Beyond the Square: Urbanism and the Arab Uprisings focuses on the urban spatial dynamics of the mass protest movements that have convulsed the Arab region since December 2010. The volume shifts attention away from public squares — and in particular Tahrir Square in Cairo — to consider the broader urban context in which the uprisings unfolded and how it has intersected with the events themselves. The essays are topically and geographically diverse, exploring a range of sociospatial phenomena in countries that have been at the heart of the Arab uprisings as well as those countries that have appeared peripheral to the regional upheaval. This breadth of perspective highlights the centrality of space and spatial concerns to the ongoing political transformations in the region. In this way, the volume provides a distinctive — and critical — analysis of one of the most significant political events of our time.

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"Revolutions do not occur in a vacuum; rather, they are caused by a complex mix of domestic and international factors. They ultimately come to fruition in places, and not just in central squares. *Beyond the Square* fills a major gap in our understanding of how urban space factors into popular uprisings. It is a valuable contribution to the analysis of space and politics."

Asef Bayat, author of *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*

"Deen Sharp and Claire Panetta's *Beyond the Square* is unique in its scope and theoretical sophistication. Discussions of MENA (Middle East and North Africa) urbanism have tended to focus on a few "usual suspects": Cairo, Dubai, or the Maghreb. *Beyond the Square* expands the conversation, covering a much wider range of case studies and orchestrating them in a coherent way that speaks to the sociospatial in theoretically generative ways, going beyond the central, highly visible urban forms and delving deeper into less tangible but no less important sociopolitical contexts of contemporary urban politics in the MENA."

Ahmed Kanna, author of *Dubai, the City as Corporation*

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Beyond the Square: Urbanism and the Arab Uprisings

Deen Sharp and Claire Panetta, Editors

BEYOND THE SQUARE

URBANISM AND THE ARAB UPRISINGS

Deen Sharp and Claire Panetta, editors

UR

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From the Square to the Streets: Sexual Harassment and Assault in Cairo after the 2011 Egyptian Revolution

Susana Galán

ArcGIS World Countries Layer Package (http://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?useExisting=1).

We are here, and we will not be silenced; we will not be scared off our streets and [away from] political action; we will not retreat to whatever sheltered bubbles any classist illusions of social standing or gender roles afford us; we will not be confined to what you tell us are our appropriate places and spaces; we will not be intimidated, we will not be shamed... We are here. We are the revolution. [Labib 2013][1]

There is growing evidence to suggest that sexual violence against women — both on the streets and in protests — has increased dramatically in Egypt since the 2011 Revolution that led to the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak (Ahmad Zaki and Abd 2014; El Deeb 2013: 6; Tadros 2013: 21). Women's organizations and the media have documented how the space of Tahrir Square, which was cherished as a safe haven for all Egyptians from January 25 to February 11, 2011, rapidly became a hostile environment for women participating in demonstrations. These groups have documented verbal and sexual harassment against female protesters as early as March 2011, the military police's targeting of female demonstrators during the military rule that followed the Mubarak regime, and the multiplication and exacerbation of collective sexual assaults perpetrated by groups of assailants in the square and its vicinities since June 2012 (El-Nadeem et al. 2013; FIDH et al. 2014; Nazra for Feminist Studies et al. 2013).[2] Outside of the spaces of protest, everyday sexual harassment has continued to affect Egyptian women at alarming rates in a climate of impunity fostered in part by the disappearance of the police from the streets (El Deeb 2013: 6; FIDH et al. 2014: 11).[3]

Yet the severity of attacks in Tahrir Square and the prevalence of daily harassment on the streets have not driven women out of public spaces (Ahmad Zaki and Abd Alhamid 2014; Langohr 2013: 25). On the contrary, the escalation of sexual violence has galvanized women and men to organize

1. Reem Labib is a researcher at the human rights organization The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) and a blogger. She was subjected to a collective sexual assault while she participated in a demonstration against sexual harassment on June 8, 2012 and published her testimony online (see Labib 2012).

2. While women's organizations and the media have often referred to these attacks in English as "mob" sexual assaults (El-Nadeem et al. 2013; FIDH et al. 2014; Trew 2012), following Hind Ahmad Zaki and Dalia Abd Alhamid (2014) I prefer to use the term "collective," which is closer to the expression used in Arabic (*taharrush ginsy gama'y*) and does not entail the racialized and Islamophobic undertones that usually accompany the term "mob" in representations of the "Arab street" (Amar 2013: 28; Bayat 2010: 211).

3. In the weeks and months following the Revolution, the police were notably absent from Egypt's streets and public spaces. Though the exact reason for their withdrawal remains unclear, it has been suggested that they feared being targeted by the general public, which had already blamed them for much of the brutality leading up to and during the Revolution. Other voices interpreted this move as an attempt to instill fear of chaos and disorder among Egyptians (Abu Saada, quoted in Saleh 2011).

and tackle the problem directly using different methods and tactics. For example, by 2012, gender-mixed vigilante groups of volunteers patrolled the square during demonstrations and worked together with anti-harassment organizations to intervene in the collective sexual attacks that had already become a common occurrence in the crowded area. A few meters away, graffiti artists reclaimed the walls of Mohamed Mahmoud Street as canvases for stencils and murals that visually placed the fight against sexual violence at the center of the narrative of the January 25th Revolution. Off the streets, feminist groups and NGOs forged alliances that crystallized in new anti-harassment platforms to address the problem through a variety of initiatives.

I argue that these projects have not only sought to address the immediate threats to women generated within the protests themselves, but have also more broadly encouraged women to maintain their presence and visibility in public space. Thus, these initiatives have challenged both the pervasive victimization of women and the widely accepted "blame-the-victim" discourses that characterized pre-2011 discussions of harassment and assault. Critically—and in contrast to previous forms of anti-harassment activism—these initiatives do not rely on the state to protect women or punish perpetrators, but instead use community intervention and individual and collective self-defense to stop sexual harassment and assault in public places, and to prevent future incidents. For this reason, I argue further that these projects are challenging authoritarian (as well as patriarchal and neoliberal) logics of security by asserting—whether explicitly or not—women's basic right to occupy and inhabit public space without fear of sexual violence. Such initiatives have received limited scholarly or journalistic attention, in part because they fall outside the traditional purview of political analyses of the uprising; however, they warrant recognition and critical examination because they are transforming existing gendered spatial practices in Egypt.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN PUBLIC PLACES PRIOR TO THE REVOLUTION
Sexual harassment and assault in public places are not recent phenomena in Egypt, nor are they particular to the years following the 2011 uprisings. On the contrary, everyday sexual harassment in the streets has been a widespread problem across the country for many years. In 2010, a report by the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR) diagnosed the "harassment of strangers in public places" as a "dangerous social cancer" that affected 83% of Egyptian women and 98% of foreign women (16). However, despite their pervasiveness, incidents of public sexual harassment have

Greater Cairo Region
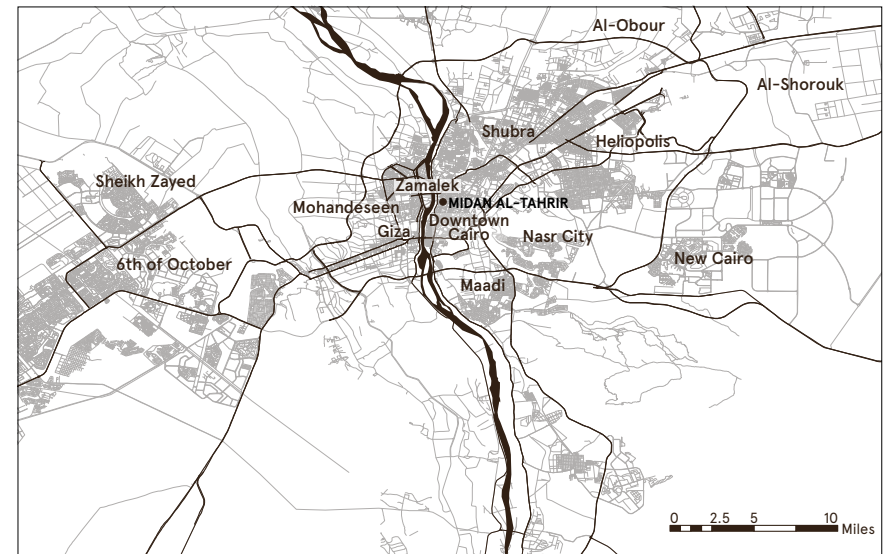
Country boundary data: ArcGIS World Countries (http://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?useExisting=1); Road data: OpenStreetMap made available by MapCruzin (www.mapcruzin.com).

often been silenced in the media and public discourse, and they are rarely reported by those who have experienced them. In fact, such harassment was *de facto* condoned under the auspices of a tolerant police force and a neglectful government that typically questioned the gravity—or indeed the existence—of the problem.

However, the 2000s marked a turning point when a series of incidents in Cairo received significant media attention and brought the issue into mainstream public discourse. One of the first occurred in October 2006, when celebrations of Eid al-Fitr, the holiday at the end of Ramadan, degenerated into multiple cases of collective sexual harassment in downtown Cairo, with "large groups of young men chasing after women, surrounding them, and ripping their clothes" (Otterman 2007: 6). On this occasion—as on others—police officers reportedly "stood by and watched the scene ambivalently," while state media first ignored and then denied the events' occurrence (Atassi 2009).

Significantly, a group of prominent activists wrote about the event on their blogs, which led the independent media to take up the story and challenge the government's denials (Rizzo, Price and Meyer 2012: 464–465). This coverage set a precedent, and sexual harassment continued to receive

public attention in the wake of subsequent incidents in Cairo — among them the mass assaults occurring during Eid al-Fitr in 2008 and Eid al-Adha in 2009, as well as Noha Rushdie's successful lawsuit against a van driver who groped her while she was walking down the street in 2008 (Amar 2011: 319–320; ECWR 2008; Leila 2008; Stop Street Harassment 2009). However, as Dalia Abd El-Hameed, the Gender and Women's Rights Officer at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), noted in an interview, this media coverage was fleeting and treated sexual harassment not as a daily occurrence on Egyptian streets but as a "strange phenomenon that is very alien to [Egyptian] culture" (March 16, 2015).

Sexual violence against women in the context of protest activities also predates the January 25th Revolution. The first documented case dates back to May 25, 2005, later known as Black Wednesday, when thugs affiliated with Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP) attacked a demonstration organized by the opposition movement Kefaya and sexually assaulted woman activists, dragging their bodies across the ground and stripping them of their clothes.

Paul Amar (2011) has looked carefully at the Egyptian state's use of sexual violence during political protests, arguing that authorities have deployed it as an "instrument of state terror" and a means of delegitimizing political opposition movements (301). As he explains, these women protesters were "sexualized and had their respectability wiped out: not just by innuendo and accusation, but literally, by sexually assaulting them in public and by arresting them as prostitutes, registering them in court records and press accounts as sex criminals and then raping and sexually torturing them in jail" (Amar 2011: 39). These acts of sexual violence notably did not receive comparable media coverage or spark similar outrage to the previously mentioned Eid attacks, and mention of the assaults was often limited to "a circle of political and human rights activists" (Ahmad Zaki and Abd Alhamid 2014).

Prior to the January 25th Revolution, research and activism treated the phenomena of politically motivated sexual assault and sexual harassment in public places as unique and unrelated. Sexual violence during protests was generally seen as a repressive tactic that only concerned the activists contesting the authoritarian regime. Conversely, everyday sexual harassment was considered a "pervasive social problem" that affected all women in Egypt (Rizzo, Price and Meyer 2012: 465). Experts argued that the prevalence of the latter stemmed from economic conditions imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the 1990s and a resulting lack of employment opportunities, which forced young Egyptians to delay marriage — particularly young men.[4] According to this view, increasing numbers of "unmarriageable" men turned to ogling and groping women in public as the only means of venting their frustration and "symbolically reclaiming their masculinity in public" (Peoples 2008: 3; see also Ilahi 2010).[5] This widespread cultural discourse, which linked sexual violence to "gaps in education and wealth" (Ahmad Zaki and Abd Alhamid 2014), contributed to an existing narrative about "the street" as a fundamentally male space — one in which women's respectability was constantly under threat.[6] Moreover, related calls for heightened police presence on the streets further criminalized working-class young men and undermined the opposition movements' claims on public space (Amar 2011).

In the aftermath of the January 25th Revolution, however, such distinctions between sexual assault during protests and daily sexual harassment in public spaces have started to disappear. Activists and researchers have come to recognize that these two phenomena, while following different logics and patterns, are intimately related and "have to be seen in the wider context of violence against women in the public and private sphere" (FIDH et al. 2014: 18; see also Langohr 2013: 22). As I show below, activists' current endeavors reflect this revised understanding of the relationship between the two.

4. By 1990, the Egyptian economy was in crisis, suffering from massive foreign debt, an overvalued currency, excessive state spending, and financially unstable public sector industries. The government faced increasing international pressure to address these problems, which resulted in the adoption of a World Bank- and IMF-sponsored plan, known as the Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program. The plan relied on a set of neoliberal economic policies, including the privatization of many state-owned businesses and industries, which ultimately benefited Egypt's elite at the expense of the lower and middle classes.

5. This construction of the problem in which unemployed, unmarried men are perceived as archetypal harassers has been debunked by anti-harassment associations, which have repeatedly shown that perpetrators have different marital statuses, levels of education, and class backgrounds, etc. (ECWR 2010: 17; HarassMap 2014: 25).

6. It is worth noting that this characterization of the street (and by extension, downtown Cairo) has proved highly profitable for the private developers that invested in suburban development during the real-estate boom of the late 1990s. As a group, they have capitalized on "elite fears of urban disorder" to market their products (Kuppinger 2004: 44; see also Mitchell 1999). Over time, the westernized coffee shops, gated communities, and shopping malls that proliferated in upscale neighborhoods and the desert have been embraced by upper middle- and upper-class women as spaces that are "safe" from sexual harassment (Abaza 2006: 204; De Koning 2009: 154). The streets, in contrast, have been increasingly considered unsafe spaces where women have "a liminal and ambiguous status as marginalized, and potentially illegitimate and disreputable, passers-by" (De Koning 2009: 130). These spatial strategies of class segregation are not particular to Egypt, but have become, as urban geographers note, increasingly common in cities around the world (Merry 2001).

POST-2011 CONTEXT:

THE INTENSIFICATION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT

During the 18 revolutionary days that preceded Mubarak's resignation, Egyptian women took to the streets in full force. One need only look at the ubiquitous images of Tahrir Square from this time to see that female protesters were everywhere and came from all walks of life, representing different ages, religions, class backgrounds, levels of education, etc. In general, women's descriptions of the square at this time are positive; Midan al-Tahrir is depicted as having been a safe space that was virtually harassment-free, and one in which all Egyptians were welcome. As Nadje Al-Ali (2012) notes, "women reported that they had never felt as safe and been treated as respectfully as during the time of these protests" (27).

Sexual harassment, however, was never completely absent from the square. In addition to the assault on journalist Lara Logan on February 11, 2011, which received significant international media attention, other women shared experiences of harassment in the days surrounding January 25th. For example, Yasmin El-Rifae, a journalist (and later a volunteer with Operation Anti Sexual Harassment), was groped in the square as she covered the protests. As she stated in a Skype interview, "People for a while didn't want to admit that this was a problem that was happening in the square because everyone was so euphoric and happy" (March 28, 2015). Significantly, however, El-Rifae drew a contrast between the atmosphere in Tahrir Square during the uprisings and the period that followed Mubarak's ousting: "It felt distinctly different. In 2013 on some days you could feel very instinctively and very clearly that this was a place that was not safe for women. That was not the case in 2011" (March 28, 2015). This distinction between the Mubarak and post-Mubarak eras is telling because the post-January 25th urban landscape has been characterized by a proliferation of sexual assaults, both in the context of protests and through increased sexual harassment in public space.

Regarding sexual violence during protests in the months and years since the January 25th Revolution, various organizations have collected testimonies from women who have experienced verbal and physical harassment and/or have been the victims of sexual attacks in Tahrir Square and its vicinity during this time. Such incidents began almost immediately after Mubarak's resignation, during the rule of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). On March 8, 2011, participants in an International Women's Day march were groped and verbally abused, called "whores, agents of Suzanne Mubarak and the west" (Emam 2011). Some weeks later, a report by Amnesty International (2011) revealed that women arrested during a peaceful sit-in the following day had been subjected to "virginity tests."

These tests were not the only incident of state-sanctioned brutality against women participating in demonstrations. During the so-called Cabinet clashes of December 17, 2011, an anonymous female protester was beaten, dragged, and stripped by the military police, exposing her blue bra. The assault was captured on video and circulated widely in the media and on social networks, causing widespread public outrage.

The summer of 2012 is often noted as a turning point when sexual assaults during protests increased in both frequency and virulence (Amnesty International 2013: 8). For example, on June 2, three women were attacked by a large group of men during a protest following the verdict in Hosni Mubarak's trial (Nazra for Feminist Studies 2012). A demonstration organized on June 8 to condemn this violence also came under attack (Amnesty International 2012). On June 26, journalist Natasha Smith was sexually assaulted by hundreds of men during the celebrations for Mohamed Morsi's election as president (Smith 2012).

The situation did not improve in 2013: on the anniversary of January 25th, 19 women were sexually assaulted in the vicinity of Tahrir Square, many of them suffering injuries from bladed weapons (Dale 2013). In response to this incident, women marched on February 6, 2013, brandishing kitchen knives and signs that threatened physical retaliation against the perpetrators of the earlier attack. Several months later, in the wake of the protests that led to the deposition of Mohamed Morsi, Egyptian feminist organizations denounced the perpetration of 101 incidents of sexual assault in and around Tahrir Square between June 28 and July 3 (Nazra for Feminist Studies et al. 2013). And more recently, on the night of June 8, 2014, at least nine women were sexually attacked in Tahrir Square by a large group of men during celebrations of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's presidential inauguration (Langohr 2014; Nazra for Feminist Studies et al. 2014).

Women's organizations have recognized a common *modus operandi* at work in these attacks, usually referred to as the "circle of hell." Women participating in protests will be isolated by a group of men, who surround them in three concentric rings. While the aggressors in the nearest circle sexually assault the target, those in the second and outer circles pretend to help her, while in fact blocking access for anyone actually trying to assist her. For example, on November 23, 2012, Yasmine El-Baramawy, a musician, was sexually assaulted in this way on a side street off the square. In an interview, El-Baramawy described the assault: "We were about 40 persons and the security forces were in front of us," she recalls. "When [the assailants] came, they came in one second, attacked me,

together ... I didn't hear any insults, I didn't hear any sexual expressions at all, zero ... The attackers themselves were saying that they were helping" (March 24, 2015).

According to activists, these assaults, which have become a regular feature of protests in Tahrir Square, are not spontaneous. On the contrary, they are organized attempts to discourage women from participating in political events and to keep them away from public spaces (Amnesty International 2013: 8; see also Ahmad Zaki and Abd Alhamid 2014). Moreover, some voices have suggested that they may be initiated by paid government thugs (*baltagiya*). As such, the logic underlying these incidents may resemble that of Paul Amar's state-as-harasser model for the pre-2011 context (2011); however, that analysis does not account for men's mass participation in assaults. As women's rights activists have noted, "15 individuals of a group of attackers might be affiliated with the security forces but the numbers are so huge [that] there must be other random men who just join in" (Trew 2012).

With regard to sexual harassment in daily life, a report published by UN Women in April 2013 concludes that harassment currently affects Egyptian women at alarming rates, with 99.3% of female respondents stating they had experienced some form of harassment and 96.5% of them asserting they had been subjected to unwanted touching (El Deeb 2013: 6).[7] Although incidents of everyday sexual harassment in the streets have not received as much media attention as the attacks on protesters described above, their multiplication in public places has had profound consequences on women's mobility, and has contributed to an atmosphere of fear. A study recently published by HarassMap (2014) revealed that women who have experienced sexual harassment on the street (95.3% of the women surveyed in the area of Greater Cairo) "strongly expressed fear of violence and physical assault" and suffered "fear and lack of security in public spaces, lack of trust in others and in especially men [sic], feelings of anger and frustration, and feelings of restrictions to their freedom and mobility" (38). Addressing this very issue, a testimonial in HarassMap's (2014) report reads,

> I am afraid to go out, I hate my clothes, my body[,] to the extent that I decided to wear long clothes[,] but there's no point. In the beginning I was scared to talk to anyone about it and felt ashamed of people looking at me although I am the victim, so I kept silent and endured[,] which led to ... psychological problems and I was afraid to go out into the street. I refuse to work far from my home as I am so scared of sexual harassment. [57]

7. According to the report, sexual harassment in daily life includes behaviors such as ogling, whistling and verbal abuse, the use of obscene language, indecent exposure, stalking/pursuing, and touching women's bodies, among others (El Deeb 2013: 6).

The report noted further that as a result of such sentiments, Egyptian women change their routines, dress more conservatively, and avoid "going out late, taking streets which are not well-lit and/or not highly populated [and] going back to the streets where they have previously experienced harassment" (2014: 38). According to the study, even so-called "trivial" or "minor" forms of sexual harassment (such as ogling or catcalling) can lead to increased fear of violence in public places (2014: 38).

POST–2011 ANTI-HARASSMENT ORGANIZING
The escalation and proliferation of sexual harassment and assault during protests and in daily life have compelled both women and men to take action. The four years since the January 25th Revolution have seen an unparalleled surge of activism against sexual violence in public places. Yet the initiatives that have emerged in this period are substantively different from those organized by anti-harassment organizations before 2011. In the past, NGOs like the ECWR focused on institutional change, mainly lobbying government ministries for legal reform (Rizzo, Price and Meyer 2012: 468). As Abd El-Hameed stated in an interview, their activities, which included the organization of workshops and the elaboration of reports, were "small-scale and didn't really reach the public" (March 16, 2015). This approach changed radically after 2011 with the formation of new alliances, platforms, and organizations determined to tackle the problem head on. These groups were often formed by dedicated activists, yet they also sought to connect directly with the general public. Moreover, the focus of their work shifted from institutional or legal reforms to "direct street intervention" initiatives (Langohr 2015: 132).

KEY ANTI-HARASSMENT AND ANTI-ASSAULT INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES
A number of recent initiatives are explicitly concerned with helping women in protest settings. Operation Anti Sexual Harassment (better known as OpAntiSH) is one of these. It was established on November 30, 2012, in response to the collective sexual assaults occurring in Tahrir Square, among them the aforementioned attack against El-Baramawy as well as eight other women and girls on November 23. As Abd El-Hameed recalled in an interview, the initiative developed "organically" after she and another EIPR member decided to set up a hotline that women who had been subjected to sexual harassment or assault could use to obtain help (March 16, 2015). To that end, they bought two phones and disseminated the numbers to protesters in the square. They were rapidly joined in their efforts by members of the media collective Mosireen. Together they launched a

HarassMap's Safe Areas poster. (Text in center reads: "This place does not tolerate harassment.") 2015.

Photograph by Ian Alan Paul.

call for volunteers on Facebook, to which 80 women and men responded, many of them already active in protests and in other anti-harassment organizations like HarassMap. As El-Rifae said in her Skype interview, this *ad hoc* initiative grew "through a process of several months of trial and error, figuring out what worked best and learning from our mistakes" (March 28, 2015).

By the time it stopped operating in July 2013, OpAntiSH comprised a sophisticated network of teams operating on the ground in Tahrir Square: intervention teams worked to prevent or intervene in cases of sexual assault during protests and safety teams helped survivors, bringing them to safe houses or hospitals.[8] Meanwhile, *midan* teams raised awareness in the square and distributed flyers with hotline numbers while scouts monitored the space from balconies and rooftops to inform team members of possible assaults. Volunteers in a separate operations room received hotline calls and coordinated the movements of the intervention and safety teams on the ground.

From the outset, OpAntiSH questioned notions of female vulnerability and the need for male protection and, unlike groups such as Tahrir

8. The initiative stopped operating in Tahrir Square after the military intervention of July 3, 2013, following the political convictions of several group members. As Mosireen member and intervention team volunteer Sherief Gaber notes, "Our goal was to protect the space of the revolution, a position that was no longer viable after the army's return to power" (March 9, 2015).

Bodyguard or Harakat Bassma that also patrolled the square during protests, they included women in the intervention teams responsible for rescuing assaulted women. According to Abd El-Hameed, this was "an important battle" because it challenged the figure of the "male hero" and helped initiate a broader discussion of gender roles (March 16, 2015).

For El-Rifae, moreover, one of the achievements of this initiative was the "social ripple effect" that it had on the volunteers who took part in the operations:

> There were a lot of people who changed jobs and started working in places like Nazra [for Feminist Studies] and other women's groups after their experiences with OpAntiSH; there were a lot of men whose views and understanding of sexual harassment were completely changed … and they began to talk to their friends about it (March 28, 2015).

While OpAntiSH was concerned with tackling sexual assault in protest contexts, other groups such as HarassMap have focused their attention on sexual harassment and assault in daily life. Founded in 2010, this independent, volunteer-based initiative has developed an innovative online and mobile reporting system that allows individuals who have been harassed to post information about their experiences in an interactive map. Using this data, HarassMap volunteers visit areas with high rates of sexual harassment, encouraging residents and business owners to intervene and/or report any incidents of harassment that they witness.

As part of an integrated approach to end the social acceptability of sexual harassment and assault, HarassMap launched their Safe Areas program in December 2014. This initiative emerged after a HarassMap volunteer was subjected to a collective sexual assault in the neighborhood of Zamalek in 2012. As Safe Areas unit manager Ahmed Hegab recalled in an interview, "The man who is responsible for [a nearby] kiosk stopped the assault" (March 3, 2015). Inspired by this intervention, the program targets small businesses including coffee shops, restaurants, and kiosks, recruiting their owners and employees to respond to sexual harassment in their neighborhoods with zero tolerance.

Sherief Gaber, a former OpAntiSH volunteer who joined HarassMap in September 2014 as the head of the Safe Areas program, notes that it is difficult to convince small business owners to participate. When I interviewed Gaber, he observed, "They don't necessarily want involvement in something that will end up taking their time or that may get them into trouble" (March 9, 2015). For this reason the initiative has sought potential allies

throughout the city, such as the aforementioned kiosk in Zamalek and the women-owned restaurants Fashat Sumaya and Eish & Malh in Downtown Cairo. Once a venue agrees to participate, team members organize training for employees and equip them with stickers and a poster certifying that the space is safe from sexual harassment. As Gaber remarked, "The goal is to reach those people who are already involved in some kind of monitoring of the street and attempt to use that position to more progressive ends" (March 9, 2015).

Supplementing the work of groups like OpAntiSH and HarassMap — and in direct response to knife-wielding collective sexual assaults in Tahrir Square on January 25, 2013 — several initiatives started to offer free self-defense courses for women. Tahrir Bodyguard and Fouada Watch, the latter a women's-rights group working with I Saw Harassment (Shoft Ta7rosh), another anti-harassment initiative, organized the first of these workshops. They translated the experience they gained in the square to the private spaces of neighborhood gyms and fitness centers. Away from the spaces of protest, the workshops reached beyond the activist scene and engaged a broader section of Egyptian society — namely, women who were regularly grabbed and harassed in public places. As the organizers noted, the courses went past the basics of self-defense, aiming also to improve women's self-confidence when they walked down the streets and help them to "recognize their strengths when faced with potentially dangerous situations."[9]

This response to sexual violence in public places was further popularized by a series of events that, under the name Igmadi (Stay Strong), have taken place in Cairo and other Egyptian cities since May 2013. These include Zumba classes, self-defense training, and awareness-raising sessions providing legal, medical, and psychological advice from organizations such as HarassMap and El-Nadeem Center for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence, among others. They have attracted women of all ages and backgrounds, combining music and physical activities to teach various strategies for avoiding or stopping harassment and attacks.

The organizer behind the Igmadi workshops is WenDo, a women's initiative that combines self-defense techniques with the development of self-confidence and self-assertion skills. Since its creation in 2013, WenDo has trained two groups of women who are now teaching self-defense to women and girls in youth centers, schools, and refugee centers, as well as at NGOs. Yasmine Nessaf, a lawyer at the Center for

9. Tweets published by Tahrir Bodyguard on January 27, 2013.

Anti-harassment graffiti on Mohamed Mahmoud Street. 2013.
Photograph by the author.

Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance (CEWLA) and a WenDo trainer, noted in an interview that she took the course to learn how to defend herself on the street: "I wanted to protect my body because there is a lot of harassment on the streets and a lot of times I don't know what I can do" (April 2, 2015). In the basic training course, women learn how to react to a variety of situations through exercises like role-playing, which allow them to revisit incidents they may have experienced in public spaces and strategize responses with the help of trainers and other participants. As Nessaf highlighted in our interview, the WenDo classroom is a safe space where women "talk about all the stories that happen to us on the streets" and exchange successful tactics for confronting potential attackers without fear (April 2, 2015).

GRAFFITI AND STREET ARTWORK
Anti-harassment efforts have not been limited to the development of organizations and initiatives. Artists have also shown a deep and abiding interest in the topic, reflected in the flourishing of anti-harassment street art and graffiti — particularly on Mohamed Mahmoud Street (the site of

Stencil of Samira Ibrahim on Mohamed Mahmoud Street. 2012.
Photograph by the author.

numerous collective sexual assaults and a memorial space for the martyrs of the Revolution) off of Tahrir Square.[10]

Revolutionary street iconography has honored Samira Ibrahim, the protester who filed a lawsuit against the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) after being subjected to a virginity test in in March 2011. It has also honored the anonymous protester whom the military police beat and stripped in December 2011, exposing her blue bra. Stencils representing the latter's bra have appeared on walls all over downtown Cairo, transforming this intimate piece of clothing into one of the protesters' strongest symbols of resistance against military rule, and thereby complicating

10. Two groups that have used the walls in this regard are Graffiti Harimi and Women on Walls. The former is a campaign that uses stencils to invert negative social stereotypes about Egyptian women and to "take back, even in a small way, public space for women." (See https://www.facebook.com/WomenGraffiti, accessed April 1, 2015.) The campaign was launched on March 9, 2012, on the anniversary of the virginity tests. The latter is a group of graffiti and visual artists that uses street art to discuss women's issues. The project started in March 2013.

patriarchal notions about the relationships between the personal and the political, the public and the private. Murals such as Mira Shihadeh and Zeft's "The Circle of Hell," painted on one of the concrete barriers that SCAF erected to restrict access to Tahrir Square, have likewise contributed to the visual subversion of a traditionally masculine public space.

In addition to memorializing events, street art has also served as an interactive text, subjected to an ongoing process of editing and reinterpretation. For instance, a piece of graffiti on Mohamed Mahmoud Street representing the anonymous "blue bra demonstrator" — also known as *sit el banat* (the best of all girls) — was modified to depict the aggressors as demonic figures and to cover the woman's chest with the colors of the Egyptian flag. Next to the entrance of the American University in Cairo's (AUC) Tahrir campus, a stencil of Ibrahim's face appeared above a battalion of soldiers, each of whom bore the features of the military doctor who conducted the aforementioned virginity tests. The composition symbolically reversed the lionization of the army for their role in forcing Mubarak's resignation, and signified this forced sexual intervention as the moment when the trust between the people and the military—who were "one hand" on February 11, 2011—was broken.

Collectively, this artwork reflects a convergence between the ideals and demands of the January 25th Revolution and the concerns of women facing pervasive sexual harassment and assault. It further brings this convergence to bear on the question of women's access to and presence in public space. The various works assert — either implicitly or explicitly — a woman's right to occupy public space free from the threat of violence. They further link this right to the 2011 Revolution, making the claim a revolutionary one.

CONCLUSION

The military removal of Mohamed Morsi on July 3, 2013, and the army's return to the streets ultimately put a halt to many of the creative and progressive initiatives that had proliferated since the January 25th Revolution (Langohr 2014). Immediately after lifting the official curfew and state of emergency on November 12, 2013, the government instituted a new law criminalizing free assembly and public expression. This *de facto* banned street protests in Egypt (Kirkpatrick 2013). The government's crackdown on human-rights activists and NGOs has similarly affected groups within the anti-harassment movement. Platforms like OpAntiSH are now inactive — in part because many activists have been arrested for defying the protest law. Organizations like EIPR and El-Nadeem continue to work,

albeit in a precarious position: another, more restrictive civil-association law is forthcoming.

On Mohamed Mahmoud Street, the government has painted over the anti-harassment graffiti. They have erased Samira Ibrahim's defiant gaze as well as the promise that read "We won't forget *sit el banat"* and the accompanying blue bras in an attempt to efface the memories of women's resistance against the military rule that followed the 2011 uprisings. The authorities have also demolished many of the concrete walls that blocked access to Tahrir Square, replacing them with towering metal gates. Shihadeh and Zeft's mural is now hardly visible behind a row of cars in what has become an improvised parking lot.

Despite these setbacks, the energy and momentum generated through the proliferation of anti-harassment projects, platforms, and artwork between 2011 and 2013 endures. It can be found in the ongoing work of groups like Harakat Bassma, which continue to organize gender-mixed vigilante groups to prevent and confront sexual harassment during religious festivities and on public transportation (Langohr 2015: 132). Similarly, HarassMap continues its efforts to create areas safe from harassment, not only around small businesses but also in schools and universities. Finally, WenDo continues to teach self-defense to women in classes offered across the capital and beyond. Collectively, these efforts are striving to preserve (and improve) women's mobility and sense of security in public space. Thus, they continue to challenge prevailing gender dynamics in public space, asserting women's right to occupy such spaces and to do so free from the threat of harassment or assault.

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