. The idea of the hybrid state is presented to explain the blurred boundaries between state and non-state actors, as well as the role of non-state actors within the governmentalities of sexual harassment. Second, the various disciplinary technologies, relying on the rationality of securitisation and morality, will be examined in relation to their enforcing and entrenching the normalisation of unquestioned state authority, as well as encouraging the expansion of state power. It will be ultimately argued that these rationalities and technologies contribute towards efforts of national reconstruction of a strong stable state and nation building through the moralising of Egyptian masculinity and femininity, which subdues dissent and demands unity to face the problems overwhelming the country.

Chapter Eight discusses feminist possibilities for transformative change in light of the anti-sexual harassment movement’s entanglement in authoritarian and neoliberal governmentalities. It begins with a discussion of the dynamics and logics of non-state actors working with and against the state, in addition to unpacking the binary of ‘with’ and ‘against’. Points of contention identified in this discussion, specifically the depth and truth to claims of subversive empowerment, the entanglement of the ‘rights’ idea in gendered neoliberal governmentalities, and the
impact of excluding economics from understandings of sexual harassment, are then interrogated. Lastly, these observations give a reinvigorated vision of Gender and Development and feminist praxis, used to highlight possibilities for transformative change when the interconnectedness of oppressions – economic, social, cultural, and political – are brought to the fore.

**Background**

The inclusion of 25 January Egyptian revolution in 2011 in a narrative of inspired Arab awakening (see Dabashi, 2012) has given the distinct impression that Arabs had been slumbering through the social, political, and economic injustices imposed upon them for decades upon decades. The vocal participation and leadership of women in the 2011 uprisings factored into this perception due to an underlying misconception of the Arab world that assumes women were not previously active political subjects. In fact, Egyptian women’s political organising and protesting began much earlier. Through the recovery of oral histories, archival research, and careful readings of memoirs, Margot Badran (1995) traced the beginnings of organised feminism in Egypt in the early twentieth century that pushed for women’s inclusion into the public space. She concentrated primarily on the members of the Egyptian Feminist Union founded in 1923, documenting their defiant activities, varying stances, confrontations with male activists, and interactions with European feminists. Baron (1994), on the other hand, pointed to numerous women-led periodicals that proliferated in late-nineteenth century as poignant examples of the significance of female intellectuals in literary and cultural transformations. These feminists played a significant role in the success of the 1919 nationalist independence movement, publicly and notably putting their bodies and money on the line, which eventually led to Egyptian independence from British colonisation in 1922. For example, Huda Shaarawi, founder of the
Egyptian Feminist Union, organised one of the largest protests of the revolution, whose front was held solely by women, on March 16, 1919 (Badran, 1995; Lanfranchi, 2015).

Despite the significant role that feminists had in bringing an end to British rule, much of their demands were sidelined by the new constitutional monarchy, headed by the once-exiled and then-Prime Minister Saad Zaghloul (1859-1927) (Hafez, 2015; Lanfranchi, 2015). The only changes instituted were increasing the minimum marriage age to 16 and introducing more opportunities for women’s education (Hafez, 2015). As a result, the number of women in the labour force in 1927 was 46,667 and by 1936, it had increased to 281,000 (Hatem, 1986). Evidently, the relationship between nationalism and feminism, which fermented from the late nineteenth century onwards, gave feminists an acceptable entry point into political organising that their male counterparts could tolerate. The anti-imperialist stance required their feminism acquire the supposedly ‘modern’ gender roles seen in Europe within an Islamic framework (Hatem, 1986; Abu Lughod, 1998). As such, the liberalisation of women’s public participation came alongside a fierce fortification of women’s subordination in the private sphere (Hatem, 1986). According to Mervat Hatem (1986, 24), “It is this nationalist alliance against the British, not the capitalist transformation of society, that contributed to change in the status of women in modern Egyptian history”.

Even the 1952 revolution, led by the Free Officers’ Movement, which promised equality of the sexes as part of its secular and socialist vision for the Republic of Egypt did not challenge this fact. The National Charter promised the following, “Women must be made equal to men, and all the remaining chains that blocked their free movement and their positive participations in the society should be
abolished” (cited in Hatem, 1986, 29). Under Gamal Abdel Nasser’s (1918-1970) leadership, social welfare, education, and health care became available to all citizens, as did the right to vote (Hafez, 2015). While women’s role in public sphere was guaranteed and gave a degree of individual autonomy, their role in the private domain remained unchanged. Hatem (1986, 31) explained this is because “the existing personal status law undermined [the] commitment” to gender equality”.

Following Nasser’s death, Anwar Sadat (1918-1981) assumed power. His reign saw the introduction of an open door policy, known as the *infitah*, which led to a massive influx of foreign capital into the country and inevitable demise of welfare-state safety nets (Hafez, 2015; Hafez, 1986). This new neoliberal capitalist system was premised on the sustained assumption that the West was the sole proprietor of development (Mitchell, 2002). Timothy Mitchell (2002) claimed this development came through two complementary methods; the first was technological, hence the dependence on foreign capital, and the second was managerial, which required the West’s expertise. The system benefited a small Westernised Egyptian elite class but disadvantaged the majority of Egyptians (Hatem, 1986). Decreasing public sector wages, inflation, and economic stagnation contributed to rapidly deteriorating quality of life for this majority (Hatem, 1986).

As the divide between rich and poor grew, so did the influence of the formerly politically repressed Muslim Brotherhood – whose opposition to the personal status reforms introduced by Sadat’s wife Jehan eventually led to his assassination in 1981 (Hafez, 2015). Although costing him his life, the personal status reforms only introduced modest changes to women’s power in the private sphere. The amendments included requiring first wives to be notified if their husbands married a second wife and be given the choice to stay or divorce, divorced women were entitled to the
apartments they had been married in, and law enforcement could no longer force women who were refused divorce in court to return to their husband’s households (Hatem, 1986).

The onslaught of neoliberal capitalist ideology and foreign capital continued undisturbed under Sadat’s successor, Hosni Mubarak (1928-) and were in fact fortified through the structural adjustment policies of the 1990s (Zuhur, 2014; Hafez, 2015). These policies, determined by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, have had a long-term impact on the social and economic structures in Egypt, including entrenched extreme intergenerational poverty, the complete deterioration of state institutions, the removal of institutional safety nets, and mass migration from rural areas in order to increase industrialisation (Hafez, 2015; Elyachar, 2007; Mitchell, 2002). The neoliberal economic policies resulted in devastating inequities in income, wealth, education, and health (UNDP, 2013). However, some gains were made for women as a result of tireless feminist advocacy (though it is often credited to Suzanne Mubarak and the National Council for Women), which included a 2% quota for women in parliament, the famous *khul’* law, which allows women to divorce their husbands under certain conditions, and the appointment of female judges by presidential decree (Zuhur, 2014). Despite heavy policing, there were public demonstrations against national grievances and mass labour strikes in the established factory cities of el Mahalla, el Kubra, and Kafra el Dawwar. However, there was little unified opposition until the uprising in Tunisia, which resulted in the toppling of the dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

These events ignited already existing tensions and conflicts, particularly those fermenting as a result of the police’s treatment of Khaled Said, who was beaten to death on 6 June 2010 in Alexandrian suburb, Sidi Gaber (Zuhur, 2014; Hafez, 2015).
The police and coroner both claimed that Said died of a drug overdose. A protest in memory of Said was planned for 25 January. A week earlier, a girl called Asmaa Mahfouz posted a video that went viral, calling on youth to stand in solidarity and attend the protest. She challenged youth by stating that if she as a ‘girl’ was brave enough to, then surely others should too. Such a call invariably raises some feminist discomfort regarding the gender roles they inscribe (Hafez, 2015). Still, the protest’s aim expanded, calling for an end to Mubarak’s reign of terror, attracting millions of disgruntled and disaffected citizens (Abdelrahman, 2012). The scale of defiance was certainly unprecedented under Mubarak’s reign, yet it was the ceaseless string of direct action, epitomising the resistance politics of the past decade, which brought Egypt to that point (Abdelrahman, 2012). Political repression was certainly not the sole grievance of protesters. Concerns about rising economic and social inequalities, the deterioration of social institutions, and disappearance of social security nets were also on protesters’ agendas (Abdelrahman, 2012; Hafez, 2015). The inequities described in the UNDP (2013) report quantify these claims. On February 11 2011, Mubarak announced his resignation and handed power over to a military council, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF).

The enactment of transparent multi-party electoral democracy was then pursued, or at the very least attempted. Mohammed Morsi (1951-), leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, won the first post-revolution presidential election on 18 June 2012. This would be the first victory of an Islamist head of state in the entire Middle East region. Morsi’s reign lasted little over a year before mass protests were called on June 30 2013. Millions of protesters took to the streets again to protest against an increasingly authoritarian and Islamist agenda, which disregarded the predominantly secular opposition and the rule of law. Demanding the immediate resignation of the
president, the rallies were partly a response to Tamarod, a grassroots movement that launched a petition earlier in the year calling for the Muslim Brotherhood to step down. It claimed to have collected more than 22 million signatures. On July 3, General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi (1954-), head of the Egyptian Armed Forces at the time, announced in a live televised address that Morsi had been deposed and replaced by the head of the constitutional court Adly Mansour. Nearly a year later, Sisi was sworn in as President on 8 June 2014. Led by Sisi, the campaign to recreate a national unified identity, which is currently subsuming local politics, has thrust Egypt into a process of nation-(re)building. Examples of the waves of propaganda are visible in nationalist signs posted along all major bridges, exuding statements like 'Long live Egypt' and 'Egypt is the mother of the world' and posters of the newly elected President Abdel Fattah el Sisi plastered all over the country. It is in this national moment in which sexual harassment intervention has emerged.
Chapter Two: Conceptual Framework

Postcolonial Feminism

This thesis is situated within the dramatic epistemological, theoretical, and methodological deviations within the social sciences that culminated in the emergence of the postcolonial feminist tradition. Also referred to as Third World feminism, Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003) defines postcolonial feminism as a transnational anti-capitalist feminist critique that uses historical materialism and racialised gender analysis to deconstruct and challenge normative and gender essentialist claims made in the name of ‘development’. Scholars, such as Anzaldúa (1987), hooks (1981), Mohanty (2003), Mohanty, Russo and Torres (1991), Narayan and Harding (2000), Rai (2002), Rai and Lievesley (1996), and Rajan (1993) have demanded that difference between women be recognised and gender issues not be isolated from issues of class, race, ethnicity, and other demographic factors. As such, postcolonial feminism confronts and resists the monolithic notion of patriarchy constructed by Western liberal feminisms that create identically reductive and homogenous notions of ‘Third World difference’ – “that stable, ahistorical something that oppresses most if not all women in these countries” (Mohanty, 2003, 19).

These notions have a number of underlying assumptions. First, the assumption of women as a coherent unified group with identical interests and desires, irrespective of class, ethnic, or race, among other positionalities (Mohanty, Russo and Torres, 1991; Rajan, 1993). This is a product of the tendency of both contemporary globalised market-led approaches and state-centric approaches to imagine the Third World as a homogenous entity to pry apart and dissect, leading to a general inability to reconcile the multiplicity and rich diversity making up women’s political, economic, and social realities (Mohanty, 2003; Narayan and Harding, 2000; Mohanty, Russo and Torres,
Moreover, it assumes Third World women require saving, ignoring the multiplicity of strategies and tactics these women are already employing to empower themselves, even against projects implemented in the name of their betterment (Mohanty, 2003; Narayan and Harding, 2000). As such, postcolonial feminism requires an analytical framework that recognises and examines the intersections of different demographic factors and how structures and power relations influence lived experiences and opportunities available to different women (Crenshaw, 1991). An element of this position intrinsically rejects orientalist stereotyping or generalisations of Third World men (Mohanty, 2003; Sen and Grown, 1987). This requires a double-edged approach that both recognises violence committed by certain individual men and the structural conditions enacting violence on certain men and women.

An offshoot of postcolonial scholarship (see Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1996; Hall and Jefferson, 1976; Said, 1979; Spivak, 1987, 1990), postcolonial feminist scholarship attempts to disrupt and centre imperialist knowledge production, which through the processes of gendered racialisation and cultural essentialism, constructs a world of binaries – North and South, East and West, developed and developing, modern and primitive. According to Edward Said (1978/1991), these monolithic rigid notions of the ‘Other’ are always in radical opposition to the superior, rational, and progressive West. The West becomes the sole proprietor of development and depicts the ‘Other’ as needing its technological and managerial oversight to realise its development prospects (Mitchell, 2000). These binaries reinforce identically reductive and homogenous notions of ‘Third World difference’ (Mohanty, 2003). As such, sexual harassment must be understood as entangled in the socio-political space of its making, or more simply, in relation to power – a laboured leap from the positivist objectivism of traditional social inquiry.
Underlying the postcolonial feminist framework introduced is a disposition for intersectionality, showing the simultaneity of oppressions as fundamental to experience of social and political marginality (Mohanty, 2003). It recognises the important connections between the multiple, conflicting or complimentary factors and lived experiences that influence an individual’s life (Crenshaw, 1991). Sociocultural discrimination and oppression experienced by women must be understood to exist within the broader logic of hetero-patriarchal capitalism. This means economic processes and mechanisms are not treated as sole explanations, nor as the sole junction for intervention, but as one of many other factors that make up the social and political conditions of existence (Anthias, 2014; Sen and Grown, 1987). By understanding sexual harassment in the context of these underlying forces of domination and subordination, development interventions can move beyond the cultural argument, one that can easily demonise and reduce the problem of sexual harassment to being a problem inherent to the Egyptian man. Instead, it is exposed as a problem of power entrenched within the interconnected systems of structural oppressions and, as such, effectively demanding their dismantling (Mohanty, Russo and Torres, 1991; Mohanty, 2003; Sen and Grown, 1987).

Deconstruction is intimately linked with ‘doing’ postcolonial feminism. It is important here to introduce Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. In methodological terms, Spivak2 largely embraces both deconstruction and Marxism. In this respect, she is distinct from Edward Said, who is generally dismissive of deconstruction and cynical of Marxism, and Homi Bhabha, who embraces deconstruction and rejects Marxism, and is more closely linked to anti-capitalist postcolonial feminist scholars (Moore-Gilbert, Stanton and Malley, 1997). Spivak (1985) argues the usefulness of her

---

2 This thesis deviates from Spivak’s model by using Foucauldian conceptions of deconstruction (to be unpacked in Chapter Three) rather than Jacques Derrida’s (Moore-Gilbert, Stanton and Malley, 1997).
position as twofold. First, it safeguards against the violent benevolence of Western feminism whose form of liberation she likens to neocolonisation, or new forms of the domination and subordination, of the Third World woman. Second, it demonstrates how discourse constructs itself through the marginalisation of that which does not align with its dominant logic.

Deconstruction, therefore, requires “reading the text against the grain, or contrary to its ostensible logic” (Moore-Gilbert, Stanton and Malley, 1997, 146) and using marginalised subjects to expose the underlying assumptions behind the logic, thus exposing meaning and power (Moore-Gilbert, Stanton and Malley, 1997). To conclude, the postcolonial feminist work of exposing histories of power through deconstruction is also significant in terms of informing the direction of the commitment to transformative structural change that was described above (McEwan, 2001). Partha Chatterjee (1993, 137) clarified the relationship between deconstruction and resistance, stating:

We must think of discourse as situated within fields of power, not only constituting that field but also constituted by it. Dominance here cannot exhaust the claims to subjectivity, for even the dominated must always retain their autonomy. Otherwise, power would cease to be a relation; it would no longer be constituted by struggle.

Postcolonial feminism is not a purely academic exercise, though a component of it certainly involves research. In this way, praxis is at the core of ‘doing’ postcolonial feminism.
In attempting to unpack the Egyptian state’s decision to combat sexual harassment as a political project, I will locate the politicisation of sexual harassment within a broader understanding of power relations and structural factors that undermine projects for transformative change and gender justice. To do this, I will employ the Foucauldian concept of governmentality, which emerged from a lecture series he presented at the Collège de France (Foucault, 1978/2007). Michel Foucault’s study of governmentality traces the historical shifts in ways of thinking about and exercising power in certain societies, acknowledging that power is manifest in and through rationalities and technologies of governance, which exert and reinforce the construction of an ideal modern citizen (Ismail, 2011; McKee, 2009; Thompson, 2008).

In a lecture given on 11 January 1978, Foucault (1978/2007) predicated an examination of governmentality with five main thoughts. The first of these is power should be approached as a set of procedures or mechanisms; it is the analysis of these in which my study of governmentality will hedge itself. Second, these mechanisms are an intrinsic component of relations of (re)production, such as family, work, or sexual relations. In addition, these mechanisms contain within them internal hierarchies and subordinations. Third, the analysis of these mechanisms should be extended to an overall analysis of society. Foucault suggests here the analysis of mechanisms of power is inextricably linked to the history of economic transformations. Four, the object of analysis should not be to conform, rather to reveal “constrictions and blockages (ibid., 3) and provide effective tactical direction. Lastly, avoiding what he refers to as the “polemics within theoretical discourse” (ibid., 4) is imperative to evade falling into the trap of meaningless analysis. He ends stating,
“Never engage in polemics” (ibid., 4). It is these five considerations with which this thesis will employ the concept of governmentality.

Power, according to Foucault, should not be conceptualised as being imposed on or possessed by different actors or institutions, rather that it is immanent within all everyday interactions, including sexual, knowledge, and financial exchanges (Macleod and Durrheim, 2002). While his initial work focused on the micro dynamics of power, Foucault’s concept of governmentality eventually expanded the multidimensional discursive conceptualisation of power to allow an examination of the intersections between micro and macro level manifestations of power (ibid). Distinct from feudal pastoral power, modern government articulated its sovereignty through populations and individuals in the ‘conduct of conduct’ (Foucault, 1978/2007; Watts, 2003). This was exercised through a complex interconnected system of constructed apparatuses at many spatial levels, a myriad of institutions, procedures and strategies, employed to achieve control (Watts, 2003).

Simply put, a study of governmentality acknowledges that power is manifest in and through rationalities and technologies of governance, in which the latter is then split into technologies of force and technologies of self, and that these exert and reinforce the construction of a particular ideal of citizenship (Ismail, 2011; Thompson, 2008). Decentring analyses of power from being focused solely on the individual allows a bigger picture to be painted of power relations, the power/knowledge nexus and techniques and practices of governing populations (Ismail, 2011). In this way, “governmentality is simultaneously individualising and totalising” (Macleod and Durrheim, 2002, 4).

Governmentality is fundamentally a political project. It problematises life, intervening and acting upon it on two levels: first, the control of the population
(macro), and second, the subjugation of the individual body (micro) (Foucault, 1978/2007; Macleod and Durrheim, 2002; Thompson, 2008). Foucault describes this preoccupation with the exercise of disciplining power and administration of life using the concept of biopower (Foucault, 1978/2007; McKee, 2009). In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1975/1977) maps the emergence of various disciplinary technologies, including public execution and torture, followed by a ‘humanist’ justice system, and later the prison system. Disciplinary technology in the modern day and age became less about forcing obedience and more about regulating populations in such a way where ideal individual behaviours were normalised and deviance from these norms led to ostracising judgement (Macleod, and Durrheim, 2002).

Operationalised through figureheads of authority, surveillance is imperative to enforcing disciplinary technologies, which in turn creates a culture of self-surveillance where individuals begin to regulate their own behaviour to fit the norm (Macleod, and Durrheim, 2002). One example of such is the concern with improving population health, where a number of technologies, particularly that of medical expertise, attempt to foster individual behaviour modification (Thompson, 2008).

Health promotion campaigns targeting issues like smoking and obesity require individuals to carry out self-surveillance by engaging prevention strategies, such as healthy diets, themselves (Thompson, 2008). The rationalities of governance here lay in increased efficiency and productivity. In highlighting that “discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)” (1977/1979, 138), Foucault provides useful analytical tools for identifying the practices and strategies that are both plural and immanent in the state, thus allowing for an examination of whether the anti-sexual harassment
discourses and interventions are operationalised as forms of disciplinary power to police women (and men’s) bodies.

A governmentality analysis is not antithetical to the overarching conceptual framework of postcolonial feminism. Scholars such as Nick Thomas and David Scott have used governmentality to analyse late colonialism, where the colonial ‘divide and conquer’ leveraging of local elites and focus on emboldening difference between culturally constituted groups expresses “a clear instance of the attention to population that Foucault describes” (Holden, 2010, 445). While the scholarly work surrounding colonial governmentality – what Scott (1999, 55) defined as “politico-ethical project of producing subjects and governing… conduct” – allowed for an important link between postcolonialism and governmentality thought to be made, there is a danger that the history of colonialism starts to appear linear in a way that presents a “rigid division between sovereignty and governmentality” (Holden, 2010, 445).

Emerging in response to similar criticisms, the subfield of postcolonial governmentality “refuse[s] to see colonial and postcolonial apparatuses of power as appendices to European modernity, defining them, instead, as constitutive of modernity and necessary to any adequate thinking of it” (Griffiths, 2015, 4). In addition, Holden (2000, 445) stated, “If philosophically nationalism was colonialism’s antithesis, the new developmental nation-state found itself unable to escape the application, and frequently the intensification and development, of colonial governmental rationalities”. Postcolonial governmentality is therefore useful for revealing the continuity between the colonial occupied state and the postcolonial nation-state, as well as “chang[ing] how we imagine the so-called postcolonial in such a way as, perhaps, to animate a more meaningful thought of decolonisation” (Griffiths, 2015, 2).
While there has been extensive scholarship employing the study of governmentality in relation to issues of sexuality and reproduction (such as Ali, 2002; De Souza, 2013; El-Shakry, 2005; Hatem, 1997; Richey, 2004; and Thompson, 2008), little research has focused specifically on sexual harassment. The work of Paul Amar (2011), in his highly regarded paper, ‘Turning the Gendered Politics of the Security State Inside Out? Charging the Police with Sexual Harassment in Egypt,’ informs to a great extent the focus of my thesis. Detailing the geopolitical and local dynamics involved in the politicisation of sexual harassment, Amar probes into the historical contexts of state-sponsored sexual terrorism, the policing of female bodies and criminalising of poor male bodies, and the discourses mobilised to support these motives. While Amar is particularly interested in discourses constructing Egyptian men as ‘predatory’, I aim to extend the focus to the various constructions of both men and women that have been mobilised.

**Conclusion**

The conceptual infusion of postcolonial feminism and governmentality is deliberate. There has been a tendency within post-Foucauldian governmentality literature, as Kim McKee (2009) has noted, to focus on the discursive elements of political rationalities and bodies of knowledge. This same critique has been levied against postcolonial scholars who have applied Foucauldian theory more generally. For examples, a common critique (see Smith, 1994) of Edward Said’s *Culture and Imperialism* has pointed to the constraints posed by discursive or textual analysis on the capacity for genuine resistance, which supposedly reduces decolonisation to a literary exercise.

Ironically, Nikolas Rose (1999, 20) has claimed that this is in fact the point of governmentality analyses, stating, “so to interpret them is to interpret interpretations:
in this way is already to change things, ‘to change life,’ the present – and oneself’. A study of governmentality is concerned with the strategies of governance in terms of “their presuppositions, their assumptions, their exclusions, their naiveties and their knaveries, their regimes of vision and their spots of blindness” (ibid., 19) and not the “actual organisation and operation of systems of rule, of the relations that obtain amongst political and other actors and organisations at local levels and their connection into actor networks and the like” (ibid., 19). Such a position on governmentality is perhaps suited to the nature of Rose’s work, but does little to firmly expound why the concept of governmentality should not feature in applied critical research such as that of this thesis. Rose’s position seems all the more absolutist considering the contribution of Foucauldian thought to postcolonial and subaltern scholarly work, which have invoked his conceptualisations of power and governance in their explorations of the lived experiences of marginalised groups (see Said, 1978/1991, 1983; Mbembe, 2001; Mohanty, 2003; Ismail, 2011).

The postcolonial feminism and governmentality conceptual approach is purposefully not applied in any prescriptive way throughout the research process. These analytic positionings, each providing useful analytic tools, were fluidly complementary in terms of addressing the other’s weaknesses. For example, the critique of some feminist scholars (see Cooper, 1994) that governmentality analyses tended to view power as being imposed equally on all individuals in a particular social location, thus ignoring the complexities and hierarchies of social location, is rebuffed by postcolonial feminism’s inherent attentiveness to intersectionality and the connectedness of oppressions.

For the purposes of this thesis, governmentality is used to deconstruct the “particular regimes of truth, concerning the conduct of conduct, ways of speaking
truths and the costs of doing so” (Rose, 1999, 19) in relation to state-led/sponsored sexual harassment intervention in Egypt. The relationship between micro and macro levels of power complements the postcolonial feminist position on the interconnectedness of the structural oppressions of capitalism, patriarchy, and imperialism. This then is used to unearth potential junctures for resistance and practical possibilities for affecting transformative change that are available to the anti-sexual harassment movement. As per the essence of governmentality, the goal here is not to make value-based judgements of the ‘goodness’ or ‘badness’ (Rose, 1999) of the movement. Instead, the thesis is concerned with excavating possibilities that are in line with postcolonial feminist visions of gender justice i.e. the dismantling of these systems of structural oppressions, and in turn, potentially reinvigorating Gender and Development praxis.
Chapter Three: Approaching the Problem

This chapter will unpack the methodological framework i.e. the application of the conceptual framework. Sexual harassment as a phenomenon is understood in multiple and often-conflicting ways, thus requiring a working definition of sexual harassment to first be presented. After which, I position myself in this thesis through a brief exploration of the multiplicities and histories that bear influence on the way I have gone about conceptualising and completing the research. This is followed by an outline of the research design and process, where two tasks were undertaken: an analysis of contemporary primary sources pertaining to sexual harassment interventions and primary research in the field, for which the key method employed was semi-structured interviews. Lastly, the chapter ends by discussing several ethical considerations that arose during the research process, including various delegations of risk ascribed to aspects of the research process (Third World risk, security risk, and personal safety risk) and the proclivity for disclosures of trauma relating to sexual violence.

Defining sexual harassment

The working definition for sexual harassment (or taharrush) used in this research is any unwanted non-verbal, verbal, or physical sexual behaviour, which includes catcalls, comments, facial expressions, indecent exposure, phone calls, touching, groping, rape/sexual assault, and stalking (HarassMap, 2015a). The word taharrush is a relatively new term in the daily lexicon, replacing the traditionally used word, mu’aksa (flirtation) (Hafez, 2014). Mariz Tadros’ (2013) framework distinguishing between socially motivated and politically motivated sexual harassment also informs
the understanding of sexual harassment. Tadros defines socially motivated harassment as driven by diverse ‘social’ factors influencing decision-making, which could include individual desire to dominate women, to have a ‘good time,’ or due to sexual frustration. Politically motivated harassment, on the other hand, is defined as sexual violence in a “conscious or unconscious [effort], to obtain or maintain political power” (ibid., 5). It can include anything from verbal harassment, assault, rape, and sexual torture as a result of different conflicts, including between different political groups, as was the case during the January 25 revolution. Such a framework allows the focus to extend beyond the existence of sexual harassment to the potential political utility of sexual harassment.

In addition, it is important to recognise the incidence of sexual harassment against some men and young boys too. For the purposes of this research, I have chosen to focus exclusively on sexual harassment of girls and women. The reasoning behind this narrowed focus is the significantly greater levels of recorded data available on sexual harassment of girls and women, but also because of the broader structural context of patriarchy and historical presence of a supposedly well-established women’s movement. Additionally, my own daily experiences of sexual harassment while living in Cairo in 2013 and then while researching there in 2015 have invariably factored into this research choice.

**Positionalities**

An important element of the methodological framework of this project is a commitment to reflexivity. Ilan Kapoor (2004) draws on Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s extensive work to argue that demarcating the borders which we occupy, cross, and leave behind is an integral part of ‘doing development’. As discursive depictions are an expression of positionalities across time, space, class, gender, and
race (and beyond), they bear great influence on the way development is written about or done by scholars, activists, and practitioners. It also raises questions concerning, for example, its ethico-political implications, underlyling unequal power dynamics, and masked complicity of silencing (Kapoor, 2004). Acknowledging the politics involved in knowledge production and challenging the use and abuse of power in such a way that makes “power visible” (Mohanty, 2003, 231) requires the researcher to demarcate the borders within which they live across and beyond and which ultimately shape the critical assumptions made within their research (Spivak, 1985). As Bart Moore-Gilbert, Gareth Stanton and Willy Malley (1997, 32) put forth, “After Spivak, there can be no question of ‘innocent,’ transparent or intrinsically politically correct readings of (neo)-colonial problematics, grounded in an assumed but unexamined identification with, or ‘benevolence’ towards, the oppressed”.

As a daughter of Egyptian immigrants to Aotearoa, New Zealand, I occupy a range of subject positions that unquestionably play a role in determining the power I possess in different spaces. In Aotearoa, a settler nation-state with over 180 years of colonial history, the dominant discourses surrounding colonisation have been framed through a depoliticised and individualised bicultural lens. This sets up a ‘Māori-white Pākehā’ dichotomy that excludes non-white Pākehā immigrants and fails to recognise my own complicity in colonial dynamics. Therefore, my subject position in Aotearoa is often invisible, materialising only in relation to spaces where I am recognised as ‘Muslim’ or ‘Arab,’ which has increasingly become the case since the heightened securitisation and anti-terrorism sensationalisation post 9/11. The terrorist reductionism does not disappear upon returning to my parent’s homeland, Egypt, where my radical feminist and communist politics can demonise me and therefore alienate me in much the same way.
This approach to reflexivity does not claim that only an insider, in this case an Egyptian born and raised in Egypt, can write on Egypt. In her book, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, Spivak (1987, 136) rejects the “the tired nationalist claims that only a native can know the scene”. It is this dichotomy that nationalists often use to discredit ideas they deem too foreign, or rather, foreign to their own interests. Spivak (1985) also warns that an attempt to purify voices or aspire for an ‘authentic’ history mistakenly assumes there is a ‘truth’ that can be retrieved independent of colonial influence. This is a decidedly Derridean position which always rejects the logocentrism of the ‘authentic origin’, the origin that justifies the status quo is always retroactively designated. Personally, I grew up aware of the passionate anti-Mubarak (read: anti-corruption) politics that drove my father to leave his homeland and the gendered racialised politics that brought my mother to settle down with him on the other side of the world. I was groomed by the local student politics of Auckland, impassioned with communist ideals and moments of radical direct action, and am now working for Shakti, a self-prescribed ethnic feminist anti-capitalist women’s organisation, which stands in solidarity with women experiencing domestic or family violence. My ideological politics are a product of my histories and the lived experiences I have amassed over twenty-five years; however, my interest in gender-based violence did not begin with Shakti. While working for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Cairo, sexual harassment was a part of my day-to-day experience. It became a part of the routine. There was not a day free of the fear of being subject to sexual harassment. In fact, it would be easier to count the days where I did not experience any form of sexual harassment than those when I did. The combination of these subjectivities undoubtedly shapes the way I ‘do’ this research on sexual harassment in Egypt.
My interdisciplinary educational background – undergraduate studies in health science and political science combined with postgraduate studies in development studies – hugely influenced the approach to this thesis. One discursive example of the disciplinary convergence was the accepted distinction between equality and equity within the health sciences. Equality is interested in equal treatment, while equity recognises the differences in individual’s ability to access opportunities and entitlements (World Health Organisation, 2016). This distinction partly influenced the decision not to use the term gender equality because, within some circles, it inherently denies the need for an intersectional approach that recognises that a fair system needs to provide certain individuals or populations with more assistance in order for them to reach the same accepted baseline as others. Another example is visible in the distinction I established between the discipline I align with and the conceptual framework I interrogate with. It was assumed amongst my peers in the Masters’ programme that scholarly work within Development Studies concerned with gender matters immediately situated my research within Gender and Development (GAD). This designation assumed some form of solidarity or the existence of coherent and accepted agenda. However, as will be discussed in Chapter Four, this is far from true. Applying GAD as conceptual approach, thus, made little sense. Instead, I approached GAD as a contested subfield to be unpacked in terms of how gender justice is understood and advanced. How it was to be unpacked, critiqued, and reinvigorated depended on my personal political commitment to postcolonial feminism, as well as the academic camaraderie between Foucauldian theories and postcolonial theories, which were a product of experiences in both the political science and Development Studies departments.
Research design

Undertaking fieldwork for this research was an express commitment to underscoring the histories of power surrounding sexual harassment in Egypt. As such, there are two layers of methods employed for generating data, alongside critical analysis of contemporary primary sources. Fieldwork for this research was conducted over the course of five weeks from late August to early October 2015. The fieldwork was funded through two scholarships, the Faculty of Arts Masters Thesis Scholarship and the Kate Edgar Masters Award. As a woman researcher, my access to geographical spaces was limited to the main urban centres of Cairo and Alexandria, where the combination of a safety net of friends and family and a variety of forms of private transport mitigated some of the risk of experiencing sexual harassment myself, at least on a psychological level. The ethics board’s conception of ‘risk’ extended even to the act of visiting and doing research in Egypt. These risks, along with other ethical considerations of handling disclosures and ensuring the safety of politically dissident participants will also be discussed.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviewing was the first method employed for generating data. Semi-structured interviews gave a necessary depth that delineated the converging and contested meanings consumed within anti-sexual harassment interventions, as well as complementing data gathered from the analysis of contemporary primary sources. Schulamit Reinharz and Lynn Davidman (1992) have argued that semi-structured interviewing had become the principal means for feminist inquiry. It gives participants a chance to be actively involved in the construction of data on their lives (Reinharz, 1992). Reflecting my commitment to self-reflexivity, this form of interviewing gave me the freedom to interact with the main themes of the research,
listening and watching, and learning to take cues from non-verbal body language were valuable skills for building rapport with participants, particularly those who were critical of the state and at times were clearly self-censoring out of fear of political repercussions. Sometimes this meant having to ask closed-ended questions because yes or no answers were less threatening, while other times, it meant reframing that specific topic up in a different non-confronting way.

Jodi Dean’s (1996) notion of ‘reflective solidarity’ is useful here. Reflective solidarity is interaction involving three persons that necessitates this positioning: “I ask you to stand by me, over and against a third” (ibid., 3). This notion is useful because, as Mohanty (2003) noted, it is praxis-oriented. It requires an active embodiment of solidarity that moves away from identifying participants with either ‘good’ or ‘bad’ approaches to gender justice. Instead, it tries to understand the histories of power shaping their trajectories in order to help identify what the possibilities for transformation are. The participants in this research gave me access not only to their work and positionalities, but constructions of their cultural memory, which was an invaluable asset to the chapters on histories of sexual harassment.

The everyday resistance of Egyptian woman to sexual harassment, whether it is the casual pinprick on the bus or the pepper spray in the taxi, must be recognised as forms of intervention in their own right. Having carried around pepper spray in my handbag for the majority of my time working in Cairo, these brave, yet small, resistances are certainly not taken for granted. However, the focus of this research remains with the histories and rationalities that shape state-led sexual harassment intervention, therefore, potential participants were limited to those familiar with or directly involved in it these projects. The process of recruitment involved sending a copy of the participant information sheet and a poster detailing the focus of my
research to a list of various state and non-governmental actors that I had compiled upon carrying out initial research on current state-led interventions. Interviews were also mediums for further recruitment, as participants’ would return to their respective organisations and share their experiences with colleagues.

Interviews, lasting between 30 and 90 minutes, were semi-structured steered by four main themes – the dynamics of sexual harassment, the intervention approach of criminalisation, the role of the state, and alternative intervention approaches – and the participants themselves. Before conducting each interview, time was put aside to share our personal histories, both the participant and myself. This is indicative of Sania Evans’ (1979) positioning as the ‘knowledgeable stranger,’ where the researcher becomes neither a friend nor a stranger. The power dynamics within interviews depended mainly on the relative social status of the participant. For example, it was important to gain the respect of the director of an organisation interviewed by stating my qualifications and previous experience with UNDP, while with other participants sharing my background in social justice organising in Auckland was enough to build a connection. As a result, a few of the participants have become friends with whom I maintain regular contact. Further to this, the sharing of personal histories often indicated the direction that the interview might go in, particularly in terms of detecting participants’ political identifications or loyalties. There was an order to the supposed disorder of a semi-structured interview that allowed me to cover the themes and the silences, having understood the various positionalities the participants travelled across.

By the end of field work, I had interviewed 23 individuals in Egypt who were either a) affiliated with, employed or volunteered for an anti-sexual harassment organisation/group, b) affiliated with or employed by a women’s organisation that has
organised around sexual harassment, c) involved in organising against sexual harassment independently to any organised group structure, or d) scholarly experts in gender-related issues and/or sexual harassment in Egypt (Table 1). Interviews were either conducted in public places, like cafes, in affluent areas in Cairo and Alexandria that are generally considered safe from protests, disturbances, or political surveillance. The interviews were conducted in English or Arabic.

Table 1: List of research participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Participant (pseudoynym)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mohamed</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hisham</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nawal</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>Basma (Imprint)</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jana</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Ana Shoft Taharosh (I Saw Harassment)</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Farouk</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Ana Shoft Taharosh (I Saw Harassment)</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hend</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>American University of Cairo</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hanin</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>American University of Cairo</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ibtisam</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Ashoka, Association for the Development and Empowerment of Women (ADEW)</td>
<td>Arabic, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Maha</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Programme officer</td>
<td>Association for the Development and Empowerment of Women (ADEW)</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mariam</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Programme officer</td>
<td>Association for the Development and Empowerment of Women (ADEW)</td>
<td>Arabic, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Omar</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>General Secretary</td>
<td>Egyptian Women’s Union (current), Friedrich Naumann</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 The private label will used for participants who can be easily identified through their position and for participants who are not employed by a non-governmental organisation or the state.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Language(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Malik</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Organiser</td>
<td>Ikhtyar</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Doaa</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Organiser</td>
<td>Ikhtyar</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Eman</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Gender advisor, co-founder of HarassMap</td>
<td>UNWomen (current), HarassMap, ECWR (past)</td>
<td>Arabic, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Kamil</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Organiser</td>
<td>HarassMap</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Moemen</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Student, volunteer</td>
<td>HarassMap</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ahmed</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Student, volunteer</td>
<td>HarassMap</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Yara</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>HarassMap</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Farida</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Psychologist</td>
<td>El Nadeem Centre for Torture and Rehabilitation (or El Nadeem Centre)</td>
<td>Arabic, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Menna</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Student organiser</td>
<td>University of Alexandria</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Safa</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Gender advisor</td>
<td>GIZ (current), UNWomen (past)</td>
<td>Arabic, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Sania</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>LoveMatters</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Shaimaa</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Let’s Scoot</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a fluent Arabic speaker, I expected language not to present a barrier to conducting fieldwork. I offered to conduct the interview in Arabic, English or a combination of both. The difficulties and implications of the translation process are well documented and I was first confronted with the difficulty of translating gender when I attempted to translate the term I had chosen to include in the title of my thesis – gender justice. Mehrez (2007) highlights the particular difficulty of the naming of gender as a category of analysis where no such neologism existed in Arabic and the consequent proliferation of terms invented by Egyptian feminists. These terms range...
from *dirasat al-jins* (which can be conflated with studies of sex, sexuality, race, or nation), to *dirasat al-nau* (which can be confused with studies of biological kind, species, sort, or nature), the Arabised English version of *dirasat al-jindar*, or more recently, the nuanced referent *dirasat al-nau al-ijtimai* (which is loosely understood as social development) and *dirasat al-nau/al-jindar* (which contains both), all of which Mehrez claims hold little to no meaning to the average Egyptian. Mehrez goes on to describe the process of naming and translation as a violent restructuring and repositioning, of inclusion and exclusion, even if it does enable certain spaces for innovation.

Understanding that these processes are conditioned and shaped by representations, histories, and ideologies pushed me to consider my own positionality within this process. What I mean by gender justice and whether that holds any local currency is of definitive importance to enacting genuine solidarity with Egyptian feminists, though, as Mehrez notes, the field of gender studies in Egypt “is informed by and conversant with gender discourses, theories, and activism elsewhere. On the other hand, it has the responsibility of elaborating, developing, and disseminating its local translations(s) of gender issues in Arabic, and within the larger context of the Egyptian cultural field” (ibid., 108). Therefore, I attempted to speak *with* not *at* the research participants. By recognising that certain terminology, like gender justice, may not translate across borders fluidly, the participants were asked to give definitions or examples to ensure a cohesive understanding of their positions. I did the same with any terms that appeared to be vague or possibly culturally irrelevant.
Contemporary primary sources
In order to access state discourses and logics on sexual harassment, it was necessary to collect and analyse primary and secondary contemporary sources, such as Presidential speeches and press releases. Attempts to interview state employees, particularly from the National Council of Women (which is purportedly independent, but is in essence institutionally aligned with the state), failed. A few potential participants expressed hesitation due to the heightened policing of state employees and despite assurances of confidentiality, while in all other cases, appeals for interviews were ignored. Locating relevant sources involved narrowing down key moments and events, such as the events of Black Wednesday in 2005 or the release of the National Strategy in early 2015 in the state’s ‘history’ of sexual harassment, which served as the basis for online searches. Critical analysis of the generated data was carried out, using the four main Foucauldian methodological principles – reversal, discontinuity, specificity, and exteriority – as the foundation. These will be discussed in the following section.

Processing Data
The process for analysing data relied on the subtle application of Foucault’s four methodological principles. The principle of reversal applies to the subversion that accompanies rendering visible the dynamics of power that inform the text. A text can be anything from oral storytelling, a billboard, a logo, or a lengthy written report. According to Said (1972), the principle of reversal, which is described by Foucault using the terms, decoupage as negativity and rarefaction, detaches the text from the “great number of conditions that override and determine its belonging to the main body” (ibid., 12). This repoliticises the unquestioned status quo, revealing the underlying assumptions that situate it. Secondly, the principle of discontinuity
attempts to deconstruct representations of linearity to reveal the silences and internal or ontological contradictions underlying the text. Said (1972, 18) explained, “In this convergence of difference and repetition, Foucault confirms the triumph of seriality over unity, the latter with its arsenal of a priori categories that elide differences”. The lack of silent continuity leads to the principle of specificity, whereby a text cannot be understood by a prior system of meanings or significations. This means that a text must be viewed as a practice we impose on things (Said, 1972). As Terry Threadgold (2000, 49) explained, “[it] is the located practice which produces the regularity of discourse, the functions for a subject, the positions for a subject, the possible technologies, the objects, and the behaviours that the term discourse encompasses”. Therefore, this principle appeals to the tendency to reduce discursive analysis to textuality. Lastly, the principle of exteriority derives the meanings of discourse from the external conditions of its existence (Threadgold, 2000). These externalities include, for example – geopolitics, history, or even architecture, which are outside of the text but essential to its existence. The application of this methodological process revealed the main concepts and themes within the generated data, thus contributing to the findings of this research. This process is similar to inductive analysis, which is defined as a “detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts, themes, or a model through interpretations made from the raw data by an evaluator or researcher” (Thomas, 2006, 228).

**Ethical Considerations**

This research received ethics approval from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (reference: 014977) on 11 August 2015. All participants signed consent forms and were informed about the research by reading through the participant information sheet, which was often accompanied with a verbal
explanation depending on their English ability. The majority of participants chose to receive a summary of the fieldwork findings and a copy of the completed thesis. A number of considerations require some reflection.

In order to receive ethics approval, I was required to seek “war-zone” insurance coverage due to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade assignment of Egypt as a high-risk country. Other than delaying my fieldwork by almost two months, the ethics process required reassurances of precautionary attitude and vigilance during fieldwork. Interview locations were primarily held in the offices of organisations or in quiet cafes far from political ‘hot spots.’ All data collected was stored and password-protected on a personal USB, held at my residence in Cairo. As the digital movement of files could have left the participants at risk, copies of transcriptions and interview recordings were not provided to participants and any evidence of illegal activity was excluded from transcriptions. In addition, participants were assigned pseudonyms upon transcription to avoid detection.

To some degree the precautions were warranted considering there had been a number of bombings in Cairo’s recent history, as well as general antipathy to any form of political dissidence. Therefore it was important to navigate the current political climate unwelcoming of political dissidence in such a way that protected the confidentiality of participants, particularly those critical of the state. Nevertheless, the risk categorisation certainly reflected notions of Third World risk, where there was an underlying perception of an Egypt that is homogenous in so far as it is dangerous. Some participants commented on the reason behind my delay as reflecting Western fear and the ‘othering’ of the Middle East. Hisham stated, “They think we are all the same, with danger lurking at every corner, but if they asked any Cairene, they would tell you where is safe and where isn’t. We know our city more than they do”.

38
Much to the same effect, my earlier description of the risk of sexual harassment in certain geographic locations turned out not to be limited to navigating public space. There was also risk involved during the recruitment of participants for the research. During the recruitment phase, a man, who claimed to have worked on a sexual harassment campaign (though he refused to elaborate on such unless we met in person), spoke to me inappropriately. A total of three men were declined an opportunity to participate based on discomfort or inappropriateness during initial communication, particularly as I did not have any male colleagues to accompany me. In another instance, a similar discomfort precipitated in a taxi ride home after conducting two interviews. This is an excerpt from my field diary following the experience:

He has different sized mirrors littered across the dashboard. Reflections of his eyes undress me from each angle as I consider my options. The nearest exit on the da’ery (Ring Road) encircling the Cairo, the city of tireless smog, is too far for me to demand he pull over. Even if I did, the relative quiet darkness of this part of town is more of a threat. I negotiate and order the levels of threat. The time till the sun sets and takes with it the safety of light, the time it would take for his arm to reach back and attempt a feel, and the time it would take to unlock the door and throw myself into the mercy of oncoming traffic. His eyes continue to stare. The stares do not end with him or even with the day.

Being put in this situation as a researcher may have limited the scope of participants, yet it served as an example as to why research on sexual harassment in Egypt is of the utmost importance.
Lastly, a consistent issue that materialised during fieldwork was the proclivity for disclosures of trauma relating to sexual violence. These included participants’ own experiences, or experiences of people close to them, of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or rape. One story that was particularly moving shared by Kamil explained the reason behind his involvement in HarassMap through a disclosure. He described:

My twin sister was raped in public when I was living in Alexandria. We weren’t able to find the rapist, or even come close to knowing how it happened. My sister spent a month not speaking to anyone and locking herself away. At the same time, there was a lot of pressure from family because they felt the family’s honour had been damaged. So after a month or so, she committed suicide. For me, that was traumatic. I became very violent, only living for the next fight and got into a lot of trouble. Moving to Cairo was my new beginning. I started studying. I wanted to channel the trauma into something positive, that’s why I joined HarassMap. It was the most appropriate way to deal with anger at the injustice experienced by my sister… to try and prevent it from happening.

The disclosure of his twin sister’s rape and subsequent suicide required an empathetic yet professional response – Had he received counselling? Had he heard of transference and counter-transference? Or vicarious trauma? I found myself at a crossroads. Despite working in the domestic violence response sector, I was hesitant about crossing the boundary from researcher to advocate. Bearing such responsibility in a country where I do not have the necessary networks and agency support to make referrals did not seem ethical. As such, I learned to approach disclosures in fieldwork as empathetically and responsibly as possible by listening and affirming stories their
lived experiences non-judgementally, and only commenting on the importance of psychological support when it was appropriate.
Chapter Four: Reviewing the Literature

Gender justice is of central importance to this research. It is a contested term; what it might constitute, what is involved in its realisation, and what is involved in its maintenance depends on the (non)-feminist and other positionalities of those defining it. The postcolonial feminist and governmentality infused conceptual framework for this research understands gender justice as an anti-capitalist, anti-racist, and anti-sexist struggle against all forms of oppression (Mohanty, 2003). However, this is not currently the dominant understanding of gender justice within development studies. Despite its now widespread acceptance within development, the concept bore little traction as few as fifty years ago. This is not to say gender did not play a part within development studies before this time. It always has, but serious interest in women and later gender within the field of development only became explicit with the rise of Women in Development (WID), which then developed into two other main theoretical frameworks, Women and Development (WAD) and Gender and Development (GAD). After first exploring these three frameworks briefly, three points of contention that arise of particular relevance to this research – the institutionalisation of gender, empowerment, and the rights-based approach – will be examined.

**Women In Development (WID)**

Emblematic of the WID framework is the insistence that women are economic actors, as both beneficiaries and participants in modernist capitalist development (Pearson, 2005). Gender justice was therefore about equal access to education, employment opportunities, and health care services (Rai, 2002; Rathgeber, 2005), which would eventually allow women – an ‘untapped economic resource’ (Datta, 2004) – to
contribute to a nation-state’s economic growth. This instrumental argument appealed to notions that the goal of development was the pursuit of modernisation through economic growth, whereby modernising the role of women in society would benefit the economy (Kabeer, 1994; Rai, 2002). This benefit, however, was never clearly elaborated. The unique characteristics and complexities shaping women’s lives were rationalised as merely the consequence of exclusion from public life.

While WID did recognise the deeply gendered nature of development, it fell short of acknowledging power relations between men and women, differences between women, and the role of structures of oppression. Colclough (2008) criticised the lack of consideration for the role of power relations between women and men, as well as its homogenisation of women themselves. Nor did it recognise the informal and private sphere where women’s labour was enforced and policed. The absence of class analysis increased women’s workload, not decrease it (Datta, 2004). In a critique of Boserup’s work, Lourdes Beneria and Gita Sen (1981) argued she ignored the processes of capital accumulation initiated in the colonial period and its effects on women of different classes. There was also no recognition of the adverse effects of capitalism on both men and women. Lastly, many scholars (see Rai, 2002; Kothari, 2005; Mohanty, 2003; Kabeer, 1994; Escobar, 2011) have criticised this approach for seeking to integrate women into the necessarily exploitative capitalist system and the entrenched consequences of colonial domination of the Global South. Achola Okello Pala identified the notion of integrating women into development was inextricably linked to maintaining the economic dependency of the Global South on the Global North (cited in Rathgeber, 1990). Preferring to assimilate women rather than examine the reasons existing structures had failed them, WID took an ahistorical approach that could not recognise that gendered exploitation was a major fixture in the global
system of inequitable capital accumulation. The First UN Decade of Development rendered women, like the Global South, as problems requiring solving and as victims requiring saving. Thus, the ‘woman question’ was born.

**Women and Development (WAD)**

Drawing heavily on neo-Marxist feminist thought and dependency theory, WAD was introduced as more a nuanced approach to gendering development. It became prominent in the late 1970s and early 1980s, drawing attention to the multiple roles that women occupied in both public and private life, the gendered division of labour, and informal (unpaid) labour, such as domestic responsibilities (Rathgeber, 1990). Gender justice transformed from the initial assumption of sameness of women to an acknowledgement of diversity. Women began to be seen as active agents of change. This had two consequences. First, it gave rise to efforts towards increasing women’s social and political participation (Rathgeber, 1990; Razavi and Miller, 1995). Second, it pushed for equal access to be pursued through legal and constitutional policy instruments. While the WAD perspective went as far as recognising diversity among women, as well as the adverse effects of the global economic regime on poor men in the Global South, it was criticised for paying little analytical attention to the social relations of gender within particular classes (Rathgeber, 1990; Datta, 2004). This led to a tendency to privilege class factors and group women together without paying strong analytical attention to other divisions (racial, religious, or otherwise) that may exert powerful influences on women’s positions in society (Rathgeber, 1990). Patriarchy was viewed as secondary to capitalism. In addition, it again began to focus on productive labour as public and informal work, rendering invisible the reproductive labour in the ‘private’ domain, just as the WID framework had.
Gender And Development (GAD)

The need for a holistic approach to understanding the complexities and contradictions of women’s lives led to the emergence of the GAD framework in the mid-1980s. Gender justice was not concerned solely with women, but with the social construction of hegemonic gender identities and the roles, responsibilities, and expectations assigned and consigned within these (Rathgeber, 1990). In short, it was seen to be an issue of social justice. While many activists argued the discursive shift from women to gender symbolised a depoliticisation and decentring of women, GAD scholars argued the language of gender strengthened the feminist position (Rathgeber, 1990). This is because it prompted a more complex interrogation of patriarchal oppression through its studies around masculinities and femininities, across class, race, and nation (Datta, 2004; Rai, 2002).

Attention to the gendered division of labour extended to the public, informal, and private sphere, finally bridging the gap between the relations of production to the relations of reproduction (Rai, 2002). Rathgeber (1990, 495) noted:

[A] gender and development perspective does not lead only to the design of intervention and affirmative action strategies to ensure that women are better integrated into ongoing development efforts. It leads, inevitably, to a fundamental reexamination of social structures and institutions and, ultimately, to the loss of power of entrenched elites, which will affect some women as well as men.

Like WAD, GAD’s socialist feminist roots pointed to the lack of access and control of resources and power for certain men and women at varying class levels (Moser, 1993). However, unlike WAD, it pushed for an examination of the politics of race and sexuality, alongside that of class (Sen and Grown, 1987; Rai, 2002). Class solidarity
and distinctions are thus acknowledged, as patriarchy is understood to operate within and across class (Rathgeber, 1990). In this way, GAD questions the underlying assumptions of social, economic, and political structures.

Gita Sen and Caren Grown (1987) were the first to unapologetically advocate for a transnational feminist vision of GAD, one that decentres capital and moves poor women of colour to the frontline of development and resistance. This conception of gender justice refuses to accept “equality with men who themselves suffered unemployment, low wages, poor work conditions and racism within the existing socioeconomic structures… [to be an] adequate or worthy goal” (Sen and Grown, 1987, 25). To pursue gender justice was therefore to pursue transformative change and social justice, directly challenging the legitimacy and place of elites embedded in development work. What remained to be explored was how the GAD vision of humanised and decentred development praxis might be carried out. Sen and Grown (1987) suggest a number of levels in which strategies towards enacting their long-term transformational vision might operate on; the economic sphere, national liberation from (neo)-colonial domination and exploitation, demilitarisation, agrarian reform, and increasing community control. Critical of the mainstream WID approach of the United Nations Decade of Women, GAD scholars argued women’s organisations needed to expand their focus creatively, as change can only genuinely be achieved through long-term structural transformations. The question remained: how might they expand their focus and in what direction? Three main mechanisms that emerged were the institutionalisation of gender, the preoccupation with women’s empowerment, and the rights-based approach.
Institutionalisation
Attempts to bring gender to the fore of development praxis resulted in what scholars have labelled the bureaucratisation, professionalisation, and institutionalisation of gender (see Baden and Goetz, 1998; Cornwall, Harrison and Whitehead 2007; Manicom, 2001; Rai 2002; Rathgeber, 2005) – what I prefer to call the ritualisation of gender. Beginning as early as the mid-1980s, the gender ritual involved the construction of a market of development actors, which regarded gender as a problem of numbers, alongside the establishment of an industry of (certain) women-specific programmes dedicated to the inclusion of women into development work, referred to as gender mainstreaming (Datta, 2004; Rai, 2002; Moser, 1993). This reduced gender analysis and sensitivity to a checkbox at each stage of the development life cycle, as well as assembling gender disaggregated data (Baden and Goetz, 1998). There was a “push towards systematic procedures and mechanisms within organisations… for explicitly taking account of gender issues at all stages of policy making and programme design and implementation” (ibid., 50). Technical frameworks introduced by GAD scholars, like Maxine Molyneux (1985) and Caroline Moser (1989), successfully entrenched the gender ritual into development practice.

With the creeping absorption of gender into the neoliberal capitalist system, the radical feminist pursuit of women’s liberation is at stake. Under pressure from neoliberal attacks on the pool of funding for progressive projects, the priority for women’s organisations has understandably become survival. Securing hard-to-get funding trump the value-based compromises that need to be made to increase the project’s appeal-factor. In any case, development actors tended to ignore the gendered nature of their own institutions, thus externalising the gender project to outside their own office walls (Baden and Goetz, 1998). The gendered ‘count’ of data described
earlier “stripped away consideration of the relational aspects of gender, of power and ideology, and of how patterns of subordination are reproduced” (ibid., 22). In a panel called “Feminism: From Movement to Establishment” at the 1995 Beijing Conference, Nighat Khan, Director of Applied Socioeconomic Research, criticised the technocracy and professionalisation of gender, arguing that it has allowed researchers, analysts, and consultants to dominate and further marginalise the oppressed women they supposedly speak for (Baden and Goetz, 1998). In addition, Cornwall, Harrison and Whitehead (2007) have claimed the shift towards technocracy and complicity with bureaucratic norms loosened the gender agenda’s links to feminism. This perhaps is a reflection of compliance with an underlying view that feminism is ‘too confronting’ and ‘off-putting’ (Rai, 2002). Radical feminist visions for gender justice are an inconvenient barrier to the status quo. Essentially, GAD has turned its back on its foundations that advocated for not only a recognition of the complexities and contradictions within gender issues and the various levels of interconnected oppressions, but their confrontation (Sen and Grown, 1987). As Rai (2002) concluded, GAD literature has followed in the steps of WID, effectively slotting itself within the neoliberal capitalist framework.

**Empowerment**

Originating in attempts to ascend the role of community-based initiatives, the crusade for women’s empowerment, specifically those in the Global South, has become a powerful force within GAD approaches (Papart, Rai, and Staudt, 2002). Empowerment was perceived as an ‘unquestioned good’ that demanded the conditions of women’s lives be improved through their educational and entrepreneurial elevation (Rao and Sweetman, 2014). It has since been critiqued by many development scholars, most notably Haleh Afshar (1998), Jo Rowlands (1995, 1998), Naila Kabeer
(1994), and Srilatha Batliwala (1994, 2007). One of the major preoccupations of these scholars is concerned with deciphering how power is to be conceived within empowerment. On this topic, Rowlands (1998, 28) stated, “Empowerment is nothing if it is not power – and therefore is fiercely political issue”. She claimed empowerment was a process, not an outcome, that lay with the mobilisation of marginalised people, particularly women, through an increased sense of ‘self’ i.e. self-confidence and self-worth. Batliwala (1994) warned against the muted interpretation of empowerment, which had become a buzzword much like poverty alleviation and community participation. She claimed this muting of meaning must be confronted with a more precise understanding of power, “as control over material assets, intellectual resources, and ideology” (ibid., 129). This necessarily demands the “challenging of existing power relations, and of gaining greater control over the sources of power” (ibid., 130). Like Batliwala and Rowlands, Kabeer (1994) emphasised the potential of the power within as foundational to efforts for mobilisation. The goal, according to Kabeer (1994, 229), is to “control resources, to determine agendas, and to make decisions”.

Overall, empowerment scholars have more or less accepted the following five modes of power operating in society as being: power over (authority and privilege to dictate non-negotiable power over another), power to (capacity to pursue opportunities, make decisions, and influence outcomes), power within (control over internalisations and reflections), power with (collectivisation of power and solidarity between women), and power to act (questioning, confronting, and mobilising against multiple oppressions) (Kabeer, 1994; Rowlands, 1995). These multiple layers of power reveal a host of issues that question the ‘good’ of empowerment. For example, Sumi Madhok and Shirin Rai (2012) used microcredit schemes as examples of how
the neoliberal state co-opted and reformulated feminist language of empowerment that initially sought collective struggle over public resource distribution into one of individual profit-driven growth, enabled through participation in the market.

**Logic of Rights**
The running theme across GAD scholarship is the unquestioned spectre of a rights-based approach, whether in regards to property rights, sexual and reproductive health rights, or the right to equal pay. Debates around the instrumentalisation of rights, whether it is by domestic or foreign actors, are reflected in a spate of scholarly work, such as *Do Muslim Women Need Saving* (Abu Lughod, 2013). There are two main issues with the rights-based approach to gender justice that are relevant to this research: the implications of rights-based approaches and the selectivity around advancement of certain rights. Firstly, rights cannot be assumed to be necessarily transformative (Baxi, Rai and Ali, 2006). For example, Reena Patel’s (2006, 1266) interrogation of the role of women’s property rights law in India leads him to ask: “can law presume the non-existence of normative force of religion and yet be reflexive and pertaining to women’s lives?” In this vein, Andrea Cornwall and Maxine Molyneux (2006) have argued that laws should not be understood in isolation from society, rather as a means of social regulation. Hania Sholkamy (2010; 2012), a prominent Egyptian scholar, moved beyond an individualised conception of rights, arguing for a repoliticisation of gender and development paradigms through a broader more comprehensive vision of gender justice.

Secondly, the selective heralding of women’s rights by various actors is cause for critique. Nancy Fraser (2007) has argued that over the course of the last thirty years, feminist theorising of gender has reconciled itself with neoliberal capitalism and moved away from its Marxist feminist roots. This has led to a monopoly of
feminist focus on recognition over distribution issues. Recognition-focused approaches focused predominantly on issues of representation, identity and difference, while issues of distribution, such as social welfare and the distribution of wealth and resources, were sidelined. Cornwall and Molyneux (2006), on the other hand, claim the mobilisation of rights has been used to provide moral legitimacy to an action or intervention, or give the impression of democratic good governance. Deniz Kandiyoti (2007) interrogates the implications of the rights-based approach in the Afghani context, where women’s rights were used as a backdrop for military intervention. She politicises women’s rights discourses, defining the politics of gender as “a process of appropriation, contestation and reinterpretation of discourses on socially sanctioned gender relations and women’s rights” (ibid., 171). It also is under the auspices of good governance and participation that certain rights are advanced over others. According to Celestine Nyamu-Musembi (2006, 1203), this selectivity is often indicative of the state’s commitment to the neoliberal agenda, whereby rights “viewed as incompatible with market-oriented legal reform are abandoned or held in abeyance”. Kandiyoti also called into question Molyneux and Razavi’s (2005) position on the centrality of the state in the protection and promotion of rights, arguing that a rights-based understanding of gender justice would be irrelevant in many, if not all, development contexts.

There has been contention regarding the logic of rights necessitating feminist engagement with the state and its institutions. Many scholars have problematised the emphasis on state engagement, as well as questioning the degree of complicity that non-state development actors are accountable for in regards to advancing the state’s governmentalities, few go as far as advocating for a full abandonment of the state (see Brown 1995; Smart, 1989; Pringle and Watson, 1997; 2000; Randall, 1998; Randall
and Waylen, 2002). Devaki Jain, founding member of DAWN, questioned the ability of non-state development actors to pursue transformative change, as dominant interests would always limit the spectrum of action available to them (cited in Rai, 2002). This is particularly relevant when considering the restrictions imposed on non-governmental organisations under Law 84/2002 in Egypt, which requires they register and be subject to restrictions, including denial of requests to affiliate with international organisations, having assets frozen or property confiscated, have funding blocked, or even face being shut down. President Sisi called for Law 84 to be enforced, despite the fact that it had remained unenforced for over ten years due to widespread opposition under Mubarak (Human Rights Watch, 2014). In such a political climate, the capacity of non-state development actors to act autonomously is directly under threat when engagement with the state is prioritised.

When the dynamics between each of the various development actors are understood within the broader context of historical and socio-political forces, it is evident that Rai (2002) was right to assert that non-state development actors and women’s organisations are constrained by the dominant paradigms of the institutions of power they work with – the state in this case. Rose (1999) would also argue it is in the state’s interest to act through the actions of a range of authorities to sanction its governmentalities. These issues certainly apply to the case of the historical account of feminist engagement with the state in Egypt. However, whether it is the amount of power commanded by the state that is at least partially moderated by non-state development actors or if it is the power of non-state development actors that is constrained by the state remains to be seen.
Chapter Five: Dominant Histories of Sexual Harassment

A factor that became evident throughout the research process, and which underpinned much of the data collected from participants was that motifs of newness and pastness evoked more than a chronology of sexual harassment. Instead, they spoke to the power to name moments, to identify facts from fiction, to pacify skeletons, or to draw blanks on their existence. It is this power over history, which this chapter will centre itself on. I use Shahid Amin’s (1995, 3) methodological approach to ‘historical fieldwork’ on the Chauri Chaura riot in India, which he viewed as “both event and metaphor”. In attempting to “give the event a pre-history” (ibid., 4), Amin can remind development scholars, who contextualise development issues, to consider the history of history itself. According to Foucault (1979), dominant histories are produced through a monopoly over knowledge-producing practices that create collective pastness. Dominant forces tend to push for unifying images, which provide the nation-state with a shared foundation of the past and a clear trajectory for the future (Baron, 2005). Dominant narratives bind the collective, identifying the points of determination and those of differentiation (Baron, 2005; Rai, 2002). Rai (2002, 17) wrote that, “memory and nationalism… are intimately connected and history is crucial to the documentation and erasure of collective memory”. Understanding the context through which the collective memories that were recalled or identified during the research process helps to reveal silences (Trouillot, 1995) within the history of sexual harassment, as well its implications on governmentality and resistance.

4 What I term ‘newness’ or ‘pastness’ refers to the relegation of an identity, phenomenon, or event to being completely novel or unknown or to the past where it is no longer visible or practiced. This is often used to invoke feelings of nationalist nostalgia (Amin, 1995; Griffiths, 2015).
In this chapter, I have identified three key moments in the dominant historical narrative of sexual harassment – the 25 January revolution, expressive justice through the collective apology and publicised rape trials, and the decline of morality in the late 1970s and 1980s through rising Islamic conservatism and reduced quality of educational standards. These key moments are not necessarily specific, tangible, or measurable incidents: they are discussion points that recurred throughout the fieldwork process, with multiple participants often drawing on similar experiences or commenting on the same issues in different ways. The key moments are not arranged by order of importance or chronologically, as they are not intended to serve as a comprehensive timeline of sexual harassment. Rather, they are intended to initiate a discussion of the relationship between power and historical production (Trouillot, 2000). Ultimately, this chapter will argue the dominant historical narrative is imperative to the interventions ultimately pursued to curb sexual harassment in Egypt.

**25 January Revolution, 2011**
The 25 January revolution marked a critical moment in the dominant historical narrative of sexual harassment in two ways: the beginning of its recognition as a problem and the beginning of its escalation. The beginning of state recognition of sexual harassment was perceived as a consequence of the media coverage of countless harassments, mob sexual assault, and rape. Participants largely identified the brutal mob sexual assault of Lara Logan on February 11, 2011, as a significant trigger of the state’s recognition of the issue. Logan, who is a white South African then-CBS reporter, was stripped and beaten, had hair pulled, and was raped repeatedly by a group of men (CBS, 2011). Other men looked on taking photos and recording videos of the assault (ibid.). The men dragged her towards a fence, where unbeknownst to them, a group of Egyptian women were camped out. These women formed a
protective circle around Logan until soldiers arrived to her rescue and beat the group of men with batons (ibid.). Her exclusive interview on the traumatic experience with 60 minutes led to an international outcry and spurred local debate on the issue. Mohamed, from Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment, stated:

For the first time... the public was aware of, there was a mob sexual assault of the reporter Lara Logan on the day that Mubarak stepped down. It was spoken about in the [Egyptian] news and many talk shows in the United States. This was the beginning.

Mohamed’s statement reflects the tendency to understand the beginning in terms of its introduction to the public debate, rather than marking the first incidence of sexual harassment. In fact, all participants at some point in their interviews used the 25 January revolution as a reference point for their histories of sexual harassment. For example, Farida referred me to a report that el Nadeem Centre for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture had co-written with El-Nazra for Feminist Studies, and New Woman Foundation (2013) titled Sexual Assault and Rape in Tahrir Square and its Vicinity: A Compendium of Sources 2011-2013. This report recorded numerous testimonies from survivors of sexual harassment, mob sexual assaults, and rape, as well as testimonies from the women and men who formed volunteer groups to defend against these forms of sexual violence.

The 25 January revolution was also seen as the beginning of sexual harassment’s escalation. One recurring example in interviews referred to the week of Morsi’s ousting, where Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment confirmed 46 cases occurred on June 30, 17 occurred on July 1, and 23 occurred on July 2 (Human Rights Watch, 2013). Nazra for Feminist Studies confirmed another five attacks on June 28, which involved women being attacked with chains, sticks, chairs, and knives, one of
whom required surgery after being raped with a sharp object (Human Rights Watch, 2013). Menna, a student at the University of Alexandria, pointed to a discernible escalation of the way violence was carried out after the revolution, declaring:

The amount of violence in this act became tremendous. It was sexual harassment and physical hitting. It became using knives and sharp objects to rape somebody. It is crazy. You cannot say this is due to a psychological or sociological problem. It’s much more complicated than that. There is no pleasure in cutting a woman there. It’s not sexual pleasure for the most part.

She recounted the publicised story of Yasmine El-Baramawy, who was encircled by 15 men, allowing her to be forcibly groped, cut, sexually assaulted, and raped vaginally and with a knife for over an hour by scores of men in Tahrir on November 2012.

Many participants also gave personal examples to support the claim that harassment escalated during the revolution. For example, Mariam, from ADEW, disclosed her own experience of a mob assault in Tahrir square during 25 January revolution, pointing out similarities in the pattern of multiple men surrounding women, brandishing weapons like sticks, knives, and belts, ripping off their clothes and raping orally or vaginally. Nawal, from Imprint, described the irony of this escalation, stating, “Mass sexual assaults used to happen in the Square, and on the other side, people would be celebrating. It was weird. You talk to people on either side, they don’t know what was happening on the other side”.

56
Expressive Justice

On June 3 2014, President Sisi’s supporters gathered in Tahrir Square to celebrate the election results and his impending inauguration. That night countless women were sexually assaulted and raped. The sexual assault of a 42-year old woman was recorded (later becoming viral on social media), showing her being stripped naked, scalded with boiling water, and subjected to mass sexual assault, as security officers tried to fight the offenders off. Eye witnesses described the chaos of the scene, where hundreds of men were grabbing or trying to grab her, as police officers shot in the air for over 20 minutes trying to get her out. Once freed, her life was further endangered when several government hospitals refused to take her in. The circulation of the video recording caught the public’s attention not only because of its brutality and audacity, but also because of its timing. This was not just any woman that had been brutally raped in Tahrir. This was a female supporter of Sisi who was in the streets that day celebrating the electoral victory of her leader. Her rape symbolised three things: the failure of the state to protect its female citizens, the failure of the state to reinstate law and order as promised, and the type of woman that could be victimised and not blamed for being raped. This situation required the state to react immediately to reassure an increasingly cynical public of its ability to protect and punish.

The state’s response to perceived challenges mimics what Kristin Bumiller (2008) termed ‘expressive justice’, whereby the objective of any political manoeuvring precludes the possibility of transformative change, instead allowing the state to further invoke increased police presence and surveillance. This concept operates in a similar way to Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s (2000) ‘abortive ritual’, where apologies are seen as opportunities for the state to preclude criticism and future transformative change. Both view displays of empathy from the state critically and as
having some form of political bearing on cementing their authority. Expressive justice includes within it state responses that are “not so much about controlling crime as with expressing the anger and outrage that crime provokes” (Bumiller, 2008, 37). This spotlighting on particular identities, bodies, and events is what Amar (2011) has called hypervisibilisation, arguing it is employed as a source of moral panic or insecurity, which renders invisible the real nature of power and social control by providing a mandate for increased security measures (see Chapter Eight). President Sisi’s televised apology and the publicity surrounding the rape trials are examples of expressive justice in action.

The collective apology
On June 11 2014, President Sisi made a televised visit to the 42-year-old survivor. He apologised for the wrong that had been committed against her and against all the women of Egypt, making a vow that this would never happen again (ONtv, 2014b). The televised collective apology was an expression of outrage and remorse. It signified an important moment in the historical imaginaries of participants who favour engagement with the state. The logics behind the declared importance of the collective apology aligned with the analysis of its mechanics put forth by Trouillot’s (2000, 174) work on the collective apology.

Figure 1: 'The Structure of the Apology' (Trouillot, 2000, 175)
Trouillot (2000) conceptualises collective apologies as ‘transformative rituals’. He states, “Apologies always involve time... They mark a temporal transition: wrong done in a time marked as past is recognised as such, and this acknowledgement itself creates or verifies a temporal plane, a present oriented towards the future” (ibid., 174). Trouillot claims apologies require at least six distinct properties: 1) the establishment of a wrong; 2) the imposition of a temporality that creates pastness; 3) an operation of ‘numerical identity’ involving perpetrator and apologiser (see Figure 1); 4) a second operation involving victim and addressee (see Figure 1); 5) an expression of remorse or repentance; and 6) the production of a partial or complete erasure. Collective apologies involve the attribution of abstract collectives, like nation states, with characteristics of the individual person, allowing nations to repent in an emotionally efficacious manner.

In the case of Sisi’s apology, the temporal imposition situated the survivor and the rapists on the first temporal plane (the past), which represents the actual physical incident that transpired. The repentant Sisi, and by extension the state, and the survivor addressee exist on the second temporal plane (the present). The differentiation of these two temporal planes allows a “double recognition of identity across the time, the perpetrator is the repentant apologiser; the victim is the addressee” (Trouillot, 2000, 174-5). These roles are apparent when considering Sisi’s dialogue with the survivor. He first beseeched the survivor that, “The blame is with us. We are sorry. We are not good” (ONtv, 2014b). He speaks of the violation against her as if he played a part in it, explicitly embodying the ‘perpetrator as the repentant apologiser’. He then goes on to avow, “[Women] are the most important. Egypt would not be anything without you. We are at your service. I am saying to you, and every other Egyptian woman, I am sorry” (ONtv, 2014b). The survivor is seen as a
collective subject, representing the women of Egypt who are suffering at the hand of gendered violence on its streets.

Responses given by participants who pinpointed Sisi’s apology as a ‘transformative’ moment in the history of sexual harassment aligned with the rest of Trouillot’s properties of a collective apology. To begin with, the earlier denial of the state meant the collective apology symbolised an admission of remorse. Ibtisam’s (from Ashoka and ADEW) description of the apology was that, “Sisi didn’t just talk about it, he went and apologised to the woman that was raped. He said ha’ek ‘alena;5 which has never happened in our history”. Mariam, from ADEW, also gave this impression, arguing the President’s apology went against the dominant masculine culture, where apology was viewed as weakness. She said: “The President went to an average woman and said in front of the whole world, in front of all the Egyptians, I am sorry. We are in the wrong”. These participants highlighted the fact that no president in Egypt’s history had given such an apology as a ‘win’ for anti-sexual harassment activism.

When asked about any possible politically motivating factors, Eman, co-founder of HarassMap, asserted, “I don’t care if the government is being genuine. As long as they are talking about [sexual harassment], I don’t care”. The supposed win of recognition outweighed any potential negatives, negatives that participants working with the state repeatedly refused to speak to or discuss in interviews. Admittance of these points of contention would potentially render their engagement with the state untenable. Nevertheless, Sisi’s collective apology imposed a temporality that created a pastness by simultaneously arousing romanticised memories of a past free of sexual

---

5 Translates to ‘the blame is on us.’
harassment, while also deeming it to be a problem of the past (ONtv, 2014b), thus satisfying Trouillot’s properties of the collective apology.

**The rape trials**

Following Sisi’s televised apology, the perpetrators of attacks against multiple women became subject to a deliberative state investigation. Thirteen men, including a minor, were charged and accused with kidnapping, torture, sexual assault, rape, and attempted murder of the woman (Al Jazeera, 2014b). Their trials were extremely publicised, covered by all the major news outlets in Egypt. Like Sisi’s televised apology, participants who worked with the state identified the rape trials as a significant marker in sexual harassment’s history. For example, Mariam, from ADEW, stated, “This is good. This is a signal to society the police are doing their work”. Eman, co-founder of HarassMap, also argued that by publicising the trials, the state made a positive statement regarding active bystanders (that supporting a sexually harassed woman was the right thing to do), thus encouraging individuals to become active bystanders.

Bumiller (2008) has argued that attention is drawn to specific cases of sexual violation in order to stimulate both a passionate reaction from the public and reassure the public of the state’s ability to contain threats of insecurity. These stories of sexual violence are narrated in a particular way that locates the source that is threatening insecurity, and justifies a punitive intervention in the long-term and increased securitisation in order to prevent recurrences. A consequence of the state’s framing that is not identified by Bumiller explicitly is the creation of an approved profile of victimhood – the worthy victim. Amar (2011) has identified this profiling as *parahumanisation*, whereby a ‘politically-disabled victim’ that requires protection or rescue is created.
The historical production of sexual harassment, weaving discourses surrounding both the collective apology and the rape trials, constitutes the image of the ideal Egyptian woman who can be victimised and sympathised with. The identification of victimhood involves a moral statement of worthiness – which women deserve the nation’s sympathies and protection and which women do not. A significant aspect to the collective apology that some participants highlighted was the political identity of the victim. Their appearance, their style of dress, their social status – these factors are trumped by the women’s political affiliation. Ibtisam, from Ashoka and ADEW, described Sisi’s remorse and moral outrage of the rape as “shock… that it could happen to one of his own, one of his people”. In addition, the televised portion of the President’s meeting with the female victim explicitly revealed her as a fervent supporter of the current president. Further, the situational location of the rape – the President’s inaugural celebrations in Tahrir Square – elevated the significance of this particular rape. Therefore, the ideal Egyptian woman adheres to the state apparatus and is deserving of victimisation (and public sympathy) because she does not dissent.

Figure 2: Egyptian security forces stripping and beating female protester (Souief, 2011)
This construction of victimhood therefore demarcates female protestors who do dissent against the state as guilty. The guilt of the female protestors is founded on a lack of loyalty to the state apparatus, which in turn becomes associated with undesirable characteristics of promiscuity, immorality, and misguidedness. These characteristics were all incorporated into an image of a fallen woman, for whom public sympathies would be lost on. A glaring example of this negative portrayal of female protestors that are subject to sexual violence is realised in the incident of the ‘girl in the blue bra’ (Figure 2). During a protest in Tahrir Square on December 17, 2011, security forces were chasing a woman who tripped and fell, losing consciousness (Hafez, 2014). A young man also fleeing the scene attempted to help her up, however, security forces caught up and began brutally beating them both. The female protestor’s black ‘abaya (Islamic dress) fell open, exposing her chest, as she was dragged away by an officer. Security forces kicked and stomped on her body with their boots, taking turns to hit her breasts and stomach with long metal batons. A graphic video of the incident emerged, sparking international outrage (see CNN, 2011b; Souief, 2011).

However, the loudest local responses, dominating state media, had a different tone. Sherine Hafez (2014b) collected examples of these responses. One commentator stated, “She was wearing a bikini and not a bra. Why, my dear, were you wearing your bikini to Tahrir? Did you think you were going for a swim?” (cited in Hafez, 2014). Another commentator asked, “Truthfully, what were you thinking wearing that ‘abaya with nothing underneath it? And a ‘abaya with snaps? Come on. Couldn’t you find one with buttons?” (cited in Hafez, 2014). These comments from the public highlight the way women’s bodies are deployed in struggles over meaning (Hafez, 2014; Kandiyoti, 1991), whereby the construction of victimhood denoting the worthy
victim involves an association with honour and respectability and a whole series of exclusions, which preclude the woman that dissents from the status quo in any form.

The Decline of Morality

The “manufacturing of impious, impure, and immoral others” (Hafez, 2014, 24) is part of a larger discourse that I have identified as the third key moment in the historical imaginations of sexual harassment – the decline of morality in the late 1970s and 1980s. It is described in different, albeit connected, forms – the main two being the decay of culture, relating to rising Islamic conservatism, and the disintegration of the quality of educational standards. While locating the beginning of the decline varied across the data collected, what connects the two branches of decline is an established temporality of a particular pastness and newness. In order for something to decay or disintegrate, it must have been whole to begin with. In one televised interview on sexual harassment, President Sisi exclaimed (EgyTalkShows, 2014):

In my lifetime, I have not seen anyone act in this way, but society then was responsible. Society would say this is unacceptable. This does not happen anymore. Back then when you intervened and told someone it was unacceptable, they would stop. Now that is not the case.

Statements like these made by state officials often admonish the current state of affairs relative to Egypt’s virtuous past where sexual harassment was apparently non-existent. The narrative of declining morality thus problematises the defective ‘new’ culture of the present. This creation of newness and pastness is important, just as it was important for the collective apology, as it distances the debate from tangible concrete structural realities that could potentially explain the prevalence of sexual harassment. The historical narrative becomes fixated on the societal transformation
rather than the actual mechanics, which allows Egyptian society to transform in line with the nostalgic belief in a moral past free of depravity.

**Decay of Culture**

The former First Lady Suzanne Mubarak’s denial of the existence of sexual harassment and her insistence of its conspiratorial manufacturing by Islamist opposition have certainly been turned on their heels given the current recognition from the state. Still, the recognition of its prevalence and the admission of fault that was implied during Sisi’s apology do not necessarily translate into an entirely open acceptance of responsibility. Sisi’s statement – “the blame is with us” (ONtv, 2014b) – must be understood in the context of the historical narrative that is being advanced. This historical narrative, which has the past and the new parting ways with the resurgence of fundamentalist conservative Islam, was described by the majority of the participants. They made consistent references to a more cultured past in the 1980s, when their grandmothers, aunties, and mothers wore bikinis and short skirts. Mariam, from ADEW, even showed me a photo of her mother and her friends in bikinis on a beachfront in Alexandria on her cell phone. Ibtisam, from Ashoka and ADEW, having grown up in the 1970s, claimed that she did not recall sexual harassment being a problem, stating, “I used to go to clubs walking in my father’s shirt. I was 30kgs lighter, but nobody ever said anything to me, ever”. The ability of women to wear bikinis and short skirts represented for participants a period of liberalism and freedom as opposed to the repressive present where women’s freedom to dress is heavily restricted due to the dominance of the current conservative strain of Islam.

While these participants recognised structural patriarchal forces as playing a role in the prevalence of sexual harassment, the patriarchal forces are connected to rising Islamist conservatism. Nawal, from Imprint, exclaimed, “It is very much about
this religious culture”, as she detailed the ways women are socialised into being subservient and visible only in certain public spaces. “Women [are] brought up to dress in a certain way, have her brother’s protection, to not go out late, to work in certain sectors like medicine or teaching”. Certain professions, such as engineering, are deemed inappropriate if they involve close contact between men and women. Ibtisam, from Ashoka and ADEW, claimed the increasing prevalence of hijab-wearing was a result of the rising conservatism. She stated, “Girls began wearing hijab, hijab, hijab. Those that didn’t wear hijab were a small number. They encroached on us”. It was these very patriarchal and masculinist codes of morality, enshrined into Egyptian culture, which served to control women’s bodies and choices in terms of work, dress, and social interactions that Eman, co-founder of HarassMap, argued were the result of the overbearing influence of a conservative strain of Islam, which determined women’s value by how covered up and isolated from society they are. She asserted, “It is an obsession with how women should be. This obsession is the result of masculinising society in a manner of extreme religiosity”. These participants point to an intensified religious conservatism as being the lead reason behind the increased prevalence of sexual harassment.

The increased Islamist conservatism was explained as a by-product of Egyptian labour migration to the Gulf since the 1970s and 1980s. Nehad Abu el Komsan, the Director for the Center for Women's Rights (ECWR), blamed the spread of more conservative interpretations of Islam from the Gulf, which demanded restrictions on the visibility and freedoms of women and condemned women who did not ascribe to their dogma (CNN, 2011a). In an interview with CNN (2011a), el Komsan stated, “Four million Egyptians went to the Gulf. They returned with oil money and oil culture, which is not very open, related to the status of women. All of
this changed the original culture of the Egyptian, which included high respect for women”. Ibtisam, from Ashoka and ADEW, also recalled the outcome of the labour migration to the Gulf with visible disdain as leading to a rise of sexual harassment due to “the mixing of classes” and the “fracturing of society”. Those that migrated were stereotyped as poor and uneducated farmers and sa’ayda, who supposedly “translated [the Gulf’s] culture because their own had not evolved”. She continued on, stating:

Now you had the plumbers, the tea boy, the mechanic… they suddenly had money. They wanted to control women. They needed control. Who used to dress differently? Wearing short dresses and the like? These were obviously the upper class. How could they exert their power in their own eyes? It is all about power and control. They did this by harassing girls.

The lack of social status of those who migrated was argued to have been a motivating factor in attempts to gain power in any form it could be taken. Ibtisam even noted, “At that time, the upper class looked down on the people who went to the Gulf”. The classist nature of this argument was both latently and visibly manifest in discussions about the introduction of Islamist conservatism in the 1970s and 1980s. Finally, it is important to remember ECWR was the first women’s organisation to lobby on the prevalence of sexual harassment in the public sphere in Egypt.

Disintegration of Quality Education
The decline of morality is also argued to be associated with the disintegration of the quality of educational standards. This was revealed in some participants’ answers concerning the identity of harassers. For example, Sania, from LoveMatters, described harassers as being mostly “not very educated and on the streets. Most of the harassers

---

6 Egyptians from Upper Egypt (used here in a derogatory manner)
that have reports filed against them are from poor educational environments”. The quality of educational standards was perceived as lacking due to the patriarchal content of the educational syllabus. Farida from El Nadeem Centre’s description of content in Arabic textbooks was that “[the] girl [is] just cooking or cleaning with their mum, while the boy is working or doing outdoor things with his dad”. She explained the influence of Arabic textbooks, using examples of gendered division of labour in the home, on perceptions of gender roles and the place of women in society. Eman, co-founder of HarassMap, also referenced images in textbooks of boys playing football and girls helping in the kitchen and how they portray women’s roles in society. She stated: “That is already establishing a gender role, where a woman’s place is not outside and this is where you shouldn’t be. I think this is more at the core of why there are a lot of justifications for male misbehaviour towards women”.

These portrayals of gender roles were also seen as leading cause of the disrespect towards women, including different forms of sexual violence, as well as anything perceivably insignificant like swear words. The most common swear words make reference to either being a woman or women’s body parts. Eman, co-founder of HarassMap, explained:

You want to insult a man, you tell them you are a woman or you are a son of a woman. Women’s bodies are used as a humiliation factor.

That is at the core of why you can walk down the street and no one will protect you, because you in yourself are a bad word.

At the same time, she said, men are attributed with ‘good’ qualities, like honour, strength, and bravery. The argued link between the binary depictions of men and women in anything from textbooks to commonly-used swear words and sexual harassment was presented as an express need for quality educational standards to be
introduced through institutional capacity building. The nonexistence of sexual education was also a reason for the poor quality of educational standards. Sania, from LoveMatters, stated, “It is forbidden to have sexual education in schools. The one lesson in biology that teaches the anatomy of sexual reproductive organs, most teachers avoid teaching out of embarrassment, and tell their students to self-study it”. She explained this reflected a tendency to view sex as a crime and not instinctual.

The claimed decay of culture into a strain of Islamic conservatism and the disintegrated quality of educational standards reflect a tendency to essentialise Egyptian society as being generally uneducated and conservative due to the Gulf’s influence. This essentialism, in the case of sexual harassment, does not come from an external foreign gaze, as tends to be the focus of the majority of the case-studies used in postcolonial feminist scholarship: rather, it materialises from various local positionalities. This history of sexual harassment tends to ignore the diversity of difference as a fundamental characteristic of any culture by depoliticising its makings. For these participants, there are no differences or distinctions to be made. For example, when asked whether there were economic factors for sexual harassment, Eman, co-founder of HarassMap, stated:

You could go to a lot of poor countries, but you still would not get harassed. I have been to so many countries where economically they are much worse off than Egypt and you would not get treated in the street in this manner.

With the disregard for the potentially mitigating influences, such as class, place or political background, Egyptian culture is thus essentialised as inherently masculinist and patriarchal. Overall, the demise of the imagined liberal cultural past into the overshadowing Islamist conservatism of today, in addition to the disintegration of the
quality of educational standards, are seen to have contributed to the decline of morality in today’s society that has enabled the perpetration of sexual harassment.

**Conclusion**

Ultimately, this chapter has shown how three key moments in the dominant historical narrative of sexual harassment – the 25 January revolution, expressive justice through the collective apology and publicised rape trials, and the decline of morality in the 1970s and 80s through rising Islamic conservatism and reduced quality of educational standards. Essentially, these histories problematise dissent and Egyptian culture, thus constructing a welcoming environment for individualised punitive and cultural intervention that will be discussed in Chapter Seven. Before this can be done, however, divergences from and silences in the dominant historical imaginaries of sexual harassment will be examined in the following chapter.
Chapter Six: Counter-histories of Sexual Harassment

Not all participants described historical imaginaries of sexual harassment that support the dominant narrative. With their divergent collective memories of sexual harassment, these participants help to reveal necessary silences excluded from the dominant narrative. The phrase ‘silences’ might give the impression that there is always an active agenda to conceal or censor certain stories or aspects to the historical narrative. It would then follow that to locate ‘silences’, we might have to rely on the state relinquishing and revealing these divergences. This is not what I am arguing. These silences are evident, visible, documented, and accessible. They are because their exclusion is political. These silences are pieces of the puzzle that do not fit the dominant historical narrative. For Trouillot (1995), it is because these silences are either not constructed as facts or if they are, they are not considered equal to the more appropriate facts. Facts presented within the dominant historical narrative are never meaningless, as they only really become fact when they are of value to its stability (Trouillot, 1995). The facts rendered un-factual or invaluable are what Foucault (1975-6/2003) terms subjugated knowledges. He argues that insurrections of subjugated knowledges are imperative for any emancipatory or transformative potential. This chapter does not provide alternative histories, but illustrates how power, namely state power, is invested in the production of historical narratives of sexual violence.

Hend, a scholar from the American University of Cairo (AUC), began her interview by telling me, “The recent political shift in the discourse between denial to criminalisation… [The] first thing to say is that the women’s movement, or the
feminist movement, has been here before”. It struck me how dominant histories construct a narrative that isolates the struggle to end sexual harassment from Egypt’s strong feminist/women’s movement. Deconstructing the historical production of sexual harassment means understanding it in the context of a history of resistances. A brief example of a ‘silenced’ history is evident when looking at the figure Sir Thomas Russell Pasha, a British public servant who joined the Egyptian Civil Service in 1902. He is mostly remembered as the commandant of the Cairo Police in 1917, which marked a period of resistance against British colonialism and efforts towards constitutional independence in Egypt. He is, however, not remembered for employing sexual harassment as policing practice. In his memoir *Egyptian Service 1902-1946*, he writes about instructing the Egyptian conscript police overseeing and controlling the first ever pro-independence march comprised solely of women in 1919 to make the women protesters ‘uncomfortable’ (Pasha Russell, 1949). The subtle admission of sexual harassment as a crowd control tactic demonstrates the prospect of silences within the dominant historical narrative of sexual harassment.

This chapter will be organised around four key junctures – exposing denial and forgetting, politicising the collective apology, challenging misrepresentation of survivors, and presenting a nuanced economic argument. These are imperative to understanding the ideological foundations and power relations underlying sexual harassment intervention more completely, and in turn, informing possibilities for feminist praxis in Chapter Eight.

**Exposing Denial and Forgetting**

Counter-histories of sexual harassment highlight the overwhelming silence on the state’s past denial of sexual harassment. Prior to the 25 January revolution, the state did not recognise sexual harassment as a seriously prevalent issue in Egypt. For the
state, sexual harassment would imply failure and that invoked a sense of weakness and inability to enforce law and order. Therefore, to recognise the prevalence of sexual harassment would mean to admit failure on their part and responsibility for future intervention. Mohamed, from Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment, explained the state’s denial was imperative “to protect[ing] the way they think, their social order, the way things should be, to protect their power”. The state executed the denial in a number of ways: concealing or obscuring fact, outright denial, and incorrect working definitions.

Concealing or obscuring fact is a definite starting point for state denial. This is evident in the events surrounding a free-entry Mohamed Mounir concert at the Giza pyramids in May 2004. Crowds of over a quarter million attended the concert. Amongst the crowds, sexual violence was so extensive that required police, fire fighters and ambulances to form ‘safe zones’ hand-in-hand with concertgoers to rescue victims (Egypt Independent, 2014b). Despite the involvement of police forces in containing the sexual violence during the concert, the authorities effectively silenced all media coverage of the incidence of sexual violence at the concert, reporting instead that the chaos was due to a failed stabbing attempt of Mounir (Egypt Independent, 2014b). Even then, the police report about the stabbing only appeared in the English language Cairo Times whose primary distribution was the exclusive expat community in Cairo (Egypt Independent, 2014b). There was no coverage of any incidents related to the concert in any Arabic language newspapers. The state’s ability to obscure fact rests in the power to establish legitimacy and identify credible sources of knowledge. An example of this was the censorship of two now widely accepted reports, one of which is the Clouds in the Sky report, that were released in 2004 and 2010 respectively by the Egyptian Center for Women’s Rights (ECWR, 2010).
censorship did not attempt to deny the existence of the reports. Instead it denied the factuality of their content. However, even then, the ECWR advocated for new, stricter laws to curb sexual harassment and encouraging increased police presence at major events (Langhorn, 2015). The state maintained the power of establishing fact up until the 25 January revolution.

The second way the state has denied the existence of sexual harassment in the past operated on two planes, which simultaneously recognised the incidence of individual one off cases of sexual harassment and denied the existence of a widespread phenomenon. For example, this was evident in the state’s response to a spate of sexual assaults (Al Arabiya, 2008). Following these events, former First Lady Suzanne Mubarak famously declared in an interview that in a country with a population of 80 million people, Egyptian men always respect Egyptian women. The exception might be “one, two or even 10 incidents,” she stated, “[As such,] we can’t talk of a phenomenon. Maybe a few scatterbrained youths are behind this crime” (as cited in Guardian, 2010). Mubarak’s statement clearly reflects the two-plane denial described above – the reduction of sexual harassment to individual cases, as well as a flat-out rejection of a structural pattern of sexual violence. Another example was the initial state denial of virginity tests performed by the military (Reuters, 2011; Al Jazeera, 2011a, 2011b), which was later revealed to be true (see Amnesty, 2011).

Initially, there was denial of sexual violence from some revolutionaries involved in the 25 January revolution. Mohamed, from Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment, confirmed the incidence of numerous cases of sexual violence in Tahrir Square, but recalled, “Everyone was trying to keep the clean image of the revolution that had emerged”. The active denial on the part of some revolutionaries was due to concern about how it might be used to disgrace and discredit the personal reputations
of revolutionaries and, ultimately, the revolution. Safa, formerly with UNWomen, also explained that at the height of the revolution, there were cases of even 6 year olds being raped in Tahrir but because of the state media blackout and fear of distorting the image of the revolution, revolutionaries were not quick to talk about the issues. Fear was a major contributing factor to the necessity of denial. For the revolutionaries, the existence of sexual harassment would have implied failure on their part to provide the new pure vision of citizenship that was inscribed in their revolutionary values.

The third means of state denial is perhaps more subtle than the other two ways. What had begun as a rallying cry against state-sponsored sexual violence (refer to Black Wednesday section below) quietly devolved into a movement that specifically focused on the socially motivated forms of sexual harassment (Tadros, 2013) or the public everyday forms of sexual harassment, such as harassment in the bus, metro, or workplace. This is evident in campaigns like HarassMap’s ‘Harasser is criminal’ television advertisements and Imprint’s anti-harassment comic strips displays in metro stations. Safa explained her exasperation with the incorrect definition of sexual harassment, which is lauded in the dominant narrative. She faulted the state media, which she claimed, reported on all cases of sexual violence as sexual harassment, stating:

Stop using sexual harassment to describe every single case of sexual assault that comes to your doorstep. What happened in Tahrir was mostly rape. What happens in Eid is mostly sexual assault. What happens every day is sexual harassment.

Using the blanket term of sexual harassment for all forms of sexual violence is problematic for a number reasons. It does away with discrepancies between markedly different forms of sexual violence. For example, mob rape and verbal sexual
harassment are hugely distinct, logically requiring a different set of interventions to target each of them. Most importantly, however, it allows for, in spite of its illegality, the exclusion of politically motivated sexual harassment from the dominant narrative. The consequence of this is the erasure of state-sponsored sexual violence from collective memory of sexual harassment, as well as giving the state immunity in such cases when it is itself the perpetrator.

State immunity is emboldened through the construction of its ownership of the sexual harassment movement and the resulting control it has over appeals for justice. In this way, an opening is created for the harassment of female protestors to continue without fear of repercussion, as a tactic to deter women from public protest. Safa called it a “classic tool to intimidate women in public space… and break their will,” which has been carried out since the political transition across the political spectrum by all of the major political players. Nawal, from Imprint, affirmed, “The state uses sexual harassment in political moments to stop women from going down to the streets, to prevent political participation, and make women think if they leave the house, there is a real danger of sexual violence”. Safa, formerly with UNWomen, also elaborated from personal experiences of hers and those around her that it is not simply a matter of breaking the will of women political dissidents, but it is also about putting pressure on their husbands, partners, children, and family. The goal is to traumatis e and humiliate family structures.

**Virginity Tests: The State as the Perpetrator**

A potent example of the exclusion of politically motivated sexual harassment is the conducting of virginity testing on women protestors by doctors in the military (see

---

7 It is understood that virginity testing should technically be referred to as sexual assault. However, for the purposes of this thesis, the state’s loose definition of sexual harassment – which has so far
Amnesty International, 2011). For example, on March 9, 2011, a sit-in in Tahrir Square was violently dispersed by military forces. In an interview with Al Jazeera (2011a), Samira Ibrahim, a participant in the sit-in, described how many women from the demonstration, including herself, were beaten, given electric shocks, strip-searched, humiliated, exposed, video-taped, and virginity tested. Senior Egyptian army generals, including Sisi who was a member of the ruling SCAF council at the time, initially defended the practice. After widespread condemnation, then-leader of SCAF Sisi explained, “The procedure was done to protect the girls from rape as well to protect the soldiers and officers from rape accusations” (BBC News, 2014). Sisi told CNN in an interview (as cited in CBS, 2011):

The girls who were detained were not like your daughter or mine.
These were girls who had camped out in tents with male protesters in Tahrir Square, and we found in the tents Molotov cocktails and [drugs]. We didn't want them to say we had sexually assaulted or raped them, so we wanted to prove that they weren't virgins in the first place. None of them were [virgins].

Statements like ‘they are not like our daughters’ establish the distinction made between the types of women who deserve the state’s recognition of their victimisation and the types of women who do not. It is abundantly clear that the latter is the political woman who chooses to resist and confront the state in public space. This will be returned to later in this chapter.

The sole focus on socially motivated sexual harassment, therefore, depoliticises the anti-sexual harassment movement on a number of levels. It promotes encapsulated anything from sexual violation and mob rape to verbal cat-calling – will be used, as it is reflective of the dominant narrative.
a confused definition of sexual harassment that prevents effective targeting, as well as concealing the state’s role in perpetrating sexual harassment, and obscuring the history of resistance and dissent that preceded the current ‘form’ of the anti-sexual harassment movement. It also gives the impression that the state has either always been interested in sexual harassment intervention or that it has never been antagonistic towards it. While events like the virginity testing and blue bra girl incident have directed public attention towards state-sponsored sexual violence, the state’s victim-blaming response has manufactured its forgetting. Exposing these instances of denial and forgetting, which are excluded from the dominant historical narrative is evidence of just how much power is embroiled within the process of historical production.

**Politicising the Collective Apology**

The politicisation of the collective apology was another important juncture in the counter-histories of sexual harassment. Participants were posed with the question as to what might have inspired an apology from President Sisi, especially considering there had been other just as publicised cases of vicious sexual assault during the 25 January revolution. In short, what made this particular collective apology historically possible? Participants indicated the collective apology was inspired by political motivations. One such motivation was to absolve the state of wrongdoing by establishing Sisi as a moral actor. This was evident in the emotional responses of some participants. Ibtisam, from Ashoka and ADEW, relayed:

> Sisi didn’t visit the girl because of *propaganda*. Sisi was shocked. He was also living in another bubble, very well brought up, a religious man but like the old days. It was like, what if she was my mother? He could not believe it, that someone could be raped in public. He could
not believe that they could post her video online like that. He is a very respectable man, a refined man.

It was possible for the President to apologise for the violations against the woman because it was not the result of state-sponsored sexual violence, but by average Egyptian men. The Egyptian culture, explained Ibtisam, positioned Sisi as the ‘God [head] of the household’, therefore making him symbolically responsible for what happened under his watch. Thereby, the only responsibility that was required to take on was that of protecting the women of Egypt. This point will be unpacked more in Chapter Seven.

With fervent defences like this, it is evident the public apology did operate as a tool of propaganda, mustering extraordinary amounts of support in the midst of a political climate that had become accustomed to political divergence. Many participants presented the public apology as just that. Even participants who did not label it with the word ‘propaganda’ felt the need to speak to this particular idea. Farida, from el Nadeem Centre, for example, saw it as political opportunism, as the law was actually written by Adly Mansour, stating, “Sisi took credit for it. He’ll take credit for anything.” She described the huge amount of popularity and support he has received for talking about sexual harassment. Again, Trouillot’s (2000) concept of the abortive ritual is relevant here. The President’s collective apology acted as an abortive ritual because it refused the political possibilities of revolutionary transformation brought on by the vivacity and audacity of the 25 January revolution. As Nawal, from Imprint, described, “There is a feeling that because they have done that, that’s it. They don’t owe us anymore”. This is especially true because the state is seen to already champion women’s issues. Abortive rituals like this establish a pastness, which allows the state to move on as swiftly as the apology surfaces. With the recent raiding of
independent art galleries and publishing houses, imprisoning activists, and declaring a
domestic war on terrorism (see Human Rights Watch, 2015), it is clear the state is not
interested in the tenacious demands of revolutionaries, instead we see its rearing head
attempting to solidify and legitimise its claim to power.

Gradual, but not new
Once the state was forced to reconcile with the once-denied reality of sexual
harassment, a linear timeline of a past free of sexual harassment and a present
escalation following the 25 January revolution was then presented. To counteract this
linear chronological order, participants presented two main points of difference –
evidence of sexual harassment prior to 2011, the gradual changes in the visible type of
sexual harassment, in order to specifically debunk causation to the revolution. Firstly,
participants argued it is historically inaccurate to claim newness of sexual harassment
due to its existence prior to 2011. For example, Mohamed, from Operation Anti-
Sexual Harassment, and Nawal, from Imprint, independently presented the well-
known fact that harassers were punished in the past by having their heads shaved
rather being imprisoned. Nawal added that “he would have his hair shaved off and
they would spray his head with coloured foam so he would be marked and shamed”.
Mohamed asserted, “Sexual harassment is not new and has been in various forms in
Egyptian society [since] the 1970s. There have been cases of mob sexual assault in
2005, 2006 and 2008”. In addition, Langhorn (2015) described the brief sexual
harassment campaign run in 2008 by teen magazine, Kilmitna, which included
organising a concert, where famous musicians and artists denounced sexual
harassment and volunteers engaged with retail workers and bus drivers, posting anti-
harassment stickers in stores and buses.
Secondly, participants argued that sexual harassment was just becoming more frequent and more visible over time, often recalling how sexual harassment gradually changed from being solely verbal to being cruder and more aggressively physical. Hisham, from Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment, spoke candidly about how he had watched his ‘cool’ older male cousins verbally harass women and started doing the same to show off. He explained:

The problem is 20 years ago our elders were saying ‘don’t use your hand’ \textit{[to harass]}. Their kids learn now from their elders. Their elders \textit{[the elders of today]} are already okay with physical harassment.

Essentially, he argued the social acceptance of verbal sexual harassment in the past, which he deemed “the polite version of harassment” laid the foundation for more aggressive physical forms of sexual harassment because the logic of male entitlement to female bodies was already entrenched. Thirdly, Hend, a scholar at AUC, explained the high visibility of sexual violence during the revolution by comparing it to the celebrations of Eid and Moulid,\footnote{The observance of the birthday of the Islamic prophet Mohamed.} where large crowds of different people from different areas congregate and celebrate. She stated, “The revolution magnified or multiplied by a million what always happens on the first day of Eid, when everyone would be on the streets of downtown \textit{[Cairo]}. There were always cases of rape and sexual harassment”. For these participants, the objective behind this counter-history is to contest the dominant chronological order and moving to hold the state to account for the sexual violence injustices of today and every other yesterday.

It is also important to note that in the past, three articles in the penal code could be used to prosecute sexual harassment cases. The first was article 306, where ‘insulting’ behaviour such as catcalling and other verbal harassments were punishable
through a fine of 100LE to one-month imprisonment. The second was article 278, where ‘indecent behaviour’ such as inappropriate exposure and stalking was punishable from a fine to three years imprisonment. The third was article 268, where ‘sexual assault’ covering physical harassment was punishable from three to fifteen years’ imprisonment. The case of Noha al Ostaz is one such example. In June 2008, Noha experienced a form of sexual harassment in Cairo. Three months later, after managing to take the harasser to a police station and filing charges, the harasser was sentenced to three years in prison on charges of sexual assault (BBC News, 2008).

**Black Wednesday, 2005: It Has Happened Before**

Most significantly, however, the events of Black Wednesday in 2005 are consistently referred to as verification of sexual harassment’s existence and visibility prior to the 25 January revolution. May 25, 2005 became known as Black Wednesday after the public protest against the notorious amendment to article 76 of the constitution, which guaranteed Mubarak more unrestricted power, was met with targeted sexual assaults of female protesters (EIPR, 2013; Internet Archive, 2005). According to personal accounts collected by Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) (2013), police forces and thugs sexually assaulted female protesters, which included tearing off their clothes, molesting and touching their breasts and vaginas, and verbally abusing them by calling them sluts and whores. They were also warned against participating in political protests again. The threats continued once four Female survivors, Shaimaa Abou Al-Kheir, Abir al-Askari, Iman Taha Kamel, and now deceased Nawal Ali Mohammed Mohamed, lodged formal complaints with the public prosecutor’s office, which refused to collect eyewitness testimonies and failed to conduct an independent investigation. The Public Prosecutor’s Office decided not to prosecute.
According to Mohamed, from Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment, they refused to help them and claimed ignorance as to who was responsible despite the array of eyewitness evidence that could have been available to them. In May, 2006, the four survivors submitted a complaint to the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, a quasi-judicial body that promotes and protects human rights in Africa, which includes overseeing and interpreting the African Charter, which later found that the Egyptian state was required to re-visit investigations, prosecute perpetrators, and provide compensation for the physical and psychological damages endured (EIPR, 2013). As of today, the state has failed to comply with any part of the Commission’s decision. Farouk, from I Saw Harassment, claimed Black Wednesday “was the biggest case in which the state declared that it was ready to use sexual violence in response and punishment to any movements against it”. He recalled: “Sexual harassment and assault was used by unleashing female and male outlaws on the groups and letting them attack women and strip them of their clothes in the middle of the street and on the stairs of the syndicate”. Mohamed described these ‘outlaws’ as being “National Democratic Party thugs”. This was not the only incident of state-sponsored sexual violence. Noha Radwan (2011) claimed Black Wednesday of 2005 was followed by similarly dark days where any protests against fraudulent elections and referenda were met with plain-clothed thugs and uniformed police in an attempt to intimidate female activists out of the public sphere. She also added, “Police custody, which under emergency law could be extended indefinitely and follow arrests without formal legal charges, became the government’s optimal means for sexually assaulting activists” (ibid.).
Survivors, Not Victims

The next part of the counter-histories draws on targeting misrepresentations of women in the dominant narrative. One method participants used to explain misrepresentations was to highlight the difference between survivors and victims. The dominant narrative created an umbrella of victimhood over women that had been sexually assaulted as victims. Nawal, from Imprint, claimed, “language is important”, thus problematising the state’s appeal to victimhood and its toxic contribution to sexist conceptions of manhood and womanhood. Men are seen as strong, brave, and independent, while women are seen as vulnerable, fragile, and require protection. She explained:

We do not use words like help, we say support. Or victim… we use the word survivor. This is to prevent, for example, men thinking they are manlier if they intervene. No, this is your human responsibility to support another human in a situation of violence.

Safa, formerly with UNWomen, called this the “masculinist nature of society”, arguing that it made targeting sexual violence difficult when the discourse leads the intervention to being about protection and not empowerment. She exclaimed, “It becomes a man to man problem, [forcing] the woman to hide behind his shoulders. No, we are on an equal footing”. Safa also commented on the use of word survivor over victim, arguing that the latter gave the impression that women’s beings were somehow tainted after experiencing sexual violence. These participants disputed the weakness inherent to the word victim, preferring instead to view women who had experience sexual violence as survivors, having survived and persisted in a society that was designed to fail them. In this way, this particular confrontation with a misrepresentation of women who have experienced sexual violence also worked to
challenge deeply held conceptions of womanhood and manhood within Egyptian society.

**Honouring Protest: The Red Line**

Another example that was used by participants was the struggle over the representation of the girl in the blue bra. Within a few days of the video footage becoming viral, mass unified protests erupted, which demanded an end to state-sponsored violence. The catch phrase that became notorious at the protests was: ‘Egypt’s daughters are a red line’, spreading all over Egypt (Hafez, 2014). Protestors carried signs that portrayed the girl in the blue bra as a ninja, instead of a lifeless limp body, jumping into the air to kick a soldier’s face and signs painted in the colours of the Egyptian flag featured a blue bra instead of the flag’s golden hawk. Hafez (2014) claimed these protests served as attempts to reframe female protestors as Egypt’s daughters, and not fallen dishonourable women as SCAF was portraying them. She argued that the “battle cries of the protests… also redressed the imbalance created within the patriarchal system that in principle should uphold the protection of females by males” (Hafez, 2014, 26). While attempts to reclaim the national debate are not to be discounted, the discursive contestation represented a ‘bargain with patriarchy’ (Kandiyoti, 1988). In appealing to the patriarchal conceptions of an honourable woman, protestors affirmed that women must in fact be honourable to receive empathy and warrant access to their rights and justice.

Many exclusions result from the affirmation of the honour paradigm, including the persistent exclusion of prostitutes and homeless women. Its problematic nature is reflected in SCAF’s justification for virginity testing female protestors. Then-leader of SCAF, Sisi explained, “The procedure was done to protect the girls from rape as well to protect the soldiers and officers from rape accusations” (BBC
News, 2014). Though the practice of virginity test has now been banned (Al Jazeera, 2011b), Sisi’s statement reveals an appeal to the perception of female honour as being associated with innocence, virginity, and sexual purity. Instead of showing that a woman’s perceived honour had nothing to do with her entitlements, the protestors inadvertently perhaps aligned with this intrinsically violent gendered conception of womanhood. Scholars such as Kandiyoti (1988), Badran (1995) and Baron (2005) have shown that women’s purity, and ultimately virginity, is essential to the constructions of nationhood. Mothers, wives and daughters are expected to embody a particular gendered role that is defined by notions of purity and honour, upholding family values, and preserving tradition. Thus, women’s beings belong not to themselves, but to their family, and by extension, to the nation.

Deviating from Hafez (2014) slightly, I suggest examples of the girl in the blue bra incident and virginity testing are important precisely because they undermine the state’s denial of state-sponsored sexual violence, not just violence more generally. It is no revelation that in the midst of a regime change human rights abuses against protesters occurred (see Human Rights Watch, 2015). In fact, it is this abuse of institutional power, in the form of Mubarak’s corruption, unfair privileging, and police’s abuses of power, to which the 25 January revolution owes much of its foundations. Because of decades of state denial, what had not yet been established are the explicit attacks on women’s bodies within these protests. Farouk, from I Saw Harassment, argued that these attacks are an overt message to women, designed to, “... scar[e] and silenc[e] women and [stop] them from participating in the public sphere and uprising. Trying to steal people’s happiness and excitement and pull them back to before January, or to an even worse place”. The ‘even worse place’ is the
position that women occupy within Egyptian society, which delegates their bodies and beings to the home and service of either their husbands or their family.

**Economic Factors**

The final key moment in the counter-histories of sexual harassment is a hugely disputed point of contention. When participants were asked whether there were social or economic factors behind the prevalence of sexual harassment, a common initial reaction was the utmost rejection of an economic argument for sexual violence. Participants were more comfortable giving social justifications, which amounted mainly to the disintegration of quality education, which I have discussed previously. At first, it appeared that participants flatly believed the economy had little to do with the debate at all. However, what became apparent as interviews progressed is this was merely an aversion to an exclusively economic argument that explains harassment with the inability of men to afford marriage. Participants contended the marriage excuse was an attempt to simplify the complexities surrounding the prevalence of sexual harassment and reduce the problem to simply being a matter of removing the financial barriers to men getting married.

This problematisation rests on two main points. First, the financial barriers that are condemned for preventing men from marrying are often the only financial protection that women have, which includes her dowry and an expectation to provide a home for her and any children she might bear. Second, it ignores the established fact that the marriage status of men has no bearing on whether men sexually harass or not. According to a HarassMap report with data from 2010-2012, there were high proportions of sexual harassment from children under the age of puberty and married men (HarassMap, 2012). Interestingly, participants who completely rejected any form of economic argument appeared to equate potential economic arguments to just two –
the identification of poor uneducated men as harassers or to the inability of men to afford marriage because of the expensive expectations attached to dowry and property.

Though participants do not explicitly connect the structural impact of neoliberal capitalism on the phenomenon of sexual harassment, it was made clear that the lack of an institutional alternative to a male provider, increasing poverty, and urbanisation are definite contributing factors. Sania, from LoveMatters, stated, “The economic downturn is a main reason for the prevalence of sexual harassment”. These issues are ironically traced to the early 1970s, which was when former President Anwar Sadat introduced neoliberal free market policies, referred to as the infitah (i.e. the opening of the market) (Ali, 2002; Ismail, 2011; El-Shakry, 2005).

To begin with, the lack of an institutional alternative for the male provider is presented as a barrier to disclosure of sexual harassment (or violence more broadly). For example, women are less likely to disclose sexual violence if they believed their husband or family disapprove and, in some cases, might experience physical violence as punishment for ‘dishonouring’ the family. Disclosure might also lead to enforced isolation, as some families response might be to segregate their daughters for their ‘own safety’. Ibtisam, from Ashoka and ADEW, explained:

The problem is people don’t go and complain… Where is she going to go? She goes to her brother and father, they hit her. She lives alone, other women will alienate her and men will harass her thinking she is a bad woman. You have a societal problem. Single women cannot exist in this society. It’s not like overseas, where I can relocate women that get abused because it will be the men in her new area harassing her afterwards. There is no institutional alternative to the male provider.
In this way, the marginalisation of divorced or single women that was perceived as a purely cultural problem appears to be intertwined with financial vulnerability. Mariam also highlighted the class aspect to social marginalisation, stating wealthier women were less likely to experience it as their wealth and social status acted as protective factor. Indirectly, the infitah is understood to have derailed any forms of state-led safety nets that women could depend on to pursue living violence-free lives.

Rising poverty and unemployment levels (see UNDP, 2013), under the auspices of neoliberal capitalism, are also related to the increased prevalence in sexual harassment. Farouk, from I Saw Harassment, discussed the intricate relationship between poverty, which he deemed a “leading cause” and the demise of cultural and social protections against sexual violence. He explained that the Black Wednesday protest, which involved many social justice movements like Kefaya, was protesting against economic problems, including high unemployment rates, corruption, and poverty. The relationship between poverty and urban planning was also raised. Safa, formerly with UNWomen, explained how the masculine approach to urban planning had created a “belt of underprivileged communities, where easily someone can hide and nobody can find them, and a lot of midnight and late night traffic of men and boys”. She shared the apprehensions women have to even leave apartment buildings where they live to get to their cars and the inability to enjoy simple walks on the Nile at Asr el Nile or Korniche Shoubra, exclaiming, “Urban settlement is masculine. These are man-only streets”. Hend, a scholar at AUC, explained that rapid urbanisation after the infitah and poor urban planning created more anonymous space and opportunities for the anonymity that allows for sexual harassment to take place. Hend, however, argued against “strange essentialisation” that “couches [sexual
*harassment* in a lot of cotton wool of ‘it is the economic crisis’. She later contended, if anything, “maybe infitah is an intermediate variable”.

**Conclusion**

This chapter highlights four key junctures by interrogating the mechanics for state denial and state apology, challenging the dominant narrative’s chronological order, re-representing (dissident) women, and complicating the economic argument, in order to demonstrate silencing within the dominant historical narrative of sexual harassment. The definitional reduction of sexual harassment to being specifically socially motivated is seen to conceal the state’s role in its perpetration, donning the depoliticisation of the anti-sexual harassment movement. It ultimately resists the dominant historical narrative’s demands for cultural intervention, pointing instead to the culture of state impunity for state-sponsored sexual violence. Overall, this chapter reveals the underlying ideological foundations and power relations that explain the state’s involvement in sexual harassment intervention is not simply about ending sexual harassment, but as having more to do with control – controlling acceptable perpetration, use of public space, and the direction of feminist praxis.
Chapter Seven: Governmentalities of Sexual Harassment

This chapter explores how the dominant historical narrative of sexual harassment operates as a politics of truth, one which produces new forms of knowledge and expertise that dictate a particular set of disciplinary technologies used to govern (Dean, 2010). Analysing the state alone as the wielder of power, however, would give a decidedly unrepresentative account of governmentality. In order to unearth the rationalities and technologies of government involved in the sexual harassment intervention, the apparatus of governance will first be identified. This examination reveals the blurring of boundaries between state and non-state development actors, underlining in particular the role of non-state actors in the governmentalities of sexual harassment.

The next portion of the chapter will identify two rationalities informing the governmentalities of sexual harassment: securitisation and elements of moralising. First, various disciplinary technologies, relying on the rationality of securitisation, demand the pursuit of a particular pathway for intervention. That pathway was through criminalisation and the implementation of certain security measures. The entanglement of the rationality of securitisation in wider counter-terrorism efforts against rising Islamism will also be discussed. Secondly, the moralising elements coded within presidential speeches and official ministerial statements, embodied in the ideal of the worthy victim, where value-based judgements are exercised regarding the survivors that are victimised and those that are blamed, and signified in the nationalist appeals to men who are challenged to rise to the occasion (or more accurately, to embody hegemonic masculinity) will be examined. These two
rationalities enforce and entrench the normalisation of state authority, as well as encouraging the expansion of state power.

The Hybrid State
Before delineating the different disciplining technologies invoked in the curbing of sexual harassment, it is apt to first establish what the apparatus of governance is and how it operates. Though Egypt has a democratically elected legislature, authoritarian measures are visible in the rampant political repression in the form of forced disappearances, mass arrests, unjust imprisonment, and even the murder of political dissidents or opposition members (see Human Rights Watch, 2015). The apparatus of governance most appropriately aligned with this is what Mitchell Dean (2010) called authoritarian government. This form of government differs from advanced liberal government (despite some continuities) because its “types of rule… [seek] to operate through obedient rather than free subjects, or at a minimum, endeavour to neutralise any opposition to authority” (ibid., 155). As Salma Ismail (2011) has noted, there is an implied assumption that the governed populations lack certain capabilities to completely self-govern without the intervention of the state. However, locating the authoritarian government is not as simple as pointing the finger at the current Sisi-led regime. Foucault (1979, 20) stated that governmentality is “the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses, and reflections, the calculations and tactics, that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power”. It would therefore be inadequate to approach the state as the sole unit of analysis, as diverse institutions enact processes of governance and therefore should be studied “together in one field of power” (Elyachar, 2005, 29).

In the case of sexual harassment intervention, a complex apparatus of governance is revealed, comprising of an illustrious informal web of (non)-alliances
between the state, the National Council for Women, and different and often-competing non-state actors. Julia Elyachar (2005) has identified the hybrid state to describe this blurring of boundaries between the state and non-state actors to the point where, in this case, the state appears to absorb the sexual harassment interventions and the non-state actors who herald it. She indicated, “The two can seem to be in stark opposition but practices have evolved across their boundaries, as the state can absorb informality and international organisations can enter the state” (ibid., 91). This aligned with Foucault’s (1979) own position that did not paint a picture of unwaveringly strong and unbeatable monolithic power structure. It also did presume that “the nature of institutions of power is a function of changes in the practice of government” (Rajagopal, 2003, 14). The involvement of non-state actors is not viewed as a transfer of power from the state, rather as an expression of the changing logic of governmentality (Sending and Neumann, 2006). The plethora of non-state actors are therefore in part shaped by the state, but also shape the state itself.

Partnerships between state and non-state actors especially reflect the need to complicate ideas of the governance apparatus because of the role of non-state actors in promoting and enforcing authoritarian neoliberal governmentalities. The geographic mapping of sexual harassment is a brief example of this. James Scott (1998) has asserted the potential ability of maps to act as disciplinary technologies for the regulation of society. In this case, the geographic mapping of sexual harassment (Figure 3) involved the definition of problem areas, which has led to the codification of (im)moral prescriptions of being ‘sha’by’, ‘uneducated’, and ‘backwards’. However, unlike Scott’s (1998) argument that the power to draw maps is retained by the state, this mapping of sexual harassment was not drawn by the state and was in
fact first established the local Egyptian non-governmental organisation, HarassMap, which has secured the authority to name problem areas requiring particular attention and intervention. The problematisation of areas directly feeds into dominant narratives of (in)security used to justify increasingly draconian security measures, which will be described later in the chapter, and therefore, actively participates in the various governmentalities of sexual harassment. This substantiates Elyachar’s (2005, 90) position that “maps are less an instrument of a sovereign state than another ground on which competing visions of reality and contests for power are played”. Likewise, Scott (1998, 87) stated, the “transformative power resides not in the map, of course, but rather in the power possessed by those who deploy the perspective of that particular map”.

Figure 3: HarassMap’s geographic map of sexual harassment incidence (HarassMap, 2015b).

HarassMap describes itself a “volunteer-based initiative founded in late 2010 that is working to end the social acceptability of sexual harassment in Egypt” (HarassMap, 2015b).
An aspect of authoritarian government that is particularly relevant in Egypt’s case is that it makes contradictory provisions for despotic practices with “the aim of rendering [individuals] autonomous by fostering capacities of responsibility and self-governance” (Dean, 2010, 171). The contradictions arise when the state, headed by the president, attempts to increase its control, while simultaneously attempting to privatise responsibility. While the specific disciplinary technologies of control will be discussed below, it should be first noted the concern with control is reflected in the state’s ownership of the issue of sexual harassment. This is evident in the authority of the state to oversee the response to sexual harassment, entrenched through legal mechanisms (i.e. amendments to the penal code and introducing the national strategy), as well as effectively absorbing sexual harassment activism through partnerships with specialised non-state development actors. The main mechanism for the partnerships has been through building the capacity of state institutions – a stable fixture within current development praxis – that can include anything from organisational restructuring to knowledge training led by non-state actors (Phillips and Ilcan, 2004). These partnerships simultaneously feed into rationalities of security and morality, which promote disciplining technologies that privatise responsibility over sexual harassment disclosure and response. Before moving on to discuss the disciplining technologies, the example of the National Council of Women will be used to specifically highlight the dynamics of the Egyptian hybrid state.

**The National Council of Women: In/Out-side the State**

The National Council of Women illustrates the blurring of boundaries between state and non-state actors within this complex apparatus of governance. The blurred boundaries between state and non-state actors can also be embodied by actors who are literally inside and outside the state, such as the National Council for Women (NCW).
According to the official State Information Services (SIS) website (2016), “The National Council for Women was established in 2000 as an independent institution to advance the status of the Egyptian women through social, economic, and political empowerment”. The state’s emphasis on the “independence” of this body is questionable, even partly so, given that it was formed by the former First Lady Suzanne Mubarak, its members continue to be appointed by Presidential decree and not through democratic means, and it has unrestricted access to state resources and ministerial departments. The NCW was disbanded after the 25 January revolution, due to allegations of visible links to Mubarak’s now-dissolved National Democratic Party (NDP) – it was housed in the NDP’s headquarters, and there is a strong relationship between now-former council head Farkhonda Hassan and Suzanne Mubarak (Egypt Independent, 2012). It was however reinstated on February 11, 2012 by the head of Egypt's ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces Field (SCAF) Marshal Hussein Tantawi, who appointed 30 new members. These members then elected the former head Mervat Tallawy, who directed the NCW up until February 1, 2016 when the current head Dr. Maya Morsy was elected (SIS, 2016). While the former head Tallawy had no direct affiliation to the former First Lady, she did act as Minister of Social Affairs under Mubarak, overseeing the drafting of the repressive non-governmental organisation law that was described earlier.

The NCW are both inside and outside the state. They have achieved this double positioning through simultaneously distancing themselves from the ousted Mubarak regime and Muslim Brotherhood, while aligning themselves with the current presidency. In a speech entitled ‘She and Terrorism’ that was presented to the United Nations, Tallawy aligned her agency’s goal of female empowerment within the state’s anti-terrorism mandate (National Council of Women, 2015). According to Tallawy,
the role of women is “to give more attention to the intellectual upbringing of the young generations and to disseminate the values of tolerance and dialogue among family members in order to protect them against being dragged [into] extremism and exaggeration in religion” (ibid.). As such, the NCW have always been subject to strong opposition from Islamists, including the Muslim Brotherhood, who have argued that laws introduced by the NCW are non-Islamic, particularly the controversial *khul'* divorce, which grants women the right to divorce their husbands given the marriage dowry is returned (Egypt Independent, 2012). The Islamist opposition will often call these laws ‘Suzanne’s laws’, alluding to the symbiotic relationship between the NCW and the Mubarak regime (ibid.). The NCW is thus “autonomous but semi-incorporated”, giving the state “access to crucial levels of power” (Elyachar, 2005, 83). It is unclear what transformation and positioning might occur under the leadership of Dr Morsy, as it lies outside the scope of thesis due to the timing of her election.

Participants aligned with el Nadeem Centre, I Saw Harassment, and Ikhtyar expressed scepticism towards alliances with the NCW. Farida, from el Nadeem Centre, for example, explained that el Nadeem Centre views the NCW as a “cautious ally” to the women’s movement broadly because of their wide-ranging access to every governmental department across the 27 districts in Egypt. She stated, “No NGO in Egypt has that access,” which especially highlights the NCW’s ‘inside-outside the state’ positionality. Despite the benefits of their wide-ranging access, el Nadeem Centre does not work directly with them, as they are essentially a governmental institution, which makes them “unresponsive in making any kind of real or genuine changes, or have any kind of real position on things”, according to Farida. She also pointed to their complete silence on state violence, which “does not exist in their
world”. The inability of an entity like NCW to respond to state-sponsored sexual violence, which has included sexual harassment, indicates the problems associated with the logic of non-state development actors who refuse any confrontation with the state. The collusion between NCW and the state is clear when considering accounts from participants describing the NCW’s previous censorship of reports on sexual harassment. Safa, formerly of UNWomen, recalled a report published in 2004 and the well-known ‘Clouds in the Sky’ report (ECWR, 2010) published in 2010 that were both banned by the NCW because at the time, they did not acknowledge that sexual harassment existed. “In reality, they are a state entity by all means”, Safa stated. Likewise, Farida claimed their founding under Mubarak’s watch was enough of an indictment regarding their loyalties.

**Disciplining Harassers**

The first element to the ‘war against sexual harassment’ is fittingly a rationality of securitisation. The dominant narratives on sexual harassment transformed sexual harassment from merely being wrong to a criminal act and a matter of national security. Paul Amar’s (2013) definition of securitisation is useful when thinking about this shift in function described above. He defines securitisation as, the “reconfiguration of political debates and claims around social justice, political participation, or resource distribution into technical assessments of danger, operations of enforcement, and targeting of risk populations” (ibid., 17). Such an understanding of sexual harassment required security measures urgently be imposed. These measures included the installation of surveillance cameras in public and retail areas,10

---

10 On October 17 2012, the Ministry of Interior Affairs announced that surveillance cameras were to be installed in streets and squares of Cairo to aid with the detection and prosecution of sexual harassment (Ahram Online, 2012a). After a period of silence on the matter, perhaps due to the events of 30 June 2013, the security state announced the installation of 310 surveillance cameras around Cairo that would
increased police presence, the creation of a specialised unit for monitoring crimes of violence against women in Ministry of Interior Affairs in May 2013, and increasing the mandate of the specialised police unit of female officers dedicated to policing sexual harassment (SIS, 2015).

The securitisation that became associated with sexual harassment was not necessary a directive solely driven by state officials or state feminists. It was also ironically advocated by (self-described) revolutionaries who identified with protesting against abuses of power and corruption within the police ranks and Ministry of Interior Affairs during the 25 January revolution. Yet, the ideological allowances attached to holding a position against security forces and then supporting increased securitisation can be explained by the sense of urgency that was expressed by these participants. Their position was that in this political moment, a window of opportunity for women’s right to safety was more pressing than the broader goal of ending corruption.

Criminalisation
The establishing of illegality has come to be seen as a natural response to the issue of sexual harassment. It is this process of naturalising illegality that will now be focused on. Foucault (1979) highlighted the creation and shifting nature of illegality as a political act. He uses the example of drug trafficking as a ‘useful delinquency’ to explain how “the existence of a legal prohibition creates around it a field of illegal practices, which one manages to supervise, while extracting from it an illicit profit through elements, themselves illegal, but rendered manipulable by their organisation in delinquency” (Foucault, 1977/1979, 280). Sexual harassment, too, operates as a

be monitored 24/7 in the Cairo governorate building (Cairo Post, 2015). Retail owners have also been obliged to install surveillance cameras in stores (Ibrahim, 2015).
‘useful delinquency’ by establishing a space where control mechanisms can be invoked with the permission and even request of citizens, as well as contributing to rationalising the steadily increasing policing and surveillance of Egyptian society. I employ the term control cautiously, a word loaded with ideas and practices of forcefulness, violent obligation, and violations of choice. In the case of the various state-led sexual harassment interventions, it is clear that these loaded meanings of control have no place in this discussion. The mechanisms of control are those that limit freedom, under the mandate of the state and are enforced through the rule of law (Rose and Miller, 2010).

The state’s main strategy for sexual harassment intervention has been through its criminalisation. The security state’s capacity to pursue the criminalisation strategy relied on the dialectical relationship between constructing the illegality of sexual harassment and introducing the punitive mechanism to uphold its illegality. The mechanisms for the criminalisation strategy were two-fold: 1) amendments to the penal code in June 2014 and 2) the National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women in June 2015. With the cooperation of several ministries, religious institutions, and non-state actors, the National Council for Women drafted the national strategy, which will be implemented over the five-year period of 2015-2020 (SIS, 2015). The four main themes of the strategy – prevention, protection, intervention, and prosecution and litigation – underlined the only possible line of action the state was willing to indulge, including setting up specialised police units and giving gender-based violence training to all police officers (SIS, 2015).

A narrative of newness accompanied any mention of criminalisation, whether that was from participants’ interviews, presidential speeches, or major media headlines. In interviews, participants identified the approval of a ‘new law’ as the
most significant criminalisation mechanism. State media also subscribed to this narrative, where headlines and statements like the following were persistent – “Egypt criminalises sexual harassment for first time” (Guardian, 2014), “New law to end sexual harassment in Egypt” (Al Jazeera, 2014a), “This law is a first in Egypt’s history” (Egypt Independent, 2014a) and “Egyptian lawmakers have proposed new legislation… for the first time” (Al Arabiya, 2014). There are, however, two points of contention worth discussing briefly. Firstly, the references to the existence of a sexual harassment law are misleading. Decree No. 50 of 2014, which has been heralded as the ‘new sexual harassment law’, actually materialises as two narrow amendments to the existing penal code (Ahram Online, 2012b).

Secondly, the dominant narrative of newness that has been constructed starkly contrasts with the counter-historical narratives examined in Chapter Six. For example, Nawal, from Imprint, and Mohamed, from Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment shared collective memories of the police’s punitive response to harassers, which involved shaming them with buzz cuts, to demonstrate that while the ‘law’ might appear to be new, the construction of sexual harassment as a criminal act is not, and neither is the concept of punishing it. Within the dominant narrative of newness, there is also a silent disregard for three articles of criminal law that, prior to June 2014, could be applied to sexual harassment cases. Though, it is true that none of these laws were specifically drawn up to target sexual harassment. The grandiose claims to newness are also accompanied with associations to President Sisi who is given credit for the amendments, despite the fact that it was outgoing Interim President Adly Mansour who approved the legal amendments prior to Sisi’s election.

The majority of participants emphasised the need for the criminalisation of sexual harassment. They justified this on the basis of four main premises: 1) to
establish the criminal act, 2) to negatively reinforce sexual harassment, 3) to act as retribution for women, and 4) to respond to the breakdown of law and order. Firstly, the construction of illegality was considered an important function for establishing sexual harassment as a serious criminal act. In fact, all participants shared commentary on the need to dispel how sexual harassment is often defended as innocent flirting, a joke, or a compliment. Defending the criminalisation strategy completely, Sania, from LoveMatters, explained how sexual harassment has become normalised within Egyptian society to a point where it is taken for granted and defended. She used the example of people witnessing a purse snatching to highlight that they would immediately chase the perpetrator and return the owner of the purse’s belongings, as opposed to their reaction to witnessing sexual harassment, which is often to blame the woman: “She is told: ‘Shame on you. You should not dishonour yourself’. Because, until now, it has not been understood as a crime”. Mariam, from ADEW, claimed the illegality of sexual harassment turned this idea of dishonour on its head. “It challenges the perception that filing a sexual harassment report brings dishonour. It’s the opposite, actually, this is your right”.

Secondly, criminalisation was considered a strong vehicle for the negative reinforcement of the harmful sexual behaviours exhibited by harassers. It signalled not only the gravity of the action, but that there were consequences for such transgressions. Eman, co-founder of HarassMap, explained:

It was important for us to show that sexual harassment was not just a silly act. It is a crime. It is just like theft or killing. It is a crime. It is important people understand that this behaviour is punishable and is unacceptable.
The negative reinforcement is therefore achieved through punitive action and hopefully disparaging would-be harassers. Mohamed, from Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment, also stated outright, “There is no negotiation. Sexual harassment is a crime”. Farouk, from I Saw Harassment, elaborated the punitive aspect to criminalisation also demonstrates to society there is no difference between verbal and physical variations of sexual harassment. Both are punishable by law. He stated, “The harasser is a criminal at all levels, from the one who catcalls to the one who reaches out with his hands or more… There is no gap, they are both criminal”. The necessity for punitive action for even the catcalle, he argued, is because of “the difference… in society’s reaction, which sometimes holds her responsible, never him”. The law is, therefore, the means to placing blame on the harasser and never on the survivor.

Thirdly, an element of participants’ stipulations for negative reinforcement was a demand for retribution. The punitive aspect was seen as a fair method for exacting justice, which compensated women (at least a little) for the daily struggles and injustices they face more generally. Hend, a scholar at AUC, declared sexual harassment was a violent crime, stating:

Some kind of retribution has to be recognised as a good thing… There are no grounds for defending harassers. You can protect their rights as criminals, but that is another story. It should not be feminists who should let go of their rights to retribution.

The statement made by Hend explained the popular appeal of the two forms of expressive justice (the collective apology and publicised rape trials) that contribute to the construction of the dominant historical narrative. Amar (2013, 17) has pointed out this process of hypervisibilisation of certain events “render/s] invisible the real nature of power and social control”, making it difficult to condemn weaknesses in the
criminalisation strategy without appearing to oppose the retributive justice it allegedly represents. Drawing on Spivak, Sangeeta Ray (2000, 2) has similarly argued the repeated reproduction of a claimed truth can prevent “a critique of the fetish-character (so to speak) of the masterword”. Attention given to moments of expressive justice arguably puts the spotlight on the retributive aspect of criminalisation, which is transformed into an apparent win for all Egyptian women, while possibly act as a distraction from other less desirable outcomes.

The last justification for criminalisation (and arguably the most significant for the state’s expansion of power) assembles discourses of a security-vacuum in postrevolutionary Egypt in association with the increased prevalence of sexual harassment. The breakdown of law and order was expressed in the vivid collective memories of burning police stations, rioting and looting of stores and businesses, and evening neighbourhood defence gatherings of men (young and old) guarding loved ones and their homes and roads from gangs of rioters and thieves. Hend, a scholar from AUC, explained the criminalisation of sexual harassment as indispensable when the escalation of sexual harassment is understood as part of the breakdown of law and order. In order to curb sexual harassment, law and order must be restored. Hend reasoned:

There is a level of breakdown of law and order, breakdown of security.
That is the responsibility of the police and the state. It is not *about* the criminalising of *sexual harassment*. It is about keeping law and order on the streets and in the villages and so on.

Hend’s statement ‘it’s not *about* the criminalisation’ draws us to an important juncture. There is more to criminalisation than establishing illegality and enforcing punishment. The criminalisation of sexual harassment, as a form of knowledge,
dictates the disciplinary technologies that are naturally to follow. Essentially, the discourses of breakdown of law and order implicate the prevalence of sexual harassment within the bigger problem of state (in)security.

**Specialised women’s police unit**

The specialised unit of female police officers has been the most visible of state’s claim to increased policing. There is conflicting evidence as to when it was officially established. There are ministerial statements dating as early as 2013 regarding its establishment, yet it was given official mandate by the national strategy. The unit consists of ten female police officers and has apparently undergone training on combating sexual crimes and violence against women in the United States (Al Arabiya, 2013). However, due to issues with female officers experiencing harassment themselves, male officers have had to join the unit as well (Al Arabiya, 2013). The unit was established for two main reasons. Firstly, the female faces of the unit are intended to encourage girls and women to overcome societal and family pressure and report cases of sexual harassment they experience. “We help the victim in facing her challenging psychological condition and we try to let her know that she is not at fault and that she should engage with society as someone who was a victim of a crime, not a shamed person”, explained Captain Rehab Abdul-Latif, an officer in the unit (Al Arabiya, 2013). This position appeals to an assumption that women are less likely to report to a male officer than they are to a female officer.

Secondly, the Ministry of Interior appeared to make the move to establish the special unit of female police officers in response to allegations of ineptitude on the part of a male-dominated police force, who “cannot deal with the mental state of a victim of [a] sex crime”, according to Colonel Manar Mokhtar, a female police officer in the unit (Al Arabiya, 2013). Mohamed, from Operation Anti-Sexual
Harassment, pointed to the insensitive nature of police procedures, where sensitive processes, like rape and pregnancy tests are carried out in unprofessional and traumatic ways, followed by intensive interrogations that might take hours and sometimes even confinement with the accused themselves between each step of the process. This sentiment was echoed by participants who argued the police were not adequately equipped to act as a first point of contact for survivors of any form of sexual violence.

Two main criticisms levelled by participants against the specialised unit of female police officers was its geographic limitations and the lack of adequate technical gender-based training or funding required in order for the unit to operate year round. The lack of funding is evident in the special unit’s small numbers and limited presence in Cairo that, on the one hand, cannot realistically cover the geographical scope of Cairo and, on the other hand, ignores the prevalence of sexual harassment in other urban and rural areas in Egypt. The specialised unit was even referred to as a ‘superficial’ move, as it only seems to make an appearance during big celebrations like Eid\textsuperscript{11} or Moulid.\textsuperscript{12} To this point, Sania, from LoveMatters, explained:

The women’s police force is an aesthetic move. It would not be if the women officers were at all police stations and did not only come out on public holidays and days of celebrations. If you went out right now, you would not see any women police officers in the street. These women officers are on display and when the occasion is over, that’s that.

\textsuperscript{11} Eid is the celebration marking the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.
\textsuperscript{12} Moulid is the observance of the birthday of the Islamic prophet Mohamed.
Hence, the issue is not the actual existence of the specialised units of female officers, but the perception that the state should be investing more into increasing their scope and power. The same logic applied for the second criticism levelled against the specialised units, which were demonstrably inadequately trained with no educational background in gender-based violence and effective intervention strategies. This was confirmed when images of one female officer violently reprimanding a harasser (Figure 4) surfaced. Adding to this, Sania, from LoveMatters, asserted that some officers have also been recorded live saying the type of clothing a women wears might encourage sexual harassment. She claimed this was a “disaster. When the person defending the harasser is the person meant to uphold the law against them”. Nawal, from Imprint, also expressed her concern with physical violence against harassers, explaining that it only fuels the cycle of violence in Egyptian society – the very thing the criminalisation strategy is attempting to put an end to. The solution put forward by participants to target the gender-based insensitivity of the specialised unit of female officers was capacity building.

Figure 4: A female officer from specialised unit violently reprimanding a harasser in downtown Cairo (Middle East Eye, 2015).
Threat of terror
The link between the prevalence of sexual harassment and the Muslim Brotherhood has been stressed by the state (see National Council of Women (NCW), 2015) revealing the entanglement of the rationality of securitisation in wider counter-terrorism efforts. In a statement from the NCW, the sexual assaults that occurred during President Sisi’s inauguration celebration were described as “revenge [carried out] against Egyptian women to steal their happiness” (Mada Masr, 2014). The NCW continued by stating (ibid.):

These gruesome incidents that occurred recently are a continuation of the systemic political harassment the Council has previously fought and warned against during the Muslim Brotherhood’s rule. The Council predicted the repetition of such politically oriented crimes organised by unknown parties with specific orientations and benefits… [The Council believes that the reason behind these incidents is to] exclude and isolate Egyptian women from public life, force them into the background, and kill their joy regarding the success of the roadmap, which the whole world witnessed.

Moreover, in a speech to the United Nations assembly, Tallawy declared: “Under the reign of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Egyptian women suffered from this intellectual form of terrorism, which was practiced under the cloak of religion, thus turning several regions in the country into sores of terrorism that jeopardise the nation’s security and stability” (NCW, 2015). The link between sexual harassment and the Muslim Brotherhood is thus extended to include terrorism carried out by the Muslim Brotherhood.
Tadros (2013) has remarked that politically motivated sexual assault had in fact increased while the Muslim Brotherhood was in power. The extent of the Muslim Brotherhood’s involvement in allowing or perpetrating sexual violence may in fact be true; however, the political value of this ‘fact’ establishes the security state as the moral actor. The security state’s own record on sponsoring sexual violence is ignored, which shows how deeply political the framing of sexual harassment is in terms of assuming legitimacy and maintaining power in postrevolutionary Egypt. Finally, it is becoming increasingly questionable whether the state’s interest in curbing sexual harassment was genuine, given its attention has faded and become more subsumed by rhetoric on ‘crime’ and ‘terrorism’. For example, in 2012, the installation of surveillance cameras was in response to sexual harassment, whereas since 2015, it has become about “combat[ing] crime and terrorism” (Ibrahim, 2015). One state official was quoted stating, it would provide a “marked improvement in security by enabling police to single out suspicious activity and allow intervention before crimes or acts of terror unfold” (Ibrahim, 2015).

Through the marriage of sexual harassment and terrorism, some contradictory narratives have appeared. One such example is the state declaring its unequivocal commitment to ending sexual harassment, while the state complains its hands are tied due to the rising domestic Islamist terrorism. The latter has been employed as an excuse for the lack of control over violations against women, including sexual harassment. For example, Ibtisam, from Ashoka and ADEW, exclaimed, “The police can’t be everywhere… The police are fighting terrorism” when asked about criticisms towards the Ministry of Interior’s anti-sexual harassment project. In a similar way, Tallawy deflected criticism on torture of female protestors, arguing, “The President is currently facing very challenging times fighting [terrorism]. Raising this issue [by the
international community] is a means to portray Egypt as a terrorist country that does not respect the rule of law” (Dream TV Egypt, 2014). Essentially, Tallawy denounced any discussion of state-sanctioned violence on the basis that given Egypt’s current situation, the priority should be apprehending Islamist terrorists. These statements demonstrate how this particular discourse of terrorism is deployed to deflect criticisms of the state and to rebuff suggestions to implement more or different interventions against sexual harassment.

**Disciplining the Harassed**

Part of the governmentalities of sexual harassment, imbued within the rationality of securitisation, is a form of respectability politics. The goal of which, according to Amar (2011, 305), is to instil “self-disciplinary practices that are depoliticising and aim for assimilation”. The moralising elements of it track and measure goodness, marking certain individual male and female bodies with moral corruptness as opposed to those with virtue. It details what is acceptable and what is not, what is normal and what is not. In Chapter Five, the hypervisibilisation of certain events (Amar, 2011a) relating to sexual harassment propelled the moralising, in order to naturalise gendered and class hierarchies and modes of governance imposed upon women. These hierarchies denounce the sexual harassment of honourable respectable women, who are seen to represent the nation’s aspirations for the ideal form of Egyptian femininity i.e., one that does not dissent against the state apparatus. On the other hand, those women who dissent against the state apparatus are labelled promiscuous, unrespectable, and dishonourable. These women are blamed for any form of sexual violation, rendering them unworthy of public support and deserving of punishment. These moral prescriptions are appointed to the daughters that will be celebrated and those that will be demonised. Such moral prescriptions elucidate the reasoning behind
Rose’s (1999) claim that the state is less preoccupied by crime than it is about the government of moral order. In this way, there is an implicit attempt to naturalise gendered hierarchies as well as the state’s hegemony (Amar, 2011a, 2013; Rose, 1999). Appeals to nationalism and appeals to responsibility are the two main identified moralising elements that are examined below.

**Through nationalism**

On May 5, 2014, a hall packed to the brim with women, chanted, ‘You are the father, you are the brother’ repeatedly and passionately, as Sisi watched on from the podium where he was seated. While addressing this all-female crowd at the Presidential campaign conference, many women called out, expressing their personal loyalty and love for Sisi (Al Jazeera Arabic, 2014). Events like this, following Morsi’s ousting on 30 June 2013, express a new citizenship distinct from that under Mubarak, one that emphasises women enact their political power as individual voters. In this respect, Rai (2002) has argued that although central to the project of nation building, women are made invisible through universal discourse of citizenship and economic development. However, in Egypt’s current context, women are not entirely invisible, nor are they passive agents of the governmentalities of sexual harassment. More than half of the support base for President Sisi is female and, as depicted in the scene above, some women are more than willing to partake in the nationalist furore. The new citizenship granted to women is deceptive in so far as it appears to be motivated by the empowerment of women. The state’s appeals to women within the process of nation building and attempts to restore law and order has arguably enabled the state to advance its disciplinary technologies under the guise of ‘progressiveness’. The recruitment of women in this process is operationalised through narratives of ‘Egypt
as a woman’ that interlock women’s honour to the nation’s honour, and the characterisation of Sisi as ‘the father’.

The honour of Egypt is expressed as intimately linked with the honour of its women, whereby making any transgression upon an Egyptian woman a direct transgression on Egypt. In a speech, Sisi swore that even those who merely look at women would be prosecuted, asking exasperedly (Egypt First, 2014):

You would do that to the honour of Egypt? And the people around you would let you do that? I am saying again. Stop, stop, and look around at what is happening to us… You talk to me about human rights when this is happening to our girls in the streets? The people around her say it is none of their business… He could even be filming [the sexual harassment]. What are you filming for? To humiliate your honour? To humiliate your nation?

It is made clear in this speech that the link between a woman’s honour and the nation’s honour is a significant element in efforts to restore Egypt to its ‘rightful’ moral order. On a side note, the reference to human rights is particularly interesting as it explicitly indicates the state’s unwillingness to take the discussion surrounding sexual harassment beyond where it currently sits. Another example of the state using an honour code is seen during Sisi’s public apology to the sexual assault survivor, where he declared, “I am talking about all of Egypt – our honour is being attacked and that is unacceptable. Even if it is only one case, it is unacceptable” (ONtv, 2014b). He follows this by saying, “Every man who has integrity, courage, and honour would never let this happen, even if it is only one case in all of Egypt. This is why I am apologising to you” (ONtv, 2014b). Sisi’s appeal to men also reflects the characterisation of men as the protectors – strong and wise – that accompanies the
characterisation of respectable honourable women as requiring male protection. Thus, the honour of the nation is intertwined with men and women performing these mandated gender roles.

Permeated within the image of ‘Egypt as a woman’ is also a declaration of the nation’s indebtedness to the Egyptian woman. During Sisi’s collective apology, he told the survivor, “You [women] are most important. Egypt is nothing without you” (ONtv, 2014b). Whether or not these affirmations were selflessly given or not, they first made an appearance in Sisi’s speeches during the campaign trail. At a presidential campaign conference, Sisi beseeched the help of Egyptian women declaring he could not make Egypt right without them. To loud enthusiastic applause, Sisi declared (ONtv, 2014a):

You have confirmed to me that the Egyptian woman is rewriting history. She is writing something… ‘Take note, we [women] are here, we are capable, we can achieve the impossible…’ To all of the women of Egypt, I call you to stand by me. The women who take care of their families, turning the electricity off, the gas off [referring to his limitation requests due to electricity and gas shortages]… I am calling you now to not only take of your small house, but your bigger house [the state] too.

In another televised interview, he told two talk show hosts, “I look to women with utter respect and honour, not out of political posturing, because the Egyptian woman particularly gives the most to her country. She takes on responsibility, she fears for her children and her home, and even her country” (Ten TV Network, 2015). These declarations of indebtedness and respect bequeath women with feelings of equal power and political value, while simultaneously evoking a form of self-regulation.
The celebration of women essentially demands rationing of resources and self-imposed austerity.

If Egypt is imagined as a woman, then President Sisi is taken to be its father. In Chapter Six, the proclivity for defensiveness regarding Sisi’s motivations behind the collective apology was highlighted. Ibtisam, from Ashoka and ADEW, exclaimed defensively, “Forget what foreigners say about this, Sisi is the father of the household”. Sisi has been happy to take on the father figure role, declaring in a television interview (EgyTalkShows, 2014):

On a personal level, I love, and don’t misunderstand, the Egyptian woman. I love girls. All the girls in the family are my daughters. Now all of the girls of Egypt are my daughters.

The characterisation of Sisi as the father denotes two main and interconnected features in Egyptian society: the unquestionable power of the president and the expected gender role of men. The leader, as is the father, is delegated powers and privileges to exercise over his citizens, particularly ‘his’ women. Firstly, they have the power to express anger towards transgressions on others, as if it were a transgression upon them, because there is an assumed ownership over those under their care. Correspondingly, judgement and punishment of perceived transgressors is considered an inalienable right. This logic is significant in justifying honour killings and tribal blood feuds in certain parts of Egypt. Lastly, their power and responsibilities are assumed in their perceived role as the protectors. Whether it is the president who is responsible for the protection of Egyptian girls and women or the father who is responsible for the protection of the girls and women under his care, men are expected to protect girls and women. These hegemonic conceptions of masculinity and femininity, as underlined in Chapter Six, shed light on the type of empowerment
permitted by the state, which merely seeks to reproduce the prevailing patriarchal logic of male dominance over women.

**Through responsibility**

In the years after the *infitah*, neoliberal economic policies reoriented the role and obligation of the state to its citizenry through a retreat of the state, mass privatisation of public provision and, most importantly, the privatisation of responsibility (Ali, 2002; DeSouza, 2013; Ismail, 2011; El-Shakry, 2005). Suzan Ilcan (2009) employed the term *privatisation of responsibility* to describe the state’s efforts to encourage greater responsibility for the self. She stated, “responsible individuals are to make choices, pursue preferences, and seek to maximise the quality of their lives” (ibid., 213). Moralising discourses have often assumed that the low disclosure rates of sexual harassment were, in part, caused by the irresponsibility of some women. It is here that the state has invoked its authoritarian control through attempts to privatise responsibility.

The choice to disclose and pursue prosecution is portrayed as a responsible response to sexual harassment. If only women would empower themselves and take responsibility for reporting their experiences and claiming justice. Ibtisam, from Ashoka and ADEW, stated, “It is very important to continue educating people that girls should report. They should take responsibility for it”. When Mariam, from ADEW, was asked about the well-documented barriers to disclosure at police stations, like police officers claiming not to have pens to document case reports, she responded, “[The woman] has to come back and try again. She has to complain, send a letter to the Ministry of Interior Affairs, send a letter to Sisi, send a letter to the newspapers”. In addition, the equating of personal responsibility to adult
responsibility meant women were often infantilised for not displaying this behaviour. For example, Ibtisam, from Ashoka and ADEW, stated:

    We [all women] have to learn to be responsible for our problems. This is the problem in Egypt. In everything, we are teenagers. We make noise. We think parents are being bad to us, but we don’t want to be adults. If you want to be an adult, act like an adult. The girl cannot be scared.

Less extreme descriptions of irresponsibility relied on appealing to the need for women to understand that full citizenship entailed disclosing and prosecuting. Whether participants held the extreme or less extreme positions on responsibility, attempts to educate women were rationalised on the basis of assumed ignorance of the women themselves and ignorance regarding the potential risks that women might face when enacting this part of their citizenship.

    Another function of the privatisation of responsibility is an attempt to shift sole responsibility of the state to a shared community responsibility. This is reflected in demands that the community take responsibility for “agree[ing] to witness”, as Ibtisam, from Ashoka and ADEW, put it. Mariam, from ADEW, similarly stated, “I don’t want the responsibility to be only on the attacker and the attacked woman. I want it to be the responsibility of the community”. The personal responsibility argument transforms in a way that still identifies with individual responsibility, but at a community level, which becomes the site of neoliberal governance (Rose, 1999; Phillips and Ilcan, 2004). By sharing responsibility with the ‘community of individuals’, the direction of intervention moves away from looking at the state and more at the attitude of these communities.
Rose (1999) has argued that partnerships between state and non-state actors often establish links between individuals and a wider group, in order to make ‘collective existence’ more intelligible and identifiable. As a result, communities become sites for intervention, where certain individuals are required to transform their practices and influence group behaviour in the name of building strong communities (Phillips and Ilcan, 2004). Both Mariam, from ADEW, and Ibtisam, from Ashoka and ADEW, have blamed the ‘community of individuals’ for not wanting to harm others livelihoods by assisting women to prosecute harassers as witnesses. “At first, they are calling him a bad man, but when you want to report him, they are like ‘this is too far’,” explained Ibtisam. However, these participants failed to acknowledge the source of the fear of active bystanding: a deep-seated mistrust of the police, which stemmed from decades of sanctioned abuse of power that gave police officers unconstrained ability to bully or target people disproportionately. In this context, the claims that reporting harassers as taking it ‘too far’ and the ‘refusal to witness’ reflected the fear that a harasser’s (sometimes) momentary lapse in judgement might result in an excessive punishment that far outweighed their crime.

Community responsibility is built on the foundation of demands for quality general education and specific to raising awareness about sexual harassment. Sania, from LoveMatters, claimed, “If there is good education and good awareness raising, from when boys are young that it is wrong, that the girl sitting there next to you is your sister, your friend and you cannot touch her without her permission”. Underlying the argument for education is an assumption that most harassers were from poor sha’by or rural backgrounds with little to no formal education, even though it has been proven that this is not the case (HarassMap, 2015c).
Appeals for increased individual responsibility is also aligned with a critique of the need to increase policing efforts against sexual harassment. The need to create a culture of community responsibility was posited as a necessary step towards alleviating the pressures on the police force. For example, Ibtisam, from Ashoka and ADEW, stated, “The police can’t be everywhere. We cannot afford this now. Police are fighting terrorism”. This position does not reflect a resistance to the rationality of securitisation. Rather, it asserts that securitisation efforts must be redirected towards responding to the most urgent threat to the nation – the Islamists. Ibtisam explained that the police could not be expected to be everywhere due to a lack of state funds, but most importantly due to the current political climate of ‘terrorism’, in which they are specific targets, that has them understandably occupied. These qualifications strengthened the claim that it is women who must be educated in regards to their responsibility to disclose and pursue the prosecution of sexual harassment cases, as well as the community who should essentially be fulfilling the role of patrolling police officers through active bystanding.

**Conclusion**
The findings presented in this chapter show the governmentalities of sexual harassment rely on the securing and policing of bodies and space, as well as the moral policing of citizens. The former is an assertion of the state’s authority to intervene or imprison, enacted through constructing sexual harassment’s illegality and introducing punitive measures to enact the illegality. The latter, on the other hand, is concerned with producing ideal moral citizens through the regulation of their behaviour. While these two rationalities and the processes they reflect are certainly distinct, they are intimately linked. The securing and policing of certain spaces is embodied through a particular brand of moral rehabilitation and vice versa. They are entirely dependent
upon new assertions of historically available\textsuperscript{13} discourses of morality, responsibility, and rights. Unlike S.M. Shamsul Alam (2015), this thesis proposes a distinction between the terms nation building and national reconstruction. The disciplining technologies, which operate under the rationality of securitisation, contribute to the reconstruction of a stable strong orderly nation-state, while the moralising of Egyptian masculinity and femininity subdues dissent and demands unity to face the problems overwhelming the nation state, rebuilding it and returning it to its former traditional glory. This is even reflected in President Sisi’s request for women to moderate their electricity usage for the good of the nation.

In respect to sexual harassment, the proliferation of debate and the supposed freedom that women have been selectively granted to voice their lived experiences has come at a cost. If it is true that certain women are victimised and defended, while others are demonised, it is also true that Egyptian women as a whole have been implicated in a governmentality of gender that has the sole aim of governing and policing gender roles. Essentially, sexual harassment, like Foucault’s example of sexuality, has been used as a conduit of power to govern over gender. This is because necessary to the debate on sexual harassment is a permeating discourse on the protection of women. Therefore when Sisi appeals to men’s authority over ‘their’ women by asking, “Are our daughters and our women able to be looked at? Let alone \textit{sexually harassed?} Are there no real men left anymore?” (Egypt First, 2014), he is in fact justifying the current reality, where masculinity is founded upon the subordination of women. The following chapter will consider these factors within the broader vision of gender justice and transformative change to which this thesis is committed.

\textsuperscript{13} I use the term ‘historically available’ purposefully here, as the discourses and narratives present in moral mapping are not entirely foreign, nor new or unfamiliar.
Chapter Eight: Possibilities for Transformative Change

What do the shifting boundaries between state and non-state development actors, and the ever-increasing role of the latter in (re)producing neoliberal governmentality mean in terms of feminist praxis? This final chapter explores several layers to this question. First, the dynamics and logics of non-state development actors working with and against the state are discussed more intimately. Three major issues underlying the dominant logics governing the feminist praxis of the anti-sexual harassment movement are then interrogated, specifically the depth and truth to claims of subversive empowerment, the entanglement of the ‘rights’ idea in gendered neoliberal authoritarian governmentality, and the impact of excluding economic factors from understandings of sexual harassment. Ultimately, these points of contention necessitate an approach that tracks and mobilises around the intersections between social, political, and economic factors. Possibilities for transformative change can thus be pursued through a radicalisation of GAD, which centres on interconnection, alliance building, and joined-up thinking (Di Chiro, 2008).

Logics of Feminist Praxis

Here, the question of feminist praxis does not begin by asking how feminists can overcome constraints imposed by the state. State imposition is less of an issue than the unintentional, yet visible, involvement of non-state development actors in neoliberal authoritarian governmentality that arguably do not empower women (Chapter Seven). The term ‘empowerment’ is certainly loaded (Chapter Four); however, for the purposes of this thesis, empowerment is understood in terms of the postcolonial feminist vision of liberation from the interconnected oppressions women
struggle against. Participants in this research existed on a spectrum of feminist praxis, each justifying engagement with or against the state in their own ways, based on their lived experiences and visions of gender justice. Sometimes, participants were inconsistent. They denounced the state in one segment of their lives, and then defended its role in another segment. For example, Nawal, from Imprint, pointed passionately to the sexual violence perpetrated by the institutions of the police force and the Ministry of Interior Affairs, despite earlier supporting heightened securitisation and increased police presence. These seemingly contradictory positions demonstrate the complex and heterogeneous nature of resistance, which often defy rigidly theoretical ideas of what subversion should look like.

The lived realities of the participants are caught in various tensions along a spectrum of multidirectional relations of power and resistance (Foucault, 1975-76/2003). Ways for thinking, justifying, and acting are activated or deactivated in certain respects (not always coherently) within the different positionalities and networks of power relations that shape the lives of participants. So, for Nawal, the recognition of police perpetration of sexual violence was not a realistic locus considering her need for institutional support, or at least indifference, from state institutions including the police and the Ministry of Interior Affairs in order to continue operation. This position is understandable given the recent failed attempts to close el Nadeem Centre, which is a lifeline to hundreds of survivors of state-sponsored torture and forced disappearances and their families (Amnesty International, 2016).

Not all individuals or organisations have the same opportunity to confront state institutions due to the overbearing reality of capitalism and increasing authoritarianism. The various tensions have been discussed along a spectrum of
multidirectional relations of power and resistance in which activists get caught up, which impacts on their capacity to act according to their genuine political compass. Therefore, unlike Langhorn’s (2015) account of the anti-sexual harassment movement in her paper, it is not the intention to present a black and white account limiting feminist praxis to either working with or against the state. It would simply be unrepresentative to manufacture these two distinct groups with or against the state as being fixed. Instead, the binary was intended to simplify the dynamics and logics behind feminist (non)-engagement with the state, in order to reveal the existing and possibilities for resistance within the anti-sexual harassment movement. As such, the dynamics of the anti-sexual harassment movement in Egypt are best reflected by Rai’s (2000) conceptualisation of women’s movements as ‘working in and against the state’. With the (often contradictory) multiplicities shared by participants in mind, a simplification of this spectrum – with or against the state – is examined below.

**With the state**
Participants justified their willingness to work with the state in a number of ways: taking advantage of state attention, public legitimacy and authority, and limited capacity to work without state approval.

To begin with, the shifting political terrain, which after a decade of silence and denial of sexual harassment, meant the opportunity to work with the state on sexual harassment had to be taken advantage of. I am reminded here of Eman’s statement where she exclaimed, “As long as [the state] are talking about [sexual harassment], I don’t care [about their motives]”. As one of the co-founders of HarassMap, she described the current alliance with the state as progress, given that it had taken years

---

14 It is interesting to note that many of the justifications given by participants mirrored those reflected Sharma’s (2014) findings from research carried out with Indian feminist advocates working for a state-sponsored empowerment project, *Mahila Samakhya*. 

122
of mobilising and campaigning and was of mutual benefit. This, she claimed, is worth celebration; “[it] is a step forward. We are in a place where there is a lot that could happen, a lot that could be built on, but where we are now, it’s not so bad. Where we are now is quite an achievement”. It is unclear what the mutual benefit that Eman refers to is. It could be pointed out that her overt focus on the state’s need for the expertise of anti-sexual harassment advocates is convenient given that this is her line of employment, while a more favourable characterisation might ascertain she is referring to the imagined empowerment of everyday Egyptian women. Underlying much of this particular reasoning was the assumption that the state is genuinely interested in doing right by women, as well as the need to put aside politics in favour of their duty to women who are suffering daily. If any critiques were presented they were paired with an assumption of the desperation of the current situation, where an immediate solution was necessary. This sense of urgency to engage in this perceived empowerment of women disregarded questions of political motivation in favour of achieving swift results.

Furthermore, state involvement in sexual harassment intervention was argued to have provided public legitimacy to not only the very existence of sexual harassment, which had been denied in the past by the state, but also to the non-state development actor’s whose existence is based solely on its recognition (such as HarassMap and I Saw Harassment). David Meyer and Sidney Tarrow (1998) call these alliances political institutionalisation, where non-state development actors actively pursue and negotiate a stable safe arrangement with the state that entrenches the alliance as routine. This appeared to be the biggest motivation for pursuing alliances with the state. Public legitimacy naturally comes through raising awareness of the prevalence of sexual harassment and, regardless of whether the ideas are
gender-forward or not; it is seen as an advance for the anti-sexual harassment movement. Kamil, from HarassMap, explained, “The state is inherently the authority. So why not take advantage of that accepted authority, in a way that is more tolerant and approach their concern with sexual harassment as a positive step forward. This is better than being immediately on the defensive”. Along with public legitimacy, Meyer (2003) found that feminists tended to gravitate towards spaces where they could mobilise safely and articulate at least some of their vision. This is certainly true of the Egyptian context given the attacks were being launched against certain activists (see Human Rights Watch, 2015).

Alliances with the state are also shaped by the limitations for independent organisational efforts to influence mainstream institutions and affect widespread change. This was consistently reflected in statements like that from Eman, co-founder of HarassMap, who asserted, “The problem with the government is only implementation now”. Safa, formerly with UN Women, contended that working with the state is the most constructive strategy because of the state’s widespread access and institutional power in all twenty-seven Egyptian districts, which no non-state development actor could hope to match. She reasoned, “It never made sense to completely oppose the state because this is your national authority. If I continue to oppose police, will they ever have the chance to change anything?” Likewise, Eman detailed many occasions where HarrasMap had partnered with the state and expressed the need for a continued alliance. She described a civil society committee meeting with state officials on the design of the national strategy, where the justification for the alliance was to respect and seek the wisdom of “the ones who have the knowledge” on violence against women. Throughout these participants’ examples, there was an explicit affirmation of the state’s need for the non-state development
actor’s expertise, and inherent to that, the compulsion for non-state development actors to work with them.

A major component of the justification for alliance was the incessant requirement for a single-issue approach to sexual harassment. Sexual violence was understood as an umbrella for distinct issues, which ultimately required sexual harassment to be targeted separately. Sania, from LoveMatters, for instance, argued that referring to the umbrella of sexual violence and all that it entailed “minimise[d] the cause”. In describing the daily tribulations of girls and women, whose first thought before leaving their homes is “imagining hundreds and thousands of different ways they will experience sexual harassment that day”, Sania argued that sexual harassment must be viewed as a problem in its own right. Ibtisam, from Ashoka and ADEW, added that enough attention has already been given to issues like domestic violence and now it was sexual harassment’s turn for the spotlight: linking it with other forms of violence against women reduced its priority status.

Co-founder of HarassMap, Eman’s response only slightly deviated from these positions. She had four premises for her argument for the single-issue approach. First, she saw it as impractical to operate holistically due to the major difficulties of project design. She explained that “Private or domestic violence is completely different and the way you would address them is completely different [from sexual harassment] because of the relationships involved as well”. Second, sexual harassment was seen to be the most visible act of violence against women and the most prevalent, a “thing that everyone experiences at a point in their life is sexual harassment in public”. Third, she said that it was more effective for organisations to specialise and focus on one issue at a given time, in order to prevent themselves from being spread out “against ten other topics”. This leads to scattered ethic and impact, as well as
preventing them from focusing their work as “intensely as [they] should”. Meyer (2003) has argued that issue-activists, perhaps like these participants, find it easier to build support bases and mobilise resources and funding by having focused single-issue campaigns that are not confrontational to the state.

**Against the state**

Feminist engagement with the state was not conclusively supported among my participants. Seven out of the twenty-two, including some who were employed in state-sponsored projects, derided state engagement for four main reasons: the superficial nature of engagement, loss of power over direction, the abortive ritual of intervention, and the deficiencies of the justice system and state institutions more broadly. Hend, as a scholar herself, gave the most eloquent articulation of the dangers posed by feminist engagement with the state, asserting,

> The first thing to say is that the women’s movement, or the feminist movement, has been here before. A situation where the state co-opts the demands of the movement and is much more effective in delivering them, but in the process, it usurps the dynamism of a women’s movement.

The dynamism in question is the ability of the anti-sexual harassment movement to direct their own feminist praxis – a point that will be returned to later in this chapter.

Some saw feminist engagement with the state was superficial, as it did not achieve genuine bargaining power for feminists. These participants often used the image of a ‘tick in a checkbox’ to describe the aesthetic nature of the alliances, where the state had to appear as if it was acting on the issue in order to maintain its international image. Nawal, from Imprint, described the state’s superficial acts as
simply “reacting to what NGOs say because we have groups on the Human Rights Council, who apply pressure, reacting to record [*of the assault*] being released. They do not have long-term feminist goals”. Farida, from el Nadeem Centre, added that while “The Ministry of Interior Affairs [*might*] announce [*a policy*], but police stations continue to operate differently”. Feminists were not viewed as equals in decision-making processes, which arguably only served to exacerbate hierarchy and bring feminists firmly within the rubric of the state’s dominant logic. Farida pointed to the lack of interest in other feminist issues that were brought up in meetings with the state: “They asked us and a few other NGOs, including Nazra, to help with the drafting of a new law targeting women. We went but they didn’t give a shit that we wanted to talk about domestic violence and marital rape”. Additionally, Nawal explained alliances with the state are a mechanism to co-opt and use women to promote the state’s own political project. She exclaimed:

```
They are doing this to appear like they are supporting women.

‘[Women] are the nation, [women] are our other half’ and phrases like that. It’s about image and not for any other reason. That’s why they did the quota for women in parliament. Political parties started adopting this as if to say they are righteous progressive parties. When most of the time these women are a front and not given any real power and might even be shafted.
```

The reference to ‘real power’ signals an important juncture from the logics presented by participants defending alliances with the state, where their goal is ultimately empowerment that permits unrestricted agency in all the interconnected elements of life.
Another element of the critique of alliances is the loss of control over the direction of the anti-sexual harassment movement. The attempts for state control are evident in the recent refusals by the Ministry of Interiors to provide anti-sexual harassment organisers, including Imprint and I Saw Harassment, with permits to operate in the streets, despite this having become routine since 2012. Mohamed, from Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment, explained, “When people want to take direct action, it’s not something the government likes because they don’t think people should be in control”. He put this down to the state not wanting to appear weak and in need of external help, but most importantly, to not wanting “anyone outside of the state to be organised”. The mandates of certain anti-sexual harassment-specific non-state development actors, like I Saw Harassment, that are openly critical of the state on social media and in press releases, acknowledge its attempt for control and therefore only engage with the state when it is strategically necessary. Nawal, from Imprint which takes state contracts, argued that working with the state on certain issues in certain spaces at certain times did not equate to compromising on the broader political values she and fellow activists held, nor did it mean agreeing with the state all the time. Instead, she argued it was more effective if activists confronted differences in calculated yet meaningful ways. Quite simply, confronting the state involves pointing out the issues X, Y, and Z, but then following this up to direct state action because “they have no idea what they are working on and they need to understand”.

It was also asserted that the state is using the criminalisation strategy to obstruct innovations to sexual harassment interventions. This could be in terms of rejecting constructive criticism to claim ‘we have done all we can’ or to preclude suggestions for new strategies. Nawal, from Imprint, explained, “They say, ‘we have
a women’s police unit, we have punishments for harassers… That is enough”. They silence women’s organisation that “go further than that rhetoric”. Again, Trouillot’s (2000) concept of abortive rituals is useful in helping to explain this process of exclusion and preclusion. In his essay, he explained that collective apologies operate as abortive rituals when they act as the single most effective solution, thus discounting the possibility for different demands of justice or reparations. The be-all and end-all positioning is even visible in comments made by participants. For example, Eman (co-founder of HarassMap) stated:

The state admitting there is a problem and introducing a law, no matter if it could be better, but actually defining sexual harassment in penal code is a big thing. Having police create their supposedly décor unit – that’s fine. They are not doing much, but there is still this intent to do something within their capacities. Even if it is not a priority to them, at least they are doing something.

Her statement reflected the perception that anything the state is carrying out is advantageous and should not be quarrelled with. By this logic, these participants thought of the state’s criminalisation and securitisation strategy as an abortive ritual, which prevents any further discussions surrounding anything from redefinition, reforming interventions to being more effective, or possibilities of new strategies in the future. In short, the abortive ritual prevents any real-time responsiveness on the part of the state.

Lastly, participants argued that the corrupt and inefficient state institutions were no recourse for justice. Nawal, from Imprint, pointed to the inherent violence of the justice system that favours the wealthy and elite, while trampling on the disenfranchised and the poor. Likewise, Farida, from el Nadeem Centre, explained
because “The justice system is broken”, the harasser will be treated like any other criminal gets treated – based on their wealth and social status. This positioning exposed the foundations for the criticism of a criminalisation approach. Kamil, from HarassMap, stated, “In regard to punishment, only certain people receive punishment depending on their socioeconomic position. They are interested in punishing some people, the convenient people, but leaving the others”.

Participants who were critical of state alliances were united in their holistic conceptualisation of sexual harassment. This operated in two dimensions: the definition of sexual violence as an intimately linked set of issues and redefining the profile of the harasser. Firstly, the definition of sexual violence as an intimately linked set of issues explicitly affirms the manifest relationships between different forms of public and private forms of sexual violence. Nawal, from Imprint, explained there had to be explicit links made between sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence because “the kid that harasses in the street might abuse his sister back home and so on. He might be translating that to the street”. The need to understand sexual violence holistically operated under the assumption that public and private forms of sexual violence are linked. Referring to an internal report conducted by el Nadeem Centre, which analysed data fours years prior and beyond the 25 January revolution,\textsuperscript{15} Farida concluded there was no evidence that can allow the differentiation between domestic violence and other forms of sexual violence. She stated explicitly:

No interventions in the public sphere against sexual harassment will work because of what is happening in the private \textit{sphere}. They are just working on bits and pieces of the bigger picture and not realising there is a huge percentage of women being subjected to sexual

\textsuperscript{15} The report was internal and not privy to outside access.
violence in the home. And they are wondering why nothing is working? They aren’t looking at ‘this is the woman’ and ‘this is her power’ in the bigger sense of her life.

Many scholars (see Bodman and Tohidi, 1998; Hatem, 1986; Joseph, 2000; Joseph and Slyomovics, 2001; Kandiyoti, 1988, 1991; Karam, 1998, 2000; Mernissi, 1987) have shared this position, pointing to various examples of the blurred boundaries between public and private in the Middle East. In this particular case, the argument for complicating the understanding of power relations was a distinctive element of the holistic conceptualisation.

Redefining sexual harassment holistically creates a space for sexual harassment interventions to confront and counteract certain societal taboos and misapprehensions. Farida, from el Nadeem Centre, explained that the public’s receptiveness to discussion of sexual violence favoured sexual harassment because of its public visibility, while anything that happened privately behind closed doors, such as sexual violence perpetrated by family members, is taboo. Hend, a scholar at AUC, described the favouring of sexual harassment as, “A moment of normalisation, where [some] things are all right to talk about and adopted by state feminists, some are not. Sexual harassment is fine. There is a national strategy”. The normalisation of sexual harassment into the public narrative was thus seen as an opportunity to capitalise on public approval and discuss more ‘taboo’ private issues. Nawal, from Imprint, also contested the criticism against a holistic approach, which portrayed it as a chaotic approach to project design requiring you ‘do everything all at once’. For example, she described Imprint’s step-by-step logic: “You start talking about the public aspect of sexual harassment. Then you say ‘Oh, you know this also happens at home?’ and then you say ‘Other things happen at home too, like X, Y, Z…’ It is all step-by-step”. It
would be ill informed to presume that raising awareness is anything other than a step-by-step process that would require advancing the interests of women as a whole. Nawal exclaimed, “For [people] to understand, they first have to listen”. For these participants, raising awareness on sexual harassment inherently involved discussions on the gendered power relations and the male dominated nature of Egyptian society that allows more insidious forms of sexual violence to endure.

Extending the definition of the perpetrator of sexual harassment is another important facet of a holistic conceptualisation. The official working identification of ‘the harasser’ is as follows (HarassMap, 2015c):

Sexual harassment is not committed by a certain type or group of people. Harassers include all parts of Egyptian society and all ages. Our reports have documented harassment from managers/supervisors, teachers and professors, police officers, soldiers, security men at banks and hotels, builders, taxi or bus drivers on the streets, guys in fancy cars, doctors, salesmen, restaurant staff, peddlers, and young children.

However, despite this attempt to disconnect class and social status as identifiers of potential harassers, the punitive aspect of the securitisation rationality has largely targeted certain types of men. These men are invisible in the justice system, either because of their poverty, lack of education, or an absence of family or friends in positions of authority. The bias against poor men (see Amar, 2011b) was highlighted through the example of high-ranking men, including Cairo University professors, who have not been publicly prosecuted by the state despite the impudence of their indiscretions. “That’s the rule for everything in Egypt. If you have power or you know
someone with power to get you out of something, it does not matter what the crime is”, exclaimed Farida (from el Nadeem Centre).

The bias against certain harassers is even more visible considering that the state is excluded from the list of perpetrators. The role of the state in committing sexual violence towards female protesters on Black Wednesday is a stark reminder of this. Mohamed, from Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment, affirmed that, “Ignoring [state-sponsored sexual violence] makes the problem bigger and bigger. You can find testimonies of female prisoners who are being sexually abused and tortured. The government is doing this, not just the Muslim Brotherhood, not just the public on the street”. Farouk, from I Saw Harassment, even claimed that the well-known police officer in the specialised women’s unit, Nashwa Mahmoud, is “actually one of the officers accused of practicing sexual violence against people during protests in 2010 and there are reports against her at the public defender’s office”, though this claim could not be verified. When asked if there was a link between everyday sexual harassment and state-sponsored sexual violence, Hend, a scholar at AUC, also affirmed the association as part of her broader critique of the state’s involvement in the prevention of sexual violence. She argued the state would only recognise and address sexual violence in certain public spaces that are not linked to political moments. “It is not going to address the whole spectrum of violence. It will negotiate. That is a feature of politics”, she claimed. For these participants, the redefinition was then absolutely necessary, as it served to redirect attention from the individual harasser towards the structural forces that were essentially responsible for Egypt’s fundamentally sexually violent society. As such, targeting the structural forces inherently involved a confrontation with the state. Farida, from el Nadeem Centre, put it bluntly, exclaiming, “The government should know better”.

133
Questioning Feminist Praxis
Given the entanglement of feminist praxis within neoliberal practices of self-government and the current political climate, which is far from hospitable to political dissidents, the poor, and the disenfranchised, Rai’s (2002) assertion that women’s movements need to critically examine their participation in the normalisation of certain discourses of power, as well as thinking through the strategic consequences of not doing so, is pertinent. Hence, the previous logics of feminist praxis described above need to be interrogated in terms of what they offer to the struggle for gender justice. The emergent points of contention are the claims of subversive empowerment resulting from sexual harassment intervention, the entanglement of the ‘rights’ idea in gendered neoliberal governmentality, and the impact of excluding economics from understandings of sexual harassment.

Complicating Empowerment
For some scholars, critical examination concluded with a fairly optimistic view of women’s organisations engaging with the state. Aradhana Sharma (2014) maintained that neoliberalism’s impact on the blurring of boundaries between state and non-state, as indicated in my earlier analysis of the hybrid Egyptian state, has not resulted in state co-option of women’s movements. Instead, it has resulted in the creation of new ‘surprising’ forms of empowerment, which include “understanding and confronting multiple and overlapping structural inequalities” (Sharma, 2014, 110) and learning the state’s language in order to demand accountability. Similarly, Chatterjee (2004) asserted state-sponsored interventions do not produce passive disciplined subjects. Rather they produce actively dissident political actors who can make claims on the state, for example, through increased appreciation of entitlements. Madhok and Rai (2012, 661), however, pose the dilemma with claims of women’s agency and
supposed empowerment, asking, “How are subjects who are formed within and through power relations and enmeshed in a web of risks and injuries expected to harness resources from within and mount challenges to those very constitutive power relations?” This question, thus, requires interrogating the assumed subject and outcome of the empowerment claims by the anti-sexual harassment movement.

It is unclear who the targets of state-sponsored sexual harassment intervention are, or who the subsequent ‘empowered’ subjects are. Intervention has largely operated through public promotional campaigns, institutional capacity building, and bolstering criminalisation efforts. This might mean the development target is anyone from a man catching the metro to work in the morning, the female university student, or the police officer at the local station. However, it has become abundantly clear the overarching narratives enveloping these interventions, which include the construction of the ideal moral victim and the problematisation of certain Islamist and backward cultures, have largely fed into negative stereotyping of the poor uneducated man, the dishonourable dissident woman, and all Islamists (Chapter Six). Empowerment then becomes a tool for inscribing characteristics and behaviours deemed respectable and desirable by the state. The capacity for women to even be a targeted group has been questioned. In her analysis of Arab women’s organisations, Islah Jad (2004) found that, aside from the false assumption that women are not already active political subjects prior to intervention, target groups altered depending on the specifications of the project or the donor guidelines and the timeline of the funding. The shifting constituency of ‘women’ means that advocacy and support is not given in any meaningful or productive way, thereby making claims of empowerment nearly impossible to measure (Jad, 2004).
As such, it is dubious as to how these short-term capacity building interventions, such as two-day workshops or training sessions, and even creative but temporary public promotion campaigns, such as Imprint’s cartoon strips in Cairo metro stations (Figure 5), can have meaningful influence in encouraging Egyptian women to become active political subjects (assuming they are not already). These measures contribute to the individualisation of the ‘empowered’ woman subject, explicating her responsibility to disclose sexual harassment to law enforcement. This implies a unidirectional view of agency that ignores the multiplicity oppressions that shape women’s ability to disclose (Agarwal, 1994; Kandiyoti, 1988). Madhok and Rai (2012) highlight the neglect of structural and temporal risks attached to transgressive\textsuperscript{16} assertions of agency, as well as the neglect of the inverse relationship between risk and social and economic advantage.

So, for example, imagining agency being enacted through sexual harassment disclosure is only realistically accessible to middle and upper class women with the resources and social capital to go into lengthy (and expensive) dealings with law enforcement and the justice system. Individuals act within the material constraints imposed on them by the intersection of capitalism, patriarchy, and imperialism. Bina Agarwal (1994, 434-5) stated, “women may sacrifice their immediate welfare for

\textsuperscript{16} Transgressive politics is used in “way of emphasising agenda setting” as opposed to integrationalist or reformist politics (Madhok and Rai 2012, 645).
future security; this would be perfectly in keeping with self-interested behaviour, and need not imply a gap between women’s ‘objective’ well-being and their perception of their well-being”. Even then, there are many risks of performing transgressive politics – individual or collective, reputational or operational, and even directly physical (Madhok and Rai, 2012) – and must be accounted for before claims are made about what women’s empowerment ‘should’ look like.

An individualisation of empowerment is also convenient for women’s organisations, whose professional existence depends on the construction of anti-sexual harassment as an expert intervention. Jad (2004) found the structure of women’s organisations to be composed of highly qualified professional and administrative fluent English-speaking staff. All but three of my participants were of fairly educated backgrounds and spoke fluent English. Many of the participants in my own research acknowledged the gap between their lived realities and that of the ‘average’ Egyptian woman, based on their socioeconomic position, social capital, and resources available to them. For example, when I asked Farida, from el Nadeem Centre, to discuss the common quip that Egyptian women like to be harassed, she replied, “I don’t know. I guess I work in an environment where I don’t have to hear things like that. I think that’s changing? But I’m not sure, I’m in my bubble”.

Considering 99.3% of women in Egypt have experienced some form of sexual harassment, female participants did invariably share the experience of sexual harassment. Male participants commented, on the other hand, on not having understood the daily pressures resulting from sexual harassment until ‘the injury’ became more aggressively visible since the revolution. Mohamed, from Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment, explained, “Before the revolution, I would have said that poor people who were born without much privilege might express their anger and
frustration in a violent manner towards women. But during the revolution, I discovered it was more than that”. It is not my intention to disparage the significant and necessary role women’s organisations play in Egyptian society. Instead, I pose the question: how do their positionings influence the possibilities for sexual harassment interventions?

The social and economic environment within which the anti-sexual harassment movement exists and works in can limit the political imaginaries, and thus the forms of interventions, available to them. Intervention becomes dictated by institutional habits and the performance of the gender ritual described in Chapter Four. Ana Clarissa Rojaz Durazo (2007, 123) explained this point excellently, stating: “Instead of organisers, we have managers and bureaucrats, receptionists and clients. Instead of social change, we have service deliverables”. Inevitably, interventions constructed within the confines of the state will never challenge its power or underlying structures. Recognising the elitist nature of women’s organisations has been critiqued. Al-Ali (2000, 121) for example, concluded that:

Egyptian women activists, as varied as they might have been in their ideological inclinations, were active agents in their specific cultural, social, and political contexts. It never fails to astonish me how women activists continue to be discredited on the basis of their class affiliation and links to European culture and education, while male political activists, especially communists, do not seem to be exposed to the same degree of scrutiny concerning their class or educational background.

Al-Ali is correct in pointing out the overstated critique levelled towards Egyptian female activists, dating as far back as the early 1900s. Nevertheless, issues of elitism
are something that feminists invested in the advancement of women’s organisations need to address between themselves.

Considering my own privileged diaspora background, reflecting on the positionalities and ambitions of those involved in the anti-sexual harassment movement is an important practice in self-reflexivity and forward thinking (Kapoor, 2004; Spivak, 1985). I, myself, have participated unconsciously in the process of gender ritualisation, which has prescribed feminist work into dark corners not versed with transformative change. Recognising the internal hierarchies and unconscious bias is, therefore, not an attempt to dispel the place these activists and organisations have in the movement. To do so would be to dismiss myself from organisational efforts for feminist praxis. It is to suggest points of contention and junctures that can be used to advance the movement towards gender justice.

While these critiques clarify disincentives to feminist engagement with the state, they do not necessarily serve as an indictment of groups that support or strategically engage with the state. Still, it is important to recall the work of Timothy Mitchell (2002) and Julia Elyachar (2005), which highlight the non-state development sector’s role in providing a context for new methods of governance and exertion of power on Egyptian citizens. In particular, Elyachar pointed to the accumulation of power and wealth during the 1990s in Egypt and the complicity of non-state development actors in the economic sector, which were not representative of the people. Without these actors, the context for new neoliberal interventions to gain and generate power, through the financialisation of debt, would not have been possible. The same could be said of this case study, whereby the context needed for new forms of governance to be exerted on citizens was secured in part by feminist organisations within the anti-sexual harassment movement. Nevertheless, Bernal and Grewal (2014)
have shown that the state’s class, urban, and elitist bias excludes any element of transformative struggle by default. Why should the state implement interventions that question its own role and interests? It is clear, particularly through the individualisation of empowerment and iterations of self-government, that women’s agency is reduced to acting in accordance with prevailing economic incentives and disincentives and not with broader structural change (Dean, 2008; Cruikshank, 1999). Thus, state-led/sponsored intervention is interested in encouraging a certain form of empowerment that allows claims that do not challenge its power.

**Disrupting Rights-based Logic**
The rights-based development logic, a focal point of the anti-sexual harassment movement, prioritises individual woman’s rights to safety. It focuses on empowering individual rights holders, as well as strengthening institutional capacity to fulfil obligations to them (Di Chiro, 2008; Harvey, 2005; Silliman, 2004). The logic is not new to the Egyptian women’s movement, nor did it emerge from a vacuum. Egypt has a long history of women’s organisations, dating as far back as the late nineteenth century with the establishment of women-led charitable organisations and learned societies (Baron, 1994). Preparing the groundwork for the different kinds of women’s political participation present today, the goal of these associations was primarily to “dismantle the barriers to public activity” (Baron, 1994, 169), which were predominantly perceived to be cultural.

This same logic is visible in defences of the right to safe passage through the publics that women might travel. Sania, from LoveMatters, stated, “When they talk about equality, the man and woman have the same rights and responsibilities. When it comes to harassment, nobody wants to talk about the women’s right to walk safely”. Eman, co-founder of HarassMap, also passionately exclaimed:
We are talking about one of the most basic rights. The right to walk down the street. You need to be able to walk down the street safely and that’s one of the most basic rights for women. It is human rights, really, the safety of citizens in their own country… There are a lot of women’s issues we need to discuss, but at the core of it, the fact that I need to walk safely in the street comes before anything. To become a member of parliament, I need to be respected in the street. They work in parallel.

The right to safety in public is thus placed at the centre of women’s rights. These findings were also reflected in Langhorn’s (2015) study, which found that anti-harassment activists articulated a commitment to women’s rights to safety and dignity in the public sphere.

Such an approach is problematic because it does not recognise differences between women. It obscures the social contexts in which individuals makes choices and exercise their rights, as well as discounting the ways in which the state regulates and disciplines individuals. As Aida Seif El Dawla (2000, 47) has noted, “Women’s experiences of a particular right or their claim to that right may differ, depending on their social status, their emotional, social and economic resources, the social space allowed for that claim, and the social costs of entering into conflict for that claim as opposed to benefits it would bring”. This is particularly true of marginalised women, whose environments are relatively outside the reach of the law (Chatterjee, 2004), and therefore have no realistic access to safety other than through male protection. Despite the widely accepted notion that cultures are fluid and dynamic systems of meaning, situated both historically and politically, the obscuring of social context is also paired with an understanding of culture as monolithic and backward (Mohanty, 2003). It
creates an environment where the state must intervene punitively (to negatively reinforce bad behaviour) and educationally (to teach good behaviour to the backward). Nawal, from Imprint’s, statement “It requires cultural intervention. Changing the way people view the role of women in society” is a reflection of such a tendency.

In addition, the right to safety is shrouded within a broader conception of what citizenship entails. This conception is entirely dependent on notions of the patriarchal household and rationalised hegemonic masculinity and paternalism, influenced in part by neoliberal motifs of rationality, calculation, and orderliness (Mohanty, 2003; Connell, 1995). To belong to the nation is to be protected, secure, and saved in the same way that a family expects of the man of the house (Connell, 1995). Sisi’s many speeches on sexual harassment declared it a national disgrace that Egyptian women did not receive protections that their citizenship entitled them to. In an interview, he stated, “In other societies, people cannot even prolong their gazes. They say it is a right for people to walk around without you staring at them like that and it is as simple as that”. The fact that other nations are fulfilling their duty to protect women, as well as exercising public discipline, is a matter of shame that must be addressed. Ibtisam, from Ashoka and ADEW, explained, “It’s not yet about empowering women, it’s about protecting women. We are still in the protection mode. I love Sisi, but I don’t think he is a feminist. He is dealing with women in a way that he understands – the protection mode”.

Many participants took issue with the way state protectionist discourses complimented existing patriarchal conceptions of the Egyptian woman’s place in society. It situates women in the home under the protection of a male benefactor through birth or marriage. The assumption of ownership, inequality, and masculinity
through domination were three specific issues that were raised as pertinent to the construction of these patriarchal conceptions. The idea that women are the property of men in their family or the husband they marry is one part of the problem. Therefore, state campaigns appealing to men with slogans asking, ‘What if she was your sister or mother?’ are seen as incongruous. Farouk, from I Saw Harassment, explained the fallacy in such an approach, stating:

It is a bad way of approaching things. It is very misogynistic. It deals with women, your mother, your sister, as something that belongs to you. And if you don’t have any of these, lost my mother young, not married, no sisters… These claims have nothing to do with you. You are not associated with them; hence, you don’t have any obligations towards them. It doesn’t discuss women as citizens with rights and freedom!

Co-founder of HarassMap, Eman17 argued these appeals to Egyptian men are a reflection of the misogynistic perception that women belong to men (or more symbolically to the state) and declared the hypocrisy in expecting men to respect women only in polite consideration of other men “who they belong to” are present.

Secondly, the idea men are stronger in mind and body than women is perceived as a statement of women’s inability to be independent. Safa, formerly of UNWomen, argued that appealing to men to protect women did not put women on an equal footing with men, rather it appealed to the masculine nature of Egyptian society and forced women to “hide behind [the men’s] shoulders”. This then fuels the hegemonic masculinities founded in male domination. Eman, co-founder of

17 Despite expressing abhorrence at the state’s protectionist discourses, the organisation that Eman co-founded actively maintain and defend their working relationship with the state.
HarassMap, explained, “Men feel empowered, in-control – their meaning comes from controlling women. That is what gives their masculinity meaning”. The embroilment of conceptions of citizenship in the perpetuation of patriarchal oppression, therefore, obliges rights logic not to be taken for granted.

**Gendering the Economic Factor**
The postcolonial state is the main mechanism for the entrenchment of neoliberal authoritarian capitalism. Only so much is clear from the disciplining rationalities and technologies involved in the governmentalties of sexual harassment discussed in Chapter Seven. State-led/sponsored interventions can serve as vehicles for disciplining women (and men) into self-regulating responsible citizens (Cruikshank, 1999). This is evident in the state’s misogynistic appeals for the protection of women through discourses of honour and citizenship, rendering individual men responsible for ‘their’ women. Raewyn Connell (1995) has argued these misogynistic forms of masculinity exist along the spectrum of age, class, and power. She maintained that the marginalised or subordinated male has the least access to the capital benefits of patriarchy and is therefore more likely to compensate this perceived emasculation through the violence of women. Hafez (2012, 40) understood this “violence toward and abuse and harassment of women as the outcome of masculinity built on hate and deprivation”. In a similar light to Connell, Madhok and Rai (2012), in their examination of the risks attached to transgressive politics, found that risk is inversely related to social and economic advantage, therefore it can be deduced that marginalised women are more likely to experience risk in embodying the ‘responsible agency’ demanded by certain feminists. This is because “to act or not to act is not an individual but a social process with different outcomes and varied risks (ibid., 665).
Recognising and addressing the economic factors within anti-sexual harassment intervention is therefore a necessary task.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has recognised the relationship between gender-based violence and economic and social factors. Despite CEDAW’s recognition, systematic analyses of this relationship have yet to be conducted (True, 2012). Likewise, there are no reports exploring the social and economic conditions that produce or influence the prevalence of sexual harassment. The insufficient local or even global data needs to become a priority. Jeremy Shiffman and Stephanie Smith’s (2007) four-pronged framework explaining the sources of success or failure of global initiatives argues this point. While their focus on making issues ‘marketable’ to policy-makers is less relevant in a volatile increasingly authoritarian state, they did contend that issues are most likely to garner attention, whoever the target may be, if they are extensively studied or articulated to reflect the severity of harm to individuals and society. Research can play a role in allowing issues like sexual harassment to be understood holistically and ensuring interventions are based on evidence rather than assumption (Hessini, 2005). It can also empower feminists to better position themselves in confronting the dominant historical narrative.

Reducing feminist praxis to a demand for recognition of equal citizenship in public spaces – a product of the insistence to exclude economic factors from the dominant historical narrative – is an example of an exclusively recognition-based approach (Fraser, 2007). Ibtisam, from Ashoka and ADEW, highlighted (unintentionally) the absurdity of such an approach when she argued women do not disclose cases of sexual violence because “there is no institutional alternative to the male provider”. It is this lack of alternative available to women, alongside issues of
urban planning and the lack of economic and social safety nets described in Chapter Six, which necessitates an approach that includes analysis of the unequal gendered distribution of wealth and resources. This is not to say that recognition-based issues, such as freedom of movement, are devoid of value. In fact, the recognition-based approach has made pronounced contributions to the GAD discipline by exposing androcentrism as a major feature of gender injustice (Fraser, 2007). Nevertheless, when the issues of recognition are understood as deliberates tools for the reproduction of docile bodies and subjectivities, which further enable, promote, and legitimise the preservation of neoliberal authoritarian capitalism, its dismantling becomes a necessary task.

**Enacting Gender Justice**

When the anti-sexual harassment movement demands equal citizenship, it is important to ask like Sen (2002), equal to whom and equal to what? Is the goal to establish gender justice without broader social and economic justice? Or in short, is the goal to make women equally as vulnerable to the neoliberal capitalist state as their male counterparts? These observations, alongside the points of contention raised above, need not “lead to political paralysis or to exercise of agency without regard to security” (Madhok and Rai, 2012). Their recognition allows for GAD to take a more sustainable approach in struggles to shape change, one which recognises and situates the interconnectedness of oppressions – economic, social, cultural, and political – at the forefront of feminist praxis. Recognising social, political, and economic interconnections further compels envisioning organisation and mobilisation in an interconnected manner too. Giovanna Di Chiro (2008, 279) provides a workable framework that aligns with postcolonial feminism, which she suggests is necessary for movements, like the anti-sexual harassment movement, to transgress boundaries of
“exclusion and inclusion” and mobilise around the intersections between social, political, and economic factors. This requires incorporating three features into praxis: interconnection, alliance building, and joined-up thinking.

Centred on lived experiences, interconnection requires enacting an intersectional critique of the capitalist, racialised, and patriarchal structures that shape and impact women’s capacities and opportunities (Anthias, 2014; Mohanty, 2003; Mohanty, Russo and Torres, 1991). If oppressions are connected, so must be the approaches to resistance. Thus, building political coalitions between the anti-sexual harassment movement (and more broadly the women’s movement) and other social justice movements is the next step for mobilising support across different platforms and constituencies. Coalition politics are alliances across and between issues that are forged with the understanding that identity politics will not achieve or sustain transformative change (Reagon, 1983). One such example is the New Woman Foundation in Egypt, which has played a seminal role in building the transnational Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies that involves non-governmental organisations, activists, and researchers across the Middle East and North African (MENA) region, as well as publishing an Arabic edition of the Reproductive Health Matters series on abortion (Hessini, 2007). Their coalition makes explicit links between reproductive freedom and social justice issues, as well as attempting to make sexual and reproductive health knowledge more accessible. Such an example highlights a necessary segue for the future of the anti-sexual harassment movement; the politics of articulation.

Alliance building relies on a politics of articulation, a result of laborious engagement, locates situated knowledges within broader joined-up thinking (Di Chiro, 2008; Schlosberg, 2013). Joined-up thinking requires mobilising around an
understanding of liberation as being collective. Lilla Watson, aboriginal elder and activist, captures this sentiment with her statement, “If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. If you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together”. Hend, a scholar at AUC, justified deviating from the dominant historical narrative because, notwithstanding the supposed victories associated to conforming and cooperating with the state, there is little potential for joined-up thinking. She stated:

You can be on the same road for a while but there is a point where your roads will part. For example, domestic violence is a point of differentiation. Care work is a point of differentiation. In every arena in which there is a feminist agenda, you will find a point where your road ends and you need to take a position. It is like sexual health. Contraception is okay for everyone, but abortion is not. Maternal mortality is fine, no one wants mothers to die, but what to do about it should be the point of it. Better health services, you see eye-to-eye. Better roads to get to health services, you see eye-to-eye. Control over my own body, they stop there.

This is the difficult part of political articulation, where the connecting of diverse movements, commonalities in vision and values, and situated knowledges is pursued with and despite of, inevitable contestations and oppositional understandings, relations, and practices (Di Chiro, 2008).

This type of interconnected thinking requires an approach that circumvents the cycle of economic, legal, social, and political violence entrenched into the state and its institutions (Fraser, 2007). Such thinking, a central part of postcolonial feminism, contributes an opening for radicalising GAD beyond the numbing ritual of gender. It
demands that the hetero-patriarchal capitalist structures governing the exploitation and abuse of women be the object of any gender justice movements. In this respect, Al-Ali’s (2014, 125) statement is pertinent:

We need a more long-term and holistic strategy against harassment that includes a campaign for a fairer economic redistribution, against neoliberal economic policies, and, crucially as well, a campaign against the systematic marginalisation of women in decision-making processes, both within governmental institutions and many opposition and dissident contexts.

To do this necessarily involves a struggle to retain power over the direction of the movement and confronting the state’s role in perpetuating violence. As Mohamed, from Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment, determined, “The escalation in sexual violence is not about sex, but about power”.

**Conclusion**

The logics woven into the varying and contradictory alliances within the anti-sexual harassment movement depended on the degree of importance assigned to certain factors. Participants who favoured engaging the state prioritised taking advantage of any window of opportunity. Those critical of engagement, on the other hand, problematised their loss of control over the direction of the movement, the superficial and abortive nature of state engagement, and the structural limitations that prevented genuine transformative change. This chapter challenged issues underlying the dominant logic governing the feminist praxis of the anti-sexual harassment movement, pointing to the lack of evidence of empowerment, the entanglement in gendered neoliberal authoritarian governmentality, and the necessity of including a distribution-based lens that considers the gendered distribution of wealth and
resources within analyses of sexual harassment. These issues require an approach that tracks and mobilises around the intersections between social, political, and economic factors. Di Chiro’s (2008) provides three useful means for enacting this approach within feminist praxis: recognising interconnections between different factors and across social justices issues, building alliances and coalitions within gender justice movement and with other social justice movements, and mobilising around ‘joined-up thinking’ where solidarity is an active embodied process and liberation is collective.
Chapter Nine: Towards Radicalising Gender And Development (GAD)

This thesis uses a postcolonial feminist and governmentality infused conceptual framework to understand the Egyptian state’s preoccupation with sexual harassment. It questioned in particular the ways women and men’s bodies are constructed and contested, and the resulting imagined vision for gender justice, as well as the underlying ideological foundations, power relations, and national development goals informing this imagination. It confronted the politics of truth – delineated in the dominant narratives of sexual harassment – that inform the neoliberal authoritarian governmentalities of sexual harassment, in order to expose both gaps in the anti-sexual harassment agenda and possibilities for future resistance.

It was never the intention to present a black and white account of feminist praxis or actively promote or oppose engagement with the state. However, when the anti-sexual harassment movement is understood in the context of authoritarianism and neoliberal capitalism, state intervention becomes less about ending sexual harassment and more about securing and policing bodies and space. The examined disciplining technologies of sexual harassment intervention, enforced by the rationalities of securitisation and specified morality, are an embodiment of efforts towards national reconstruction and nation building. This is reflected in the simultaneous deflection of responsibility onto individuals and the assertion of the state’s role as the overseer over sexual harassment interventions. In this way, the governmentalities of sexual harassment reproduce the prevailing politics of truth of neoliberal authoritarian capitalism and a strain of moderately sexist Islamic nationalism.
Locating the governmentalities of sexual harassment within a broader understanding of power relations and structures revealed sexual harassment is not only a social or cultural phenomenon, but also a political and economic one with multiple histories of power. In particular, the dominant historical narrative of sexual harassment has further entrenched deeply misogynistic gender roles that allocate women to the care of men and the state, viewing them as incapable of being entirely independent and requiring protection. This is particularly evident in comparisons of the presidency to fatherhood, which appeals to a hegemonic masculinity that affords men unreserved power to run the household in the same way the president is expected to rule the nation. In addition, it has demonised particular individuals, namely poor and working class men and dissident women, who do not conform to the image of the ideal moral citizen. Empowerment, in this light, is permitted so long as it does not challenge the dominant patriarchal and capitalist structures, and even then, it is not clear what the substance of this supposed empowerment even is.

This invariably influences the way gender justice is imagined in specific and limited ways. Reform, not transformative change, is today’s agenda. Noticeably, in interviews, even the question ‘Is gender justice possible?’ was met with either ridicule or laments. This is because the anti-sexual harassment agenda, as have many other issued-based movements before it, approached gender justice as if it were unimaginable. This became clearer with each interview. For example, Eman, co-founder of HarassMap, exclaimed:

That is the dream that everyone wants. That is what everyone is essentially working towards. It is very hard for us to grasp or measure, but I think it’s a goal that everyone wants to achieve. There is a lot more to do, but working on sexual harassment, political participation,
on family law reform. A lot of other aspects, we will eventually lead to
gender justice, but I think we have a long way to go, a long way to go.

Nawal, from Imprint, replied, “Maybe? That requires a lot of work”, while Mohamed
stated, “Empowering women is the goal. Other people, other radical groups, see
punishing men as the goal. I think empowering women is how you get equality”. The
limits of the imagination extended to raising the position of women to that of men’s,
an effort that according to participants required performing the gender ritual. As such,
sexual harassment becomes a problem of numbers, counted each time a major
celebration or horrific transgression takes place, each time aggravating claims for
increased gender sensitivity on the part of society. Change the law, more training for
police, jail more men, introduce sexual education, more police, more surveillance
cameras, fix the education system – these were the only possibilities provided by
participations.

While reasonable in terms of maintaining engagement with the state, these
possibilities take form in the individualised rights-based approach, relying on the need
to achieve the positive right (to safety) and the negative right (to not be sexually
harassed). It establishes artificial boundaries that divide women’s private and public
experiences and livelihoods, separating women from their contexts. Likewise
women’s agency is permissible in accordance with prevailing patriarchal and
economic logic, and not with broader structural change. The ritualisation of the
technocratic and bureaucratic norms with the unquestioned spectre of empowerment
loomed over the anti-sexual harassment movement. The possibilities stated above
exist entirely within the prevailing development logic of what has already been done.
By ignoring multiplicities and complexities and, ultimately, the relationship between
structure and agency, the ideological foundations and power relations remain
conveniently hidden. Gender justice has never been achieved after all; therefore, possibilities are limited to what has already been imagined in other contexts.

It is at this juncture where my thesis intentionally deviated from the conventional applications of GAD. The saying goes, ‘insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results’. The standardisation of the gender ritual is an example of such insanity. In fact, my findings have shown that the gender ritualisation has resulted in complicity with securitised neoliberal governmentalities, which impede women’s choices and opportunities. Enacting gender justice requires a retreat from the standardisation of gender ritual that not only recognises the interconnections of oppressions, but also confronts them through feminist praxis. Ironically, the radicalisation of GAD therefore requires a retreat to its roots. Di Chiro’s (2008) framework, aligning with postcolonial feminism, provides three useful features in order to enact this radicalised vision for GAD: interconnecting social justices issues, building alliances within gender justice movement and coalitions with other social justice movements, and mobilising around ‘joined-up thinking’ which understands liberation as a collective process. If liberation that is intersectional and collective is ‘too confronting’ and ‘off-putting’ (Rai, 2002), I would take that to mean we are doing something right.

The decontextualisation of the sexual harassment debate arguably mirrors the point Abdelrahman (2012) made in regards to the 25 January revolution debate. She argued that a false separation of economic and political struggles in understandings of the revolution have led to economic justice being removed from the equation. This came despite economic justice being one of the cornerstones for the demands for Mubarak’s resignation, reflected in chants like ‘Bread, justice and freedom!’ The focus on political freedom, such as the right to organise and protest, consumed the
debate, rendering the political economies of social issues invisible. This reworked collective memory of the revolution has arguably influenced the political imaginations surrounding sexual harassment intervention because, in a similar way, sexual harassment is presented as a socio-political or cultural issue, and disconnected from potential underlying economic factors. By implication, economic interventions are ruled out. Participants largely refused to acknowledge economic factors at a structural level, assuming economics were only relevant at an individual-level, instantly precluding the very real endemic structural economic failures influencing the hopelessness and desperation of people’s (including men’s) lives.

Sexual harassment is, in part, a symptom of a neoliberal capitalist (dis)order, which makes even days-old bread too expensive for the average person, pits neighbours against each other to avoid paying water bills, actively encourages businesses to exploit their workers for profit, makes it more expensive to have a child in school than it is to have them working, measures girls value in the size of their dowry, and requires traffic police to take bribes because their wage of 600LE (around $120 NZD) a month cannot possibly sustain their families. How can sexual harassment be understood without this broader spectrum of oppressions alongside it? This thesis has shown that social phenomena are not just social, but economic and political as well, demanding interventions that target interconnected systems of structural oppression – capitalism, patriarchy, and imperialism.

Ending sexual harassment, or achieving gender justice in Egypt, is impossible without a strong comprehensive vision and strategy that recognises and mobilises around these intersections of oppressions. This thesis attempts to contribute to a reinvigoration of GAD through a return to its radical postcolonial feminist roots. This reinvigoration is necessary if feminist praxis is to move beyond the numbing ritual of
gender to enact justice across all life’s junctures. If one thing is certain, the current hetero-patriarchal capitalist structures governing the exploitation and abuse of women will continue until their foundations are dismantled.
References


——— (2013, June 13). The first women’s police unit to combat sexual harassment [Video file - Arabic]. Retrieved from: http://vid.alarabiya.net/2013/06/13/f8df084f403494e90f62d7309ca8200/f8df084f403494e90f62d7309ca8200.mp4


(2014). Open space reflections on (counter)revolutionary processes in Egypt, feminist review, 106, 122-128


DeSouza, Ruth. (2013). Who is a ‘good’ mother?: Moving beyond individual mothering to examine how mothers are produced historically and socially, *Australian Journal of Child and Family Health Nursing*, 10(2), 15-18


Dream TV Egypt. (2014, November 14). ‘*Kalam Tany*’ – Mervat Tallawy: The 7am girls are better off in prison than out of it [Video file- Arabic]. Retrieved from: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzQFRC7NoVg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzQFRC7NoVg)

Durazo, Ana Clarissa Rojaz. (2007). “we were never meant to survive: Fighting Violence Against Women and the Fourth World War.” In INCITE! Women of
Color Against Violence (Ed.), The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex (pp. 113-128). Cambridge MA: South End Press

Egypt First. (2014, June 13). *Video of Sisi: God willing we will prosecute those who even look at the woman citizen, let alone sexually harasses him, with the law [Video file - Arabic]*. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JNVBBmkrvs


164


Moser, Caroline. (1989). Gender planning in the third world: Meeting practical and strategic gender needs, World Development, 17(11), 1799-1825


ONtv. (2014b, June 11). The President Visits Tahrir Square Sexual Assault Victim to Check on her Health [Video file - Arabic]. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRWAa_VBm6A


—– (2005). Gender and Development as a Fugitive Concept, *Gender and


Said, Edward. (1972). Michel Foucault as an Intellectual Imagination, boundary 2, 1(1), 1-36


Ten TV Network. (2015, November 4). The house is your house: ‘The Egyptian woman is the most who contributes to the state and I respect her the Egyptian woman’ [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnG8ciL_kuw


Thompson, Lee. (2008). The role of nursing in governmentality, biopower and population health: family health nursing, Health and Place, 14, 76-84


