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Traversing the urban as a woman in Cairo and Aswan

Mennat-Allah Yehia Mourad

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The American University in Cairo

School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

**Traversing the Urban as a Woman
in Nasr City and Aswan**

A Thesis submitted to
the Cynthia Nelson Institute for Gender and Women's Studies

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (M.A.) in
Gender and Women's Studies in the Middle East / North Africa

Specialization in Gender and Justice

by Mennat-Allah Mourad

under the supervision of Dr. Martina Rieker

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Abstract

Traversing the Urban as a Woman in Cairo and Aswan

Mennat-Allah Mourad

The American University in Cairo

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This thesis explores the hierarchical dynamics that govern the everydayness of women's relationship to spaces. I argue that our conceptual understanding of space, especially through terms such as modern, cosmopolitan, tribal, village...etc, are all part of a lexicon that makes our everyday, but that also how we traverse the city, and the choices that we make of where to go and how to get there is an integral contributor of how a city is not only imagined but lived, and thus how the social imaginations that we believe govern our everyday is actually re-iterated. I argue that our choices as influenced by neoliberal capital has been influencing in turn our everyday and how it is not separate from the overarching events of rupture that occurred in 2011 through to 2013, and how these ruptures helped make the invisible of the hierarchical dimensions of the city visible.

Table of Contents

Chapter One
The Desired City Between Nasr City and Aswan

Thesis Questions

The central question that this thesis aims to explore is how women occupying different socialities in terms of class and spatialities and hence different potential subjectivities engage with urban space to create their spaces of living. In order to explore this question, I investigate urban tensions manifested in a neoliberal agenda shaping the kinds of cities we are living in. The effects of late neoliberalism in Egypt under the auspices of the military regime is currently reconfiguring urban spaces and also creating new and renewed power struggles. Within this context, I try to get a fuller understanding of how women shape these urban spaces and in turn get shaped by them. How are class differences embodied in women's usage of space? How different is it to ask these questions in cities that are different in their conceptual constructions, their everydayness and the perceptions of their inhabitants to it in relation to other cities in Egypt?

Introduction

Research on gender in public space is proliferating at this particular moment in time, however, much of this current interest focuses on sexual assault/harassment and its effects on women's mobility among others. This thesis explores urban tensions and their relationships to space usage through a mapping of women's experiences as a focal point to be able to understand how space affects women's lives and their everyday. This research aims to navigate how urban tensions in regards to gender/class relations affect women in regards to engagement of public spaces, performativity in those spaces and the public/private divide in relation to Massey's (2005) conception of space as being "always under construction" (p.9). It is helpful in order to explore this question further to invoke the presence of the neoliberal agenda and its shaping of contemporary cities, how these cities affect its users – especially women- and their engagement with it. Cairo, considered a cosmopolitan city – in the literature at least (Singerman, Amar, 2006), will be a focus of study, as a space imagined to produce civilized and modern subjects – or is a production of them. It is however, important to note at this point that the imagination of Cairo as a cosmopolitan city is a romantic

notion or brand (Harvey, 2012, p. 104) as not all spaces fit this description, in addition to the fact that what is considered to be cosmopolitan could in itself be different as there is an equivalency in the literature that equates cosmopolitan with a certain imagination of Western modernity or as Robinson (2005) has noted that at the moment it is being equated with hyper-modernity (p. 91) and thus it is important to consider what kind of cosmopolitanism is desired in the accounts of my interlocutors and what their desires mean in terms of the choices they make in regards to their spaces of living, their mobility and their everyday and if their lives bring forth a cosmopolitanism that is not being acknowledged because it is does not fit the dominant framework of what should be desired in the spaces we inhabit. This thesis juxtaposes Cairo to the Upper Egyptian city of Aswan. Aswan, a city in the far south of Egypt is a space within the neoliberal imagination that is considered as "tribal" or at best "un-modernized" in the literature and in the conception of both Cairenes and Aswanis. Aswan in particular, especially with its links to the rest of the African continent as opposed to other governorates in the North that are imagined to be outside of Africa (although still an "other" to the Global North's conceptualization of space), is deeply immersed in the imagination of what is considered the tribal. The tribal is a product of a colonial imagination that invokes a certain relation to traditions and the local on certain imagined communities, always deemed by the colonizer, currently Cairo to Upper Egypt, as backward and lagging behind. Khaddar (2002) mentions this relationship in her review essay of "Beyond Colonialism and Nationalism", and especially through the movie "Al Mumya" (1969) by Shady Abdel Salam, where she relays how the Upper Egyptian community is described as "backward clans of traditionalist tomb robbers selling Egypt's artifacts to European collectors," (p.85) and how the enlightened effendis from the Antiquities service coming from the capital Cairo, are struggling against them for the benefit of the sake of the country and its history. It is within these depictions and imaginations that an understanding of the tribal in Aswan is invoked and analyzed as part of its colonial past, but also re-worked to understand certain aspects of Cairo as manifested in the closed gated communities.

I thus compare both cities, Cairo and Aswan, in order to better understand the desires of women as inhabitants of those cities and as the other and what informs their desire of space and its construction, and also to understand what makes an other. The choice of Aswan stemmed from wanting to explore the othering process in a different light than the one being enforced in Cairo but in a sense the othering in Aswan was

also the same. The othering in Aswan was also enforced by capital, which is always manifesting itself in different forms and guises, and thus not only embedded in a system of governance but also informs the inhabitants' lives and their everyday. The choice of Aswan in particular was due to it being a non-ordinary ordinary city. The non-ordinary city of Aswan stems from the heritage and culture that is the Nubian identity but in a sense there is the ordinary in Aswan in its relation to Cairo as "another governorate", marking Aswan as a rich space for grasping and understanding the power dynamics that govern relations between the cities.

Justification

There has been a significant increase of discourse surrounding structural violence against women especially in public spaces. Accordingly, it is relevant in this context to explore women's access and usage of public space and also how the city in turn shapes gender relations. This thesis studies Cairo and Aswan, to explore the different politics and contexts surrounding space and the conceptualization of these cities and spaces in the minds of their inhabitants and through this exploration understand the relationship between women's mobility and space and through the different positionalities that these women inhabit whether in the social hierarchies that inform the lives of Cairene women and the imagination of what this life should entail or through the social construction of a certain tribal distinction to a space. Urban tensions are constitutive of the tensions within the larger social domain of a society and hence of significance for tracing questions of women's relationships to space. The social domain structured around class distinctions that affect and are affected by gender relations, constructs classifications of people and thus affecting their relationships in terms of access and usage of the spaces of the city.

The imagination of the city itself as a space is an important question to be considered, especially with emergent categories resulting from the modernist imagination of a cosmopolitan city which translates into the imagination of who the modern subject is, and the worthwhileness of his/her presence and usage of spaces. The modern subject, that is the "civilized" individual who is able to "properly" use the spaces of the modern city. The civilized individual practices the category into which they were placed and performs the everyday of their class and Butler's gender performativity in terms of a moral expectation required of the female sex as well as an expectation of being the weaker sex always in need of protection, and any other distinct identity they

3

were imagined to belong to. This identity has been reproduced in the neoliberal imagination of space that within the current moment in the history of Egypt – a product of the military/business elite's construction of space.

The gendering of space and thus the invocation of women's relationship to space is pertinent as a produced subjectivity within this discourse as a category that has been and still is prominently figured within the urban tensions that permeate societies, and also as a category that excludes "others". Urban tensions usually get reproduced on women's bodies, whether such reproduction is violence, hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion, or any other form of structural violence. It is important in this regard to understand that "women are not just women" but that they are an identity that contains within it an imagination of its performativity. By making the woman question visible, however, it is important to explore who gets silenced in the process, to explore what is at stake, and also what societal categories are derived and the hierarchies that they establish and the evolution of these categories and hierarchies. Women are not only silenced by being victimized and calling for someone to represent them, the category of the perpetrator of that violence is also silence. To speak about violence that targets women there arises a need to develop a social category that performs that violence since the state needs to retain the role of the protector and thus the working class male is thus both accused of being the perpetrator of said violence and victimized at the same time as a product of "unfavorable conditions" that had led him astray and thus is in need of discipline.

This fieldwork based thesis explores how upper class women navigate the worlds they live in, how they imprint their ideas, beliefs, values and relations onto spaces they occupy and inhabit, and also how space forms them and their ideas and values and relations to each other.

Literature Review

The modern city is a site of contested claims and tensions maneuvering expectations of an upper-middle class, a neoliberal agenda that caters for that class as opposed to the actual lived experiences of those who reside in the city as well as those who pass through it in terms of their daily routines. It is thus appropriate to ask who has the "right to the city" in light of these imaginations versus the actual practiced lives, and explore the outcomes of such tensions manifested in gated communities,

4

gentrification, privatization of public spaces, enforcement of governmental policies and the opposing every day daily routines of the users of the urban space.

Harvey (2012) focuses on the "bouts of urban restructuring" in his book *Rebel Cities*, invoking the Haussmanian planning of the city and its "class dimension" (p.16). The project "Cairo 2050" is a projection of such Haussmanian planning ideas where spaces in downtown Cairo are targeted for urban renewal which will ultimately impact the ability of the middle class to live in the city center due to high rents and increase in costs of living. Working class communities, and people in informal housing stock, in the Cairo 2025 project will be relocated to the outskirts of Cairo, bearing the social and economic costs in the project's wake. The Engels (as cited in Harvey, 2012) criticizes the result as "always the same, the scandalous alleys disappear to the accompaniment of lavish self-praise by the bourgeoisie on account of this tremendous success," forgetting that the circumstances that produced such spaces still exist and that these spaces are thus reproduced elsewhere (p.17). The city thus gets planned without taking into account the "layered dynamics" of space that give the everyday life meaning to the city users (Bendiner-Viani, 2013).

It is pertinent at this point to refer to Massey (2005) as an essential conceptual tool to the understanding of space. She posits that space is a product of interrelations, a sphere where multiplicities exist and that it is always "under construction" (p.9). Accordingly, "space doesn't exist prior to the identities that shape it and the relations between them" (p.10). However, space also affects the shaping of identities of the users of a given space. Practices that govern behavior in Paris are different from those that govern behavior in Dubai, or Cairo...etc. An imposition of a linear view of the construction of space is thus problematic at this point as it imposes a historical narrative, usually written using a Eurocentric approach (p.10), where space becomes contingent (for its shaping) on the modernity project.

The Modernity Project and the "Civilized" Subject

The city under a neoliberal agenda is always perceived as the "city yet to come"(Simone, 2004), one that is perpetually being made and remade through big projects, especially after what Lefebvre (1987) describes as the ushering in of the "modern era". Within these big projects there is an imagination of "who" has the right to "use" these new spaces or "how" they "use" it under a uniform way of living. The modern, disciplined, civilized subject in this sense is the optimum user of these spac-

es, and whoever does not fit within these imaginations is disciplined into these identities or is rejected. In order for the state/the urban planner/architect/ruling elite to achieve that, the city has to be rational, countable and projects the image of a universal anonymous subject (De Certeau, 2011, p.94). The user of the space is thus subject to be administered turning the "chorus of idle footsteps" (p.97) into something that can be tracked, traced and disciplined. According to Lefebvre (1987), the "everyday is thus defined as a product" and its production is "manipulated by producers: not by "workers" but by managers and owners of the means of production (intellectual, instrumental, scientific)" (p.9).

It is important to note that theorists such as Massey and De Certeau do not posit an imagination of space/the city as static and fixed; on the contrary, they suggest that space is constantly in a process of being transformed. They stress, however, on the particularities of each space and the relations and interrelations of its users in its shaping, bringing about an actual open imagination (Massey, 2005, p.11) of the future, instead of one that is moving on a linear model in complete disregard to the uniqueness of each space. It is pertinent here to debunk the myth of modern cosmopolitanism, being projected by neoliberal capital as a western concept and modeled on the Eurocentric trajectory that history is led by the West and thus of cosmopolitanism as a Western concept (Robinson, 2005, p.39).

Women's Particular Experiences of the Urban

Thus women's relation with space as a particular category is problematic and is based on a woman's place in the society in which she lives in. Tensions related to the modernist conception of women and their usage of space as opposed to the "traditional", "tribal" conceptions (among other categorizations) inform the dominant discourse related to gender and its relation to space and the urban.

Although there has been a conceptual post-colonial division of space in a city like Cairo, where the public has been relegated to the men and the private to the women, these divisions have been resisted and redefined. This resistance that has been performed by the marginalized whether they are upper class or working class women, the working class men or other communities defined as "other" has been contested in "cosmopolitan" cities utilizing the top-down approach where citizens are expected to behave in a respectable manner according to their gender and social class. It

6

has also been contested through neoliberal capital as it continually creates new privatized public spaces.

The contemporary city is continuously being depicted as a dangerous space for women where they need to follow certain edicts and use space within their gendered "capacities". Phadke (2013) argues that women in particular bear the brunt of carrying that fear, projecting violence against women as a higher form of violence than that which is enacted on any other identity and thus women in public are expected to be going to or coming from another place, i.e. they should not be "loitering" (p.53). Safe "public" spaces are those spaces of consumption, whether they are cafés, restaurants, shopping malls...etc. The more high-end the establishment is, the safer it is projected to be, and the more "purchasing power" the woman has to have in order to gain access.

However, Rachel Newcomb (2006) in her ethnography of the provincial Fes City in Morocco posits that women subvert the power dynamics and "give meaning to social spaces by using their own cultural categories to shape space in a way that reflects the construction of a female, Moroccan and Fassi identity" (p.291). Newcomb particularly chose Fes City, as it is "not considered central to political and economic operations of power" such as cities like "Cairo or Casablanca". (Newcomb, 2006, p.290) Newcomb's work on Fes and the gender dynamics within it through builds on De Certeau's conceptions of space where "intertwined paths give their shape to spaces ... and weave places" (De Certeau, 2011, p.97).

The Silenced and Excluded

By categorizing women and presenting their input in space formation, usage and access, we need to explore who gets excluded from the discourse of women and space as a result which has been dominated by discourse around sexual harassment. The rhetoric surrounding safety usually depicts the lower class youth, and working class as the perpetrators of violence. Phadke (2013) problematizes this notion as it perpetuates an "us" against "them" mentality, whereby violence against "them" is sanctioned and where "upper and middle class perpetrators of sexual violence get off easily" (p.50).

Another category of individuals who are excluded, are women who refuse to yield to the status quo, and according to Phadke (2013), they are mostly the "unrespectable woman: the street walker, the bar dancer" who are deemed to threaten

women's reputation and thus threaten their presence in public space (p.51). An ethnography conducted in Sri Lanka shows how factory women who did not conform to the rules of middle class behavior in public as endangering "women's morality" which in turn is considered a "threat against cultural purity and survival of the nation" (Hewamanne, 2003, p.75).

Phadke (2013) continues in "Unfriendly Bodies, Hostile Cities" to reveal the "layered exclusions and multiple marginalizations" (p.52) of those who are deemed to threaten women's bodies as alleged perpetrators of violence (lower class males, the unemployed...etc.) and those that are a threat to women's reputations, who through their performance of intended or unintended resistances to the "moral image" of women in public space, create a space for violence to be enacted upon women. Thus, categories of women, "moral" and "immoral", different classes, different cities and different conceptualization of the people living in those cities as "cosmopolitan" or "tribal/traditional"... etc. are complex and the dynamic categories construct and shape complex and dynamic cities.

Navigating the World We Know

Harvey (2012) linked the question: "what kind of city we want?" to the question: "what kind of people we want to be?" (p.4) I believe the answer to those questions lies in Phadke's vision of "multiple bodies in public space" (p.53). Phadke (2013) proposes that women claim public space without excluding the other categories such as the working class male, nor women who are deemed immoral. She says "each act of claiming of public space must acknowledge the rights of others to that space" (p.52). Accordingly, Phadke is politicizing the presence of women in the city yet at the same time not through the exclusion and/or silencing of the "other" – a production of the social tensions that permeate the urban, taking the form of class politics in Nasr City (and Cairo) through neoliberal arrangement of space and the othering of some Aswanis in the production of the city as a heritage city. Phadke in this sense perceives the passivity of the modern subject as a spectator in the everyday (Lefebvre, 1987, p.10) and not only calls on women to "loiter" but also calls on them accept the "silenced" and "excluded" working class male in the public space.

Claiming the right to the city is also claiming the right to engage with it by "slipping into the interstices of public spaces unnoticed and unremarked", a right of freedom from the top-down regulatory practices that promote for a modern citizen,

one who is in this particular moment of neoliberalism is also expected to be a "consumer citizen" (Phadke, 2013, p.55). These regulatory practices are enforced in a top-down manner in an assumption that by planning the city and looking at it from above, there is a better knowledge of "best practices".

This presumption that because we see the map of a given space or because we look at it from a bird-eye's view that we know the answers, the trajectories of the bodies that get to traverse these spaces; but by "walking in the city" according to De Certeau we ask new questions based on the interactions of all the categories in shaping the spaces we traverse. We ask why do women resist the public/private divide? We ask why are women given a special status when it comes to violence? And what comes first, society's projection of urban tensions on women's bodies thus rendering it special or the special importance given to women's bodies rendering violence projected on it as special?

By exploring women's engagement with public space in two different cities in Egypt provokes a further exploration of the questions posed within different contexts, a city like Cairo that is under heavy neoliberal influence for its planning and shaping, and Nasr City in particular as a product of that particular moment; housing seven malls showcasing it as a perfect locale for the consumer citizen, i.e. the model citizen. On the other hand, there is Aswan, a city conceived by the capital as tribal and unmodern and doesn't house the nation's model citizen, because it is within this conception, out of time. The elite of these societies do not see themselves as part of its imagination. Spaces and how they are shaped do not bear the same characteristics because they are traversed and planned for diverse social categories, it is thus consequential to review how we traverse the spaces we inhabit and how it informs the planning of that space.

> This territory cannot be mapped any more than the range
> of a bird can be mapped. The range of a bird is just
> wherever it goes. We can, after the fact, produce conceptual
> grids which account for where the bird has been, and we can
> as the result of knowledge of repetition, have an idea of where
> the bird will go (there is habit, after all), but the map comes
> after, not before. (Janz 2001, p.396)

Janz (2001) reiterates De Certeau's conceptualization of space, by arguing that meanings accorded to space are given to it from the inside, from the trajectories of those who live and inhabit this space and that it is always changing. Invoking Robert

Park's idea that people shape the spaces they are living in and in due process creating themselves, Harvey (2012) says this process is constantly taking place and accelerating (p.4). The meanings we afford to cities, spaces or places are not necessarily based on their uses to us but are also products of dynamic interactions and thus are experiences of the world are forever shifting in each "temporally specific situation" (Bendiner-Viani, 2013, p.716).

Accordingly, women give meaning to the spaces they inhabit, meaning is not afforded to that space by the state or the ruling elite. Through the enactment of their lives and the trajectories they take, women assert their paths. The urban planner/architect might look at the city from above and grid the city with lines but it is the actual enactments of all the categories, including women that inform meaning to the spaces and as Harvey (2000) has indicated that "new geographies are daily being produced" (p.558)

Methodology

Undergoing this research I used semi-structured interviews and participant observation in order to investigate women's engagement with space in both Nasr City and Aswan. My interlocutors are mostly friends and acquaintances from the ages of 20 to 35. They are mostly upper class or upper middle class women, though having my family as residents of Nasr City gave me the opportunity to rely on my parents as informants to some knowledge that also informed my own history with the space. I have discovered during the course of my research that having lived in Nasr City for over 27 years doesn't mean a true knowledge of the space and accordingly I understand that my interlocutors also are not a representative sample to be generalized, yet they tell, like myself observations that also inform how I intended to study both spaces in my comparative approach to the two urban environments of Nasr City and the urban corniche strip of Aswan.

It is through the everyday of my interlocutors of their class and their performativity of their gender and class – especially the moral economies of their gender, and within the notion that space is an ever-changing construction that I undertook my research. The interviews conducted were placed over the phone, online and in person for the Nasr City part as they were mostly friends and family, and the participant observation part continued to be an ongoing process. For Aswan I spent two months January and April, revisiting the same interlocutors after having established a premise

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of mutual trust. All my informants were notified that pseudonyms would be used instead of their real identities in order to protect their privacy.

Conceptual Framework

I relied on Doreen Massey and her conceptions regarding space to shape how I studied Nasr City. The transformation of the district was influenced by interpretations of the city as a modern space and what that entails and the reality of what modernity meant for its inhabitants especially in terms of class and class relations and how it is informed by Eurocentric approaches to understanding space. Massey's understanding of space is thus immensely relevant to the transformation of Nasr City in particular and Cairo in a more general sense and as a projection of the ongoing changes that Nasr City residents are going through.

The performativity of gender and gender relations as gender in the context of my research is performed and given meaning as well as the everyday of upper class women figured prominently in the accounts of my interlocutors. Interaction with space has become a non-conscious relationship performed through decisions about which spaces one frequents and behaviors that govern those spaces.

Chapter Outline

Chapter two discusses space and women's engagement with space in Nasr City, Cairo. I expound on the neoliberal trends exemplified in Nasr City in particular especially with the proliferation of malls and cafés. It was thus important to investigate the history of Nasr City, how it started as the new capital from the 1950's, when socialist ideas were used in the planning the new district – at the time, and transformed into the neoliberal haven that it is now, and the role of the neoliberal elite, including the military establishment, in creating this space and thus the imagination of who lives within this space. Nasr City inhabitants were part of a conceptual construction of the modern subject transposed from districts like Heliopolis, its neighbor, or returning from the Gulf to live the everyday of the upper class or upper middle class. There was, however, through most of my interlocutors' accounts a sense of disassociation with the space. The generation of my interlocutors grew up with the formation of Nasr City as a district and the transformation it underwent through the policy changes, it did not, however, reflect their everyday as informed by parents and social networks.

One of the aspects that made class politics in Nasr City evident is the prevalence of hierarchical consumerist centers, concentrated in shopping malls, around which the experiences of my interlocutors regarding class and its manifestations was ever present. The rise and fall of malls informed women's relation to space in Nasr City through class. Gatedness was thus used to put a physical aspect to the class differences that made the trespass of the working class male into the more affluent neighborhoods more problematic, thereby further problematizing issues of class and embedding them more strongly into the everyday of my interlocutors and the inhabitants of Nasr City in specific and other Cairene districts in general.

In chapter three, I discuss Aswan as the supposedly anti-Cairo as provoked by the discourse of tribalism that envelopes Upper Egypt and particularly Aswan with the marketable Nubian village and in opposition the desire of its inhabitants of aspects of life evident in Cairo, aspects that are sometimes described as modern, civilized or a description of an imagination of cosmopolitanism. It is within this understanding that the research of the different imagined social communities residing in Aswan and who gets silenced and who gets included and under which conditions. Being excluded from the modern, is a source of contention amongst my interlocutors as it denotes a class dimension of a different kind than the one prevalent in chapter one, one that paints women from Aswan, as coming from another governorate, i.e. not Cairo or Alexandria, thus naïve and unworldly.

The relationship between Cairo and Aswan and the imagined hierarchy of power is studied in chapter four, this relationship paints Cairo as "more important" and subsequently that informs the power relationship between the inhabitants of both cities, thus making living in Cairo a potential for becoming more important as well. Nasr City exemplifies the modernist and worldly desires of my Aswani interlocutors; such as City Stars, as a site of a consumerist desire which was frequently mentioned by them as a site of the modern space that is desired. The dependence of Aswan on the tourism has made of the city a non-ordinary city, but it has also created a persona or a brand for it, one that depends on the Nubian citizen and the social construction of his character as kind and smiling – and village-like in demeanor (i.e. not affected by the "harsh" city life). This has silenced other social categories in Aswan – and hampered a true understanding of the social dynamics that make up the governorate.

A comparative study is conducted in chapter four to understand the dynamics that produce a "global" city like Cairo and a "branded" city like Aswan and thus cre-

ates social dynamics between the two cities as such that maintains the social hierarchy of importance in favor of Cairo. How women in both cities conduct themselves and how they view the other is an important indicator that tells of more prevalent notions of understandings about what it means to live in an urban setting or otherwise and tells as well what we conceive of as urban. In chapter five I elicit Robinson's (2005) ideas regarding ordinary cities in my study of Cairo and Aswan. Cairo being a contender in the global cities race overshadows the other governorates and other cities like Aswan "focus on some of the other global functions Sassen associates with global cities, these include promoting attractive global tourist environment..." (p.111). However, the event, that is the 2011 uprising, has created ruptures that has affected capital and its manifestations in Aswan to affect the global tourism industry. New forms of consumerist outlets are the focus of capital that is losing the Nubian heritage and is aligning itself with desires for what is conceived to be modernity.

I conclude in chapter five by looking into the future of the urban projects in Egypt in light of the trends that have shaped and continue to shape urban life and relationships in Egypt, especially with the proliferation of gated communities, the aspiration for megalopolises and gentrification and how that reflects on the "others" – the working class, male and female, the other governorates, and how relationships are shaped. I also bring forth in chapter five a further understanding of Cairo's colonization of other governorates and how Cairo is still itself colonized especially in terms of global capital interests.

Chapter Two
Gender, Capital and the Neoliberal City:
Nasr City (Cairo)

I have lived in the Nasr City neighborhood in Cairo for 27 years and for me everything about this neighborhood was relatively "normal" given how we shape our perceptions of our spaces of living according to the structures that are already prevalent, however in my pursuit to study the engagement of women with space, some observations of the perversities that I believed was "normal" raised some questions, such as the presence of seven malls in very close proximity to each other and to the space that I am inhabiting, such as the small public garden next to my house that has been shut down and gated since I was five. Such as my parent's desire (as well as many other friends and their families) to leave this neighborhood for the new gated Up Town Cairo or 6th of October spaces and leave Nasr City behind. For a lot of people this desire to leave this space is because of the crowdedness of Nasr City. Others like my parents want to leave because culturally "it's going down hill". These questions (aided with subsequent readings) helped formulate a conceptual understanding of this space that required further exploration and required as well an understanding of how a different city within Egypt works, but not through the eyes of a tourist – which I was in Aswan in May 2013.

My first trip to Aswan alerted me to a difference between women who are "Aswanis" and women who are perceived to be "coming from" other cities with different modes of conduct. Taxi drivers, especially, would articulate these differences with their perceived ideas about behavior of people coming from different cities as when I got asked more than once if I "come from Cairo or Alexandria". These differences were reiterated by one interlocutor when I mentioned the prevalence of the widely held and pronounced idea of the "kindness of the Aswani people" to which she countered "it's because to the people in the service sector you are a domestic tourist, of course they will smile at you and serve you". Accordingly, these incidents - especially within an urban space such as Aswan's Corniche - would raise the question what makes Cairo a prominent city and Aswan the "traditional", the "tribal" or "rural" and also pushes the question of who has the "right" to the city and to question the imagination of who is the "proper citizen" and who is the other within that context. The-

se incidents could also inform the argument of Cairo's colonization of other governorates within a conception of modernity that is in itself parochial to reflect a Western understanding of modernity (Robinson, 2006, p.15) and which doesn't encompass Cairo as a totality as opposed to the imaginations of Cairo as a homogenous space.

Nasr City, A Historical Trajectory

Nasr City (Victorious City) was planned in the 1950's to be the new capital of Cairo and the plan was socialist in orientation. It was a renunciation to the values of the society it overthrew and become a symbol of the new "modern power" (Frochaux, Martin, 2010, p.16). Accordingly, the plan that was initially made was that the city be designed into neighborhoods with nuclei of centers of activities, catering to the "educated and upper middle class potential residents". Nasr City was imagined to be encompassing modern ideas that showcase the "progress of the new regime" – that of the post 1952 army led revolution (El Shahed, 2015). The district was designed by architect Sayed Karim, who was influenced by Le Corbusier, who had himself modernistic approaches to design that focused on efficiency. One design that Le Corbusier made for Paris stood out to me as it resembled quite distinctly el Nozha street in Nasr City. The Egyptian version however had a big clock at the beginning of the street signaling the city's projection of modernity, noting however, that the clock hasn't been functioning for years. Since clocks are one of the markers of modernity and as Harvey (1990) has indicated as "modern societies we accept clock time" (p.418) the non-working clock in Nasr City is indicative of the imagination of that space.

In an eerie resemblance to the past, the 2015 Egyptian government, led by the Egyptian army announced plans for the construction of a new city called "Capital Cairo" post 2013 army led "revolution"/ "coup d'état", showcasing the "upper class'" perpetual search for new places of dwelling with a certain exclusionary imagination. But whereas Nasr City was planned within a socialist framework and implemented in the 1980's during the economic policies of *el-infitah* (economic open door policy) where the construction was left to investors for decision-making and signaling the beginning of the neoliberal urban planning in Egypt, the new Capital Cairo was planned with private investment in mind and where the government in effect has stated in the state-run newspaper that it will not be able to finance the construction of the capital and will rely on private investments (Zalata, 2015). Nasr City has thus gone through

what was according to Eid, Khorazaty, Rashed and Sadek (2010) "Land Use Transformation" or as Massey would describe it as "space under construction".

The implementation of Nasr City was thus affected by capital in its diverse manifestations. Retired army generals being placated by the Mubarak regime in order to maintain their loyalty as speculated by Tadros (2012) and were thus provided with business opportunities as with the 1982 presidential decree that provided the Ministry of Defense with plots of land in Nasr City. Egyptians returning from the Gulf after having accumulated wealth were also a contributing factor in how the city was built according to the new capital flowing into the country and into the pockets of investors building the city.

Accordingly a taste for investment and consumerist leisure was embedded within Nasr City in its construction phase and malls became a part of the Nasr City identity and so were the questions regarding who has access to these spaces and who doesn't. Malls, considered to be safe and modern spaces for women to enjoy their time without being harassed in turn created an "other." The working class male, in this discourse has become an "other" whose presence is problematic, and upper class women as victims who are in constant need of protection.

Exclusionary Discourses

In the Egyptian context, one can link the discourse of violence/safety with that of the sexual harassment discourse in Egypt, in which the women are "victims" of the "uncivilized" masses of young men. The modernity discourse is very prevalent within this context as well, yet the desire for what is deemed to be modern is actually sometimes manifested in a yearning for the late 1940's and early 1950's sociality. Whether it is the way people dressed – especially for women in the city and within certain social circles, the urban planning, the behavior of people in the streets, there is an imagination about what the modern is and it is not necessarily a reflection about what is necessarily new or global but about a certain imagination that was constructed about that time and which had became the golden marker. The working class men do not fit in this imagination, and neither does the rural or other socialities.

Thereby the working class youth as an other are a threat to women in public but are disciplined in places of consumption – such as malls. Perpetrators of sexual harassment or any other form of violence from upper and middle class backgrounds usually do not get targeted with this discourse. Men and women from the working

class though undesirable in the upper-class districts in terms of consumers, they are welcome to serve in the homes, cafés, malls...etc. It is thus not strange in the practical sense that working class neighborhoods spring around what are deemed the upper class neighborhoods, however unwelcome it is from the upper-class residents.

Public spaces for women and working class men are accordingly "shrinking" within the discourse of safety and within that frame women are victimized and thus in need of protection. This is problematic on two fronts: women can't get protection except if they are engaging in consumerist behavior and thus belong to a certain economically privileged group and there is a marginalized group in society that is suffering from a constant structural violence. Nadia Ilahi (2013) mentioned the class aspect when she described upper class women's escapes into enclaves of and shelters of consumption. She focuses on transportation and how women who can afford to have cars find in them a refuge. Being shielded from catcalls and harassment and even an ability to dress "less conservatively" (p.63).

Traversing Nasr City

The Nasr City I traverse is made up of major parallel streets and nooks and crannies in between, with mostly people growing up there and taxi drivers not getting suffocated by the traffic jams since they know which roads lead where and how to escape. You can't escape the opening of a new shop around the corner every other day though and the subsequent celebrations to announce to the neighborhood that the shop is there. This happens every other day because at some point the shop will be resold, re-decorated and re-opened with a new business venture. Before the mall City Stars opened, I remember one street in particular where many women living in Nasr City and Heliopolis would shop there, the street contained many boutiques and had imported clothes. City Stars marked the end of the popularity of that street however since it sported the high end imported brands there; the shops remained in that street but they cater to a different clientele. For taxi drivers and myself alike, Nasr City is Abbas El Akkad street. It came to my attention that taxi drivers took Abbas El Akkad as a focal point for Nasr City as they usually asked me "where in Nasr City?" just as we are about to enter Abbas El Akkad.

Abbas El Akkad street has the high-rise buildings, the shops, the cafés, a park, a mall (Wonderland) and leads to two other malls (Genina and Akkad). These malls used to be very popular back in the nineties and early 2000's, they had nice high-end

cinemas (not all of them still do), Genina mall has an ice-rink in the middle and a bowling alley, and every now and then the owners attract a well-known establishment, like Chili's the international restaurant, for instance to open there. It is however, relegated in the imagination of the upper class as catering to the working class. This imagination of Genina could best be explained by a family member's reaction knowing that I ordered food from a restaurant there, they wrinkled their nose and asked me "Genina?", the same restaurant that I ordered the food from is also available in City Stars so the main contention was that I was engaging in activities associated with the working class. City Center is small and not on the same level as the other malls but until recently had a good movie theater and is still retaining some of its clientele, possibly due to the presence of spaces like Starbucks, Carvel and other fast-food shops in it and in its vicinity. Wonderland had it worse for wear; it used to have a small theme park and is housed next to the biggest park in Nasr City - the international garden but even though it still does have a good cinema theater, it is largely ignored by the upper class residents of Nasr City in favor of City Stars. Serag Mall, even though it had cinema theaters as well was also unpopular among the residents but for its electronic shops with the promise to fix all electronic devices. Tiba Mall, which used to be the first mall in the area was very popular until the advent of Genina Mall and it fell into disuse until a renovation that marked it as a space for certain furniture shops and houses Carrefour for Nasr City residents, and it has also retained its cinema theater. Last is Akkad mall which never took off successfully to begin, settling into being an open hypermarket mall.

The socio-economic discrepancies between the neighborhoods in Nasr City were pronounced then in terms of a discomfort one felt transgressing their everyday regular performance. Ahmed, a programs director at a developmental institution and resident of Nasr City explained how uncomfortable he felt as a young male resident of the seventh district – a middle class district – going into a mall like Genina. His discomfort, however, was not an impediment to his access of said mall and Ahmed explains that at the time being able to pay for whatever services or products he wanted to buy were enough to grant him access but he thinks it is different with malls like City Stars and the policing of its gates.

Nasr City though used to be projected at some point to be an extension to Heliopolis; it has the Cairo International Conference Center, the Cairo International Stadium and is home to a branch of the most popular sporting club El Ahly. Foreign em-

bassies were supposed to relocate there upon its completion, it even has a district called the "Embassies District" – but that never happened. Nasr City is now considered to be going downhill, especially that the "slum areas" Ezbet el Haggana at the North East of Nasr City and Mansheyet Nasser which borders Nasr City to the East. It is thus imagined that the *shabab* coming "from these slum spaces" with their "inadequateness" in their ability to "use" modern spaces have Nasr City as their hangout place in malls such as Wonderland for instance which is very unpopular as it attracts the said *shabab*. This positioning, along with a "deteriorating" residential condition, explained by my father, who has been a resident of Nasr City since the mid-1980's, as an over crowdedness that happened as a result of the greed of building owners. Well-known to the residents of Nasr City is that the buildings should never have been that high and almost all buildings have illegal extra floors, coupled with leasing of the ground floors to shops instead of garages to gain more money, Nasr City became less attractive to live in. Frochaux and Martin (2010) in their study of Nasr City have also indicated that the density ratio has increased exponentially from the initial plan that was made for Cairo in general and to Nasr City specifically by 150% (p.101). They have argued as well that due to the weakening of the building codes phase two of the implementation of Nasr City saw a discontinuity to the unity of the design of buildings that should have supposedly kept buildings at a maximum height of 5 floors, as an exception to the main roads, effectively creating an "ad hoc horizon" (p.102). The non-uniformity of the buildings is a sore topic for Cairene residents who have aspired to establish rules to the implementation of consistency in shape and color of buildings similar to the new gated communities.

My interlocutors in Nasr City have also expressed their alienation from the space growing up. Nermine, a 27 year old Marketing specialist at an international retail store in City Stars, has lived her entire life in Nasr City but expressed she had more affinity for districts like Heliopolis and Zamalek. The reason she relayed was that these spaces were a "perfect combination of authentic and hip", whereas Nasr City was "chaotic", and given the choice she would "definitely" relocate as Nasr City had "too much noise". Nermine's relationship to Nasr City is seen from within the closed private spaces of her home, her car, and her work in City Stars. Working together on a project during our studies for a Bachelor's degree in Journalism, we decided to do a report on "crowdedness" and since we both lived in Nasr City and since Nasr City was to us epitome of crowdedness, we naturally filmed our project in the

Nasr City district. I remember even then that her father accompanied us during the filming of the project in the street. Nermine's description of Nasr City as being inauthentic has been part of Nasr City's history, as it never fully lived up to its designers' initial plan of it being an extension to Heliopolis. Another interlocutor Mohamed, a 27-year-old researcher, lives in a space that is officially, according to zoning part of Nasr City, however, he never identifies as a Nasr City resident. This identification is partially the result of him living closer to Heliopolis, but partly it is an aversion to Nasr City as a space, as in he would agree to meet friends in spaces as far as Zamalek rather than in Nasr City. Most of my interlocutors who are from the upper class districts have had roots, as in familial networks, in the Heliopolis district as with Tala, Nermine's friend and who also works in the same retail store in City Stars. Tala also has more affinity towards Heliopolis and expresses this relationship in terms of having her network of friends and family located there, her sporting club and her school. Nermine was aware of the presence of the working class neighborhoods such as Ezbet el Nasr and Mansheyet Nasser commenting that they are a natural evolvement as most of their tenants work in the informal service industry such as "maids and chefs" whereas Tala has no clue of the neighborhoods I have mentioned but has acquiesced that the area in which she traverses in Nasr City is very limited, that when I asked her which areas has she never been to in Nasr City, she replied that it would be easier to say which areas she had been to. All these experiences relayed of Nasr City share the same theme, one that is looking at the district from behind a window or through the railings that separate one class from the other.

In relation to the topic of density and alienation from the community, it is important to point out the lack of reliable public transportation. Public transportation available in the area is confined to public buses and informal network of microbuses. I have never used public transportation until I have started my undergraduate education. It was then when I received some autonomy in mobility decisions and not even right away. My university is located along the Cairo-Ismailia road, which is a 30 minute ride away by car and where there is no formal public transportation and that's when I used the microbus for the first time, to cut back on the expensive taxi rides. My use of the microbus was frowned upon by family and peers and I was being pushed to learn how to drive and get my own car instead. There was a tramline in Nasr City that linked it to Heliopolis but it stopped being used since 2007, I had never used it myself, or anyone in my network and none of my interlocutors as well. The

tramline itself was removed in 2014. The idea for its removal stemmed from it being too slow and congesting the district more by taking up too much space (El Shahed, 2012). The tram's removal from Nasr City allowed for an extra lane for public buses in Mostafa El Nahas street, a main street that intersects with the Abbas El Akkad, Makram Ebeid and El Tayaran. The buses' lane was however highly criticized for creating many accidents. This was amended by putting a railing to disallow pedestrians from crossing at just about anywhere across the buses' lane. There is a plan for a metro line that passes through Nasr City but since it is still in the planning phase, there is no accurate information is available but it should pass only through the North-West part of the district. Since taking a taxi everyday is very expensive and public transportation is very unreliable and frowned up as marking a lower class status, having one's car is the next best solution, accordingly there is a density of traffic as much as there is a density in the population, aided by the lack of garages, the space of which was used to lease out for commercial purposes.

Nasr City houses a free-trade zone, and accordingly some factories and leading to this area is a neighborhood called the "10th district" or El Hay El 'Asher. The 10th district is considered a working class neighborhood, a claim that is supported by the prevalence of tuk-tuks, a marker of the "inferiority" of the neighborhood as well as the establishment of an immigrant community from countries considered to be "developing" or "underdeveloped" or Asian immigrants studying at Al-Azhar but who are not economically privileged to live in the upper class districts of Cairo like their counterpart "expatriates" from the Global North.

The Presence of the Military and Ties to Neoliberalism

> The illusion of Freedom will continue as long as it's profitable to continue the illusion. At the point where the illusion becomes too expensive to maintain, they will just take down the scenery, they will pull back the curtains, they will move the tables and the chairs out of the way and you will see the brick wall at the back of the theater.
> -Frank Zappa

The very visible presence of the military establishment in the planning and construction stage and in the "ownership" of land - and its links to the business upper class is very indicative of the kind of imagination the city has. The military is projected as a "trusted" institution, one that "comes from" the people and thus "doing for" the people. Claims of monetary gain are countered by nationalist voices that decry

those that haven't served their country the way the "military men" have, always serving their lives on the line. It is to be invoked here that the military as a patriarchal institution was the planning body of spaces such as Nasr City, and involved in some of its business ventures, which raises the question of how that city was imagined within that framework.

These questions are pertinent to the questions of women's engagement with public space because it feeds into the imagination of the making of the modern subject and the contextual foundations of that discourse. It also brings forth the question of how "new" cities are being built and within what imagination, such as New Cairo in particular, which is undergoing the same construction imagination such as Nasr City (Consumerism and Militarism) but with a further embeddedness of the othering practices exemplified in gated communities. The residential gated spaces in New Cairo are not divorced from "urban mega projects" and "leisure developments" (Alsayyad & Roy, 2006, p.5) exemplified in spaces such as "Cairo Festival City", and complexes such as "Uptown Cairo, "elite" schools and "elite" private universities...etc., and what can also be noted is the military presence with a manifestation of mega-military projects, such as a new mosque that was built in honor of former General Mohamed Tantawy and "advertised for" with a huge billboard.

The heavy presence of military establishments in Nasr City was never something I noticed. Some establishments and state institutions were always a part of Nasr City but since they had always been there, I never really saw them. The ceremonial ones such as the parade ground and its monumental tribune to the Unknown Soldier has always been part of my route. The fairly new and luxurious hotel "El Masa" that was built in 2006 and which belongs to the military showcased the military's business ventures. There are plots of land that have the infamous "Do not come close or take pictures" signs that are indicative that these plots are owned by the military. State institutions such as the notorious "State Security" building was maybe the only building that showcased the state's presence in terms of force rather than as a business, or an empty plot of land. In 2011, in the aftermath of the Egyptian uprising, my vision adjusted to the presence of the military and state actors. It started with the heavy securitization that the "City Stars" mall received in the early days of the 2011 uprising. It was the first time I see the "Unit 777" military task force. This unit was created back in 1978 as a response to terrorist activities, but was never part of the contemporary internal securitization until early 2011. A period of peace prevailed after that in Nasr

City until the Rab'aa protests and sit-in. During that time however, small changes started to occur, but they were not as obvious. Ahmed Tayseer street, one of the streets linking Nasr City to Heliopolis was closed in its Nasr City part which lies in between a military plot of land, specifically the Ministry of Defense. Heavy securitization encompassed the Rab'aa protests and sit-in in 2013, which also led at the time to a visualization of the military presence in the area. Besides the Nasr road being blocked by the protesters the roads around the sit-in were constantly being closed and opened again. Having to pass by Rab'aa area every day to go to work I was exposed to the manifestation of securitization and the visibility of the presence in terms of army of soldiers. After the violent dispersal, the military presence became more visible yet again in terms of army tanks and soldiers and a fetishization to the army became a normal sight as well as defensive walls surrounding army establishments springing up around Nasr City. Also a visibility to the Muslim Brotherhood's presence in the district was made apparent to my interlocutors and myself alike, there was a sort of suspension of time through a suspension of activity on a main road, this sit-in proved that the disruption of life-as-usual was closer to home. Tala commented that during the sit-in itself, "the back area of Rab'aa was an open space for peeing and pooping and camping. The place was a big pile of garbage. Harvey (1990) mentioned that sit-ins, demonstrations, and such activities were an "attack on an established order" (p.419), in the case of my Nasr City interlocutors, it was the realization of the rationale behind their feelings of disconnection, a realization that there is no "modern" by revealing the presence of the "other". I heard a lot of people moved out of Nasr City because of that period" said Tala; this statement indicates some of the residents' disapproval of the state of the district and its other inhabitants.

Urban Planning – Further Gatedness

The practice of gating is entangled with the idea of the creation of a modern subject who is "worthy" of accessing the modern spaces. There are two famous public parks in Nasr City, the Children's Park and the International Garden but both are gated and require an admission ticket because there is an image that Egyptians will defile with their "backward habits" those spaces and thus there is a need to filter access. Even though there is an admission ticket to police access, these public parks are not popular with the "upper-class", "modern" youth as these spaces do not provide cultural capital or status. Another gating practice is the "minimum charge" at the café, a

practice that also, according to De Koning (2006), "keeps out those who do not belong to the comfortable class" (p.230). The author argued that in Cairo there are vastly different time/space continuums in which the different Cairenes traverse, one that is part of the cosmopolitan, "now-time", where according to De Koning a "fellow Cairene who is watching your car parked next door to that nice restaurant seems far removed from your cappuccino enjoyment, an experience you, in contrast, share with millions of other people all over the world"(p.232), this fellow Cairene is denied being alive in the space time as the upper class Cairene.

Some "entrepreneurs" took the gatedness concept even further by establishing "women-only spaces"; and whereas some successfully took off such as women-only gyms and private women's beaches – spaces that also cater to the wealthy according to exorbitant entry/membership fees – some hadn't had the same success such as women-only cafés. Although the discourse that prominently surrounds the establishment of women only or segregated spaces was that of safety from "men's prying eyes" and harassment, a religious imagination was also invoked especially after the rise of Islamist politics in the case of D.Cappucino (El-Saeed, 2013). The only café that is still actively promoting a woman's only space is called "D.Cappucino" and is housed in Nasr City. D. Cappucino opened in 2013 at the height of the deposed president Mohamed Morsi's rule who was elected president on the 24th of June, 2012 and overthrown in July 2013, after one year in power. This establishment and others like it portray a certain image of the "Modern Muslim" who doesn't reject the "world" or "global" trends but is one with them – though within an Islamic imagination; and women wanted to be part of that "new" Islamic Modern which isn't a threat to the upper class way of life as it espouses the same values - headscarves with Gucci labels at exorbitant prices. Al Watan ran a piece on the new café commenting on the "discrepancy" between the "modernity" of the café supposedly evident in its name, its menu and décor and the values that it promotes – segregating the sexes among other "non-modern" activities such as the prohibition of smoking and music (2013). This modernization of all that is Islamic became evident in all aspects of life, even elevators played Qur'an or Islamic prayers whenever they were being used, a trend that Ahmed noticed had started in Nasr City. Also, City Stars participated in the morality policing of behavior especially concerning *shabab* or youth, putting up signs at the gates indicating rules concerning "proper dress", that there would be no public display of affection – the sign showing a man and a woman holding hands with a cross on it.

Although there is no direct link between the Muslim Brotherhood and Nasr City, it emerged during the 2013 protests staged by Muslim Brotherhood and supporters in Rab'aa El Adaweya square that Nasr City was a space that held special significance. The presence of Al Azhar University – one of the leading Islamic universities and attracting students from all over Egypt – and the heavy presence of Gulf returnees who resided in Nasr City with ties and links to the Muslim Brotherhood, the link became visible. This visibility after "the event" was similar to the visibility of the military establishments in Nasr City also after the event of the 25th of January uprising protests. The presence of Muslim Brotherhood and supporters however was evident in the modernization efforts with a religious "tinge" even before the two events. The modernization of the upper middle class, that "upheld" society's religious moral codes, as Ahmed notes "you can't find even one bar in Nasr City" (personal interview, June 2015).

Upper Class Women and the Working Class Men

> "Our children are embarrassed to say they are from 'Ezbet El Haggana'" - (Tadamun, 2015)

Class-based segregation is thus part of the everyday of the city-dwellers, especially pertaining to women and thus reinforcing an imagination of the working-class men as being a threat to women's safety in the name of poverty, assumed sexual deprivation and a perceived lack of moral decency. Acts of decency performed by working-class men are perceived with awe amidst the all-encompassing images of the "sex-obsessed beast" that is supposedly the working-class man, such image is constantly being reproduced in movies about *ashwayiat*. In contrast, some middle and upper-class men prefer to maintain an image of masculinity that is also part of the image of working-class men, by having access to regular coffee-shops, by attempting to speak the same slang and listening to Sha'abi music. However, it is the working-class men or men coming from lower-class backgrounds who are regularly stopped by the state for security checks and have to perform a "modernity through consumerism" in order to be accepted into Cairo's "modern" spaces (Ghannam, 2011).

The discourse of safety also affects the imagination of the modern city which makes the presence and visibility of the "professional or consumerist" woman desirable, but who is safe as well - through spaces that provide that safety (Phadke, 2013,

p.52). This provides the connection between consumerism and gender and class relations within the urban and the problematic question of women's access to public space.

The presence of women as "loiterers" is thus problematized and sometimes even deemed as inappropriate as they do not engage in any "productive" activity within the neoliberal logic. Standing in the street would attract at best glances and at worst comments, lighting a cigarette however, would require the intervention of the bus driver, by subtly asking me to embark on the bus instead of waiting in the street, even though the bus had to wait 5 minutes before leaving Nasr City and the bus driver would never have given a similar reaction to a male student. There are spaces, however, where women are welcome, and that is, if they perform their duties as citizens and consume/shop/buy, i.e. becoming consumer citizens (Viswanath & Mehrotra, 2007). It is therefore pertinent here to link the gating concept with the idea of purchasing power, especially with the continuous commodification of public spaces, where private interests in this sense shape how the city is being planned and constructed and where there is "a loss of confidence in the public and community experience". Women have thus internalized their unwelcome status in the street, both Nermine and Tala mentioned that they rarely walk in the street except to go to the supermarket or catch a taxi for Nermine but for Tala venturing into the streets of Cairo, and not just Nasr City is not something that she would choose to do at all.

It is also important to point out that within the spaces that are privatized/commodified/gated, further mechanisms of status are being implemented, as not all malls (or consumerist centers) are equal. City Stars mall in Nasr City, for example, as opposed to other malls shows this disparity. This could reflect the trend of creating an insatiable consumer citizen, one who is always waiting for the newer, better, more expensive model. In this sense City Stars is the newest of the malls that are present in Nasr City, it is more exclusionary and more highly securitized and houses international high-end brands. The gatedness in City Stars manifested itself in different forms, one which I witnessed showed the security at the gate preventing a man wearing a *galabeya* from entering the mall. Since the *galabeya* if worn by anyone other than the rich Gulfi denotes that the wearer is not from an upper class background, and thus the man was stopped. Their voices raised, I heard the security guard tell the man, "do you not know where you are going? this is City Stars!" (personal encounter, n.d). Another form of exclusion targets young men who are barred from entering the mall on week-

ends and during feast celebration days, except if they were a part of a couple or a family unit, and in this sense enhancing power dynamics between upper class women and working class men.

In the 1990's the malls were constructed and were a successful venture but now in the 2000's, some malls like Wonderland have experienced a sort of death – as they have become less exclusive with the people they are accepting. Other malls like Tiba Mall have witnessed a revival after death but are housing outlet shops and are thus welcoming a different category of shoppers. The changes that have occurred to these malls are also indicative to the kind of changes that are happening to Nasr City in general, a kind of decayness with continuous attempts of revival as with the construction of City Stars – the newest elite mall.

I thus argue that with the construction of new upper class cities such as New Cairo that offer more securitization, privacy and spaces in general where upper middle classes can practice their consumption habits without "fear of the masses" prompted more people to perform an inner-migration. The New Cities are a reflection of the inhabitants' everyday of upper classness and thus are deemed more appealing as spaces to live in. My colleague Sara Verderi described it perfectly when she said that spaces such as Ezbet El Haggana and Mansheyet Nasser, which produce the category of the *shabab* or the untamed and undisciplined youth, continues to haunt the upper classes and their way of life. These youths, live in the spaces called in Arabic *ashwaiyaat* meaning unplanned and unstructured – the opposite of what living in a modern city entails and thus it is supposed that the populations that live there are accordingly chaotic having lived in the unplanned spaces. Having these *ashwaiyaat* close to upper class neighborhoods and districts is discomforting for their residents who continue to invest in new spaces and in gating practices to keep the "others" out. Although Nasr City has the parks and the malls and the cafés, they attract the wrong crowd – the working class- for there are no gating practices and thus the move and the desire for a space that affords that barrier is needed. El Abaddi (2010) mentions in her article titled *Lost in the Slums* that it is the inhabitants of the areas that are deemed *ashwaiyaat* or working class neighborhoods that gets attacked, not the "problem of lacking infrastructure, public services and poor sanitation". It is, however, important to note here that the residents of Ezbet El Haggana are not victimized, they have partly taken a role in shaping the spaces they are living in, by for example adding street

signs, a project that was according to Al-Shihāb Institution for Comprehensive Development (as cited in Tadamun, 2015) self managed.

Conclusion

There is a constant search for what is considered for the modernist imagination to be the cosmopolitan, this imagination that was derived from a colonial spatialization of time producing forward people and backward people. In Nasr City, the upper class who are no longer happy with what is deemed the inhabitation of the undesirable "*shabab*" of the working class "uncultured" masses to their spaces of living. There is always the fear of the sullying of this certain imagination by the inner migration from the "rural to the urban", the rural in this sense encompassing all spaces outside Cairo except a few cities like Alexandria that has a history of cosmopolitanism. The rural in this sense also encompasses the areas that produce the "*shabab*" from the working class who also threaten the Cairene upper class way of life. Although Tala, for example, was not aware of the presence of the working class neighborhoods, she was adamant that their presence affected the quality of life in the Nasr City district, and she expressed her desire to move to one of the new compounds.

This projection of forward people who lead a modern life denotes that there is a spatial marker linking modernity to upper-classes and their spaces of living. El Shahed mentioned in one of his posts how architecture is a profession that caters to the upper class. After the 2013 revolution/coup, most of the achievements that have been assigned to the new regime have been concerned with the building of new roads and bridges catering to the upper-classes need for more efficient roads to transport them from their far-off gated communities to their workplaces and back, failing to note that there is no official network of public transportation linking the older parts of Cairo to the new districts. On the other hand, the assumed backwardness of the working class is also projected spatially in terms living in cities deemed as rural or villages or even in the working class neighborhoods of the capital, like Ezbet el Nasr and Mansheyet el Nasr for example.

The modern itself is a construct that within a certain context denotes a progression of time to the "Now" but which actually means different things in different contexts, as it sometimes denotes the yearning for the life of the late 1940's Egypt for one class, which is in a sense a projection of the colonial influence on the urban design and practices of living. For those living outside of Colonial Cairo or outside the

upper class districts, it means the desire to be part of a certain lifestyle that also has the colonial imagination of one space as more advanced than another. Accordingly it is within these imaginations that the relationship between Cairo and Aswan is re-searched, especially that Aswan and Cairo have a historical connection in terms of the internal migration that from Aswan considered the rural to Cairo.

Chapter Three
Negotiating the categories of the tribal, modern and cosmopolitan in Aswan

Aswan as a city is interlinked with the Nubian heritage and culture, books have been written about the Nubian history and culture and projects have been erected to preserve that culture. The UNESCO, besides its focus on the preservation of Nubian heritage sites from the flooding that occurred after the High Dam was built in the sixties, there is still an ever present interest in Aswan that is Nubian, this is clearly evident in the importance of the Nubian museum and the essence of it being the only celebrated museum in Egypt that is focused on a particular identity or social community. Capital has thus been focused on the Nubian as well, as the identity has become continuously produced, reproduced and consumed, and tourism has become the essence of how this city was built, around the Nubian identity.

Thus, my interest in Aswan as a researcher doing a comparative study stemmed from reflections I had when I was tourist back in 2013. I stayed for only three days but they were very illuminating in terms of my engagement with reading materials on cities, but first and foremost, it was the impression that I as a Cairene woman was different than my Aswani counterparts that grabbed my attention the most. The same dynamics happened in different Egyptian cities as well but I was always surrounded by fellow Cairenes to take full notice. There was always also condescension on the part of Cairenes to people coming from other governorates, even to Alexandrians, a projection of Cairo being bigger and more worldly. My first impressions of Aswan were those of the typical tourist, that Aswan is imbued with culture, that of the Nubians as an ethnic category to be specific. The relationship of the Nubians to an African heritage by skin color and race put them in a category of being from a different culture, one that is tribal and not part of what we deem as modern as either part of our 1940's colonial nostalgic affiliation with the modern nor of the modern as new. The tribal affiliation that was given to Aswanis – imagined to be the good Nubian people – has relegated them to the traditional, one which is also a projection of the relationship between the Mediterranean and "sub-Saharan Africa" and the distancing

that the North Africans and I will talk of the Egyptian to be particular to the rest of the continent.

The urban center of Aswan is made up mostly of the corniche, a strip of land parallel and adjoining to a body of water; in Aswan, the Nile to be specific. There are however, to the purposes of my research, old and extended corniches, the old one is the one that existed in my 2013 trip and which catered to the touristic audience with either international brands like KFC and McDonald's or spaces that provide an authentic experience of Egyptian or Nubian food, like Salah El Din or the Nubian restaurant respectively. Parallel to the strip and the main street, there is a "souq" comprised of the entire street but whereas in 2013 it was made of both shops that sell statues and masks as souvenirs for tourists, in 2015 it is more varied to include merchandise that caters to Aswanis mostly. The extended corniche, however, the one that was implemented (and still in the process of growing) is further up the strip and lost its connection with Aswan as a distinct cultural production, with cafés springing up with names such as "C'est La Vie" and "Snob" and that serves a non-distinct cuisine like menu of food and drinks. The extended corniche is considered according to Abdel Fattah (2015) from the online publication "Sada El Balad" a beautiful and civilizational front. According to Abdel Fattah, this extended strip of the Corniche was part of the governorate's extension plan to create new harbors. The space of the harbors was monitored by security who wouldn't allow us closer to sit in the space that is direct to the water but only in the cafés above. The extended part of the corniche is related to the "New Aswan" district. There has been some mentioning of this space among my interlocutors but since the space is still in its initial phases, what I was able to attain were projections from my interlocutors as to their understanding of this new space and the state's proclamations of what this space is and what it represents. The local government in Aswan is attempting to attract Aswanis to move to New Aswan by opening 9 new university departments (Sleem, 2015), and there are plans for a "big" mall and sporting clubs (Salah, 2015). It is in the extended part of the Corniche that I started to lose the tourist gaze as the spaces themselves did not market the Nubian heritage and culture. The significance of this is that I noticed that there is a trend in the new Aswan that is attempting to market a local experience, one that is not focused on tourists who want to experience the simple Nubian life –whether foreign or Egyptian tourists- as a culture that is retained and museumified from a peoples with a history as old as the ancient Egyptians but one that is new and modern.

I noticed in the configuration of the city that the urban center is not where the Nubians live, the Nubians live in the "villages", mostly spaces that are enclosed on the Nubians. The Kenuz Nubians are closer to the urban center and they mostly live on islands in the Nile such as Gharb Sehel, Sehel and Heissa. Gharb Sehel is the most attuned to the presence of tourists. There are many guesthouses that promote the Nubian culture heavily through the use of colors that are associated with the African culture and the Nubian music. They also open their homes to tourists as guests, let them see crocodiles that they keep as "pets", and maybe offer the tourists some tea. Sehel and Heissa islands are more low-key, yet they do maintain the friendly hospitable air with outsiders. The Fedij Nubians live in areas far from the urban center, between Aswan's center and Kom Ombo, which is around 47 kilometers. These areas are called *markaz* and are mostly comprised of the Nubians who were displaced when the Aswan dam was built. These spaces are far removed from the touristic Nubian experience being marketed and upon visiting them, the experience was one that was more attuned to a rural village rather than the tourist village. Governorates like Aswan have in its subdivision the space that is called *markaz* which is a space that encompasses several rural villages and accordingly is not used to describe spaces in Cairo. The different spaces of living inform not only the social category but also bear into it a class dimension that is based on the social category. State power in Aswan is not very recognizable except in spaces such as the High Dam as a site of national security, or within the vicinity of the ministry of interior on the corniche, otherwise it is the power of the tribe and the family that is most permeating.

Pitfalls of the Cairene Researcher on Aswan

'Masr' is Egypt and 'Masr is also what Egyptians call Cairo
Ahdaf Soueif (2012, P.9)

I went to Nepal in March 2011 to volunteer with women in agriculture. My knowledge of agriculture is non-existent and so what happened in the trip was not surprising. The expectation that I had of myself, and them from me as someone com-

ing from a "cosmopolitan city" and thus knowledgable enough about all aspects of life was shattered when I failed to feed the chicken the "correct" way. This all led to one of the most humbling moments I experienced, standing there, it became apparent to me that what I perceived to be mundane activities that presumably anyone can do - like feeding chicken – is actually something to be learnt and that the production of knowledge presumes some forms of knowledge as higher than others and so although my "cosmopolitan" background afforded me a cultural capital, I was brought down to earth by being laughed at by the village women, standing there with a bucket in hand, and all of women at the other side of the room with their mobile phones out as I became a star (due to my ignorance) in the village of Tinpiple.

The relevance of this story here is that I didn't want to reproduce the same enforced dynamics of the perception as "coming from the city thus knowledgable" into my fieldwork in Aswan. Also projecting all the urban prejudices of modernity vs. traditional and the rural was problematic in my initial reaction to the Fedij Nubian's women expression of wanting a club. The women I met from the village "Armena" from 'markaz Nasr El Nuba' wanted a club, although they met each other regularly in each others' houses, there was a sense of ennui that they believed would be resolved by having activities such as having a club to meet regularly at. Condescendingly, I initially dismissed the idea as an attempt to emulate an exclusionary body as I envisioned the clubs that are scattered around Cairo and other governorates do, including Aswan itself in the urban center. My reaction reminded me of an academic article I read for James Ferguson (2006) and in it he recounted a man he met in Lesotho in 1983, the man declared he was interested in building his house in the "European-style". Ferguson wrote that he grew to appreciate the local architecture in Lesotho, which according to him used "appropriate [local] technology". When Ferguson expressed his sentiments, the Lesotho man expressed that the aspiration of having a European style house was not a blind mimicry of the West but an expression of power and wealth and an expression of a certain "standard of living" (pp. 18-19).

Being from Cairo, referred to as *Masr* (Egypt) by my interlocutors and myself, afforded me a perceived privilege. One interlocutor, Sara, a 24 year old Graphic Designer expressed a mixture of longing to aspects of what she deemed as cosmopolitanism evident in Cairo and expressed in the prevalence of cosmopolitan cafés but herself reproduced the rhetoric of the villageness aspect of Aswan when talking of the Nubians. The mixed feelings that Sara had about Cairo was also evident in her answer

when I asked her where she went to study for university. Going to Luxor, a governorate that is 179 kilometers to the north of Aswan, instead of the capital city Cairo, Sara had to justify by telling me that it fitted her pace in studying, even though I never asked her why she went to study in Luxor rather than Cairo but she informed me so as to deflect the perceived inferiority of studying in a non-prestigious university seeing that Cairo houses what are deemed to be the prestigious universities such as Cairo university. The first time I met Sara was at a cultural event and a cultural space called Fekra, the second time we met we went to where she took her driving lessons. It appeared to be a working class neighborhood and she apologized once we got there and assured me that she never went to this part of Aswan before she started the driving lessons.

The construction of any city in Egypt has Cairo as a model, Cairo as *Masr* is reproduced and is creating desires for consumption patterns that are relevant for the middle class in Aswan. At one point Sara told me that she would introduce me to modern Nubians who now live in the urban part of Aswan and who don't care for shopping in Aswan but get all their clothes from City Stars in Nasr City, Cairo. She also expressed her desire to be part of the planning team for the New Aswan project, wishing that it resembles spaces like New Cairo – a space which she deems a reflection of the modernity that she aspires for.

I was discussing the concept of Cairo as being referred to as *Masr* with one interlocutor, Nadia, a 24-year-old housewife, and a mother to one daughter, when we got interrupted with the arrival of her sister. Later on, while we are all talking, her sister referred to Cairo as *Masr,* at which Nadia looked at me and smiled and where her sister explained that everything they bought or perceive as want to buy, they come to Cairo for - referring to shopping as well. There is, however, a certain imagination of Cairo holding more possibilities to a life they wish to live. Cairo is believed to have better possibilities in terms of more choices, and this was expressed by my interlocutors, each from a vantage point of personal interest, Sara, for example, expressed her visits to Cairo as giving her more choices in terms of social events with friends citing how she wished in particular that Aswan had a karaoke place. For Nadia, the possibilities available for better educational opportunities were higher. Her desire to be something more than just a "housewife" was stunted by the perceived lack of opportunities for a better education. She seemed to experience ennui in her life as a housewife and advised me to not get married right away. I think she saw in my Cairene self the em-

bodiment of the difference between us in terms of being from Cairo and being from Aswan, not in terms of class but in terms of moral economies. Her perception of my relatively freer mobility led her to use me "as a friend of the family" to go out. She had relayed to me before her husband returned home from work that she wanted to go out, so when her husband returned I asked him if she and I could go out and he agreed but then she re-iterated the request with a sort of defiance, "Menna and I want to go out", and he replied "sure I'm not preventing you". This interaction led me to believe that there was a sort of a moral code that she feels she must abide by but not myself and that my presence as a guest enables her the chance to find that opportunity. Karmah saw that in Aswan there were limited opportunities for writers and artists to share their work with the public and that more attention is given to those either coming from Cairo or sharing their work in Cairo. Karmah, however, saw that sometimes this is used as an excuse for laziness by the writers and artists.

Aswan and its Villages

Cities that get written about in the media tend to project branded images about the respective attributes that are perceived to be specific to their cities. In Cairo, the projection of chaos is prevalent and gets reproduced, a google search for the keywords Cairo and chaos yielded 862,000 results, one result even indicated a game with the title "Chaos in Cairo" based on events or activities in 1920's Egypt, the projection of chaos in Cairo and other "developing" or "undeveloped" countries stands in opposition to the order and rationality of the West, and in Aswan, it is the perceived 'kindness' of its people and relative quiet and peace. Ananya Roy and Aihwa Ong (2011) discussed the branding of cities and focused on Dubai and Singapore as powerful contemporary global influencers in terms of "worlding" practices, replacing the West as a focal point for modeling. There are other facets to the branding of cities, however, and that is the creation of an aura of authenticity that stems from a tradition or indigenousness, this however clashes with the aspirations and desires for modernity in a sense and cosmopolitanism in another. This could be expressed in my initial reaction to the village women about having a club when I thought that they had the perfect setting without the exclusionary practices performed at sporting clubs, but on a wider note, this could be seen on the projection of Aswan as Nubian and all the projects that aim to preserve the Nubian history, heritage and culture. The equation of Aswan with Nubia is problematic on two fronts; it attracts funding and development opportunities

as long as the features of the Nubian culture remains unchanged, a certain kind of preservation to what is deemed traditional. The Nubian museum had the aura of a colonial interest in the "other" articulated the efforts of many European governments including that of the Czech to preserve the Nubian history. The UNESCO named Aswan "City of Crafts and Folk Art" in 2005, again focusing on the folk and the traditional aspects of the Nubian culture. This interest focused on the Nubian as a history; there was a section that supposedly showed the "current" Nubian who is of course living in the village, in a humble cultural home, wearing cultural appropriate colorful clothes. On another note, the focus on Nubia, silences the other inhabitants of Aswan, the Aswanis who have ancestry that comes from Upper Egypt, silences the Hilalis whose ancestry is from Arab tribes that have remained in this area, and from the Bashareya, who come from nomadic origins. It is relevant to point out here that the Nubian museum is the one museum in Aswan that has received the most attention from the state and cultural bodies on a worldly scale. Another museum, the Aswan museum is not marketed as heavily and only mentioned in passing if you are planning on visiting other sites in the same area. When I went to Aswan in 2013, as a tourist, I only saw the Nubian Aswan, the one that is infused with colors, Nubian music and culture, but as a researcher a different Aswan came to the surface, one that is diverse.

The Cairene Woman in Aswan and the Aswani Woman in Cairo

The imagination of rural and upper Egyptian people as naïve is projected onto both men and women. The 1998 movie "Saeedi fel gam'aa El Americya" clearly articulated that stereotype in a movie that was very popular and grossed over 27 million Egyptian pounds. There is however an added focus on the morality aspect when it comes to that dichotomy between Cairene women and women from the rural/southern women.

The stereotypes of the immoral Cairene women and the naïve rural/southern women abound, not only in the literature and movies like the "Laila bent el reef" (1941) and "Fe Sha'et Masr El Gedida" (2007), but also in the narratives of my interlocutors. Zirbel (2005) brings forth these narratives as she recounts northern Egyptians (and in particular Cairenes') view of the south as naïve and pre-modern and the southerner's views on Cairo as an immoral space- especially for women. This was evident in a certain kind of permissibility that I was allowed as a woman not available to women from the South and the rationale behind it was that I was from Cairo. This

was projected in my interlocutors' imagination of Cairo in their comparison to my life versus theirs, telling me that it was possible for women in Cairo to live on their own, to smoke freely, to order shisha in a café, even to laugh loudly in a public space; are actions that were attributed to me since I was coming from Cairo but that that they are not given the same permissibility by their community as coming from Aswan – or outside of Cairo. There was an imagination that since Cairo is this vast impersonal space, people have become indifferent to the moral codes of the more traditional spaces and have acquired a "blasé attitude" as explained by Robinson (2005). It was thus difficult to not reproduce these social categories in the face of prevalent reiteration of it even from interlocutors themselves, who negate it through their recounting of their experiences later on in our discussions. David Harvey (2012) mentions in Rebel Cities that the branding of cities creates "opportunities to pocket monopoly rents" (p.104), but I argue that the branding serves more purposes such as in the case of Aswan which gets reproduced as a space of "villageness", a terming that serves the tourism industry instead of the mundane rural. The branding of Aswan as a village requires a different kind of tourist, one who consumes villageness, who takes idyllic pictures of the Nile and the small isles and captures portraits of the hard-lined faces of the "villagers" and their simple lives. On a felucca ride, the boatman asked me while we were passing next to the ISIS hotel in the middle of the Nile if I – as a tourist - had been to the Nubian village. I had been to Gharb Sehel, a Nubian village and he replied that if I hadn't that he would have taken me to the village built by the ISIS hotel. He added that sometimes the tourists want to see the culture of the place without actually being inconvenienced to stray away from their accommodation. This village within the hotel feeds into the production of a cultural value and the re-iteration of Aswan as a village – or that which is important about it anyway. It is thus a question of the production of meaning and the value that could be derived from it. One of my interlocutors, Karmah, a writer kept it as a running joke every time we met, regarding "the kindness of the Aswani people". She told me that this is a "romantic vision" as we are "treated with kindness" because at the end of the day we are the consumers of the domestic travel.

Thus partly, the complexity of what makes Aswan is the branding it undergoes as a city and the subjectification of the people living in these spaces. Karmah in particular mentioned how frustrated she felt whenever someone tells her "I am always glad to see women from Aswan writing" – the implication that being from Aswan or

any other governorate doesn't give the writer the sophistication naturally prevalent to the Cairo citizen. Karmah added in this regard that she is "not trying to prove anything to anyone" – being a woman from Aswan doesn't factor in her decision to write. She added I forge a space for myself for my own benefit not to break taboos. She believes that women are constantly trying to prove themselves and in some respect there is an added pressure on women from the governorates.

In Aswan, there are the Nubians, and their pride of their Nubian cultural heritage, whether they are Kenuz, or Fidej. The Nubian culture being promoted however does not distinguish between the Kenuz and the Fidej, and if it is pointed out, it is just a mere mention in a historical tidbit, as in the Nubian museum when they mentioned in one of the displays that a particular form of paintings on houses is mostly a Kenuz tradition. There are also the urbanite Aswanis who are offended by their exclusion of what they perceive to be the city (and the aspects of perceived "modernity" that go with it) bringing forth a colonial discourse of civilized/uncivilized. This discomfort is understandable in a sense that there is an understanding that they are being pushed out of the now-time of those that belong to the cosmopolitan spaces. Among my interlocutors, there was as well those who reproduced in their discourse a perceived "lag" behind Cairo in terms of modern cosmopolitanism represented in spaces such as malls and cafés and one interlocutor even mentioned the lack of beauty centers (at the time of my first fieldwork) as a sign of lack of modernity. My interlocutor would say things like "just like Cairo..." or "not like Cairo but..." comparing Aswan's urban center to Cairo. Thus the power structures that women operate within are layered, there are those of class between women in Cairo itself and then a further added layer of the power dynamics between women of Cairo the cosmopolitan city – referred to as "*Masr*" and the women of the "village".

Within this imagination, I seek to explore how Aswani women traverse the urban and how they negotiate images of the cosmopolitan and what they perceive as the modern/civilized vs. the villageness that is the "brand" of Aswan. My project also tackles an exploration of what affects women's engagement with public space in terms of mobility and behavior and decisions regarding accessibility to spaces and not others especially within the safety discourse that usually targets women subjectivities.

In Aswan, public spaces in the old part of the Corniche offer inclusivity to anyone who wants to access it or so it seems. The pavement is wide enough; there are public gardens and public benches. Sitting in the "Rowing Club" in the old part of the

Corniche, my interlocutor Karmah makes sure to pick the tab, joking that if we go to any café in the extended part of the Corniche (Extended Corniche for the interest of this study) like "Snob", she wouldn't pay. A week before this incident, a Cairene friend and I went to "Snob" and when the bill came she exclaimed (and I agreed) that it was extremely low compared to what we are used to in Cairo. These incidents exemplify not only the socio-economic differences in Aswan but also those between Aswan and Cairo. Karmah mentioned that when she was in Cairo, she felt different than the people who went to cafés in Zamalek or Mohandiseen and she described it as a "double difference" in terms of the socio-economic differences between her and them and that she is coming from Aswan, mentioning that she felt estranged from them. Some women, however, are reluctant to access the old corniche and are opting instead to "hang out" with friends in the new cafés, one interlocutor Sara mentioned that the "Rowing Club" is a space for mothers to find husbands/wives for their children.

The new cafés in the Extended Corniche are harder to access as they are not a walking distance from the rest of urban spaces. What was noteworthy however is that there is access via microbus or 10 minutes taxi rides (which Aswanis I have encountered rarely use – even coming from an affluent background). This arrangement reminds me of the inaccessibility of the gated communities via public transportation such as public buses or the presence of walkable routes and the setting up of informal routes via microbuses. The design of the Extended Corniche cafés is very cosmopolitan in the sense that it doesn't rely on the motifs that are related to the Nubian culture, it serves food that is nondescript and hailed as modern. A Cairene friend lamented that the design of these spaces is reflecting cosmopolitan ideals instead of the traditional Nubian and thus is a reflection of the loss of the Nubian/Aswani identity, bringing Ferguson's story to the fore again that shows the inclination to pin certain societies deemed as tribal/traditional in a certain time in the past and project onto them all that which is felt to be lost in the modern urban, i.e. the blasé attitudes, the conceived social ills of people living in the city.

There are subtle differences that distinguish between what is acceptable in the modern Aswan as explained by the Aswanis and what is not and most notable was the lack of the intermingling of the sexes. This was made most noticeable to me when one of my interlocutors, Sara, saw her male cousin with a female friend in the street and teased him relentlessly. I mentioned the incident to another interlocutor and she told

me that it was not common for male and female youth to hang out, this exchange I noted since Sara has several male friends, and has had been in relationships before. Several of my interlocutors also mentioned smoking; Karmah smokes but is very aware that she doesn't perform the act of smoking in public even in the "cosmopolitan" cafés. She added that she has taken the habit of denying being a smoker with her to Cairo. This is part of Karmah's everyday as an Aswani woman in Aswan and her performance of it in spaces that she might deem as more free. Karmah distinguishes spaces rather than people as free, meaning that she perceives that not all spaces are equal and that there are pockets of spaces where some people enjoy more freedom than in other spaces. Karmah indicated that people whether they are in Cairo, Aswan, the United States all go through constant personal and social revolution and that the spaces of freedom that they enjoy are a projection of each society's battles to achieve a certain right. Karmah, thus sees in Cairo rather than in Cairene women a site of freedom, even when I mentioned that Cairene women do have limitations. She cited my staying alone in Aswan, smoking in public and ordering shisha as some of the examples of the freedoms that Cairene women enjoy both in Cairo and Aswan, mentioning that one of her friends was denied shisha and was told by the server that they don't serve it to women, mentioning that shisha was served to 15 year old boys at another table. Karmah's understanding of my "freedom" was tainted as she told me that as a woman from Cairo I could rent a space and live on my own, disregarding the network I live in and the moral economies that I traverse within as it is perceived that Cairo as a homogenous space "allows" women certain freedoms. Yet I can't do that, I can't rent any space in Cairo and live on my own, or any other governorate, my parents "trust me" yet they "don't trust what people will say", the size of the city (to be mentioned later) does not matter here, as long as the social network and tribe to which I belong do not approve. What is tricky is to navigate the differentiating moral economies between the two social groups, as I do have as a "Cairene" woman coming from a certain background a certain mobility based on the preconceived notion of my modernity.

Laila, a 20 year old student, explained that many of the differences between Cairo and Aswan stems from Aswan being a smaller city and thus a smaller community and network where people know each other, or at least their families, a sentiment that was shared by Karmah. She explained how I was known to "come from Cairo and Alexandria" was because very few Aswani women "my age" would remain un-

veiled and "they are known", according to her. Upon mentioning that, I was reminded of a conversation I had with a taxi driver who asked me when does the "Eid" (feast) start (it was 6th of January, the eve of Eastern Orthodox Christmas). I answered that I wasn't sure whether the celebrations were later that day or the next day. He apologized profusely for mistaking my religious identity then proceeded directly in asking whether I was from Cairo or Alexandria. For the taxi driver, I was either Christian or a part of the immoral Cairo whose unveiled head wasn't problematic.

Laila proceeded to explain how she doesn't expect sexual harassment from males who inhabit the same social class she does because the community is so small, that they are bound to bump into one another, or their families at some point. Karmah told me that besides smoking which she wouldn't dare do in public, in a café, she wouldn't laugh loudly, or sit alone with a man. She says, "people look at you, they concentrate with what you do", mentioning two women sitting at a nearby table who did sneak glances at us for laughing loudly in the "Rowing Club". These discussions with Laila and Karmah refer back to the imagination that they have of Aswan as "small", not in the sense of space but in the sense of networks, and the imagination that "everyone knows everyone", according to Nadia.

Class Differences and the Desire for Modernity/Cosmopolitanism

Sitting at the café "Snob" as opposed to one of the public parks in the older part of the Corniche was evidentiary to the kind of transformation Aswan is undergoing. My interlocutor Sara would show me around spaces that exhibited the longed for modern cosmopolitanism or would go at lengths to describe the villageness that envelopes the perceived simplicity of the Nubian people, according to her and to the literature such as appears in travel articles, "Nubians seem to be from another world, another time. They are known for their extreme kindness, hospitality, generosity, simplicity and fun" (Hakem, 2015), continuously confined within a certain imagination that is given to them from the outside, they are given an identity that is shaped and reshaped outside of their selves (Harvey, 1990, p. 419). The Extended Corniche not only houses many cafés, it is also the same space where new apartments are being built which my interlocutors express would cost millions a unit for ownership. Karmah, saw these developments as a way to create new opportunities for women, adding that these manifestations of a cosmopolitan lifestyle, such as going to cafés,

buying branded clothing, or electronic devices such as smartphones would compel women to work and forge their way in public space.

Expressions of distaste regarding the older part of the Corniche is manifested in many forms, including restaurants that were once highly rated on "Lonely Planet" but are now not considered suitable as a space for hanging out. At the start of my fieldwork I visited a restaurant called "Salah El Din" in the old part of the Corniche and even though the restaurant was empty, I decided to sit there all the same. The waiter upon knowing that I wasn't from Aswan proceeded to ask what I was doing there and I explained that I was a student and gave him a brief of the topic of my research. He seemed genuinely interested and gave me what I felt was sincere friendly advice, that I visit less expensive restaurants in the future, more suitable for my budget. Although at the time I didn't think twice about the advice, it was later made apparent to me that this restaurant (and several others in the older part of the Corniche) were not popular among the locals because they serve alcohol and although I can't speak for the waiter but I believe he thought to direct me in a diplomatic manner of other "more suitable" spaces for women.

Spaces that are within financial reach of the lower classes are in disrepair like the cinema in Midan El Mahata which my interlocutor Sara didn't even consider when I asked her if there were movie theaters in Aswan. Several of my interlocutors mentioned escaping sexual harassment as a reason as to why they frequent the new cafés, Salma, 21 years old, told me that she sometimes "forgets where they used to hang out" before the new cafés were built. It is however, noted that a desire for modernity and cosmopolitanism is also a factor. A certain unnamed sensitivity from having to answer for the "branding" of their city as a village as in the case with Sara who was very offended after a Cairene girl expressed astonishment that they "had Facebook" in Aswan. I was the focus of this anxiety as soon as I mentioned to any of my subjects of study that I'm comparing an aspect of Cairo to Aswan. One subject even raising an eyebrow asked, "as in we are living in villages here?" This sensitivity was pronounced as well when in showing me around, one of Sara's friends told the group that it was a bad idea to show me the Aswan Sporting Club, saying, "she is from Cairo".

The Difference of "Pace"

When Karmah and I first started talking she described the change of pace between Cairo and Aswan as the biggest difference between the two cities. She says that in Cairo "men and women are both very fast, you can wear practical clothes to manage the fast pace and no one cares if you wear the veil or not, whether you are overweight or not, all these things are marginal" adding that she can't run after a microbus in Aswan because she will "hear comments", as opposed to it being "normal" in Cairo. Karmah rationalized how she perceives this difference in that people in Cairo (whether men or women) need to catch that particular metro or bus or any other transportation because life is rushed and the pace is fast, where in Aswan, the pace is slower and the geographic distances are not as big so if she does actually miss the transportation, she could walk home (although the pace of life in Aswan is in fact much slower than in Cairo and the city is much smaller than Cairo, there was a certain overstatement in simplifying the alternatives for women, particularly in Karmah's case whose work in the souq street which is parallel to the Corniche and is around a 20 minute ride away from the location of her home, making walking home in the heat of Aswan unbearable)

The linking between pace and anonymity was however pertinent to the research and to which she emphasized that the slow pace gives people the leisure and justification to involve themselves in other people's lives and that it has become a living practice. She mentioned one incident when she was sitting in the "Rowing Club" and a girl "gave herself the right" to "advise" her about not wearing perfume. She added, "the table I'm sitting on is my space, she invaded my space". She added as mentioned earlier that she carried these restrictions with her the first time she came to Cairo, saying that she denied being a smoker to a "Costa" server (a café) when he asked her to be able to place her in the smoking or non-smoking section of the café. It is accordingly these practices that form our everyday and as women we perform a certain embodiment of our gendered construct. In the process of traversing the urban, Sara and I, decided to run an errand which required that we wait for a friend in the street. Sara was very disconcerted about being perceived to be "loitering" and finally she decided not to wait any longer for her friend when we met a female acquaintance of hers. She told me, "what will people say?" (about us "loitering" in the street). Accessing the public to Sara was not unproblematic as long as we were moving or as long as she performed what to her was proper behavior that will ensure her safety but once we stopped, it became a problem. We were then not only subject to the "flan-

eur's" gaze – and where sexual harassment was likely to happen – we were also to be the subject of gossip.

The Hierarchical Dynamics within Aswan

I was describing to my interlocutor Nadia how upon first coming to Aswan I saw the people as one block, the Nubians, but that upon exploring Aswan I discovered the different social categories. She proceeded to inform me of the different categories in terms of hierarchical class categories, according to her understanding. She started with the lowest (according to her), the Hilalis. The Hilalis, though have their names as descendants of Abu Zeid El Hilali, a revered 11th century Arab leader, currently possess the lowest rung in the hierarchical chain that informs Aswani society. Nadia says that no one wants to marry "from them", and if you find out that a neighbor is Hilali, you might instantly dislike them. She added (and this was confirmed by most of my interlocutors) that they have the "lowest" professions or are engaged in criminal activities such as selling arms or drugs. Nadia mentions then that the second lowest community is the Basherya and Ababda tribes. She says that they have their own customs and are involved in the business of raising sheep. The third community in the chain as perceived by Nadia were the Nubians and within the Nubian community, Nadia saw that the Kenuz were better than the Fidej and that there were classes in each tribe from within. She finally mentioned the highest imagined community were those that are called Aswanlis (who she said believe have Turkish lineage). Although Nadia was critical of the imagined connection to the Turkish as a sign of an upper classness by making fun of the notion, she mentioned that she came from this community. I attended a post-workshop meeting in Aswan in which they discussed oral history, and I met there a Nubian youth Salman who is in his early twenties, and I asked about the different social compositions in Aswan in an attempt to understand their everyday. Salman however did not give me an extensive make up of the social distinctions in Aswan but he did mention the Hilalis in particular as a problematic social group. His description of the Hilalis resembled that which gets ascribed to the working class in Cairo, especially when he described how they "as Nubians" do not like to go to public gardens because they are frequented by the Hilalis who "bring their pots full of cooking with them" and that they as Nubians "do not like that scene", adding that they preferred the new cafés and that they are a "good development" for Aswan, especially the women, since "it finally gave the women freedom to frequent spaces without har-

assment. Although Salman did mention that the Nubians are not a homogenous group, especially in terms of class, stressing that there are vast economic difference between the different families, he did talk of the Nubians as a homogenous group in terms of the Hilalis and the social activities that both groups engage in.

The way Nadia described the different imagined classes reminded me of the castes in India, but my interlocutors especially Nadia and Karmah, both described it as tribal. Karmah in particular insisted that Aswan is a tribal community where she admits to me that these tribes are a social construct or an imagined social community, but that if someone from another tribe slurs her tribe that she would retaliate in kind. This hierarchical structure is not discriminatory in the constitution but this means nothing as class hierarchies in terms of discriminatory practices can be exercised within the invisible sphere of power, and re-iterate the same rhetoric of the backwards people who are in need to be modernized and made to adapt to civilization which is the same hierarchical portrayal that is the modern cosmopolitan versus the traditional uncivilized tribal that the state deems is in need to modernize especially as incidents of violence occur.

My conversations with Karmah were very informative as well in trying to establish the state's relationship to the different social categories. I asked her if the state favored the Nubians by giving them representative power to Aswan, and she told me that it was natural that they receive more attention as it is in the state's interest to placate them because of their displacement for the building of the Aswan dam as well as the media representation that they are given. She told me that the Bashareya tribe (which she is part of) doesn't receive the same attention from the state within their location in Aswan but that they are privileged in another part – the Basheryas in "Halayeb and Shalatin", where they are given special privileges by the state because the tribes there reside in a contested border land between Egypt and Sudan. The state through its military institution, according to Karmah, grants the Basharya tribe members in Halayeb and Shalatin better services in terms of creating a union for them, by building them better schools and hospitals and even by lowering the admissions score for them when entering universities for some colleges, all in the sake of instilling a civic pride within this tribe within this particular space over the contested land. She tells me members of the tribe in this region are really loyal to the army.

The hierarchy within Aswan in terms of *"marakez"* is also important to note as the urban center (centered around the Corniche area) resembles Cairo in its rela-

tionship to the other Aswan centers such as Edfu, Nasr El Nuba, Kom Ombo and Daraw. These centers are inhabited by Nubians and "upper Egyptians" for example as the ones I have visited in Nasr El Nuba, yet seeing Nubians as a homogenous category all economically one is problematic as it overlooks those Nubians who live in these centers and overlooks as well that there is a class dimension and a certain agrarian/modernity divide between Nubians living on agrarian land such as those living in Nasr El Nuba and those who live in the urban center such as the family I met in Maraya and alerts to the dynamics of the imagined social community that is labeled Nubian. The differences between women living in the urban center in Cairo as opposed to those living in Aswan, to those living in the centers has been noted by my interlocutor Karmah as well who had linked it to perceived freedoms of women, she said that "women Cairo have more free spaces than women from Aswan (and other governorates) and women in the urban center of Aswan have more spaces of freedom than women in the centers". This could explain the women's aspiration for the modern as the embodiment of identity and honor is always projected on her and thus her spaces of freedom are limited, seeing in the cosmopolitan space (undiscriminating whether modern Eurocentric in nature or not) the characteristic of making her anonymous. I saw the embodiment of tradition and morality on women in Aswan, with the belief from my Aswani and Nasr City interlocutors that these projections are exclusive to non-Cairene women. Although the pronouncements of these sentiments are different - the embodiment of the nation's identity and honor, they are present and are exhibited in various manners. It is thus that we are stuck in this false dichotomy of either being a modern woman, fashioned around the modernity of the West, or remain in their unchanging out-of-time existence. Aswani women, however believe that in the Cairene "modern cosmopolitan" experience – the one that in itself is exclusionary in nature – the achievement of being in-time with the rest of the world, and the shedding of that brunt of carrying the responsibility of the honor of the nation.

Conclusion

Aswan for the longest time depended on the tourism industry, which made it a non-ordinary city, yet its distinction was embedded in the Nubian heritage, in the images that circulated of the Nile and the tiny islands and thus the restatement of Aswan as Nubia and attributably as a village. Thus the creation of a conflicted desire, one that is proud of that identity of Aswan as a special space and one that desires to be

part of the modern world has become part of what informs my interlocutors' narratives. My interlocutors subscribe to the notion that there is a modern space in the bigger cities, such as Cairo and Alexandria where women especially behave more freely due to the perceived blasé and impersonal attitudes that urban dwellers of bigger cities supposedly undertake.

Before 2011 and the uprising that shook the tourism industry as admitted by everyone I spoke to in Aswan whether in support of the uprising or against, capital manifested itself in the tourism industry and catered mostly to international tourists who will provide the city with a foreign currency, but since the tourism industry fell apart due to the perceived security threats, capital has manifested itself in different forms, mostly through cafés on the Nile that lost its Nubian/traditional aura and the transformation of bazaars that catered to tourists into markets. These transformations cater to the aspirations of my interlocutors who find in these cafés spaces that better inform their desired lifestyles. Again we are in the presence of a situation that puts the much-aspired modern lifestyle in spatial terms, where in this sense Aswan is perceived to be "behind" the modern/developed world, and where my interlocutors uphold this imagination of the space they are living in and aspire it to keep up.

Chapter Four

The Difference Geography Makes

One of the recurring themes that I have managed to return to time and again in my research was the modernity vs. the premodern/the tribal/the less developed that is prevalent in the literature that depicts the west vs. the rest but is also invoked in the literature and narratives of depictions of the capital city versus the governorates. Invoking a post-colonial argument to the study of the urban in this instance would be illuminating. In *Ordinary Cities* Robinson (2005) described how "categorizing cities tends to ascribe prominence to only certain cities and to certain features of cities". The way Cairo is positioned as being the focus of everything that is important in Egypt brings forth the question of the categorization of Cairo versus the governorates and in a sense the question of modernity and development that Robinson invokes.

From to Cairo to Aswan and Back

Beyond the colonial relationship between Cairo and other governorates, there is a historicity to the relationship between Cairo and Aswan. The migration of Aswanis into Cairo, even before the 1952 revolution/coup, was channeled into a certain form of service relationship. Most Aswanis who migrated to Cairo worked as doormen (*bawabs*) or cooks and were prominently Nubians. This service relationship informed a certain imagination to the Aswanis and Nubians in particular extending beyond the imagination of Cairenes to other Egyptians living in other governorates, an imagination that forever locked the Nubian Aswanis in particular into these roles, eliciting jokes until the present time manifested in calling any male with darker skin "Othmana"; the name the media through cinema gave to Nubian men.

This relationship of power is not one way, however, the *bawab* who most of the time is not Cairene, is an ever-present reality in the lives of Cairene youth, especially women. Even CairoScene (2014), an e-zine catering to a certain upper class community, published an "open letter" to what they termed "the most important man in most Egyptian girls' lives". The letter included references to the disapproval of the *bawab* to the way some women dress, getting home at a late hour, inviting men over...etc. The letter was not only about the policing of women's behavior, it also alluded to the class discrepancies as when in the letter it was asked of the doorman if he resented the

woman ordering several meals during the day, wondering if the doorman would think of her as a "spoiled brat". The letter was signed "A random Egyptian girl".

It is for these reasons, these subtle power hierarchies that extend beyond the one that is present between Cairo as "*Masr*" and its colonized governorates that took me to Aswan to understand the city as the "other" of Cairo and also the desires of its inhabitants of the Cairene experience and lifestyle which they undoubtedly see in movies or TV series; or even in their forays into Cairo without the hawkish eyes of the family giving the illusion of a freedom that doesn't exist in their birthplaces.

Notions of Morality between Cairo and Aswan

"Don't you for one time sleep out
or to stay out late lest the doorman sees you
and you thus will not get married"
- Luka (2015) Hashrab Hashish. *Unnamed Album*. Egypt.

Notions surrounding what is morally acceptable on a social level is different between the two cities and refers back to the imagination of Cairo as a modern space. Women of Cairo are expected to behave differently which is evident in my Aswani interlocutors' engagement to Cairo as a space and their perception of Cairenes. Although the different interlocutors I met have a very different relationship to Cairo in terms of access and perceptions, they all share an understanding that there are different morality standards between the two cities, whether they share the legitimacy of these standards and its applicability on their lives. I remember that all my interlocutors in Aswan as well most of the random people I have encountered have asked me whether I smoked or not. For them it was not morally acceptable that women smoke but they were not alarmed when I mentioned that I occasionally did smoke, it was expected of the Cairene woman.

One other aspect of morality and which stood out for example is the *hijab*, or the "veil". All my interlocutors in Aswan wore the veil as it is expected of the women of a certain age to don the veil, yet no one "forced" my interlocutors to wear it and only one reported that her family have a say in how she wears it. It is conceptualized though that because some women in Cairo choose not to wear the veil for instance, that Cairo is one homogenous permissive space, where even if the family forces women to wear the veil, the city at large doesn't care. The city here thus takes the form of an entity that is separate from its inhabitants in the minds of my interlocutors,

49

whereas in Aswan, the city has certain characteristics that it enforces on its inhabitants.

The veil is one aspect of what is believed to be moral behavior for women but the imagination of what is moral and immoral encompasses many different social behaviors as well, such as staying out late, having male friends, smoking and even something that could be just as mundane as walking in the street. Cairo is seen as indifferent to these acts because according to the official "State Information Service" website and through a census that was conducted in 2014, it is a city of around 9 million people, the largest governorate in terms of population and thus making it hard to control or police behavior. Although Cairene women in a sense agree to this sentiment, they agree to it within certain parameters, certain enclaves bringing forth a class dimension. Cairene women hide in cafés, malls and gated communities in order to hide from harassment, the harassment which is performed by the working class males who are imagined to be the "other", the "un-modern", in a sense the "tribal" class of the city, and the women who reside in these neighborhoods share the same imagined identity of the "un-modern", "tribal" woman.

Nasr City in Cairo embodies and projects these dynamics very aptly; the upper class residents of the district perform the same power structures that are between Cairo and Aswan within Nasr City itself. Venturing out of the enclaves that capital created exposes women to what they believe to be the "rural" or "tribal" behavior, enforcing the notion of the need for separate spaces that strictly separates the different classes, or pushes them to desire to move. On a personal level, my parents' desire to leave Nasr City and live in a gated community is a reflection to that conception, the encroachment of not only working class neighborhoods but also working class standards of living and habits. The expression of "our difference" from the people of Nasr City has always figured into my life as well as my interlocutors. Although there are two schools very close to my place of residence, my parents chose to enroll me in a private school that is on a good day, 30 minutes away from my home, located on the Cairo-Ismailia road. Two of my interlocutors went to school in Heliopolis; their parents like mine, wanted to give them a "good education" which they believed couldn't be had in Nasr City schools. Noor, a 29-year-old woman living in Nasr City and working in an arts collective institute downtown, informed me that her parents were "interested in giving her a quality education...one that reflects their upbringing". Nermine mentioned that her parents' decision was based on the knowledge that "most

reputable schools are in New Cairo". Social activities were also prominently done outside of Nasr City, citing mainly parents' membership to sporting clubs in the spaces in which they grew up. The schools and social spaces in Nasr City were not closed enough on a certain class to reflect the lifestyle that my interlocutors' parents wanted them to have.

This led to a divorce between my interlocutors and Nasr City as the neighborhood in which they grew up and projecting the power dynamics mentioned previously. Pockets of spaces in which the upper class lived made possible by the malls and cafés created this differences in lifestyle based on class as a distinction. The difference in Aswan is the conception of it being a smaller city – over one million according to the 2014 census - and also of being made up of a population that is considered "tribal" by its inhabitants, thus making the connection with the space different, as if the city is invested in keeping morality and lifestyle of its inhabitants in check.

With recent changes in Aswan however, the dynamics are changing as to the relation of Aswanis to space. Their interest in the new cafés and even one interlocutor saying "we don't know where we used to go to before these cafés opened up" is indicative of the changing trends and what is considered suitable and fitting to their lifestyles. These cafés reflect a rejection to the Nubian domination to culture and lifestyle in Aswan and is projecting what the Aswanis believe is modern values. The Aswanis however still don't find the aura of anonymous cityness desired, projecting that the city is maintaining its identity even to establishments that are considered to them as modern/cosmopolitan. Women and men for example still segregate themselves unless in a family setting, it is noted however that women now do foray into the public space alone without familial guardianship. Not all Aswani women but also not all Cairene women either. The women in Cairo however who are perceived not to have access to the public as independently as their counterparts, are perceived to be themselves tribal or coming from tribal or rural backgrounds because they are not behaving in a modern manner.

The public/private divide is in this sense variously configured and reconfigured with notions of morality as well as the brand of the city one inhabits. Massey (1994), through her studies of the conceptualization of space noted how space was subjected to dualism, that there is a certain association of the private space with the feminine and thus with what was considered local (p.9) but she cautions against such a simple divide especially that all the categories and subjectivities that creates the im-

agined social communities are constantly being reconfigured, that they are always reimagined. Within this context of Cairo versus Aswan, the duality exists also in the imagination of the mobility of women in Cairo versus the staidness of women in Aswan and the relation of it all to notions of morality. In Cairo however, the ability to be mobile is linked to certain establishments that are gated and thus in their essence private but these are the same places that are in the minds of my interlocutors associated with the global. Massey (1994) also brings forth the problematic aspects of linking the local to women as they get subjected to an enforcement to perform certain aspects of traditions, which are mostly linked to morality as well, to preserve the nation's honor. Before and during 2011, whenever the public/private divide was being challenged, protestors were constantly subjected to attacks on their morality, especially the women – being accused of performing sexual relations in the square, being subjected to virginity tests by the army, and of course the incidents of mass sexual violence that women were subjected to were indicative of the state's and communities' perception of women who transgress into the public.

Tribalism in Nasr City

Creating gated communities and spaces where only a select few can have access to is a manifestation of tribalism in itself. The tribalism manifested in Aswan through families based on lineage is not so different than the one manifested in Nasr City through which district you come from and from which previous district did you relocate from. The encroachment of a different "tribe" – the working class in this case, has led to further estrangement of the upper classes to Nasr City and for the generation that grew up in Nasr City to not feel any affinity to it but to the communities that they were subjected to – all out of the district. In my various trips using public transportation I usually get to engage the city in all its diversity, but these encounters – which I usually relay to my friends and family are horrific or at least a nuisance which prompt them to ask me when I will ever learn how to drive and get my own car, in order to avoid this. I am expected to follow my tribe's suit and shield myself from the "other", until I reach my destination which is also a closed community on my "upper class" tribe. Failing to follow this advice I'm constantly being guided to try the newest trends in transportation apps, including "Easy Taxi" and "Uber". These apps allow their users to rate the taxi driver on things such as whether they have used

the AC in the car, whether they engaged you in conversation or not; and are hailed for it.

Women in Aswan projected a sense of all-encompassing sense of ruralism and tribalism onto the city which prevented them from performing what they perceived to be their freedom in a modern city, however, inhabitants of Nasr City experience the same sense of discomfort in the wider area of the district they live in – the wider space of Nasr City projects a lifestyle of a "tribe" that isn't theirs. In the subject of the veil for instance, I remember as an undergraduate that I used to walk every other day around a public park and so would pass by a kiosk after to grab water. The man in the kiosk finding that I'm becoming a familiar face proceeded in asking me as if we are old friends why I wasn't veiled yet. The community in my neighborhood was invested in my life growing up, from the shopkeeper who did not want to embarrass me when a male colleague at university dropped me off and for instance when the doorman's wife once commented on the time of my arrival home, these incidents which have prompted in my mother a fear for my reputation amongst the "others" comprised of the community that is rural within Nasr City. Noor also commented on the role of the doorman who she believes is from "Ezbet el Haggana" when she mentioned that she is sometimes "very conscious" of his existence in her life "especially when male friends visit" especially that she is living with a female friend.

Robinson (2005) cited Gluckman in the analysis of tribalism in the city. Gluckman mentioned that "tribalism characterized cities everywhere", the study particularly mentioned British towns and the kinships formed between people coming from diverse backgrounds, such as Scot, Welsh, Irish, French, Jewish...etc (p.58). Whereas Gluckman is proposing that this tribalism is derived from kinship networks based on ethnic identities, I propose here in the context of Nasr City that the tribalism is formed from class politics. The upper class has built places with the advent of neoliberal policies for their tribe to access, but with encroachment or the "haunting" of the "other" that is the working class who come from the working class neighborhoods, further measures are needed, such as the barring of working class men from malls, or the minimum charge at cafés and restaurants.

Securitization

One rationale behind this distinction in access to space is securitization to protect a certain living standard and thus a social status, and sometimes actual fear of the

"other" in terms of bodily harm, which most of my interlocutors in both Nasr City and Aswan materialized in sexual harassment, imagining only one social class to be its perpetrator, the working class male. In Aswan, my interlocutors identified that the harassers are of a working class status and they ascribe the Hilalis as working class and the worst in terms of relation to arms and drug dealing, but there has never been a direct accusation to the Hilalis in particular, one interlocutor, Laila, when I pushed the matter by asking her if she identifies the harasser as coming from a certain social group, she said the harasser doesn't carry an identifier with him, but "most probably he comes from the Hilalis", since they are the ones who occupy the lowest rung in the social class ladder and work jobs such as manning the *hantour* (the horse and buggy). Sara and her friends prefer to access the new cafés at the extended corniche for change but have also expressed that they go to these spaces to escape harassment. All of my Nasr City interlocutors mentioned sexual harassment as well as an identifier to their relationship to the district. Noor mentions that her first encounter with sexual harassment happened in Nasr City; and Nermine and Tala mentioned that they avoid walking in the street in Nasr City among other things to avoid sexual harassment. Accordingly this fear has been part of the shaping of these women's relationship to Nasr City and their everyday as well. These women are not accustomed to take public transportation in terms of public buses and microbuses and thus are obliged to either get a car or to take taxis. Socially, their network of friends and family access the enclaves of upper class fortified spaces and sporting clubs that practice what is in their making as gated communities a class distinction, and thus for the upper class women, they are practicing in their social lives a certain everyday that is in a sense also a war on the "other" social class, the poor, the working class.

The First Event: The 2011 Uprising

When protests erupted in 2011, fear gripped the hearts of the upper class in Nasr City as alarming reports on Facebook and via social networks - before the internet and connection to the world at large was cut - that armed thugs from Ezbet el Haggana are attacking the homes of Nasr City residents. "Social Committees" were formed out of neighborhood men, armed with an assortment of weapons from guns to makeshift weapons assembled at home. Several images remained with me to the present day of the fear of Ezbet el Haggana neighborhood and the supposed hatred they had of the upper class and the violence that they were going to inflict. Not disclaiming

that there were cases of violence, but I remember distinctly after a few days after which the neighborhood men assembled the social committees, one youth shouting in the street irritably, "several days I have been standing here and not one thug has passed".

Small changes occurred in Nasr City after protests erupted in Tahrir Square - a 30-minute commute at best – besides the social committees being disbanded seeing that there was "no longer" any danger from the working class neighborhood. These changes occurred as was mentioned in chapter one around the most significant site that embodied capital in Nasr City - City Stars. In Aswan the effects of the uprising were not immediately felt to have shaken the city but sites of capital were affected since they were mostly related to the tourism industry, which was heavily interlinked with the ruling elite's businesses. Immediate changes were not felt around some sites of capital, such as the ISIS Island hotel on the Nile which had as a shareholder Alaa Mubarak, son of the deposed president, according to one motorboat boatman; the boatman added that this hotel in particular fell into disrepair since the uprising. According to another tour guide before the revolution, the Movenpick hotel was not able to build an extension due to heavy influence exerted by members of the ruling elite before the uprising, but it is now building these extensions.

Most of the touristic sites were either far from the residential community such as the Abu Simbel temple or were close to the Nubian villages – a community that has been privileged since Nasser but is currently at odds with capital since according to the same boatman who has mentioned the relationship between the ISIS hotel and the ruling elite, that businessmen such as Naguib Sawiris is attempting to buy "Nubian land" for huge projects. I did find that Sameh Sawiris, Naguib's brother, did in fact buy an island called "Amun Island" and was planning on building a luxurious hotel with "Louis Vuitton" the famous Parisian shopping brand. Construction was halted by Sawiris due to the "instability" in the country affecting any investment projects in general.

It has been a strategy to remove certain sites from the vicinity of residential communities in order to "preserve the sites" or remove the communities from the vicinity of the site to preserve its integrity from the general population which "does not appreciate the value of heritage". In the case of Aswan, the two cases appear to be true in the tourism industry, though with Aswan there was an added impetus under which some sites were removed from their place and that was to preserve them from

drowning after the Aswan dam was built. This ongoing project of "protecting heritage" has been part of the state's agenda especially under neoliberal capitalism. Downtown Cairo is undergoing this "cleansing", where the trend is to remove the population from working class backgrounds who do not fit within the neoliberal project that is attempting to "save the Egyptian heritage" by seizing the sites that have cultural value and put them into the process of gentrification, enabling only a certain class to access this space. Downtown Cairo saw the removal of informal sellers from the area, the harassment of residents from the working class neighborhood of Ramlet Bulaq, the construction of a huge parking space right next to the square which heard the shouts "bread freedom and social equality" and a reconstruction of said square with a built-in pole guarded by military tanks and state actors. Harvey (2000) describes this as a sort of "demonization" of certain spaces "sanctified by some dominant power" in order commit to an action that is presumably for the public good (p.556); in downtown it is the cleansing of a historical part of Cairo from its deterioration, in working class neighborhood, it is the projection of violence through endless recounting of it in TV series and movies, and to problematize working class youth as they become in essence themselves as demonized sites.

In Aswan, my interlocutors didn't mention noticing any changes after 2011 except the change in the tourism industry, which is the cornerstone of the brand that is Aswan and which has affected capital in its diverse manifestations and the projects by the neoliberal elite, and where capital now is being redirected to serve a non-Nubian hegemonic space.

The Second Event: Rab'aa (2013)

After Cairo as an entity was shaken in January 2011 and all neighborhoods were affected by fear, the everyday went back to "normal" in Nasr City, up until the Muslim Brotherhood took Rab'aa square as a site for their sit-in. Protests that raged in other parts of Cairo from 2011 to 2013 were seen on TV but were very divorced from the inhabitants of areas such as Nasr City. In November 2011, I participated in the Mohamed Mahmoud protests with a friend. Both Mohamed Mahmoud street and Tahrir square felt like war zones and in order to leave we had to hitchhike with a random stranger who agreed to drop us off on top of the 6th of October bridge located at the center of Cairo and connecting it from east to west, and as soon as we got on top of the bridge, we were in a different time zone and a different Cairo than the one that

was in Mohamed Mahmoud. I went home to Nasr City and we had guests and we extended pleasantries in what I perceived at the time as surrealism.

The Rab'aa sit in was different in how it affected the lives of Nasr City inhabitants as the sit-in affected their routes especially the ones that visit the Western side of the city, my daily route for example was affected by the sit-in and I had to find alternate ways to get to work than my usual route, the same with Noor. Noor associated the Rab'aa sit-in with the visibility of the military presence; she mentioned that she has the remnant of a gas bomb which she found in the street and which she uses as a vase. Tala, on the other hand, associated Rab'aa with the protestors and the effect they had on Nasr City. She says, "during the sit-in, it was a disaster. The back area of Rab'aa was an open space for peeing and pooping and camping. The place was a big pile of garbage. I heard a lot of people moved out of Nasr City because of that period". The sit-in at Rab'aa organized by Muslim Brotherhood supporters was considered telling enough for some upper class Nasr City residents that the district does not fit their conception of the modern city even with the constant new cafés opening up which Tala has described as "not the nice ones". The discomfort that Tala felt about the cafés could be considered a reflection to the state's handling of the coffee shops. In June 2015, the municipality waged a campaign on all coffee shops to remove all that were found in violation of their license requirements (Shorouk, 2015). Tala rejoiced in this action, saying that even though they are built back within months, "still" – it was something. Cairo's governor stated that these measures were taken in order to "bring back order to Cairo's streets" – a keyword to describe the modern city.

The changes that Tala and Noor noticed were quite different since their dispositions were different, Tala saw the deterioration of an already "embarrassing" neighborhood and the epitome of that deterioration was the Rab'aa sit-in, Noor on the other hand saw the changes in terms of violence which came to be really close to her place of residence as she recounts her story of having found the gas bomb in her street, both however have recounted feeling a disconnection from the city growing up and both have affinity to other districts and aspire to move somewhere else if they ever get the chance.

Order was not the only thing that the "new" military government sought to tackle, speed was also an integral part of that new project. Harvey (2000) mentions that in the hybrid military/capital union, speed is a signifier of class interests being met to maintain territorial powers. This was clearly visible post 2013 coup in the

kinds of projects that the new government planned and oversaw and for whom – some of which were old projects yet sped up in their implementation. The Cairo-Alexandria road, the Passover connecting Nasr City to New Cairo, big Dubai-looking projects such as Mohamed Tantawy's mosque which is also on the road connecting Nasr City to New Cairo, Tahrir square and the new parking lot, even the new Capital that was announced to still be in the planning phase was projected that it will be built with speed as current Egyptian President Abdel Fatah El Sisi said in the conference in which the new Capital was announced, "we are behind, and those who are late must either speed-walk or run…even running will not be enough in our case" (as cited in Said, 2015). What is being proposed is that there is world-time/now-time and that we as Egypt are behind; the concept of now-time has also been ingrained in our everyday lexicon, with phrases such as "to catch up with the time" is constantly being used implying that time is a unilinear trajectory. Massey (2005) discusses how different places are categorized according to a temporal placement they have (p. 68) where the west and the developed countries are moving with the trajectory of time forward ahead of the line whereas "developing" countries are trying to catch up and finally the failed states which have fallen off the trajectory. The fear of being a failed state haunts us and this fear has been used to discipline several factions of the society and has become a fetish, especially with the rhetoric that surrounds terrorism, and where opposition to the current government is met with "isn't it better than what's happening in Syria and Iraq?" This fear from being left behind as a failed state is not only a state-level fear to keep the opposition in check but it is also used by the capitalist and neoliberal forces in their descriptions of their enclave versus the surrounding shadow-lands. Tala mentions that, "after you get to see how life can be, - the new compounds for example in New Cairo, you really start to despise living here".

Rab'aa and the Muslim Brotherhood and the Modern Muslim

The connection between Nasr City and the Muslims Brotherhood became more pronounced during the Rab'aa sit in, when it came to the public's attention where some of the leaders of the MB lived. The presence of Al Azhar University and thus the affiliation with the un-modern non-secular population in Nasr City also came to prominence when student protests erupted in the area after the dispersal/massacre of the Rab'aa sit-in protestors. These students were pitted against Sheikh Aly Gom'aa, the Grant Mufti of Egypt, whom the students and Muslim Brotherhood sup-

porters as well saw as a puppet for the state. The supposed "unruly" behavior of the students further embedded the undesirability of the living situation in Nasr City. Before, Rab'aa, however and even before the Muslim Brotherhood came to power, a trend of the image of the "Modern Muslim" was gaining popularity.

The Modern Muslim does not shun modernity in its manifestation of high-end brands and access to high-end places; the modern Muslim asserts that they belong to the tribe. Private beaches that catered for women only with expensive access fees sprang up, as well as private women only pools, segregated gyms but as one of the social issues that gained traction recently – July 2015 - on social media such as Facebook shows, there were accounts of some veiled women being denied access to the swimming pool in a compound - another word for Gated Community - in one of the resort towns in Egypt in the North Coast. The Modern Muslims were in uproar since it was seen that there was "an attack on the veil". Lists appeared showing establishments and gated communities that do not allow veiled women. The tribe in this case is rejecting the image of the Modern Muslim, associating the veil with Rab'aa, with the Muslim Brotherhood and with "backwardness" that was supposedly the Islamic project. Nasr City establishments however, continues to host Modern Muslim cafés, continues to have malls that promote "traditional values" such as City Stars – which post signs at its door with a cross over a couple holding hands and another one over a tank top (signifying revealing clothing), and which continues to accommodate signs of Islam that is not of a working class background, like Quran reciting elevators and being a dry district. Nasr City thus, is not a space of modern-ness as it still accommodates the working class neighborhood and the Modern Muslims who were left behind after the removal of Muslim Brotherhood president and adding to it the accusation to the group that they were terrorists.

The Muslim Brotherhood and Tourism in Aswan

The Rabaa sit-in and its subsequent dispersal/massacre had little significance for the lives of Aswanis in particular, they were however affected as a tourist city by the instability caused by the continuing protests and the continuing travel warnings for tourists issued by embassies and travel websites. Many of the Nubians I spoke to, including one woman, Ayah, a married 26 year old and soon to be mother, was very

critical of the current regime, the Muslim Brotherhood and the first SCAF government that came to power after the popular uprising in 2011. Although she believed that the Mubarak government was corrupt, "but at least people were able to live", she says. Although her husband does not work directly in tourism, he works in a gulf country, her maternal family and the village that they live in is involved in the tourism industry. The sisters all learn crafts, such as jewelry making, or embroidery to sell tourists. When I visited they were in the midst of a workshop organized by an Aswani woman who lives on the Corniche strip and does not identify as Nubian. The organizer's family owns a cultural center and part of the center's activities is work with the Nubian women; and in our discussions she mentioned that the women used make jewelry that is not distinctly Nubian, "they made necklaces and bracelets that had the Apple logo, but these wouldn't sell, so we had to re-orient them". These women still had to work in a flailing tourism industry and work on motifs that promoted Nubianness and heritage.

The urbanite Aswanis had however a different experience with the effect of the popular uprising since their families did not work directly in tourism, except Noha, whose husband owns his own restaurant situated in the Aswan tourist market. Noha relayed that the restaurant is still in business but that the clientele is now mostly Egyptians; the income still comes in but it is not in foreign currency. She added that they are better off than others like a friend who had to sell his possessions in order to keep his family afloat.

There has been incidents of bombs set up in Aswan, which has been described to be the work of the Muslim Brotherhood, there was a minimal heightened sense of security, and in the day-to-day life of Aswanis only appeared on the Corniche strip. Two areas showcased this new forms of security measures, one near the Ministry of Interior on the Corniche where a concrete wall was built similar to the ones surround the government and military buildings in Nasr City, and the other form of security was the presence of a bag checker at the fast food chain McDonald's on the Corniche starting April 2015, during my second trip to Aswan. McDonald's is a very popular spot among youths in particular, and above it is the "Rowing Club", which is still also a popular hangout among the locals. When I asked the bag checker what prompted the new development, he replied, "haven't you heard of the bomb that went off yesterday?"

Constructed Communities and Social Classes Between Nasr City and Aswan

Going back and forth between Cairo and Aswan, I initially saw the differences that I was trained to see, the "villageness" of Aswan and its rural tranquility, and the urban-ness of Cairo with all its entailed chaos. I initially saw the non-complexity of the Aswani character as simply Nubian, and the supposed cosmopolitan-ness of the Cairene character; but upon closer look, tribalism appeared to be thematic in both cities. Saad (1998) pointed out in her book "*Directions of Change in Rural Egypt*" that we "characterize aspects of social community...as a form of collective identity", but she advised that we do not treat these communities as a given as the "social categories never quite fit the social reality". There are Nubians in Aswan, Hilalis, Ababda and urban Aswanis as social categories but ones that do not necessarily the fit the neat binary categories of urban vs. village. My interlocutor Sara was indignant about being identified as a villager by a Cairene – since she is coming from Aswan – as the Cairene expresses amazement that Sara has a Facebook account, but my interlocutors in the Nubian village do have Facebook accounts, so what characterizes Sara's urban-ness, modernity or cosmopolitanism if her identifier of modernity and non-villageness is present in the village. Also what characterizes tribal-ness if the aspects of what constitutes "tribalism" are available in the capital city Cairo, which the urban upper class Aswanis are aspiring to emulate in lifestyle.

What is desired in terms of lifestyle choices made by the Egyptian upper class in both Nasr City and Aswan is a sort of tribal modernism based on a Western model. According to Robinson (2005), there is a "privileged link between modernity and certain cities", whereas non-Western cities are presumed to be "static and closed" (p.39). The Egyptian upper class has aspired for this model - the Western, and recently the Dubai model sporting the highest, the tallest and the biggest as signs of the modern cosmopolitan and a "first world form of investment" (Robinson, 2005, p.62) but the cosmopolitan in this sense is seen to derive from what is considered in the literature as the Western – the Western supposedly being developed and modern (p.4). What Robinson promotes is cosmopolitanism that does not follow one model, since the Western model is in itself not a reflection of what is imagined to be purely Western (p.71). Finally, Robinson purports that "contrary to the way in which 'non-Western' societies have been described in the scholarly and popular literatures of the West, these societies (the non-Western) were never 'closed' ... (that they are) complex, fluid, social world" (Comaroff & Comaroff as cited in Robinson, p. 39).

61

Some of my Aswani interlocutors supported the narrative during our interviews that civilization is equal to Western modernity, one interlocutor Laila mentioned that she feels that the Aswanis are more "civilized" since they have been in constant contact with "foreigners" mentioning that men in Aswan still stand and give women their seats in public transportation as opposed to in Cairo. This sentiment of Nubians/Aswanis being more civilized because of contact with foreigners has also been mentioned in the book *Nubian Ethnographies* (Fernea 1990), based on a historical trajectory tracing the relationship of Aswanis to Cairo since before the 1952 revolution/coup and intimating that the Nubian Aswanis who came to Cairo to work in the service industry preferred working in foreigners' homes and thus enabled them to gain a modern disposition that is not present in the working class of the Cairene community who hold similar positions in Egyptian homes. Robinson's (2006) proposition, however , is different as it does not focus on a Western or development model, or where the finance capital is located and from which value is derived, but in the cosmopolitan-ness that is derived from ideas and values constantly traveling and not necessarily from a focal point of the Western model.

The Doorman / *The Bawab*

> Do you know that Suleiman brought us something?
> What did he bring us?
> A gift because he is our neighbor. He is our neighbor, right?
> (personal communication, July 2015)

My 4-year-old niece asked me if our doorman was our neighbor and I paused. Our doorman comes from another governorate in Upper Egypt, the reason I know this is because when he is absent for long periods of time, I feel his absence and subsequently understand that he is not around and has chosen to spend his holiday with his family. The doorman is an integral part of the building; Noor even described "his role in their lives as very important", yet he is not considered a neighbor in the cosmopolitan sense but as part of the house. A television show called "Her Highness" hosted by Egyptian actress, producer and presenter Isaad Younis, featured in one of its episodes the figure of "the *bawab*" (March 2015), she opened her show with a short monologue in which she recounted her history with their building's doorman who was from Aswan and whom she described as "family", a figure that was "highly respected" by everyone in the apartment building; she also recounted how he would look after eve-

ryone, the "women, to make sure they're safe", "no one would go up the building without him knowing who he was or who he was going up to", she then finished her monologue by explaining how "we (as residents) live in the doorman's protection".

The figure of the *bawab* and his respectability derives from the maintenance of the status quo relationship. In the movie "El Beeh El Bawab" (1987), disruption to the lives of the characters was in a sense created by their greed as they see the doorman gaining wealth from his brokerage of real-estate deals. The film informs us that the unchecked power of neoliberal capital could wreak havoc on the social hierarchies and what that entails. The doorman in the film stopped being a "proper doorman" as he stopped protecting, but rather was more interested in making money and attempting to join the upper class tribe. Younes (March, 2015) later on in the show interviewed one Aswani doorman who after talking about who real Egyptians were, "the ones who really are concerned about the country", she looked to the camera and said "some people still think in terms of social hierarchies, but these hierarchies are only in our heads", but the *bawab* that she describes is a social category that only remains respectable if he remains "part of the building's family" in a subservient manner, once he shirks these duties – including those that police women's behavior, he no longer becomes respectable.

Conclusion

> Imagine if someone took pictures of Kattameya's or Marina's castles, or the cities and resorts of the corrupt during Mubarak's era, and these photos got published in 50 years under the title: this was the beautiful Egypt under Mubarak, and this was the life of Egyptians under Mubarak. Imagine the extent of the lie and the falsification
> – Al Sisi (2015)

There are many dynamics in cities and surrounding the discourse around cities that affects their social hierarchy and their categorization and subsequently affects their inhabitants, this has created social dynamics whereby some cities are projected to be more important than others and where labels such as modernity describe an entire city but where pockets of what is considered rural problematize these spaces prompting inhabitants to feel a devaluation to their spaces of living, such as in Nasr City, where there the working class neighborhoods continue to throw their shadow on the lives of the residents. These dynamics are present in other parts of the city, where New Cairo serves as the gated solution to accommodate the Eastern Cairo's escapees

63

from the upper class tribe and 6th of October compounds serve to accommodate the Western side of Cairo, or that is how it is projected.

The "rural" or "village" inner migrants from upper Egypt are seen as part of the problem since they "bring with them" the practices of the "tribe" but what is invisible is that the capital city exhibits its own band of tribalism. Accordingly, it is not the tribalism that is the problem, but rather what that tribalism looks and acts like, bringing forth the question of modernity – the one that haunts us from a colonial perspective and continues to be re-iterated in the conceptualization of what proper cities should look like and projected onto spaces such as Aswan in their urban strip.

A yearning for a modern Cairo is actually a nostalgic yearning for a colonial city, the one that "Khedive Ismail built to be part of Paris" but no longer is (Younes, March, 2015). This modern Cairo is clean, women can wear short skirts, and men attended football matches in suits, but as Al Sisi mentioned, these pictures are a falsity and represented only one brand of tribalism, the upper class', the rest of Cairo becomes invisible, as if it didn't exist. Thus the aspirations of modern Cairenes has taken the shape of a yearning for Eurocentric model of cosmopolitanism, and nostalgic to the modern Cairo of the colonial period which also favored the Eurocentric model. These aspirations and desires are projected onto other cities in their urban projects, except when neoliberal capital can still profit from a brand of villageness as that which was found in tourism. The Nubian heritage and history was museumified as well as the Nubians as a people, established as a social category and privileged within a hierarchical structure in Aswan. Other social categories are invisible in Aswan because they do not fit the narrative, and thus the Nubians as a people are conceptualized as tribal and rural – distinguished and privileged as such, the other Aswani social categories are also tribal and rural since they "come from" an Upper Egyptian governorate. They all do not fit the conceptualization of the modern cosmopolitan fashioned around the Eurocentric model. Places like Aswan are conceived to be outside of "world-time", their importance as imagined spaces lie in their museumified state, but Mbembe (2000) argues that "world-time gets domesticated" by "dominating space and putting it to different uses" (p.260) shedding light on neoliberal interest in maintaining the image of the "villageness in Aswan" and its lucrative "use".

Chapter Five
A Few Words in Conclusion

> If geography has been imagined and made as part of capitalism's his-
> torical geography, then it can be reimagined and remade in an image
> other than that of capital in the future
> -David Harvey (2000, p. 557)

The practice of "othering" is about women, is about the working class, is about one city versus another and thus it is imperative that we talk about how othering is made a reality and it is through practices such as gatedness, walling and segregation that othering becomes possible. However, these are not new concepts, just old ones that have taken a new guise under neoliberal capital. It would seem that class segregation practices that were observed during the colonial period, such as barring Egyptians from accessing certain roads open for only the colonizer and the upper class Egyptian (Al Sisi, 2015) is not something that is practiced today, but what is actually practiced as have been noted above is the same form of segregation.

The upper class build their own cities and call them private, not content with private upper class establishments such as high-end malls and cafés, as these establishments constantly get encroached upon by the working class. The practice of self-segregation thus becomes a natural act, part of the women's everyday. It is part of the women's everyday to take her car, go to closed communities that involve activities practiced by the upper class, go to social spaces designed for the upper class and deal only with their tribe. Women in particular are constantly being told that it is safer, that they should learn how to drive to avoid the dangers of taking a taxi in Cairo (De Koning, 2009), that the more high-end establishment you go to, the more processing goes into who is allowed and who isn't and thus who only the civilized who will not sexually harass the woman will gain entry. At the same time, there is an aspiration for the cosmopolitan city evident in the desires of my interlocutors as well as random people I converse with in my daily life. This cosmopolitanism is however the cosmopolitanism derived from "Europe and the developed countries". In a random conversation I had with a taxi driver who picked me up in Nasr City, he informed me of the better practice of turning on the air conditioning in the car as they do in "Europe and other developed countries". He then proceeded to inform me that he has been to some Gulf

countries and that they always kept their air conditioners on. This brand of cosmopolitanism, the one that is Eurocentric or finance capitals' centered and proceeding supposedly from a higher to a lower is the modernity project re-iterated in the present.

The Silenced Cosmopolitan

Although cosmopolitanism for the working class is not visible as opposed to the upper class notion of it, it does exist in forms that are silenced, as these forms do not fit the narrative of the modernity project, of the West vs. the rest and the Eurocentric model of modern cosmopolitanism and finally of the aspirations of the wealthier classes and their construction of spaces that fit these imaginations. Spaces have thus become hierarchically organized within the city and cities have also been hierarchically organized within themselves.

It is thus consequential that within these dynamics, the silenced "other" is anyone who is not part of the "developed" and "modern" "first world". These terms are problematic in the sense that they enforce a conceptual preconditioned hierarchy that gets re-iterated, not only on a state level but also in our daily lexicon and thus in our imagination of our social selves and thus our relations to other communities within our social spheres. Upper classes thus aspire that the cities that they traverse are those that get termed developed or modern and the ruling elite thus erect policies to prove that the city that the upper classes inhabit is on one list or another with establishments or projects that constantly aim to be the highest, the tallest, the biggest; and thus these superlatives become part of our desires of the personal, we aspire to live in the tallest building, take the fastest route, and have the most efficient life and failing to enforce our visions of what we deem as cosmopolitan in our own fashion in the cities we inhabit, we build gated cities and communities around ourselves modeled around one form of the cosmopolitan that is the developed and/or modern.

Women's Everyday in the Making of Neoliberal Cities

Women's choices as well as any other social category, are part of the making of the social, thus their everyday in a sense leaves a mark on the territories that they traverse, even their silence or their absence is a mark. The choice to self-segregate into tribal enclaves or to discriminate against an "other" could be ingrained in the eve-

66

ryday of women, as with my Nasr City interlocutors who grew up in communities outside their districts and with their absence have left a mark in the social fabric. Women's everyday informs their "milieus" which continually gets de-territorialized and re-territorialized (Janz, 2002 p.394), through a conceptual imagination of desirable spaces as reflective of status and social distinction.

Janz (2002) mentions "refrains", a refrain is a sort of repetition of one part of the song but Janz uses it here to describe the traversing of a certain space to create patterns and thus "creates a territory". My Nasr City interlocutors traversed Nasr City in a limited capacity rendering their "territory" and the habits of making "a place home" were severely limited, whereby their traversals of other territories led them to have affinities for other spaces that felt as more part of their everyday and thus of the self and thus of their desires (pp. 395-396). The everyday of the upper class women as a social category has thus been imprinted not only on the contemporary social fabric but also on the historical context of that space making it unquestionable and a pre-existing condition. Accordingly, these practices of self-segregation and othering have become normalized within the everyday, and thus there is a need in order to understand further the dynamics of capital and its influence on the everyday to de-normalize these practices and to make them strange, to understand these practices as part of conscious and unconscious decisions. Capital informs our everyday by creating the much desired enclosed spaces that the upper classes flock to, capital at this moment in the Egyptian context is informed by the state, the military state in particular, the one that was hidden or invisible before the uprising in 2011 but is now very visible. The military state and the securitization it affords to its establishments reiterates a certain power dynamic and a certain imagination to desired spaces and how they should look like – the tallest, the biggest, the grandest. Women as subjectivities are in a sense targeted with these imaginations the most since their sense of security – being constantly in danger of sexual harassment in particular – rely heavily on the state and the protection of the state or of capital and its walling practices by keeping the undesirables out or by avoiding the places where the undesirables reside.

The Cosmopolitan under the Neoliberal

What happens in spaces like Nasr City (as part of Cairo) under the Universalist form of cosmopolitanism and within the imagination of the neoliberal capital desires is an attempt to create spaces that allows only those who have shed the look,

dress, smell of the "hottentots" (Harvey, 2000) to be able to belong to the same upper class tribe, or discriminates intensely through practices of walling, gatedness and gentrification where spaces of the "now-time" are "protecting its borders against the barbarians" (Hardt and Negri, as cited in AlSayyad & Roy, 2006) who have formed the shadow spaces such as Mansheyet Nasser and Ezebet El Haggana or have come from Cairo's colonized spaces, such as Aswan. On the other hand there was – and still is to some extent - an ongoing process of tying an imagined space – which is the Nubian Aswan to a real place – the governorate at large, and "binding people" to the Nubian identity of the kind, simple Nubian villager, leading to "political/practical consequences" (Harvey, 2000) on the lives of those that inhabit this place to which they are bound to act in a certain manner to appease capital. In most of my interviews with people in Aswan, there came a point when someone would describe to me Nubian weddings without being prompted. I would ask them about their typical day and they would recount normal things and I believe there comes a point during the interview where they feel that they have not given me the Nubian-ness that I must have come as a researcher from Cairo all alone to know so they recount one of the last remnants of what they deem to be a marker of their Nubian-ness so as not to disappoint me. Harvey (2000) posits that a certain ideological cast is given to spaces deriving from global interests whether they are state level bodies such as governments, or bodies bent on gaining commercial gain through use of a certain meaning or history ascribed to a place, or even what would be deemed as "benign" activities such as those performed by some humanitarian bodies to alleviate crises, it is however that as a result of all these events that a certain ideology is cast on a space and from it is produced all the differences that differentiates between the different social bodies and "when assembled as a collective power, these multiplicitous geographical visions produce what Smith calls "the satanic geographies" of contemporary globalization" (p. 553)

The Universal and the Cosmopolitan

> What happens when normative ideals get inserted as a principle of political action into a world in which some people are considered inferior and others are thought indolent, smelly, or just plain ugly?
> - Harvey (2000)

In "Perpetual Peace", Immanuel Kant writes "The peoples of the earth have entered in varying degrees into a universal community, and it is developed to the

point where a violation of laws in one part of the world is felt everywhere. The idea of a cosmopolitan law is therefore not fantastic and overstrained; it is a necessary complement to the unwritten code of political and international law, transforming it into a universal law of humanity" (as cited in Harvey, 2000). This leads to Kant's universalism and the equation of modernity to the West, in which we question the idea of cosmopolitan law where one model of "best practices" gets emulated. On the other hand, the inclusion of the "other" or "the rest" proposes that there is more than one model and hence negates the concept of a universal truth or archetype as a nonsensical idea as the logic of one cosmopolitan universal truth/law negates itself as cosmopolitanism here will thus be another form of cultural imperialism or as Douzinas (2007) describes it, humanitarian imperialism (p. 138). Walter Mignolo (as cited in Hardt and Negri, 2000) proposed that we all have local histories but that not all of them get included in the one universal design or truth and this is the crux of the matter. Thus the proposition of Robinson (2005) in removing the labels of "developed", "developing" and "underdeveloped", and on the other hand, the "modern", "tribal" and the "uncivilized" and treat all cities as "ordinary cities" (p.4) is more viable than the universalist, euro-centric, modernity project induced form of cosmopolitanism, it requires however what Mignolo would describe to decolonize and de-westernize (as interviewed by Mattison, 2012). Mbembe (2000) on another note posits that there is already a kind of alternative non-state level integration through the "informal economy, contraband and migratory movements" (p.262) and thus here is what Massey would describe as a "recognition of coevalness" in which there is an understanding of possibilities beyond the projected trajectory and that these possibilities of other trajectories are autonomous from one another (p.71). In Aswan I witnessed the brand of cosmopolitanism that was not centered around the Eurocentric model through my conversation with a Madame En'aam, a larger than life woman, whose son was living in Qatar and who was regularly visited by her, was getting married. Madame En'aam was a friend of Noha's mother and I met her on one occasion in which she discussed various topics including her readiness in doing business over the internet by buying products from China, "just small things" she says "like pencils for instance and selling them here" to her knowledge of Jennifer Lopez and her insured body part. Madame En'aam embodies what Mbembe talks about in the alternative, she does not have the look of the upper class tribe of the gated communities, nor does she talk like them, nor does she work the same type jobs but she does exhibit a degree of cosmopolitanism that might

nor have been experienced by someone who has lived in one of the upper class gated communities.

Cosmopolitanism Never Had a Center

> In "dispossessing Western Cities of the assumption that it is their experiences which determine the character and future of urban modernity [that it is not forgotten] that they too are derivative, imitative and that urban innovation is almost always a result of cosmopolitan interdependence (Robinson, 2005, p.77).

To assume that cosmopolitanism ever had a center from which its universal themes or ethics have been exported is problematic but has been promoted within the colonial project that sought to export modernity embodied in Eurocentric themes onto the savages and the hottentots of the rest of the world. But to believe that is also to believe that the European modernity project was never influenced with ideas beyond its borders, to believe that people didn't travel before Europeans went on "exploratory" expeditions and order and map the rest of the world and in essence to internalize the "self producing story of Europe" (p. 71). To believe that is also to believe that there are no "shadow" spaces in spaces deemed as developed or modern, spaces that are inhabited by those who Agamben would describe as *homo sacer* who are to be excluded from social order to maintain the public good – that is for the society to keep its supposed moral order, cleanliness, efficiency and other modernist keywords by excluding those whose sociality does not fit this narrative, such as the homeless, the refugees, the poor, the working class, the non-binary non-heteronormative, and essentially a continuous production of imagined social communities of desirables and undesirables rendering us all in a sense *homo sacer* and rendering tribalism and factionalism as an ever-present reality. Harvey (1990) working on Marxist ideas regarding the fetishism of commodities asks his readers to "get behind the veil" to understand how social production is done, and in this case, to "get behind the veil" to understand how spaces like gated communities get socially produced and for what purposes and by what ideas, how spaces like Tahrir get socially produced and at what cost (p. 423). It is also pertinent to read Robinson's proposition which is but a first step to achieve cosmopolitanism, and that which is to remove pre-established labels and categorizations on cities and as Borges (as cited in Robinson, 2005) offers an imagination of " sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere" (p.79)

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