



UNIVERSIDADE D
COIMBRA

Yasmine Hamdi Sanad Loza

**DE-ORIENT THE ARAB WOMAN:
POLARIZING GEOGRAPHIES AND FRAMES OF
OPPRESSION IN CONTESTS AND CONTESTATIONS OF
HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Thesis in Human Rights in Contemporary Societies under the supervision of
Teresa Cunha (PhD) and Sisay Yeshanew (PhD) submitted to the Institute for
Interdisciplinary Research (IIIUC) of the University of Coimbra**

January 2020

Institute for Interdisciplinary Research
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CIÊNCIA, TECNOLOGIA
E ENGINHO SUPERIOR

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Abstract

In my thesis I firstly aim to investigate the global constructions of Arab women in news platforms, through an in depth theoretical discussion of frames of representation. In the State of the Art I firstly reflect the fieldwork in the chapter on Politics of Media Frames and Silenced Realities, in assessments on:

- 1.1 Languages and Power of Media,
- 1.2 Eurocentrism: Collective Outrage versus Collective Apathy, and
- 1.3 Women's Resistance in Epistemology: Human Rights Encounters and Arab Feminisms Deconstructing Double Patriarchies.

I move on to explore the portrayals of the Arab in productions of the Orient and the "Third World", discussing:

- 2.1 Frames of Oppression: Framing the Other,
- 2.2 Orientalism and The Immoral "Moral" Contest of Human Rights,
- 2.3 Doctrines of Exclusion: The "Civilising Mission" and the Burden of Representation, and
- 2.4 Double Patriarchies: (Non)Recognition of the Other of the Other.

Finally, I assess dichotomies between the South and North, assessing constructions on women in the research dialogue Polarized Geographies and Polarized Feminisms, inquiring:

- 3.1 Veiling and Unveiling: Injustice(s) on the "Arab" and the Arab Woman's Body,
- 3.2 Social Construction of Vulnerability and Violence on the Woman's body,
- 3.3 Purity, Honour Crimes and Crimes of (Dis)Honour, and
- 3.4 Orientalist (Mis)Representations and the Egyptian Women's Burden(s).

My fieldwork encompasses the scrutinization of media reportage on the region and with particular focus on Egyptian women, in order to de-orient the homogenizing frame. De-orienting epistemology constitutes of critical discourse analysis articles from a renowned international newspaper, under a specific Egypt-centric time frame rather than a western-centric one. Articles are collected and analysed under the keywords Egypt, Women and Rights and are assessed for their frame: imagery, language, content and

layout. Under a Key of Analysis which I designed, the articles are coded to assess trends, frames of silencing and empowerment and their frequencies and instances. In doing so, the critical findings of media portray that the image of the general Arab women and more so Egyptian women has been blurred. The dangers of misrepresentations were underlined under trends of normalized depictions of alienation of the woman from her rights, face and body. Double Patriarchies are evident in systematic narrations of violence, in Western experts and Human Rights organizations speaking for and on the region, in focuses of men over women speaking for women's rights, portrayals of the woman as victim and the vilification of Egyptian society. The few instances in which direct quotes of agency of empowered women are stated are acknowledged to be as objective as possible. It was disclosed that languages largely perpetuate oppressive frames evident from the critical key of analysis discussion in quantitative and qualitative findings. Imageries to a high extent reproduce prevalence of repeated Double Patriarchies. Abstracting a small number of instances of direct women's quotes reflects stigmatic perpetuation of foreign imposition, cultural obscurement and focus on men in Egyptian women's empowerment. The research therefore sought to de-frame Frames of Oppression by deconstructing them and their languages, and to go beyond this, through articulations of Egyptian women leaderships themselves involved in women's rights whether directly or indirectly. This was carried out through semi-structured interviews which carry my own resonances with them as an Egyptian woman and as the interpreter and producer of the research, whereby my own voice is present throughout the work. The interviews reveal that the voices of Egyptian women, let alone Arab women are clearly non-homogenous and diverse, each with important stories to share. While there are nuances between perspectives, these must be seen and heard. The relational distance among women is seen within Cairo, between Cairo and outer cities, and levels of education. This mirrors the significance of exchange in women's rights discourse within Egypt and amongst feminisms of the South and North. Epistemologies ultimately should seek to listen to and invite women from the South to produce their own knowledge on the world, on women's rights and most crucially on themselves.

Resumo

Na minha tese, primeiro pretendo investigar as construções globais de mulheres árabes em plataformas noticiosas, através de uma discussão teórica sobre quadros de representação. No Estado da Arte, reflito primeiramente o trabalho de campo no capítulo Política de Estruturas dos Média e Realidades Silenciadas, em avaliações sobre:

1.1 Idiomas e Poder dos Média;

1.2 Eurocentrismo: Indignação Coletiva versus Apatia Coletiva;

1.3 Resistência das Mulheres na Epistemologia: Encontros de Direitos Humanos e Feminismos Árabes Desconstruindo Patriarcados Duplos.

Exploro retratos do Árabe em produções do Oriente e do “Terceiro Mundo”, discutindo:

2.1 Quadros de opressão: Enquadrando o Outro;

2.2 Orientalismo e o Debate "Moral" Imoral dos Direitos Humanos;

2.3 Doutrinas de Exclusão: a Missão Civilizadora e o Fardo da Representação;

2.4 Patriarcados Duplos: (Não)Reconhecimento do Outro do Outro.

Por fim, passo a avaliar dicotomias entre o Sul e o Norte, avaliando construções sobre mulheres no diálogo de pesquisa em Geografias Polarizadas e Feminismos Polarizados, investigando:

3.1 O uso e o desuso do véu: injustiça(s) no “Árabe” e no Corpo da Mulher Árabe;

3.2 Construção Social da Vulnerabilidade e Violência no Corpo da Mulher;

3.3 Pureza, Crimes de Honra e Crimes de (Des)Honra;

4.4 (Não) Representações Orientalistas e o(s) Fardo(s) das Mulheres Egípcias.

O meu trabalho de campo exigiu o exame minucioso dos relatórios dos média na região e com foco especial nas mulheres egípcias, a fim de desorientar o quadro de homogeneização. Desvincular a epistemologia dos artigos de análise crítica do discurso de um jornal internacional de renome, em um período específico no Egito, em vez de no

Oeste. Os artigos são coletados e analisados sob as palavras-chave Egito, Mulheres e Direitos e avaliados pelo seu enquadramento: imagens, idioma, conteúdo e disposição. Sob uma Chave de Análise que eu projetei, os artigos são codificados para avaliar tendências, quadros de silenciamento e empoderamento e das suas frequências e instâncias. Ao fazê-lo, as descobertas críticas dos média retratam que a imagem das mulheres Árabes em geral e mais ainda a das egípcias ficou confusa. Os perigos das deturpações foram sublinhados sob tendências de representações normalizadas de alienação da mulher, dos seus direitos, rosto e corpo. Os patriarcados duplos são evidentes nas narrativas sistemáticas de violência, nos especialistas ocidentais e nas organizações de Direitos Humanos que falam pela e da região, nos focos dos homens nas mulheres que falam pelos direitos das mesmas, nos retratos da mulher como vítima e na difamação da sociedade egípcia. Nos poucos casos em que são citadas alegações diretas da agência de mulheres com poder são reconhecidos como os mais objetivos possíveis. Foi revelado que as línguas perpetuam amplamente quadros opressivos evidentes da chave crítica na discussão da análise em resultados quantitativos e qualitativos. As imagens reproduzem, em grande medida, a prevalência de repetidos patriarcados duplos. Abstrair um pequeno número de instâncias de citações diretas de mulheres representa perpetuação estigmática de imposição estrangeira, obscurecimento cultural e foco dos homens no poder das mulheres egípcias. A pesquisa, portanto, buscou desqualificar os quadros de opressão desconstruindo-os e os seus idiomas, além disso, através de articulações das líderes egípcias que estão envolvidas nos direitos das mulheres, direta ou indiretamente. Isto foi realizado por meio de entrevistas semiestruturadas, onde carrego as minhas próprias ressonâncias com elas como mulher egípcia, como intérprete e produtora da pesquisa, em que minha própria voz está presente em todo o trabalho. As entrevistas revelam que as vozes das mulheres egípcias, muito menos das Árabes, são claramente não homogêneas e diversas, cada uma com histórias importantes para compartilhar. Embora existam variações entre perspectivas, elas devem ser vistas e ouvidas. A distância relacional entre as mulheres é vista no Cairo, entre o Cairo, nas cidades exteriores e nos níveis de educação. Isso reflete a importância do intercâmbio no discurso dos direitos das mulheres no Egito e entre os feminismos do Sul e do Norte. As epistemologias deveriam, eventualmente, procurar ouvir e convidar as mulheres do Sul a produzirem seu próprio conhecimento sobre o mundo, nos direitos das mulheres e, mais crucialmente, sobre si mesmas.

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Introduction

*The idea of representation is a theatrical one;
the Orient is the stage on which the whole East
is confined.*

— Edward Said, *Orientalism*

In a world of persisting global socio-economic and gender inequalities presenting themselves in hegemonic discourses of power; women of the South are confronted by Frames of Oppression and Double Patriarchies arguably to a higher extent than men, and contestably, even more so, compared to women and men from European and Western societies. This is evident in discourses depicting how women's lives are lived, their rights and violations against them are discerned and documented, and the spaces in between. Oppressive other-ing languages reinforced across international spheres of media, academia, politics and law continuously impose and perpetuate frames of injustice from their epistemological outset. Doctrines of hegemony determine the ways by which knowledge is produced and sociocultural difference and diversity across intersectionalities are valued. The global idea of the Arab world and most particularly of Arab women remains to a large extent very Orientalist (Said, 1978) in its contemporary continuation. This affirms the need to move beyond generalized and faulty representations, most crucially in human rights domains. Current discriminatory constraints posed by Orientalist attitudes — which claim the frame and the power to define “another” — discount existing narratives of complex individuals within national, regional and global spheres.

Said describes Orientalism as what—

can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient — dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.

Said, 1978:3

Interventions against power hierarchies of knowledge and practice in the epistemological canons and cognitions of language strengthen the potentials of human rights discourse as the imperative means towards enhancing spaces of recognition, points of contact and enriched encounters towards solidarity across stratified borders. My thesis thus seeks to critically assess how polarizing dichotomies in *Frames of Oppression* grow and persist in dominant forces of knowledge production of identities in direct dialogue with women's rights spaces for resistances. The theoretical discussion is premised on addressing the contextual abstractions in languages of representation and patri-colonial means of othering. The critical discourse analysis of media monitoring and semi-structured interviews portrays contemporary frames and de-frames, and the nuances within them. It is in these moments of assessing voids and patterns in infrastructures representing the other and the other of the other — as Egyptians from the non-Western South, as women in patriarchal societies subjected to patriarchal epistemologies — that deeper knowledge is mined. Comprehensive identities and struggles which are otherwise directly and indirectly denied their rights, thrown beyond the frame and silenced by doctrines of hegemonic power in chasms of disparities are revealed. These are seen to speak out on their own situational realms for truer advance in media representations and academic discussions of human rights, the politics of women's rights and feminist research.

Frames of Oppression is conceptually drawn from Judith Butler's *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (2009). I use *Frames of Oppression* to convey the moulding power of language in not only defining but creating and subjecting vast multidimensional identities and social constructs of realities into reduced trivialized frames. Such frames occur in accounts of documentations of discriminations which blur complex agencies and violations when women are living and beyond the taking of their lives, in reporting their loss. This evident modus operandi is based on perpetual cycles of ethnic and racial prejudice, arrogance, and deliberate ignorance pertaining to the construction of the other. The act of defining frames of (non)existence does not innocently depict a frame of a particular reality but rather presumes and reinforces oppression; sentencing the specific people and region which it intends to frame into silence, invisibility and normalized states of murder, chaos and violence. Core theoretical and practical evidence in analysis of global frameworks critically deconstructs the frame to de-orient discourses of homogenized, manoeuvred gazes in how these may subject Arab women to manifold layers of inferiority and exclusion.

Essential to the research is the concept of *Double Patriarchy(ies)* which is used to describe the magnified oppressive patriarchal forces of domination imposed on majorities of women classified as Arab. The term of patriarchal is seen as the legal, political and moral imposition and glorification of male over female figures. The facade reproduced from a Double Patriarchal gaze of the subjected woman is twofold: imposed by men in the region and women and men outside of it. This term is designed due to finding it insufficient to speak of solely one patriarchy of injustice against Egyptian women and to underline the complex dynamics of plural systems of (dis)empowerment. Patriarchies are inquired as non-exclusively stemming from regional and national systems, and additionally from global, paternal, racialized claims of knowledge on women's human rights. These languages predominantly (mis)represent and assess the region — more particularly confining women purported to be “of” the region — within multi-fold doctrines of patriarchal alienation from their situated experiences, bodies, voiced representations and rights.

Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) is central to the thesis essentially due to the historical coining of the concept of (mis)representation and its trajectory into the persistence of frames defining the other in contemporary human rights. Detecting Orientalist discourses significantly develops the state of the art of representations and framing with basis on the theoretical inquiry. Apparent continuities of Orientalism — principally on non-Western women Arabs and Egyptians from diverse religious and sociocultural realities — urge toward the critical contemporary need to deconstruct, re-think, and de-orient contemporary women's rights thought and practice through women's diverse perspectives, gazes and voices. In speaking back to oppressive frames, (mis)representative human rights patri-colonial gazes are dismissed as inadequate to interpret their production of the orient until they listen to and speak with claimed narratives, struggles and languages of women in the region themselves.

The thesis encompasses a centrality around Egyptian women leaderships and human rights agents in stressing women's individual complexities and the need to de-orient the Arab *woman*. Embracing her own elaborated and sophisticated intricacy through profound consideration professes each Arab woman as uniquely diverse and of equal significance and rights to both men in the region and women and men exterior to it. Consequently, rather than vindicate to critically assess or speak for all Arab women, the

focus on Egyptian women leaderships counteracts homogenization across Arabs by taking into account one Arab country and its own diversity. More so, it redresses oppressive schemas of passivity and foreignness to human rights through the sample of Egyptian women's rights accounts, which are acknowledged as a segment out of millions of Egyptian women's specificities and narratives. Egyptian women are in like manner to Arab women non-homogenous, which underlines the dangers of broadly referring to Arab women, in addition to the nuances among women's rights leaderships from Egypt. This point of recognition is vital for the ethical epistemology of the thesis and seeks to emphasise the de-orientation of vast categories of false sameness when based on western-centric categorizations of national, religious and ethnic identities.

De-framing media and Orientalist images in dialogue with semi-structured interviews of women leaderships in Egypt contributes to efforts which recognize and value each woman's voice and her critical commitments to de-orient her self in representational discourses. Resistance through intervention strives towards Egyptian women and non-Western female identities to be welcomed and remembered as flourishing creators and agents of their own narratives of emancipation — fully claiming themselves — against all patriarchal and racial prejudice in women's rights. The process of de-Orientalism is principal to the ethical background, hypothesis and epistemological mission of the research I conduct, situated as an Egyptian woman. In positioning myself as an Egyptian *woman* I recognize my situation in the feminist academic field in the twenty-first century and my selection to defend women's rights. This focal point seeks to move beyond controversial fixed notions and divisions between gazes of race and gender in women's human rights discourses, evident even within this acknowledgement. Identifying myself as an *Egyptian* woman; my research is aware of my experience in European and Western critical systems of education and simultaneously, the complex sociocultural, intersectional experiences of my personal identity in my nationality, language, sociopolitical classification and belief. Being grounded in Egypt is chosen to locate Arab women more closely in an effort to decenter imposition of discourses relational to the West and other hierarchies of power, all of which reflect the experiences which led me to refrain from framing myself as an epistemological subject of my own de-homogeneous critique.

Polarized dichotomies invented through the historically prevalent continuum of Frames of Oppression and Double Patriarchies shape the production of knowledge on the Arab

region, its people and Arab women. Foreign depictions are researched to investigate whether Western and European human rights discourses for and on the South encourage communication across divides between states, people and their rights, or further exacerbate alienating geographies. In producing a study that seeks not to commit the same epistemological injustices it claims to contest; the research aims to be as comprehensive, critical and scientifically rigorous as possible, without denying the context from which it derives or the situation from which it speaks. This standing largely determines the core theoretical and epistemological choices in my research. Various theories of representation and ways of producing meaning reflect and construct discourses of power and subject: the “semiotic approach understood representation as the way words functioned as signs within language” (Hall, 1997:42). Wording as markers may reflect a cultural moment and the writer’s and speakers’ apparatus which may echo self-determination, continued oppression or the pair in obscuring combination. The thesis cannot proclaim to be free of its own frame which in itself defends a crucial idea on representation: the “acceptance of a degree of cultural relativism between one culture and another, a certain lack of equivalence, and hence the need for translation as we move from the mindset or conceptual universe of one culture or another” (Ibid.:61). Accordingly, the critical assessment analyses the symbolic and practical implications of representations of Egyptian women in human rights discourses of international media reportage for their depictions, repetitions, (in)direct expressions, imagery and allocated space and meaning in coverage. Direct interventions of women as articulate agents of women’s rights and feminisms exterior to the West — thereby reframe the frame without perpetuating it or claiming to address all Arabs — further underlining the need for inconclusive depth and complexity in frames of reference even within one Arab, African, Middle Eastern country and one individual woman.

Recognizing and blurring boundaries moves beyond decolonization and passive colonial depictions to constantly charting cultural territory of ideological consciousness: “to achieve recognition is to re-chart and then occupy the place in imperial cultural forms reserved for subordination of a designated inferior Other. Hence, reinscription” (Said, 1994a:210). Women arguably battle to a greater extent against territorial and identity occupations than men to contest empire in contemporary rights against imposed multilayered subtle and blatant oppression(s). Multi-culturally situating resistances reveals the potentials in the spaces beyond and in between polarizations; unfolding

challenges if not rejection of hegemonic power canons. Continuous decolonization is counter-scholarship, critical reassessment of what is (ab)normalized, and by whom.

Male preference and dominance in societal realms of employment in political, legal, judicial and religious interpretations of rights and the family unit deters women's full engagement in determining their bodily autonomy and representational systems. External frames further intensify unfavourable impacts on women due to a perceived glass ceiling which limits spaces of imagination of alternative realities. The relation between experiences and knowledge is interlinked in webs of power and how these are produced and understood mould women's experiences and perceptions in academic, corporate and political spaces and realms. Apparatus of framing are described as meridians setting "artificial horizons" which, "in their very construction, possess a kind of rigor that is absolute and general, mathematical" (Derrida & Johnson, 1981:296) rather than situated, shifting, conscious, knowledge production. In "representing representation" (Ibid.: 297) frames are monolithic; to speak for representation, "proffering its discourse through a kind of "square mouth," "oblivion closed by the frame" (Ibid.). There is a theatrical illusion of power and (dis)empowerment between what is unrepresentable and what is representable; as worthy of representation, recognized as human life, and who is to be reduced as less than.

Due to voids of representation of women's complexity in women's and human rights discourses, the thesis is innovative in its epistemological approach of consciously choosing not to fit into a moulded, fixed category of analysis. My thesis commits itself to critical efforts stressing the urgent need for narratives of de-standardization of the image of the Arab woman in her own self expressions and social eloquence against exoticism of victimizing and silencing mechanisms. The eager endeavour to bring forth critical analysis of the historical invention of the other inquires the inadequacy of frames reinforcing patri-colonial *otherly* identities. In this contemporary moment of pressing need for human rights re-examination; the valuable process contributes to epistemological and irrefutable channels of resistances in shifting languages and structures of knowledge. Sequentially, I commit to identify spaces which may lead to comprehensively embracing Egyptian women and women of the East and West together at a roundtable of human rights exchange and solidarities with other women and men at national, regional and global levels.

Part I

State of the Art on Languages of Representation and Framing

The theoretical choice of adopting Edward Said is justified by the fundamental basis of argumentation which he, coming from Arab descent and exposed to foreign influence, delineates the ways by which some Western binary representations of the East may be condescending to people from the region. I seek to go beyond Orientalism to De-Orientalism in an effort of unlearning and re-imagining gazes of representation from a feminist perspective in contemporary times for women of the Arab South. Said's work is used extensively as a compass to the analysis of critical discourse, and yet I derive off it to assess representations of not only Arabs at large, or the whole region of the "Third World", but of deconstruction; focusing on specificity and nuances of women in Egypt. Seeking to dismantle all-encompassing generalizations and faulty portrayals, the particularity of one country is used to de-orient the homogenized notion of Arab women. Challenging representations which are produced as knowledge promotes the re-examination of mythical terms of oppositeness, distortion and self-validation of Western and male supremacy through enduring devaluation of the alleged other.

Said (1978:50) states "any account of Orientalism would have to consider not only the professional Orientalist and his work but also the very notion of a field of study based on a geographical, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic unit called the Orient"; conveying the constructs of language in frames and schemas of representation. In this sense, fields of interest are construed and appropriated in relation to the epistemological point from which they derive. To "speak of scholarly specialization as a geographical "field" is, in the case of Orientalism, fairly revealing since no one is likely to imagine a field symmetrical to it called Occidentalism" (Said, 1978:50) thus portraying the postcolonial gaze and the power imbalance producing the other. Hegemonic epistemologies of naming

display the reproduction of relational power heuristics between a situated speaker framing an abstracted other and on this account, may traverse beyond to scrutinize the potentials of naming in imagining a field called de-Orientalism. The socio-geographical naming(s) of East and West, the Orient, and the “Third World” have been formed from a western-centric position of superiority. The means by which these dichotomies are represented shows to what extent the “Orient” bolstered definitions of the West as its contrasting opposite or “cultural contestant” (Said, 1978), in a polarizing, self-validating mirroring of itself. The relation between the Orient and the Occident was and continues to be one of power and hegemonic domination based on extinguishing and vacating an imagined other: while western-centric discourses seemingly self-certify their power in producing the Oriental. The phrasing “Third World” is a misleading and alienating geography of oppression which must be challenged as destructively false from its outset. The politics of recognition and standards of approval in HR¹ domains cannot be liberated from colonialism if and when it is evident in frames of Egyptian women’s representation and political monitoring that these are seeking approval of, comparative to, and adhering by the languages of the oppressors who to begin with, do not see them.

¹ HR acronym used for Human Rights will be used from this point onward.

Chapter One

Politics of Media Frames and Silenced Realities

Media monitoring language brings to light the politics of epistemological patterns in global perspectives; unravelling oppressive silencing of the subjects which they appear to intend to frame, decipher, if not construe from their outset. The critical discourse analysis of newspaper articles framing Egyptian women thus undergoes thorough systematic investigation, which is moderately Arab and Egypt-centric in its time-frame. The chosen frame of reference is centered on a date in Egyptian contemporary political history; the eight years aftermath of the Egyptian revolution of 2011 to January of 2019, leading to the contemporary moment. Through concentrated analysis on a date of transformation and hope for Egyptians, the research seeks to highlight the significance of positioning in frame production and de-framing centricities shaping political and social memory. In this chapter I endeavour to explore the theoretical discussion of media frames prior to delving into detailed qualitative and empirical data collected in the following section of the thesis. The underlying cause for misconceptions and reductionist sociopolitical attitudes styled by mass media are argued to be largely due to persistent Eurocentric, western-centric and Orientalist epistemologies. The above-mentioned structures are channelled through languages which essentialise and fragment the other; as typical, and unworthy of being acknowledged as whole. Reproducing a narcissistic narrative of superiority continues to forge authoritarian dichotomies of life and (non)existence in HR knowledge and women's rights which is fixated further through framed references.

Colonialism, within the scope of this study, may be defined as the systematic means of control and domination of territories (tribes, ethnic groups) through economic, political, military and social impositions; consequently fragmenting and other-ing people and societies and establishing forms of government and infrastructure in the sole interest of the colonial power. Colonists established themselves as “conquerors” and

For that you want only brute force — nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others. They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got. It was just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale, and men going at it blind—as is very proper for those who tackle a darkness.

Conrad, 1997:9

The force of order further forcing definition on and obscuring the sight of women of the south is translated in present-day facades of normalized depictions. Neocolonialism deceitfully maintains contrived dependencies and disempowerment through subtle and blatant, physical and cognitive exploitation of people and their nations under the guise of rescue and assistance. The term is, therefore, a contemporary perpetuation of colonisation under methods of moral and financial imperialism, oppression and pressure not necessarily including direct military presence. Its objective remains the same; the accumulation of wealth by the coloniser at the detriment and impoverishment of the colony and according to the epistemological compass and canon of a centric West. Condemnation of the state of the other as coincidentally less than and in need of intervention is continued under imperialist pretences of Western social, economic and political development.

Imperialism and colonialism are often used interchangeably and yet imply difference. While both imply dominance on the other, colonial stems from Latin *colonus* meaning ‘farmer’ as European colonizers and settlers into the territories of natives under the larger ideology of imperialism. It is a mode of appropriating land and resources and extracting it in conquest, “in which sovereignty is operated over the colonized at a distance, often through the installation of settlements of colonists in the related process of colonization” (Maier, 2006:44 *apud* Mattingly, 2011:7). Imperialism stems from the Latin word *imperium* meaning advocacy of Empire and rule over expanded territories, while dating back from before colonialism to the Roman Empire, militarily. Empire establishment is mostly said to be of “non-consensual nature”, defining Empire as “rule over very wide territories and many peoples largely without their consent” (Mattingly, 2011:6). Imperialism involves the cognitive mindset of racial superiority, and the alleged right to dominate lands and the civilizing cultural mission due to their beliefs in their own moral imposition to deal with the rest of the world. Imperialism may thus be defined as referring to “both the process and attitudes by which an empire is established and maintained” (Ibid.). The imperium is built through colonization, and persists in direct and indirect exploitation for the demand of capitalism and flourishing economies of the West. Just as Empires changed forms over time, imperialism arguably similarly is “not static or uniform” (Ibid.), appearing under diverse apparatus. The ideological, cultural psyche does not end and remains in both aggressive and subtle mechanisms of authority and

oppression by the so called developed on the so called developing people and their regions accordingly.

Colonialism and postcolonialism have not only dominated lands and cultures territorially; but actively produce and engage in “forms of discursive appropriation: other cultures become appropriated into the imaginary globality of the colonising nation” (Ahmed, 2000:11), within apparatus of reductionist relationality and exclusion. The use of the term neo-colonialism is defined as speaking not only of the colonial aftermath, but also investigates how the remnants of European colonialism persist under different if not similar forms despite formal independence. The complex relation is based on a historical continuum under various names, producing and defining the other as an opposite polarized enemy. Postcolonialism transcribes itself in a continuous process of resistance through unlearning and renaming by the non-West, and it critiques the underlying dynamics of relational race, women’s representation and displacement to the West. Deconstructing the instrumentalisation of discourses justifying intrusion, imposition, measurably determining and systematically reinforcing authority on the so called other transcribes the core of the research from the perspective of women, therefore post patri-colonial frames.

The notion of dividing the world between ‘the West and the rest’ sustains the interpretation that ‘Western modernity’ is “commonly offered as a tautology: modernity being seen as something that the West created, and then provided to, or forced on, others” (Bonnett, 2004:75). Geographical positioning in relation to the West and framing the other reflect Western dependencies rather than dependencies of the other. It can be argued that beyond the false sense of pride is insecurity in contradictory desires to control not only framing histories but people into them. This hypothesis does not have the intention to overlook the reality in the Arab region of prolonged mass atrocities nor the similar projection of otherness amongst discourses of nationality, culture, tradition and religion as opposed to the West. However, the reality of dominance and imposition cannot be omitted due to its severity in political, economic, and sociocultural spheres of influence and perpetuated presence in every frame it produces.

Mama² (1995:17) describes the framing acquisition as “enslaving the soul of the Other”. In the way the African has been “construed as a subject” (Ibid.); white supremacy may be conceptualized as a “set of discourses and practices that subjugated non-European people and cast them in the position of subjected Others, while it advanced the interests of European nations” (Ibid.). The enslavement of the soul of the Other depicts a deeper colonialism, one of the very being and essence of a human. While pursuing the Empire’s own interest, the relations — based on slavery and colonialism — are not equal from their points of departure. Mama (Ibid.) illustrates that “enslavement and colonisation did not only materially exploit and politically subordinate African resources and ways of life but at the same time transformed and subjected Africans to the imaginings and caprices of imperial culture and psychology”. In its psychological depth, the cognitive objectification of the other as an ideology and discourse can be said to justify itself through its own claims of scientific and moral reasoning.

The evidences I have gathered in media monitoring — discussed in greater depth in Chapter Five — persuade me that postcolonialism largely “continues to render non-Western knowledge and culture as 'other' in relation to the normative 'self' of Western epistemology and rationality” (Ghandi, 1998:x). Efforts towards de-orienting the “mode of address” learn to “speak more adequately to the world which it speaks for” (Ibid.), and interrupt and reassess standpoints of relationality in identity and politics of recognition. My theoretical choice in referring to postcolonialism is to critically adhere to its use, investigating instances of its repetition, in that the recurrence of the word colonialism questions whether it is in fact an era, postcolonialism or if it is continually reiterated as a persistent marker in memory. This argument interrogates whether social constructs can exist independently from, or be liberating in, the same languages that they are oppressive. As colonialism is understood in different ways depending on location and situation, and it cannot be assumed to have ended in a linear manner. I inquire therefore despite the connotation of postcolonialism that colonialism has ended; other terming may mask recurring absences in human advance. For both non-Western and Western feminisms and men, guises of somewhat redundant epistemological presumptions may be seen to continue under mechanisms of selectivity in knowledge access and production.

² Amina Mama is a Nigerian British writer, feminist and academic. Her eclectic experience has shaped her world-view and work, in strengthening relationships between women intellectuals across the world and the discussion on postcolonial and gender issues.

From its point of departure the discussion derives from dialogue across media monitoring³ representational languages and direct resistances which are understood as in–definitive accounts yet valued in their entirety. Power-making processes are seen to reinforce “existing domination or seize structural positions of domination” (Castells, 2009:47). These correspondingly produce capacities which “resist established domination on behalf of the interests, values, and projects that are excluded or under-represented in the programs and composition of the networks” (Ibid.). The research reflects the need for recognizing diverse realities despite the apparent commonalities under naming of the Arab region, people and women. I aim to contribute to spaces defending what is “a matter of rights, a demand for response to previous harm and denial” (McLaughlin, 2003:7). The tension faced in women’s rights frameworks stresses the need for more distinct critical consideration of the perspectives from which HR grammars are produced. Analysing the production of the “Third World” and experiences produced by media and other canons of truth contests universal exclusions;

To venture so apparently uncontroversial a truth about how all cultures in fact behave was nothing less than an act of delinquency; the opportunity offered you to say something in the name of pluralism and fairness was sharply restricted to inconsequential bursts of facts, stamped as either extreme or irrelevant. With no acceptable narrative to rely on, with no sustained permission to narrate, you feel crowded out and silenced.

Said, 1994a:325

Inquiry of narratives of representations of women and Arabs in media discourses through qualitative and quantitative data and the relationship of sociological exchange needed between the two forms of data, crucially cross-dialogues with semi-structured personal interviews. Through a socioculturally and politically aware continuous — rather than fixed framing — effort; the epistemological choices seek to fulfil my aim to convey the dangers of perpetuation of theoretical and practical languages which reproduce omissions. Investigating constraints, alienation and silencing furthermore assesses how frames may normalize and shape conflict and HR violations in the Arab region. The sample for international media is assessed for its claim to be global and the particular

³ Media Monitoring: Newspaper articles collected in the international edition of the Guardian newspaper with the keywords: Egypt, Women and Rights producing a systematic analysis of the representation of the Arab woman in the western international media, in the English language, mass produced, read and renowned newspaper.

moments and languages it uses to refer to women's rights with particular focus on Egyptian women.

In some moments, contemporary media frames may be seen to mirror historical projections and manipulations of social consciousness alienating Arabs — identified as a “portentous opponent in the Islamic state” (Kabbani, 1986:5). Perpetuating fear — Western discourses are seen to largely act as a tool for self-proclaimed polarized superiority, which fashions a “polemic to check whatever influence such a rival state might have” (Ibid.). It can be argued that these languages reproduce doctrines of hostility and fanaticism. Polycentric multiculturalism points to the need to move beyond mere tolerance of disempowered groups in their depictions to transformations of power relations towards equality. Imagery sympathising with otherwise marginalized and muted peoples de-oriens oppressive apparatus in that “no single community or part of the world, whatever its economic or political power, should be epistemologically privileged” (Shohat and Stam, 1994:48). Moreover, that no geopolitical region should be defined from a one point centric focus or produced as epistemologically stunted through violent narratives and mechanisms of silence.

Diverse contextual situations framed by knowledge produced on women's rights in Egypt involve languages which elicit certain emotions around outrage, apathy, sympathy and desensitisation which reflect differing perspectives. Linguistic data is thus used to understand “emotionally charged areas like that of sexism and other forms of discriminatory behaviour” (Lakoff and Bucholtz, 2004:39). Cognitive thoughts guide expression, and discourses influence cognitive thoughts and actions. Thus, attempts to discover linguistic data as diagnostic evidence of the relationship of power pose questions on potentials of language “from the linguistic end of the problem: does one correct a social inequity by changing linguistic disparities?” (Ibid.). Efforts of critical deconstruction of naming and definition speak back to the frame in closely assessing linguistic use. This further hypothesizes that women “experience linguistic discrimination in two ways: in the way they are taught to use language, and in the way general language use treats them” (Ibid.). This analysis is strengthened with discourses which shift the emphasis to move beyond the way women are subjects of languages to their own eloquences as powerful agents of production, influence and linguistic articulation. Women's own social inter-networks in complex spheres in addition to more global forces

framing identities are shaped by the contextual situation from which they are produced. This impacts how they determine, delineate and express themselves for different purposes, at different moments, public and private, and within interactions diversely concerning women in their social realms. Therefore, analysis recognizes and strives towards being sociopolitically aware of the historical and contextual source of production of its moment. It counters abstractions in their sourced specificity so as neither to generalize that all Western media reproduces the same truths — nor that all Arab women produce the same truths, in that no knowledge is absolute. It however acknowledges that exploring possible existences of trends in representation and dangers within its overtones may depict the significance of valued resistances beyond them; in women's self-represented articulations.

Delimiting borders through different understandings and productions of knowledge expands fields of references in academic spaces, mirrored through dynamic identities and the knowledge produced by them: “the collapse of borders in scholarship reflects and parallels the collapse of borders in the post-industrial world” (Henderson, 1995:4). Personal drives of youth, particularly girls seeking education and academic freedom occupy and expand new spaces of discussion. In these spaces — despite limited access to academic freedom — their presence has the capacity to impact further engagements across socioeconomic, racialized or gendered boundaries. Encounters promote spaces for interruptions, dialogues, and translational exchange of personal experiences. This contributes to moving beyond mere framing and recognition, to commending intersectional, multi-dimensional and shifting identities which blur the boundaries constraining people in public spaces and in women's rights advancement.

In this chapter I theoretically lay the foundation for the media monitoring analysis and the politics of media frames. I firstly assess the Languages and Power of Media in international representations of the other and other of the other, women of the South. Secondly, the element of Eurocentrism: Collective Outrage versus Collective Apathy in productions of media frames and finally; Women's Resistance in Epistemology: HR Encounters and Arab Feminisms deconstructing Double Patriarchies to unpack the dynamics of representations, the struggles of recognition and agencies of Egyptian women in resisting them.

1.1 Languages and Power of Media

The languages used by media canons of knowledge is assessed in cross-analysis with women's chosen wording in their self narration. Seeking to bring to light hegemonic forces in analytical frames of both regional state and global media: "state practices of exclusion and hierarchisation vis-à-vis certain groups based on ethnic and national origin are no different from racism even if they hide behind the rhetoric of 'belonging'" (Herzog, 2004:54). National and global classifications conveying methods of control and exclusion are considerably evident in social and legal systems of naming. In doing so, these claim and renounce power of the subject which is already named by racial or gender subordination, or both. While dominant groups mostly maintain their privilege, not all acknowledge or question their privilege race-thinking through generations. More so, the "structural arrangements that bind them to this conceptual mode, have made the category of race a source of identification, cultural crystallisation, belonging and collective strength" (Ibid.: 55). This reiterates critical reassessment of the infrastructures of discriminatory thought and its connections to media as a tool of influence, speaking across vast reductive conjectures in its structural renewal of such codes and in consequence, the potentials to deconstruct them.

A "wide variety of hybrid representations of the Orient now roam the culture" (Said, 1978:285) from normalized violence amongst Arabs, and threats of their physical and ideological presence in Europe. Orientalist discourse has updated itself with Islamophobia as to instil fear of the other based on apparent lack of likeness. Western-centric imagery depictions consistently portray the Arab as reduced, distanced and "faintly outlined stereotype as a camel-riding nomad to an accepted caricature as the embodiment of incompetence and easy defeat" (Ibid.) in violence, when depicted at all. In addition to this, the region is repeatedly framed as a singularity of disorder and chaos, or emptiness and void of humanity. Anti-Semitism of the physical and social portrayal of the Arab was to depict that so-called Semites were "at the bottom of all "our" troubles" — and so "if the Arab occupies space enough for attention, it is a negative value (...) [and] insofar as this Arab has any history, it is part of the history given [to] him (or taken from him: the difference is slight) by Orientalist tradition" (Ibid.:286). In the historical trajectory of regional relations presently under debate in HR expression and practice — similar to political and media projections of the Arab other connected to terrorism particularly post the September 11th attacks in 2001 in the United States — the element of

evil is *Oriented* as a definition of opposite, savage and male. For this reason the research is conscious of the terrorist attacks as a moment where languages of terrorism and of the barbaric other increased, distinguishing us and them further. It does not however use this date as the event to politically focus media monitoring as frames in languages were affected but existed prior, and towards vigilance in de-orienting the standpoint of instrumentalized views.

Recurring global power relations of exploitation are exercising similar forms of authority when producing reports on the atrocities in the region and deduce the life of the Arab as less than. This reduces the recognition of the Arab woman in contexts of violence, chaos and questions of humanity. Difference in grievability questions what would happen

If those killed in the current wars were to be grieved in such an open way? Why is it that we are not given the names of all the war dead, including those the US has killed, of whom we will never have the image, the name, the story, never a testimonial shard of their life, something to see, to touch, to know?

Butler, 2009:39

There is tension in contradicting interests and establishments of power; created on both fronts and imposed to a detrimental extent on the women of the South when perpetuating discourses of oppression. The moral responsibility the West claims is highly contradictory and hypocritical; in that it is based upon “exclusionary norms by which fields of recognizability are constituted, fields that are implicitly invoked when, by a cultural reflex, we mourn for some lives but respond with coldness to the loss of others” (Butler, 2009:36), or in reactions to violations towards others. Discriminatory exclusion is not limited to the women or people of the Arab region but also the so called South within the North. This includes Arabs which externally show their religion for example, present in European countries, and racialized and other blurred citizenships such as African Americans, refugees, and LGBTQ lives. Furthermore, this translates in the dismissal of feminist movements which are blamed, silenced, or forcibly re-inscribed within different struggles according to different power relations that they could be perceived to serve or sustain. The South within the North therefore conveys that the South is not limited to its region but exists in different forms and on different geopolitical terrains. Notions of the South as “opposing the North is not the South constituted by the North as victim, but rather the South that rebels in order to overcome the existing normative dualism” (Santos,

2018:7). Confrontation of the “hierarchical dichotomy” (Ibid.) is focused on de-orienting its compass rather than claiming to be the opposite of the North, nor endeavour to take its place. Apathy and lack of exchange towards severe HR violations is largely determined by the languages that communicate the violation and the identity of the affected. How they are framed and identified in relational power apparatus’ are indicators of structural mechanisms of distancing, exclusion and extinguishing life and death from their epistemological outset to their moulded impacts. Resistance is therefore not in correspondent opposition but in interrupting languages of oppression in between dichotomies to break polarized frames.

Basic human needs and “other conditions for persisting and flourishing” (Butler, 2009:29) are framed in a way to confirm or revoke these needs for specific peoples. This thus makes “possible the practices of war” through “conditioning and facilitating” (Ibid.) structures that reinforce and justify it. Mechanisms of surveillance and access to them, as the “operation of cameras, not only in the recording and distribution of images of torture, but as part of the very apparatus of bombing, make it clear that media representations have already become modes of military conduct” (Ibid.). In this respect the self-validating relationship between the “material reality of war” and the “representational regimes through which it operates” — thus “rationalize its own operation” (Ibid.). Through interpretation and administration, realities and ontological statuses are “compromised and suspended” (Ibid.); dictating languages and defining subjects which reflects the necessity of monitoring rights from alternative standpoints.

Frames of violence, war, recognition and irrelevance are reproduced and “contain, convey, and determine what is seen” (Ibid.:10) — and thus what is not seen or made invisible. Fear of the foreign overlooks the reasons for distancing classifications as refugees in our soil. Additionally communicating a certain language of force in an invasionary manner:

The intermediary does not lighten the oppression, nor seek to hide the domination; he shows them up and puts them into practice with the clear conscience of an upholder of the peace; yet he is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native.

Fanon *et al.*, 1965:38

Correspondingly, the global media and HR discourses may be said to be playing the role of the present-day intermediary in terms of violence, generalizations and vast polarizing images. Media and HR discourses not only frame but constrain and pretend to define; and their influence does not end at the point of production. Fanon's provocative comparison between the two peoples and lands, describes one as a settler's town of white people, foreigners, and the native's as a colonized hungry town, with no light or space: a town of "niggers and dirty Arabs" (Fanon *et al.*, 1965:39). Such contrast conveys extremely distressing depictions reinforced by mass generalizations at times apparent in contemporary media coverage⁴, where in one area a life is recognizable, celebrated even, and grievable upon its loss and another is fated to suffer or be eradicated. This is based on the fact that the person is born there, but it seems to matter "little where or how; they die there; it matters not where nor how" (Ibid.). In conveying the "totalitarian character of colonial exploitation, the settler paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil" (Ibid.:40); further tainting the identity of another, and demoralizing it in a way which makes the people unrelatable and unknown in addition to being denounced as evil, unwanted, threats. Discourses of difference reproduce standardization of patri-colonial inequalities which continue unrelentingly. All the while "tradition remains the sacred weapon oppressors repeatedly hold up whenever the need to maintain their privileges, hence to impose the form of the old on the content of the new, arises" (Minha-ha, 1989:106), and by the same token in bolstering doctrines of fear.

It is said that a "very large segment of day-to-day professional communication takes place in the international language, English" (Scollon and Wong, 2001:4), moreover, that communication is between one "non-native speaker of English and another" (Ibid.). Realities are far too complex to assume that a "language solely determines the thought patterns of its speakers" (Ibid.). Yet, "many aspects of western culture, especially western patterns of discourse" lead to "misinterpretation in intercultural discourse" (Ibid.), carried within the parameters and cognitive schemas of language and "transmitted through the process of teaching and learning of English" (Ibid.). The relational conversation is largely

⁴ *Newspaper article* of the Guardian describes women's agency in Egypt from a patronizing gaze: firstly discrediting not even questioning whether women have political and social place in the Egyptian revolution, but stating that they do not through the predefining title: "Egypt election: no revolution for women". Moreover evident when western feminist speaker undermines, slanders and shames women's struggle describing reluctance to be active in their politics as a "dirty scene" (Tomlin, 2011); no solidarity, ethics ("buying votes") full of competition, and women's alienation. She expresses women's need to claim discussion but ends with a quote from foreign imposition, outsider perspective, expressing need for different ways to claim and frame women's rights by stating patriarchal society as if West is not: reproducing DP, and framing it for the women as a western filmmaker (Tomlin, 2011).

directed to the power advantage of the native speaker who may conduct and transcribe the dialogue according to their own fluency and frame. In instances when the non-native speaker is fluent, the process of access and accomplishment of this fluency in communication is required if not neglected. Questioning the inverse scenario — had the native English speaker learned Arabic as an example for the purpose of this discussion — would be largely regarded by Arabs with apprehension. Many Egyptians for example would wonder what is being interpreted and for whom, rather than a normalized endeavour to learn a language for translation, communicational exchange and access to knowledge. Digitised academic production of public sociology in addition to social media networks engages (and thus excludes) numerous individuals by grouping. As

part of algorithmic veillance and the production of algorithmic identities, people become represented as configurations of others in the social media networks with which they engage and the websites people characterised as ‘like them’ visit.

Lupton, 2015:146

These structures increase elements of likeness, and ergo, difference in expanding spaces of individuality and urging confrontation against doctrines of fixed identities and languages.

Despite the theory of power which feminist knowledge entails, particularly for women academics: the “university is not free of specificity in history and is marked by gender, class, and ethnic differences” (Okely *et al.*, 2007: 228). This is much like knowledge production in the English language, or translations to language second to one’s own which further curtails knowledge. The “global predominance of the English language means that much significant and innovative research, legal and policy reforms, and support work fail to inform international debate” (Dobash and Dobash, 1998:56) which cannot be disregarded from its epistemological production. Contextual sociocultural struggles and women’s global burdens; in addition to access to Arabic education,⁵ all impact women entering media and academia from Arab or non-Western origins. Translating and producing knowledge in English presumes a limitation in that

⁵ Education in Egypt also encompasses other realms of access and limitations including the more privatized postcolonial schooling in Egypt under foreign schooling systems and languages such as English, French or German.

Regional or minority language skills per se can be strongly supported by available offerings from kinstates where the language is used, such offerings cannot be a substitute for domestic support for minority language media. If supply from a kinstate is the only contact with media in the language in question, an important link between language and community will be absent.

Moring and Dunbar, 2008:20-21

Despite limited access to channels of knowledge; women's rights research as a field of study entails "vital interdisciplinary connections, in contrast to the strict or even antagonistic boundaries between disciplines" (Okely *et al.*, 2007:244), across other fields and languages. Moreover women's visibilities have increased due to "occasional access to academic power" (Ibid.) gradually enhancing independence and changing power structures of the university and formal and informal spaces in media production. Women remain nevertheless, arguably limited as contributing equals speaking in their own languages in national and global frames.

1.2 Eurocentrism: Collective Outrage versus Collective Apathy

Frames are constituted by "neural networks of association" (Castells, 2009:142) that can be accessed from language through metaphorical connections. Structures impacting consciousness depend on the cognitive images and emotions which are derived — and activate specific neural networks in semantic fields of language and conceptual thought. Epistemological frames greatly dispose "outcomes of outrage, apathy, and collective and individual action" and the "complexity in forms and dimensions of emotions" (Goodwin *et al.*, 2001: 10). These structures impact the duration of responses and emotions within specific cultural settings displayed through action and inaction. The power to occupy and interrupt doctrines of social imbalance reclaims knowledge through individual and collective narratives. Situated narratives may thus directly contest the problematic hegemonic concentration silencing personal identities and self-definition(s) and determining social outrage towards some instances of HR violations and apathy towards others.

Self-proclaimed global voids of expression and relatability in the production of framing doctrines are felt by the Arab region. When violations on individual and vast numbers of

Arab person's rights or life occur; she, he and they are less likely to receive the collective outrage of emotion in reaction to its loss but rather a desensitized apathy to it, when comparably unprotected by international humanness and solidarity. Similar to the relationship between distance and closeness; Eurocentrism and racism are interlinked whereby discrimination against particular individuals is predominantly due to group profiling, racism, and patriarchy. This normalized operation is deeply embedded in structural society. The Eurocentric code of thought is "fundamentally unrepresentative of a world which has long been multicultural" (Shohat and Stam, 1994:4). Blurring boundaries occurs in spaces that are beyond the polarized fixed categorizations, within which, "women curve their ways, negotiating their own overlapping identities as well as challenging the dominant social definitions" (Herzog, 2004:77). Women's complex diversities and efforts to encounter and confront dominant canons of ruling and influencing society convey active stances against restrictions on their existence and flourishing lives.

Proximity and cultural codes play a major role in the shaping of notions of multiculturalism in the global North. The connotations of representing the other, whether as geographically distant, alienated in opposition, or in proximity and yet still not part of us, we; are conveyed through the dynamics of the intersections between multiculturalism and the definition of national and political identities. Ahmed (2000) questions how multiculturalism reinvents 'the nation' "over the bodies of strangers? How does the act of 'welcoming the stranger' serve to constitute the nation? How is (...) 'we' of the nation affirmed through the difference of the 'stranger cultures', rather than against it?" (Ahmed, 2000:95). Through emphasised distinctions between us and the other in language; reputed "strangers become incorporated into the 'we' of the nation, at the same time as that 'we' emerges as the one who has to live with it (cultural diversity) and by implication with 'them' (those 'specific ethnic groups')" (Ibid.). Doctrines of belonging further reinforce selective recognition and value on particular bodies and exclusion, consequently, of others. In her book, she delineates:

I wonder at the conditions of possibility for the writing of these other 'strange encounters', as encounters with aliens, those who are beyond the very category of 'the human'. It seems symptomatic that the strange encounter is written as the encounter with the one who is, quite literally, not from this planet.

Ahmed, 2000:1

The process of producing knowledge about the Oriental — whether concerning woman, man, imaginative space or location — is imbalanced in the sense that it is dictated and reproduced in the dark of dichotomies. The situated context of the patriarchal postcolonial gaze of reception impacts the process of identification — missing, to a large extent, how the woman shapes her world from her gaze. This underlines the need for analysis of spectatorship to “explore the tensions among the different levels, the diverse ways that text, apparatus, history, and discourse construct the spectator, and the ways that the spectator as subject/interlocutor shapes the encounter” (Shohat and Stam, 1994:350). The way by which the frame is produced from the point of view and tools of the spectator in media spectatorship “impacts complexly on national identity, communal belonging, and political affiliation” (Ibid.:354). Therefore, to a large extent this shapes collective memory and action concerning situated and displaced realities.

Different and unbalanced conceptions resulting from certain epistemological frames and the misleading problems which derive when one’s “living status [is] open to apprehension” (Butler, 2009:8) subject human lives to standards of monitoring and selective value placement. In addition to apprehension, Butler (2009) argues that intelligibility schemas also condition and produce norms of recognizability. To apprehend a life, one must firstly recognize it as a life and one that can be relatable to one’s own. Enhancing the radicality of Freud's work on human identity ponders: “how, in the postwar world, that constellation of words and valences that surrounds Europe and the West acquired a much more fraught and even rebarbative meaning from observers outside Europe and the West” (Said, 2003: 17). In Said’s complex arguments he seeks to “point out how bound [figures and writers from the past] were by the perspectives of their own cultural moment as far as their views of other cultures and peoples were concerned” (Ibid.:23). Thus, systematically affirming their situated authorities, self-validated through the displacement of the other.

Frames of Eurocentrism invisibilize intersectional identities and multiculturalist existence in the “Middle East” through homogeneous naming, for example; “Egypt melds Pharaonic, Arab, Muslim, Jewish, Christian/ Coptic, and Mediterranean influences” (Shohat and Stam, 1994:5). Within and outside the frame exists complex diversity: largely excluding Arab women who do not identify with Islam. This includes Christian

Copts, Maronites, Armenians, Syriacs, Assyrians, Arab Catholics, in addition to the various Muslim branches within Islam and degrees and ways of religiosity. These are not aptly represented by internal, and even more so, global political recognition and policies. Furthermore, the region's Muslim population consists of only about "only 20% in the Middle East and North Africa (the historical cradle of Islam)" (Whitaker, 2009) of the world's Muslims, further confirming the abstraction in connections of vast generalizations in naming.

When racism frames an individual and is made personal, there is a lost opportunity for an "antiracist pedagogy: racism is reduced to an individual, attitudinal problem, distracting attention from racism as a systematic self-reproducing discursive apparatus that itself shapes racist attitudes" (Shohat and Stam, 1994:48). In addition to eclipsing complexities of the individual and abstracting what they seek to represent by what they are made to represent. It can be argued that within this space, individuals may speak out in dialogue in that no segregation is absolute: "all utterances inescapably take place against the background of the possible responses of other social and ethnic points of view" (Ibid.). Utterances and resonances imply silences and hesitance to utter, which are also valued in coming to comprehend contextual environments which impact women's choice to claim certain experiences and to remain anonymous to others. Such dynamics convey that racial and national diversity is "fundamental to every utterance, even to that utterance which on the surface ignores or excludes the groups with which it is in relation" (Ibid.). Associating and distancing portray the non-autonomous existence of "communities, societies, nations, and even entire continents" (Ibid.) in a "densely woven web of relationality" (Ibid.). Countering framing identifications — notions of proximity, belonging, from where, and for whom — enhances the realm of self-direction which deduces readiness to utter and choices to remain silent, which are thus given serious consideration in epistemology and raise the question of non-choice.

Representations of the East continue to assume a racialized superior authority which can be drawn historically under several forms; colonialism, Orientalism, and most recently, a continuation if not culmination of this trajectory; Islamophobia — prejudice against Muslims particularly as a political force which further burdens women. It is not the same as racism, xenophobia, afrophobia and negrophobia as it does not address the same constructed fear based on cultural and racial phenomena, but through a mix of cultural,

racial and religious it employs similar mechanisms of producing hatred and fear of the other and exclusion as its basis. Misleadingly, it may appear to be more specific, by being directed at a particular religion and people affiliated to it in abstracted ways. However, the wide-ranging political construction of apprehension of the other is not specific or particular to its political counterparts but in like manner; seeks to encompass vast populations in one word. Muslim people exist not only within the Islamic regions, but in European neighbourhoods, integrated in societies or forming their own communities, visible or invisible in the streets. Their “region and country of origin, together with religion, have formed dominant markers in popular and official understandings of multicultural communities” (Afshar *et al.*:2005:268). Geopolitical-based historical accounts — have and continue to — distinguish the distant other as a religiously oppressed being, ignoring the patriarchal realities and sociopolitically charged oppressions existing also within the West. These accounts proclaim violence and acts of terror as foreign, of the East, of militant groups, and therefore subjectively frame masses of people affiliated to the region under non-secular governance depicted as oppressed by default. This reinforces discriminatory attitudes against anyone heard speaking Arabic, or of some resemblance whether physically or by name, to an Arab, or to a Muslim.

The growing focus and literature illustrating expressions of Islamophobia is “dominated by empirical studies, the analysis of media representations and socio-psychological approaches” (Sayyid, 2014:10). Nevertheless, research has been “less successful in understanding the phenomena and mapping its relationship with other forms of discriminatory practices such as racism and anti-Semitism” (Ibid.). Theoretically interlinked; “these ontic studies of Islamophobia do not (and cannot address) the ontology of the category” (Ibid.), particularly without detachment from the languages which produce it. The studies are in political need of conceptual clarity; in how the category “appears in a contested field where questions about national security, social cohesion and cultural belonging are played out” (Ibid.), delineating the linkages to be understood from complex situations. This emphasises Islamophobic discourses as the field in which “the relationship between national majorities and the postcolonial, ethnically marked minorities is being forged” (Ibid.); in the production of unscientific generalizations in relation to imageries of fear. In trying to define Islamophobia, Sayyid (Ibid.:13) indicates that “what a term comes to mean is related to how it is used, how it is embedded in cultural practices and, in other words, the language game played around the term in

question”. In that for a widely contested concept as Islamophobia, the politics around its use are “far more visible than the politics around the use of many other terms and an ostensive definition would not work” (Ibid.:14). The ambiguity of the term reveals the dangers in employing the same apparatus of its homogenous production in its analysis and further, for the underlying dynamics of its origin to be overlooked.

Stereotypes are driven through western-centric and Eurocentric depictions which continue to be somewhat conveyed in global news coverage. Immediate presumptions and differentiations among people in times of conflict; whether victim or perpetrator of violence, denounce as violent and in the same moment stigmatize the other, orienting their existence to fate of danger towards themselves or whomever may surround them. This proves highly problematic to populations of the region which are condemning the same acts of terror, and in particular to the women in the region who are fighting battles on two fronts. Women in patriarchal, non-secular state systems with predominantly men in authoring positions of religious interpretations, legislation and political power, are not homogeneous as women. They live under further complex intersections of HR struggles where men too, albeit, exist under threats of radicalism. When acts of terror are brought to light, women are highly further condemned in their depictions, or minimized reduction of violations in abstracting the complexity of their situation.

It may be said that the false assumption that Islam is incompatible with HR or feminism is as destructive as mechanisms that politicize the essence of the faith into the political sphere at the expense of women. Homogeneous frames are thus “causal ingredients and effects of prejudices, racism, and discrimination” (Afshar *et al.*:2005:268). Producing the Arab-Muslim world as separate hegemony discounts differences and similarities which effaces all complex diversity in addition to potentials of sameness both in the region and abroad. New information “carries with it the potential to shock, to disrupt, and to destabilize as it intrudes into the policy process” (Jones and Baumgartner, 2005:55) in interventions delimiting women’s patri-colonial confinement. Decision-making and monitoring the world is incomplete due to “heuristic shortcuts” to handle the overabundance of information thus measuring “social realities with error” (Ibid.:57). Deriving from purported facts, HR coverage impacts cognitive recognition and reactions and has “jarring implications for the proper response to the state of the world, such as public policy outcomes” (Ibid.). These consequences stress the need to deconstruct fixed frames for their scientific invalidity and perpetual crises.

Increasingly, with distorted representations in film culture and news allegedly reporting reality or truth; the word terror has and continues to spark widespread fear—that has been constructed as a phenomenon known as Islamophobia. In manufacturing a common threat, the image of the other is vastly connected to Islam, Muslims, and the Arab region in terms of terrorism, aggression and constant images of chaos and violence. The power of ideology and radicalism due to fear is occurring also in the South; fear of the North. Distancing polarization based from one dominant standpoint perpetuates doctrines of direct and indirect exclusion. Additionally, these structures compose presentiment of the other, and other of the other: which turns “discourse theoretically into an epistemological closure, making interventions in it conditional on the discourse’s own terms is to make intervention impossible” (Odeh, 2019:4). In patriarchal epistemologies women are subjected as being the other in both cases by dominant apparatus based on alienation;

One thing about “terrorism” as a phenomenon of the public sphere of communication and representation in the West that seems most striking is its isolation from any explanation or mitigating circumstances, and its isolation as well from representations of most other dysfunctions, symptoms, and maladies of the contemporary world.

Said, 1994b:342

Women’s racialised isolations reinforce interdependent structures towards schemas of fixed oppression and extend to detachment between the public and private, and from insulated interventions in the exclusive epistemological web of knowledge production. The production of terror and affiliation to it is further heightened in its self-fulfilling discourse. Amin (2009:28) declares the reality of autocratic power in Arab societies claiming that this prevalent rule “retains or loses its legitimacy on grounds other than the non-recognition of the principles of democracy”. Moreover, if capable of “resisting imperial aggression, or of giving the impression of doing so” (Ibid.), may reject “modernity” and guarantees, through its rejection, the “exclusive ideological focus” (Ibid.) is at the center of its project. Media depictions of terrorism reproducing alarm are construed to “lack discriminate contents or definition, but [...] signify moral power and approval for whoever uses them, moral defensiveness and criminalization for whomever they designate” (Said, 1994a:310); whom is outcasted afar in the framing. The “terror induced by the overscale images of “terrorism” and “fundamentalism” [...] — figures of an international or transnational imaginary made up of foreign devils — hastens the

individual's subordination to the dominant norms of the movement" (Ibid.). This blurs boundaries between race, nationalism and arguably between women as constructs of social belonging, identity, and exclusion. Politics and languages of terrorism are scarcely uncorrupted and when exist, are somewhat "disqualified as instruments for conducting rational, secular inquiry into the causes of human violence" (Said, 1994b:349). This largely perpetuates systematic schemas of (mis)representation and exclusionary HR discourses concerning women's rights.

In projections of identity and acts of self-validation and definition, the Arab woman works in appeasement within the antithetical structures which define her as the minority. Misinterpretations of the other due to fear and language dichotomies feed radicalism, arguably, on both fronts. Amin argues that radicalism may be a result of the inability to "deal with the damage caused by the integration of the Arab and Muslim countries into the world capitalist system" (Amin, 2009:28), — as well as the "emergence of political Islam, the confusion in political conflicts, but also the re-emergence of social struggles" (Ibid.). The phenomenon in perplexity is likewise evident in global discourses and translated as political Islamophobia most likely as a discriminatory generalized discourse, used as a pretext to dismiss the other and their ideals. The "creation of terror and the perpetration of atrocities are aspects of militant action in the unequal world we inhabit, of our notions of what is cruel and what is necessary, and of the emotions with which we justify or condemn particular acts of death dealing" (Asad, 2007:2). While these tensions and dichotomies are powerful in both sides and framed under different contexts and pretexts; they fall consistently and mostly at the expense of the women of the region.

In describing the dynamics of Islamic Activism and civil society, the linkage between democratization and civil society should be apparent, in that democracy is a "set of rules and institutions of governance through a peaceful management of competing groups and/or conflicting interests" (Ibrahim, 2002:246). Therefore, the "normative component of civil societies [is] essentially the same as that of democracy" (Ibid.); in employing set apparatus across non-homogenous and diverse peoples. In reality the "relationship between civil society and democratization is neither simple, linear, nor operates in a vacuum" (Ibid.:247). This is dependently shaped by its own location, collective memory and the sociocultural normalization of its influence — the political culture of the particular environment and its surrounding factors. The full complexities are only partially depicted in fixed frames of contemporary communications. The external forces

which currently (dis)qualify the region, its means of governance and its democratic performance in accordance to external standards may be said to directly and indirectly undermine national pre-existing systems of social solidarity and civil society. Additionally, surface level descriptions of these relationships accentuate societies' dangers of misinterpretations, particularly those that women in Egypt are each contrastingly faced with individually and as separate collectivities. The influences on nationalism and structured discriminations largely determine current frames and what is worthy to be remembered and glorified, and on the contrary, what is not worthy of social and collective recognition let alone glorification. Memory and nationalism are said to be "intimately connected, and history is crucial to the documentation and erasure of collective memory, to the remembering and forgetting of recognizable commonalities" (Rai, 2008:15). This is reflected in contemporary media reportage, which is never independent from the political culture it is born but arguably a reflection of it. History from patri-colonial perspectives thus fundamentally reinforces itself from its positioning.

Due to the complexities of the discourse on political frontlines, the politics of fear-based discrimination are said to be a struggle between its opponents and advocates. Hence; the "rearranging of the normal axis of conflict in Western plutocracies, demonstrates the disruptive effect of the disclosure of a Muslim political subject position" (Ibid.:14), in addition to the non-Muslim in the region and the Muslims outside the region, subjected by default. The "category of Islamophobia depends on the existence of a Muslim subject position" (Sayyid, 2014:17-8), and on the location of the political other framing and diffusing fear. I would argue that in this case it is not just the Muslim as a political subject, but rather expanded to other-ly identities coming from the Muslim region, from an Islamic country, affiliated to an Arab name or perceived identity. Pigeonholing occurs regardless of people's ethnic or religious background, and even physical profiling; but merely dependent on being thought to be appearing or sounding as an idealized subject of discrimination or stereotyped, fear-based prejudice upon identification. Therefore the concept of Islamophobia, although directed at a radical Islam, discriminates against all Muslims, and does not represent all Muslims. The concept also targets and discriminates against non-Muslims from the region or lives somewhat physically or socially thought to be affiliated to religion depending on their external constructions of this thought. Being condemned as a political subject — is preceded and followed by silences of complex and vast expressions and social identities. Each life which is thought to be framed in the

discriminatory act is then further muted in moments where she or he may even express or defend her-self and him-self in the need to explain and justify their detailed self-positioning within and under both national and global structures.

Counter-measures against Islamophobia seek to move beyond mere refutation of the claims made by it. Aiming to de-essentialize these claims, in telling different narratives in words and action, further circumscribes the need for these alternative stories to “abandon a Westernizing horizon as a common destiny” (Ibid.:22), through fundamental epistemological reassessment. Critique seeks to dismantle specific structures rather than mere representations in media and political debate arousing fear of the Arab or Muslim subject. Sayyid states

The emergence of Islamophobia points to two key developments: firstly, Islamophobia posits a post-racial subject that is subjected to exclusionary practices. Secondly, Islamophobia marks the transformation in the balance of power and anxieties generated by the decentering of the West. Naming something 'Islamophobia' is a way of alerting us to the persistence of the racial in the post-racial. Much of the opposition to the deployment of Islamophobia reminds us of the post in the post-racial.

Sayyid, 2014:23

Challenging racialized epistemological frames which influence schemas of recognition and non-recognition of the value of any human life reinforces a space of postliminary contestation. This space resists perspectives of power in political constructions of naming and the cultural frames they originate from through and beyond theoretical post-racial deconstruction. For this reason, many Egyptian women have privately and publicly re-examined religious scriptures and patriarchal misinterpretations of Islam, and claimed their entitlement to do so through them. Arabs and Arab women's efforts in their women's rights must be fully valued and embraced, rather than merely incorporated and deliberately limited because of being Arab, a woman, or Muslim. Exposing what is outside of the frame, and the fact that there *is* indeed life that lies outside of the frame: deconstructs “frames deployed by dominant media sources during times of war” inducing “full deterioration of context” (Butler, 2009:10), and invisibilization of realities beyond the representation. Furthermore, as contexts are framed; “there is no context without an implicit de-limitation of context” (Ibid.). This has been interrogated in the critique of language through self-articulations and multi-epistemological, linguistic de-framing

approaches. Ideas and use of the “Third World” and Islamophobia as normalized terms methodically representing the Middle East, African and Asian regions are in themselves reflective of distancing, confining and alienating epistemologies of systematic oppression needing urgent deconstruction.

Within spaces of confinement, imposed interpretations are challenged to reveal previously systematically muffled expressions. Cross-cultural spectatorship moves beyond a superficial or utopian exchange between communities to a dialog “deeply embedded in the asymmetries of power” (Shohat and Stam, 1994:355). Multiculturalism describes the “discourse of minorities, spoken for and against in the multicultural wars, proposes a social subject constituted through cultural hybridization, the overdetermination of communal or group differences, the articulation of baffling likeness and banal divergence” (Hall and Gay, 1996: 54). Multiculturalism embraces cultural diversity, tolerance and preservation, critiques western-centric perspectives and stresses the need to be recognized across diverse ontologies towards “decolonization of global culture” (Shohat and Stam, 1994:5) and representation rather than denial of local and global culture in instrumentalised states of postculturalism. Thus, multiculturalism and the critique of Eurocentrism are understood as inseparable concepts, each becoming “impoverished without the other” (Ibid.). Multiculturalism alone would be merely a fusion or “accretive”, and the “critique of Eurocentrism without multiculturalism runs the risk of simply inverting existing hierarchies rather than profoundly rethinking and unsettling them” (Ibid.: 359). Inclusivity of fields of knowledge, diverse cultures and intersectionalities situate their limitations from their own sociocultural standpoints; underlining that “central to multiculturalism is the notion of mutual and reciprocal relativization” (Ibid.). To commit to different groups’ “own” seeing gazes towards transformation in balanced acknowledgement of each other may pose more patri-colonial tensions and perpetuate frames rather than true de-orientation and poststructuralism. Naming and classifications do not encompass all world visions or all they in themselves set out to be as they are somewhat pre-defined from their epistemological apparatus. The “entitled, then, does not assign the capital of a type of writing; it ensures its suspense, along with its contours, its borders, its frame” (Derrida and Johnson, 1981:179). It may therefore be argued that the “multicultural has itself become a 'floating signifier' whose enigma lies less in itself than in the discursive uses of it to mark social processes where differentiation and condensation seem to happen almost synchronically” (Hall and Gay,

1996:55). While all humans entail intercultural differences, the imposition of relativisation and charged connotations based on sociocultural phenomena of external naming and internal self-validation simultaneously, within structures of exclusion may be restrictive according to the realms of their production.

History “reopens and challenges what seems to have been the finality of an earlier figure of thought, bringing it into contact with cultural, political and epistemological formations undreamed of by — albeit affiliated by historical circumstances with — its author” (Said, 2003: 25). This perpetuates structural schemas of power and captures in between, struggles against invalidation. The very act of calling the frame into question is what numerous scholars and activists from the region are working towards; occupying regimes of truth through the exposure of their own narratives, situated claims, spaces of resistance and sociopolitical engagement. Epistemological and cognitive contributions of polycentric multiculturalism challenge “historical configurations of power and knowledge” (Shohat and Stam, 1994:359). These “are not accustomed to being relativized; the world's institutions and representations are tailored to the measure of their narcissism” (Ibid.), self-centering themselves by displacing and abstracting the other. Crucially, the disempowered groups who have “known in their bodies the violence of the system are less inclined to be deluded by its idealizations and rationalizations” (Ibid.). Through the self-clarification of their articulations in epistemological contributions, they challenge the imagined structures of power, re-envisioning mono-culturalist relativisations and reductions. Situated knowledge in a historical continuum which is acknowledged rather than simultaneously concealed and perpetuated delimits the parameters of vision to decenter the West.

Repositioning naming and language apparatus challenges the boundaries of existence in power dynamics of knowledge production. To *unthink* Eurocentrism; non-European thought and writing must occupy hegemonic spaces. Endemic in present-day thought and education, Eurocentrism has been largely naturalized as common sense, as the inventor of history. It attributes to the “West” an inherent progress which “elides non-European democratic traditions, while obscuring the manipulations embedded in Western formal democracy” (Shohat and Stam, 1994:1). It masks the “West's part in subverting democracies abroad” (Ibid.:2), minimizing oppressive practices by “regarding them as contingent, accidental, exceptional” (Ibid.), and as a coincidence. In the view that “colonialism, slave-trading, and imperialism are not seen as fundamental catalysts of the

West's disproportionate power" (Ibid.); the West appropriates its own domination. Unthinking Eurocentrism thus decenters this appropriation from other realms of cognition. Said notes Immanuel Wallerstein's (1997) description of critics of Eurocentrism

in the last four decades of the twentieth century furthered the attack by taking on Europe's historiography, the claims of its universalism, its definition of civilization, its Orientalism, and its uncritical acceptance of a paradigm of progress that placed what Huntington and others like him have called "the West" at the centre of an encroaching mass of lesser civilizations trying to challenge the West's supremacy.

Said, 2003: 22

Challenging languages even of critique brings forth empowered narratives and identities in HR and impacts collective consciousness, engagement and networking in reactions to violations. Social sciences and research on media must seek to "overcome the Eurocentric heritage which has distorted its analyses and its capacity to deal with the problems of the contemporary world" (Wallerstein, 1997:22). This is evident even within the assumption that the interrogation of supremacy implies inferiority or compliance, which is always constrained by inadequacy. The "operation, which no longer belongs to the system of truth, does not manifest, produce, or unveil any presence; nor does it constitute any conformity, resemblance, or adequation between a presence and a representation" (Derrida and Johnson, 1981:208). Eurocentrism may be therefore argued to sanitize "Western history while patronizing and even demonizing the non-West; it thinks of itself in terms of its noblest achievements — science, progress, humanism — but of the non-West in terms of its deficiencies, real or imagined" (Shohat and Stam, 1994:3), as inadequate and as less than. Universalism is defined as the "view that there exist scientific truths that are valid across all of time and space" (Wallerstein, 1997: 24) as fixed, unquestionable knowledge. Eurocentric discourses claim universality from their own point of perspective and vision, bordering and defining the world. Such discourses consider the persona of scholars and researchers as "irrelevant, since scholars were operating as value-neutral analysts" (Ibid.:25) in addition to constancy in loci of research. Structures of (dis)empowerment acting as boundaries are not fixed and cannot be considered as neutral, rather essential to be recognized as manipulated and fluid in order to expand social, economic and cultural thought, and dismantle moral arrogance through collective human exchange and solidarity.

1.3 Women's Resistance in Epistemology: HR Encounters and Arab Feminisms Deconstructing Double Patriarchies

Challenging the frame interrogates the relationship between cognitive perceptions of HR, of each other, of who is subjected into the frame, by whom, and how many more DPs⁶ are internalized through the frame. The process transcends the limits of perception and ideas to human thinking, speaking, and writing agents of HR discourse. It is significant to critically challenge the need to resist all forms of violence not just when it impacts the imperial, or the male, but as validly worth resisting the power dynamics of how value is attributed as well as the notion of polarized fronts. Moghadam⁷ argues that if

Feminism has always been contested, if feminists should be defined by their praxis rather than by a strict ideology, and if a feminist politics is shaped by its specific historical, political, and cultural contexts, then it should be possible to identify Islamic feminism as: one feminism among many

Moghadam, 2002:1165

To therefore be able to perceive feminisms from other namings, and relief them of classifications from the sociocultural structures that repress if not suffocate them without claiming full detachment from them. Feminist insights seek to deconstruct in public and private spheres ideas of an essential woman through the acknowledgement if not celebration of difference and its interrelated junctions. Situated recognition acts in defiance to Orientalist and imperial discourses of power and heroism, defying the “codes of silence that their own communities impose on them in the name of anti-racism” (Rai, 2008:63). These structurally exclude what falls outside the hegemonic frame. Outlining the question of culture as one which poses challenges in these points of contact and recognition accepts that “even democracy movements create their ideal woman erased of all differences, however — authenticity of culture is inscribed on women’s bodies and roles” (Ibid.). Authenticity should be properly addressed in order to challenge and reject discriminatory forms of patri-colonial domination. Patriarchal influence and imperialist

⁶ DPs acronym for Double Patriarchies will be used from this point onward.

⁷ Valentine Moghadam is born in Iran. She is a feminist writer, sociologist and activist whose work is focused on transnational feminist networks. Her national experience imprinted her work within foreign education, and shed light on her views of identity politics, culture and religion in connection to women in development and employment. She has also worked for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as the head chief of gender equality and development

lens not only defines and self-imposes on the East, but within the West through its root, homogenous standards and fixed structured concepts of emancipation.

Recognizing cultural differences and oppressions within empowers the otherwise other in being agents of their own realities and rights. Through the diagnosis of spheres of racial, patriarchal and sociocultural belonging and whom they reject, HR is no longer alienated nor considered out of reach for some, if and when based on the same signifiers of difference outside. Bhabha⁸ (1994:85) states that if “colonialism takes power in the name of history; it repeatedly exercises its authority through the figures of farce”, which are revealed for their non-scientific doctrines of exclusion. The ruler “cannot eliminate the distance between mimicry and the source, cannot or does not want to transform the ‘Other’ — the Arab — into one of ‘us’ [...] nor the variations that the female ‘Others’” (Herzog, 2004:74) offer to the claims of exclusivity and moral standards. Such contradictions are reinforced within realms of civil society and rights for women in Arab countries and HR discourses and policies on regional and global levels. From the point of view of the “dominated Other, mimicry is a form of assimilation and self-abnegation, though never total” (Ibid.:75). It “contains a threat to the dominant and hence always bears the potential for subversion or resistance” (Ibid.) in reconstructing foreign language structures. Young (2015:159) refers to the creation of languages and nations in that they are “made and transformed, usually for political purposes”, rather than a natural formation. Moreover, the “classification of languages” (Ibid.), resulting from politically charged naming, categorizes “as the same when they are full of differences (Arabic)”, and other languages which are essentially the same as distinct entities “(Dutch/Flemish)” (Ibid.). This reflects fixed and fluid identity, and the production of race in language doctrines of homogenization and distinctions. Resistance stems from oppression; history teaches that “domination breeds resistance, and that the violence inherent in the imperial context — for all its occasional profit or pleasure — is an impoverishment for both sides” (Said, 1994a:288) — rejecting a polar definition of dependence.

Numerous Arab feminists, scholars and activists contest the false contradictions between HR and religion and aim to see points of contact with secular feminisms rather than dismissing them as fundamentally impossible in coexistence. Religion is not monolithic

⁸ Homi K. Bhabha is an Indian English scholar and critical theorist in contemporary postcolonial studies, whose work is extremely significant to my thesis discussion in terms of cultural difference, mimicry and displacing and asserting authorities between them.

or static and feminist perspectives of it make spaces for women to voice and defend their rights in their situational realities. These women argue that it is a dangerous premise to say that “religion per se is bad for women” (Badran, 2001:51) as there would be nothing “to discuss — or for which to hope” (Ibid.). Dynamics are more complex in terms of women’s agency and cannot be reduced or dismissed as incompatible to their societal realities. Information technology for example has produced a great shift in contemporary times for women to collect and articulate these visions. Mernissi⁹ (2006:121) asserts that new “technologies have destroyed the *hudud*, the border frontier that divided the universe into a sheltered private arena, where women and children were supposed to be protected, and a public one where adult males exercised their presumed problem-solving authority”. These shift the private to the public and internalize public discussions to matters of domestic life and the family, and vice versa, thus blurring the fragmentation of women’s spheres within and across societal realms. In urgency to intervene against voids; women’s efforts in the monotheistic faiths “subject their religious texts to a feminist rereading, or to locate and emphasize the women friendly and egalitarian precepts within their religious texts” (Moghadam, 2002:1162) and must be acknowledged to advance further. Strategies to advance the status of women and to reassess religious thought largely see postcolonial societies to different extents, reverting to nationalism to reinforce the significance of questions of women’s role as citizens and the lines between the public and private realms.

The word modernizing is often understood as deficiencies in imitating the West; as Abu-Lughod¹⁰ (1998:18) describes in “failures of nationalism, failures of enlightened modernity, failures due to the pull of tradition, travesties of modernity”. Failures, that is, according to the perspective of catching-up in vain due to an inapplicable model which disregards and amplifies vast and increasing divides and socioeconomic situations. Postcolonial theorists challenge standards of injustice by creatively inquiring about the encounter between the East and West. Pursuing “analytical implications of the insight that modernity is a construct and an organizing trope, especially for the national developmentalist successors of colonial regimes” (Abu-Lughod, 1998:18), by asking whom is it benefiting. This resistance urges towards critical assessment of languages and

⁹ Fatema Mernissi was a Moroccan feminist writer and sociologist. Her doctoral thesis *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female dynamics in Muslim society* was published into a book which identifies the powers of Muslim women in relation to their faith.

¹⁰ Lila Abu-Lughod is a Palestinian-American anthropologist whose work focuses around postcolonialism, women’s studies, and politics of gender and memory specializing in ethnographic research in the Arab region.

epistemologies of women's rights in the domains in which they are situated and in how they situate themselves.

For shared precariousness to be equally recognized, the cognitive tensions and contacts of human dignity are vital to interrogate increasingly normalized frames which are broadcasted into the global audiences' living rooms. Using alternative social media platforms as spaces of resistance: the "diffusion of Internet, wireless communication, digital media, and a variety of tools of social software has prompted the development of horizontal networks of interactive communication that connect local and global in chosen time" (Castells, 2009:65), to respond to if not deconstruct hegemonic representations. Women's interventions are strongly influential within and across societies and knowledge arenas; such as media, academia and peace organizations, infiltrating agency within prominent structures of power to defend complex identities and solidarities. In

adopting the criteria for success and by competing on the basis of those criteria, by adopting certain patterns of behavior, dress and speech and by their sheer assertiveness, the Palestinian-Arab women are carrying out a political act involving the blurring and challenging of the conceptions held by the dominant Jewish male society, even if their actions do not constitute a frontal struggle and/ or political declarations.

Herzog, 2004: 75

The rhetorical discourses, in a "comic turn from the high ideals of the colonial imagination to its low mimetic literary effects mimicry emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge" (Bhabha, 1994:85). In working within the structures and yet setting themselves apart from them, women establish an 'ambivalent third' space, which renders a "place to speak both of, and as, the minority, the exilic, the marginal and the emergent" (Ibid.: 149). When one can speak of both, in the languages of the oppressor and the situated mother tongue, a higher effort to rebalance humanity occupies the colonial hegemonic imagination through resistant agents of change against all limitations and discriminatory doctrines. Rights are "inevitably the product of particular historical societies and are therefore themselves always subject to change and renegotiation" (Young, 2015:125). Therefore through critical assessments of language and framing; the apparatus of HR would become more effective when

recognized and valued if deriving from the South particularly when addressing or speaking for the South.

Gender imbalance is interrogated by women's agency to question norms and roles; largely due to wealth and access to education. Egyptian feminist Huda Shaarawi¹¹ writes in her memoirs:

When my mother failed to persuade me girls should not ride she asked me to choose between a pony or a new piano, knowing my passion for music. She won because I chose the piano, but I said to myself, 'I shall get a new piano and ride my brother's pony'

Shaarawi, 1987:45-6

At the time, Shaarawi looked up to a lady poet Sayidda Khadija al-Maghribiyya due to her intellect and poetry and noted her own lackings in grammar and morphology, but blamed her male teacher for that. Shaarawi (1987:42) states that she was impressed because "she used to sit with the men and discuss literary and cultural matters. Meanwhile, I observed how women without learning would tremble with embarrassment and fright if called upon to speak a few words to a man from behind a screen" (Ibid.). Learning and access to education empowered women to be "equals of men if not surpass them" (Ibid.). When men are gatekeepers to knowledge production and learning, women who exhibit courage to venture with men as a route to empowerment may be leveraged to speak with them and authorize themselves in rewriting their own fate.

The same may perhaps be argued across patri-colonial powers. As media culture may manipulate the public sphere and influence social reactions — women's appeal to "repressed, regressive, fantasies" (Henderson, 1995:19) which reinforce patri-colonial and class stereotypes; have capacities to "deconstruct [...] popular stereotypes, especially when cultural forms [...] embody a self-critique" (Ibid.). Hegemonic power influences knowledge production frames and silences, but creates within itself spaces of resistance, monitoring and self-criticism in academia, media, politics and other representational fields of expression. Border pedagogy allows the "discovery of an idiom that facilitates dialogue in difference, that is able to articulate distinctions between cultures without promoting hierarchy and the norms of exclusionary stratification" (Ibid.:26), through

¹¹ Huda Shaarawi was an Egyptian leading feminist, nationalist and founder of the Egyptian Feminist Union. She recounted her life in her book: *Mudhakerati* "My Memoir" in Arabic which was translated to English and entitled: *Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist, 1879-1924*.

speaking and writing consciously. Reorienting borders' "different directions and from different locations, some from positions of centrality and dominance, others from positions of marginality and powerlessness" (Ibid.), acts as a serious effort to review and reject damaging gazes. Promoting "urges to see beyond them, to our common humanity" (Ibid.: 13) delimits false barriers between identities in attempts to make visible powerful methodologies born from the far-reaching complexities of African and Arab people, particularly women.

As a fundamental step in bridging the growing North-South divide and HR inequalities of frames of existence and war; a gigantic decentering effort is needed in order to challenge "radical exclusion and legal non-existence" (Santos, 2007:6), and the distinction between fictitious civilized and savage zones. Efforts of intercultural translations may "defamiliarize the canonic tradition of monocultures" (Ibid.:7) and fight voids and barriers of knowledge of the other without reproducing them. If recognizability is claimed as a "universal potential" which "belongs to all persons as persons, then, in a way, the problem before us is already solved" (Butler, 2009:6). It is important to oppose torture in "any and all of its forms" — and to rethink the "we" in global terms in ways that "counter the politics of imposition" (Ibid.:38), and misleading wordings. As it may seem impossible to assume that change would come out of the good will of European governments, it is up to the people to firstly recognize that the "Third World does not mean to organize a great crusade of hunger against the whole of Europe" (Fanon *et al.*, 1965:106) as that implies more violence, denial of humanity and a lack of sense of union between patri-colonial markers of segregation. What it "expects from those who for centuries have kept it in slavery is that they will help it to rehabilitate mankind, and make man victorious everywhere, once and for all" (Ibid.), more particularly, womankind. Some Western feminisms may likewise stop denying and reinforcing relentlessly the languages which promote exploitation from one perspective reproducing the "Third World" as a separate, inferior universe.

Arab women thus contest moral superiority on two patriarchal fronts and through alternative means of surveillance, and reinvention: "self-confidence and ability seem to be key characteristics of the new Digital Scheherazades. When you start looking for them instead of focusing on the veiled women, as many Europeans do, you are amazed by their rapidly growing number" (Mernissi, 2006:125). This is not to say that veiled women do not encompass such ideals, rather that vision must not be mono-directed to the veil and

the surface level, patri-colonial attributions and exoticised interests external to its use. The ideals of moral virtues, democracy, dignity and political participation are reinforced in harmonization within religion, proudly justified in “valuing the best gifts of modern civilization: human rights and the satisfaction of full citizenship” (Mernissi, 1991: vii). Subjected discriminations on both fronts are due to an “elite faction (...) trying to convince us that their egotistic, highly subjective, and mediocre view of culture and society has a sacred basis” (Ibid.). New networking communications advance spaces of situated cross-political and cultural reframing. Structurally excluding, singularizing, dismissing narratives as irrelevant or in contradiction to HR is oppressing and severely an exclusionary, imperialistic power prophecy to be contested. Rethinking what is thought to be imported and measured by Western methodology deconstructs imposed languages and patriarchies which define emancipation in contrast to the polarized other. Trying to limit “women’s power to the private sphere has always been a male fiction and the defensive fear of the feminine has always gone together with the fear of strangers” (Ibid.:126). Communication strategies highlight Arabic as a prominent language of self-expression, discussing law, religion and sciences rather than the language of illiterates or having to speak in English to be included in the global standard. Digital and social dialogue between women and men and regions counteracts these fears directly, rather than focus on violence among men historically at the cost of women.

Boundaries are challenged through continuous rebuilding of diverse frames of existence. Identities are not essentialist but rather “discursively constructed”, “unstable, fluid, often contradictory, and always in process” (Roseneil, 1995:141) rather than single, fixed categories. Denying feminisms from the South from the dominant canon silences their successes and reinforces DPs in terms of race and gender in western-centric despotism. The persistence of oppression within institutional regimes of identity and law framing the woman as other appeals for research and spaces which are conscious of vast diversity and the value of exchange; challenging frames of absolute truth. Feminisms are increasingly “aware of the shifting sand under the scientific statements and taken-for-granted concepts on which policy recommendations are based” (Scott, 1985:128). Moreover, they improve the capacities of cognitive and linguistic schemas in defining them. Selective acts of recognition and non-recognition reproduce a system of value of one life over another; not restricted to global discourses but regional tensions and resistances. As with Mernissi’s Digital Scheherazades, symbolic violence(s) may be temporarily challenged through

online activism. Social media's power is "exacerbated by its ability to short-cut through to engage affect through conversation, art, image and music" (Sayers and Jones, 2014:274). For some women, the internet is extensively seen and used as

a new emotional and relational domain that could provide an avenue for contesting many economically rationalistic, individuating assumptions behind discourses entrenched in a certain form of masculine imaginary incorporating (literally and metaphorically) symbolic violence, competition and individualism.

Sayers and Jones, 2014:274

Although limited to access and literacy levels, means of self expression expand beyond qualified, formal channels and are more connected to women's actual realities. The "digitised body/self and capacity of self-representation" (Lupton, 2015:183) in online spaces for the concept and practices of "reinvention", is "central to both private lives and organisations" (Ibid.). Individual realities and recognition of the woman's body in being regarded as historically and socially variable, fluid and open to change infiltrate into "deeply embedded substructures in social and organisational life" (Sayers and Jones, 2014:274). Women's interventions act as a key "strategy for contesting the inaccurate portrayal of women in the cultural and social imaginary [as] to offer alternative visions that make more emotional and imaginative sense" (Ibid.:275) in contemporary contexts.

Focusing on complexities of African and Arab women, it may be said that "ethical scholarship is socially responsible scholarship that supports freedom, not scholarship that is free from social responsibility" (Mama, 2007:23). The power potentials of women when they occupy spaces of influence evokes further barriers to their representation as they become monitored and censored in indirect and direct ways. Negative and "vociferous reaction to women's 'collective' social activism on the Internet is just as revealing as the activism itself" (Sayers and Jones, 2014:282) in that contesting women's capacity to move themselves from the

margins to the centre, they replace the social imaginary of the female body with a more empowering vision, and at the same time draw attention to the primary process by which they are marginalised — symbolic violence.

Sayers and Jones, 2014:282

Combating oppression and structural silencing through dialogue and occupation of spaces of knowledge, the woman's body speaks back in the process of "institutionalised argumentation" (Gelber, 2002:134). Constituting a "discursive construction of the goal of eliminating racist discrimination" (Ibid.), brings to attention different perspectives of struggles in doing so. Dialogue and response opens further spaces for "victim communities to respond to, contradict and counteract hate-speech-acts" (Ibid.:135) as a public response to the censorship and the effects of discursive discrimination which pronounce them as victim communities. This includes "recognising who might, under current circumstances, be excluded from exercising the speech liberty" (Ibid.:137) and other hegemonic frames of (mis)representation.

The social symbolism continues to be defined by dominant canons and affects the Arab woman at least two times in a continuum;

Women have had to pay a high price for this new wave of nationalism, and have confronted issues that are very similar to those faced by women during anti-colonial struggles — rape, war, homelessness, insecurity, and being constructed without their consent as threats to, and symbols of, the new nations and national identities.

Rai, 2008:13

Strategies of resistance reflect regional and "internationalist counter-articulation" (Said, 1994a:311) in "secular space, and of humanly constructed and interdependent histories that are fundamentally knowable, although not through grand theory or systematic totalization" (Ibid.). For the purpose of sociocultural preservation and HR tangibility in Egypt and other non-secular societies, possibilities have more potential to be enhanced through the non-secular spaces. Cultural intellectuals must therefore deconstruct representations, their sources, content, purpose and limitations rather than accepting the politics of identity "as given" (Ibid.:314), most particularly in self-proclaimed superior moral impositions on several fronts.

Double patriarchal gazes of the Orient, continuing to be portrayed in mass generalized knowledge produced on the region and women of the region are resisted in the same domains to move beyond them. These channels unearth women's own claims and interpretations of religion, culture and histories of agency within and beyond the spaces of their confinement. Countering oppression through the female gaze, women develop self-definition and thought firstly as their own self-acknowledged spectator, actively

dismissing the male gaze and the politicized patriarchies it reproduces as a prerequisite for women's visibility and emancipation. Women speaking against repeated acts of terrorism — previously unknown as terrorism — on their bodies and social realities, reshape the moral standard from their situated realities. Agencies visibilize their epistemologies of living with dignity to defend their bodily and soul existence and their essential humanity.

Chapter Two

Representations of the Arab in Productions of the Orient and the “Third World”

Located distinctions are considered vital by activists and feminists regionally and globally in uncovering humanist struggles and sociocultural symbols shaping cognition, to disprove the notion that religion condones violence or normalizes it. The region and in particular the women from the region have and continue to work against barriers of patri-colonial frames actively expressing problematic ambiguity of alienating depictions. Some of the “most radical criticism coming out of the West today is the result of an interested desire to conserve the subject of the West, or the West as Subject” (Spivak, 1987:65), further conveying the centering cycle in that the “much-publicized critique of the sovereign subject thus actually inaugurates a Subject” (Ibid.). Positioning produces the frame and what is within it in its own languages. This provokes efforts to deconstruct repressive normalized hierarchical languages in women’s rights at the global stage to depolarize oppressive gazes as neither opposed to civilization and the West, nor as alien to HR, nor as exo-worldly beings of normalized chaos, violence and cultural lack. Recognitions of intersectionalities, womanism and postfeminism enhance the debate to consider absences and contradictions and address them directly. Beyond a postcolonial feminism which would critique feminisms of the West, which are in themselves diverse and complex, the issue is not women claiming opposition to other women and a mere exchange of power hierarchy using the same epistemological lens. Rather this introduces an effort to de-orient mechanisms of hierarchy towards greater solidarity and transnational feminism.

Orientalist representations, frames pretending to claim the Orient, and the very access to the hegemonic production of such representations methodically reproduce colonialism, which is to some degree evident in discourses framing women’s rights in the region. Said (1978:301) outlines one of the Orientalist dogmas of viewing the Oriental as “eternal, uniform, and incapable of defining itself”; which wrongly justifies the highly generalized and systematic vocabulary used when describing the Orient from a Western standpoint as the only way to decipher the invention, and in claiming scientific objectivity. What may be argued to be a deliberate tendency to overlook generalizations under the assumption of

objectivity; directly and indirectly imposes exclusion. Discounting the impact colonialism has had and the continued resonances in socio-personal realities and misconstrued identities, is an epistemological error. Moreover, to study the Orient and exclude the direct input of insider perspectives of women is to commit another injustice in the epistemologies of knowledge production and the ethics of scientific objectivity. Orientalists — people producing knowledge defining the Orient, the African, the other, and the other of the other, and women from these epistemological and mythical territories — tend to disregard; seeming to have

buried their heads in the sands of empiricist methods, travelling about the continent administering questionnaires and tests to obscurely defined groups of subjects, and then using these to make all manner of generalisations about an African subject who has remained entirely mythical.

Mama, 1995:38

The imagined subject is exoticised and measured by standards alien to the situation and context from which she and he derives which further distances the discourse of HR from the cultural politics of African as well as Arab nations. By setting false standards to impose moral superiority a superficial ordeal is made of the discourse preventing true global exchanges and HR domains.

Said states:

Representations, because they are representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer. If the latter alternative is the correct one (as I believe it is), then we must be prepared to accept the fact that a representation is *eo ipso* implicated, intertwined, embedded, interwoven with a great many other things besides the "truth," which is itself a representation. What this must lead us to methodologically is to view representations (or misrepresentations — the distinction is at best a matter of degree) as inhabiting a common field of play defined for them, not by some inherent common subject matter alone, but by some common history, tradition, universe of discourse.

Said, 1978: 272-3

Through the process of counteracting polarized identities the “process by which conscious social actors of multiple origins bring their resources and beliefs to others,

expecting in return to receive the same, and even more: the sharing of a diverse world” (Castells, 2009:38) dismisses the “ancestral fear of the other” (Ibid.) through exchange. Dialogue deconstructing power hegemonies moves “beyond our imperative to survive as a distinct culture, we need to strive for a transformation of the conditions that hold all oppressed cultures in thrall” (Said, 1994b:242). It is of significance to acknowledge contemporary interconnections across humans, nations and historical facts rather than rigid descriptions of fragmentation not only between women and men but even within and across African and Arab nations.

This chapter seeks to address Representations of the Arab in Productions of the Orient and so called “Third World” under four main sections: firstly, Frames of Oppression: Framing the Other, secondly, Orientalism and The Immoral “Moral” Contest of Human Rights, thirdly, Doctrines of Exclusion: The “Civilising Mission” and The Burden of Representation and comprehensively with focus on Egyptian women, Double Patriarchies: (Non) Recognition of the Other of the Other. Resistances and identities are recognized and appreciated in spaces continuously contesting epistemological misconstructions within narratives of HR struggles: once the Frame of Oppression of projected polemic is de-framed and endangered for its hostility and fanaticism of (dis)empowerment.

2.1 Frames of Oppression: Framing the Other

The production of knowledge on the Orient as a relation of tension in a reductional process of documentation implies that the relation “between Orientalist and Orient was essentially hermeneutical” (Said, 1978:222) from the Orientalist’s eyes. Overlooking a “distant, barely intelligible civilization or cultural monument, the Orientalist scholar reduced the obscurity by translating, sympathetically portraying, inwardly grasping the hard-to-reach object” (Ibid.) which contrarily to a large extent further abstracts it. The feeling of disconnectedness and giving meaning catalyzes further obscurity; ironically limited in its purpose in that the “Orientalist remained outside the Orient, which, however much it was made to appear intelligible, remained beyond the Occident” (Ibid.), unfathomable and remote. In assessing the historical trajectory of documenting the Orient, the East, and the Western definition of the other, the same injustice cannot be committed by definitively generalizing the West, or by claiming complete objectivity due to the purposes of this argument.

It is said that the “new imperialism that dominates us, the non-Westerners, no longer appears as a physical occupation. The new imperialism is not even economic; it is more insidious — it is a way of reckoning, of calculating, of evaluation” (Mernissi, 1991:18) — evident in defining as inferior or translating, assuming mass populations as being incapable of speaking, reflecting on or deciphering themselves. Rather than polarized relations of domination notably apparent in some if not most Western media languages and frames; it is crucial for feminisms to

escape the binary thinking (...) scholars have begun to dismantle — thinking that posits a rigidly distinct West and East and assumes therefore the crude dynamics that correspond to this division, slavish imitation or cultural loss versus nationalist resistance and cultural preservation.

Abu-Lughod, 1998:21

This poses multi-fold challenges on regional and global fronts. The debates centered on Islamic Feminisms may be described as “contentious”, in that the “very term as well as its referent are subjects of controversy and disagreement” (Moghadam, 2002:1135). The question of controversy, it may be argued, between Islam and women’s rights, and regions of Africa and the Middle East are wrongly perceived as essentially in contradiction to HR which is a dismissive presumption of a very complex sociopolitical debate. As Ahmed¹² (1992) argues, the other of the other, Arab and Muslim women “need to reject (just as Western women have been trying to do) the androcentrism and misogyny of whatever culture and tradition they find themselves in, but that is not at all the same as saying they have to adopt Western culture or reject Arab culture and Islam comprehensively” (Ahmed, 1992: 166). As follows it is therefore wrong to

Coerce women to cover themselves by enshrining religious obligations in state legislation, thereby depriving them of the fundamental principle of individual and personal responsibility toward God. But it is equally wrong for the state to present women with the difficult and degrading choice between upholding their religious beliefs and losing their rights to education, employment, and personal autonomy.

Na’im, 2009:214

¹² Leila Ahmed is an Egyptian-American scholar of Islam whose work focuses on articulations of women’s positioning in Arab Muslim societies and deconstructions of patriarchal and colonial misinterpretations on women.

False polarizations assume a full understanding and imposition in both, and hypocrisy of privilege in HR praxis. Polarized, politically charged geographies — as the West and Islam — frequently silence the underlying complexities of ethnic and religious groups in addition to discrepancies between different branches of Islam, which merely reinforce and present juxtaposition. A western-centric, geographical point of perspective which evidently condemns infrastructural belief(s) does not refer to the religion in its essence but rather its politicization. This disregards both the very politicization of the statement and assumption itself, in addition to its impacts on those legally and socially affiliated by non-secular nations of law and governance. Despite the limitations in HR discourse, the distanced knowledge of the other may be contested. Global networks have been “utilized by women’s movements to build bridges and create solidarities across national borders in their struggles to democratize politics” (Rai, 2008:70) rather than partaking in the rejection of the potentials of solidarity within the global sphere.

From the rulers perspective, every “act performed by the ruled Other will always be similar yet also different” (Bhabha, 1994), and that it is “precisely this simultaneous existence that is threatening” (Herzog, 2004:74), posing further emphasis on the construction of the mystical other. The other is fragmented and reduced through discriminatory antithesis; Bhabha elucidates

Once the liminality of the nation-space is established, and its signifying difference is turned from the boundary ‘outside’ to its finitude ‘within’, the threat of cultural difference is no longer a problem of ‘other’ people. It becomes a question of otherness of the people-as-one. The national subject splits in the ethnographic perspective of culture’s contemporaneity and provides both a theoretical position and a narrative authority for marginal voices or minority discourse. They no longer need to address their strategies of opposition to a horizon of ‘hegemony’.

Bhabha, 1994:150

Relations of superiority in nation, produce vast assumptions reflected in representations of the non-European or non-Western other. Classifications of the African, Asian and Arab are deeply maintained and strongly evident in their contemporary persistence in the realm of knowledge and the production and communication of this knowledge: “the Oriental is *contained* and *represented* by dominating frameworks” (Said, 1978:40). The nation of

each ethnicity or human becomes their own body outside of their country, in which they may belong and be marked as other. By allocating an exotic, formed depiction of the region, its religious influences and traditions, HR discourses and struggles are regarded as distant from any Arab-African reality. Spaces beyond frameworks of containment are occupied by situated feminist production in media, academia and other channels opening spaces for claimed narratives of social realities and multiculturalism to challenge (his)torical hegemonies of power and exclusion.

As (dis)empowerment occurs along diverse axes of factors impacting identity politics: the “self becomes a matrix of multiple discursive forms and identifications — which is in no way to deny realities of race, class, gender, nation but only to complicate and dialecticize them” (Shohat and Stam, 1994:344). Recognizing multidimensionality as a middle way lessens the burden of representation as attempts to “avoid both falling into essentialist traps and being politically paralyzed by deconstructionist formulations” (Ibid.:346). It is “precisely the overlapping of these circles that makes possible intercommunal coalitions based on historically shaped affinities” (Ibid.) to move the discussion beyond frames. Alliances are based on collective responsibility for action; whereby intersectional individual voices evoke the “theoretical possibility and even the political necessity of sharing the critique of domination and the burden of representation” (Ibid.). In spaces of knowledge production, complicating rather than surrendering to confines of exclusion erodes Orientalist traps in order to embrace the Arab and the Arab woman in the dialogue of her rights.

Emphasis on the “representation of the political, on the construction of discourse, is the radical contribution of the translation of theory” (Bhabha, 1994:27), in that “its conceptual vigilance never allows a simple identity between the political objective and its means of representation” (Ibid.). To resemble the dominant, in mimicry such an approach describes that the “manner in which women function in gendered, racialised places of encounter sometimes reflects resistance in the course of cooperation, though they also submit to the act of exclusion and may be consenting partners to it” (Herzog, 2004:74), for example in “accepting the Western criteria for success” (Ibid.). In this way, the other remains the other but cooperating within society, although to a large extent with no other choice or imagined space for a different reality. In order to be

institutionally effective as a discipline, the knowledge of cultural difference must be made to foreclose on the Other; difference and otherness thus become the fantasy of a certain cultural space or, indeed, the certainty of a form of theoretical knowledge that deconstructs the epistemological ‘edge’ of the West.

Bhabha, 1994:31

In this light, Kabbani¹³ (1986:10) illustrates the limitations of such analysis so as “not to say that *all* travellers discussing the East misrepresented it, but that the dominant misrepresentations were, unfortunately enough, the ones that captured the public imagination in the West”. The dominant Orientalist reproductions are said to exist almost as a reflection of an Occidental need for self preservation; in that “European culture came to be framed by warped representations of the East — since in the end the dominant taste and mythologising instinct triumphed” (Ibid.). Languages structured by situated power hierarchies of knowledge impact perceptions and actions taken defending against injustices. Obscurity through a postcolonial, racialized male gaze leads to distancing from humanness. Consequently my analysis interrogates the extent to which international media stages may be reproducing doctrines of alienation through their massive contemporary influences on collective and individual social consciousness and psychological thought. De-framing morality according to historical facts from different perspectives may question its presumptions. Moral reasoning is said to be situated: “as far as the native is concerned, morality is very concrete; it is to silence the settler’s defiance, to break his flaunting violence in a word, to put him out of the picture” (Fanon *et al.*, 1965:43). Moral reasoning is thus largely dependent on recognition of space, rights and person as human, in addition to the selective gaze from which it derives and the tensions produced between false divisionary polarizations.

The image of the European “coloniser had to remain an honourable one: he did not come as exploiter, but as enlightener” (Kabbani, 1986:6), fulfilling moral duty, setting standard definitions of moral codes and power distinctions between the imagining of us and the other. In processes of translation and inferring meaning, each “objective is constructed on

¹³ Rana Kabbani is a British-Syrian cultural historian, writer and activist on women’s rights, feminism and has condemned Islamophobia as having roots in colonialism. I bring forth the author’s brief description not to fully encompass their lives by it but to emphasise the importance of experience and pursuit of knowledge across borders and the location from which the writers speak and write. The relationship between Arab origin and British nationality is also outlined as significant as being considered “privileged”, to acquire a western nationality, education and career to write freely. It is not an abandonment of the writers’ own cultural origin but a journey through it, evident in Kabbani’s experience and other women writers of value to my thesis argument.

the trace of that perspective that it puts under erasure; each political object is determined in relation to the other, and displaced in that critical act” (Bhabha, 1994:26) through relational appropriation. Complex contradictions are “rooted in the process of translation and displacement in which the object of politics is inscribed” (Ibid.), blurring, focusing and defining at the same time the object in reflection to its point of production. Cognitive change, “brought about through the preparation of the minds of the rising generation” (Amin, 2005:205), reflects the influence of knowledge production and its potential through academic and political structural re-assessments of scientific scrutiny in situated re-inscribed historical narratives and contemporary HR frames.

Understanding culture as shared knowledge employs languages produced as the “privileged medium by which we ‘make sense’ of things, in which meaning is produced and exchanged” (Hall, 1997:1) through power apparatus of definition. In dialogue with Ahmed’s stranger fetishism, the discourses implied in the construction of the other and encountering the stranger, she states: “opposition between being and the other, as with home and away, needs to be called into question” (Ahmed, 2000:139), in that what is needed is an “analysis of how philosophy already encounters others in its very turn to ontology” (Ibid.). The situation of the narrative along with the narrator’s proximity to the stranger manufactures construction of an image and largely homogenizes ideas which silence the complex diversity of Arabs, let alone, of Arab women. To orient is to impose a cultural gaze that does not encounter the framed subject but speaks for it: maintaining the centrality of its identity by deriving meaning from its own premise and naturalized reproduction of the other. Contesting frames through critique of their production focuses clarity on the previously blurred stranger in global recognition as a self-claimed, speaking entity which exists and furthermore thrives beyond the structures of persecution.

2.2 Orientalism and the Immoral “Moral” Contest of Human Rights

The dichotomy between “us” and the “other” has to a large extent itself been created by an epistemological imbalance and a cognitive injustice in the very imaginary of this other. The power and scope of Orientalism produced “not only a fair amount of exact positive knowledge about the Orient but also a kind of second-order knowledge — luring in such places as the “Oriental” tale, the mythology of the mysterious East [...] — with a life of its own” (Said, 1978:52): a European vision, depiction of the so called Orient. Images and

languages of oppression and violence are repeatedly used in contexts of the “Third World” due to their epistemological systematization. Geopolitical frames and polarized classifications convey the incessant need to name and thus make distinctions of territory claiming identity, between what is ours and theirs — “the territory beyond”, “the land of the barbarians” — described by Said as a “universal practice of designating in one’s mind a familiar space” (Ibid.:54), which produces “geographical distinctions that *can be* entirely arbitrary” (Ibid.). The unknown is imagined and produced as barbaric, in the act of Orientalization; the Arab is *Oriented*¹⁴ according to geopolitical point of power of defining the Orient. Mohanty (2013:45) asks “who produces knowledge about colonized peoples and from what space/ location? What are the politics of the production of this particular knowledge? What are the disciplinary parameters of this knowledge?” Revising the politics of knowledge production and power situations of classifications counters the act of defining the other by claiming authority to languages and self-definitions of identities.

The struggle of the other persists in selective recognition of humanity “it was not enough to quarrel on the basis of HR, because they were first obliged to claim and prove themselves to be fully human” (Young, 2015:102). Through the process of problematizing such fields and geographies of power; pre-existing interventions, values, and languages — life grammars struggling to be known and heard — are recognized for their essentiality. Areas of knowledge production are said to be contradictory places where “knowledges are colonized but also contested (...) in a rapidly privatized world that offers some semblance of a public arena for dialogue, engagement, and visioning of democracy and justice” (Mohanty, 2003:170). The deconstruction of (mis)representational discourses of nonexistence cuts across patri-colonial borders by bringing to light the vast diversities and points of contact between the countries of Africa and the Middle East and across Western territories of identity.

Under HR languages reform “should not and cannot mean the wholesale and uncritical adoption of the dominant Western theories and practices” (Na’im, 2009:32). Western policy makers impose political statements influencing systems of occupation and

¹⁴ Oriented: Drawn from Said’s *Orientalism*; the prolonged injustice and *normalized* ideology practiced as a definitive act of self-proclaimed epistemological authority of Orientating; Orienting, no longer as a particular phenomenon but a canon producing Oriented, fixed “dominant” frames of “truth” assuming geopolitical supremacy to the extent of creation of the produced Other, and self-validating power prophecies.

recognition of violations; directly impacting people in Islamic societies in addition to imposing standards to measure, monitor and evaluate democratic levels in the so called “Third World”. In the “post-Cold War world, as America asserted its imperial ambitions, soft power has become an overarching frame of reference for the entire Western world bonded by common cultural values and strategic interests” (Fraser, 2003:261) which affect frames of hopelessness of the rest. Foreign patriarchies largely led by Western institutions define standards producing evaluations of democratic and HR progress on the Arab region. This may be arguably linked to the nineteenth century when the West “found their most deliberate expression, since that period saw a new confrontation between West and East – an imperial confrontation” (Kabbani, 1986:6). The polarized hegemonic authority of historical continuation reinforces itself on women from its position and its control of the region’s men. Reinforcing battles of domination in projections of exoticism and violence directly subjects the Arab, most particularly the Arab woman as the victim of outsider lenses.

Mohanty¹⁵ (2013:46) states that rather than biological differences *per se*, it is the way people cognitively perceive “race, class, and gender — the political links we choose to make among and between struggles” that impact conversational exchange of human and women’s rights struggles. It is rarely a matter of choice for the feminist struggles which must recognize that hierarchical systems of domination of one group over another are not only imagined since their impact is seen and felt. Ignoring differences or assuming the same social environment and standards is from its core in error as the same constructed languages cannot be used to challenge the way by which social constructs are created and sustained. Kabbani (1986:10) emphasises that it is “commonplace of Orientalism that the West knows more about the East than the East knows about itself” implying a “predetermined discourse [...] which limits and in many ways victimises the Western observer” as if burdened or responsible to civilize the other and other of the other. Due to

¹⁵ Chandra Mohanty is a postcolonial and transnational feminist theorist of American nationality and born in India. India, in South East Asia is a populous country, similar to Egypt. It has religious diversity in its numerous Eastern religions, and Islam is not the majority unlike Egypt. India holds a secular government within its multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and pluralistic society which affirms its diversity. Contextual articulation is significant for the purposes of this research and yet refrains from distinguishing against feminists solely by their nationality but rather, their views which are enriched by their experience and exposure, both within their country of origin and foreign exposure and education. Their context of writing and origin is important to understand the relationships between the South and the North, and the situational position and experience from which they speak. India, although very different and vast is also different to Egypt, and yet relationships within the struggles should not to be excluded for this reason. She is a recognized Distinguished Professor of Women’s and Gender studies and her views, like numerous other feminist scholars bring value to the discussion.

the dependence of such projections, forced identities and silences sustain Orientalism to maintain Orientalist imagination and thus, Occidentalism, its egocentric romanticism, and potentials of the Occidental in itself. In order to maintain such a field of possibilities, theatrical personas and imaginations; the Occident must preserve the Orient in such a way that it “remain true to itself, in other words, truly Oriental” (Ibid.:11). Any divergence from “*Orientalness*, it became useless, a travesty of what it was *supposed* to be” (Ibid.), reinforcing the Orient and its people as a subject sustained for another’s self-assertion, that is staged and confined, rather than genuine acknowledgement, recognition, or desire for proximity.

Power systems create women’s representations to their own projections, and exclude masses from a global and regional solidarity. Within the void of intercultural communication and exchanges, epistemological presumption is fundamentally unjust in that it makes itself intelligible, formal, and standard across all borders. Said notes

on the one hand, Orientalism acquired the Orient as literally and as widely as possible; on the other, it domesticated this knowledge to the West, filtering it through regulatory codes, classifications specimen cases, periodical reviews, dictionaries, grammars, commentaries, editions, translations, all of which together formed a simulacrum of the Orient and reproduced it materially in the West, for the West.

Said, 1978:166

The production of the Orient, until today reproduces what Said (Ibid.) refers to as a conversion: “from the personal, (...) garbled testimony of intrepid voyagers and residents into impersonal definition by a whole array of scientific workers”. Being defined and impersonalized is an act of power and authority which suppresses the other to whatever gaze is chosen to project it.

Spivak (1987:91) highlights the relation of investigation and “masculine radicalism” producing information as one with a long history, adding that in “seeking to learn to speak to (rather than listen to or speak for) the historically muted subject of the subaltern woman, the postcolonial intellectual *systematically* ‘unlearns’ female privilege” (Ibid.). It can further be argued that in patri-colonial rhetoric unlearning privilege is a methodology of the privileged and thus reinforces the position of authority from which they are

speaking. It is not enough as it centers focus on the Western consciousness and agency and does not articulate the empowerment of the other but reinforces its own, with the choice to unlearn it and need to learn to speak to fellow human beings and women rather than for them. Furthermore, being spoken to, appears to be another silencing mechanism historically of a patriarchal authoritarian nature said to wives and children; rather than opening scientific balanced conversation between two sides speaking with one another where listening to would precede what would be spoken, and this would be more natural rather than a learned, intentional effort. Whether or not privilege is learned or unlearned; it is always at the expense of the so called non-Western woman who is subjected to the radical gaze and scientific efforts for objectivity which are alienating in themselves. Speaking with other women — if privilege, status and power were not present in the first place to have to be unlearned — would have been a normal act.

The Western choice to unlearn its own privilege not only solidifies the power of choice, and to define, but naturalizes privilege so much to the extent that it is subconscious normalized behaviour that firstly needs an effort to be unlearned and secondly gathers its method to dialogue with the other based on an epistemology of the North. It does not reverse the historical fact of colonialism, to deny it or choose to forego their entitlement with further entitlement in the methodology of how to view the other. Rather blatantly and routinely it legitimates its own authority to dictate scientific objectivity and maintain complete control over the microphone and visual lens, so to speak, in shaping the other's voice and image. This diverts attention away from the reasons of subjectivity and other-ly realities as to why they are such and what they would have said; to the question of how to approach and address them, predetermining the discourse and methodology and further discerning the other as default identities across all "subalterns", defined as such by the same compass.

The moral desire for "epistemic confidence and mastery among White Western feminists is related to the epistemological entitlements that underwrite normative whiteness" (Sholock, 2012:708) and in accordance to the cognitive and methodological schemas that authorize their entitlement in creating discourse. The idea of unlearning privilege and the decision that this is in Western power or capacity, a thing to learn and unlearn, to carry when appropriate and lose when necessary, may be in this way seen to reinforce the apparatus of morality, while privilege remains of their ownership: a tool or belonging to choose to take or leave behind. This may be argued to confine if not diminish potentials

for privilege to be perceived as shifting, or to be of ownership and access to non-Western women. The theoretical debate reinforces authority of the West, to a point of conscious saturation of power in epistemology and knowledge production: we do not need “another theory of revolution; we need rather to revolutionize theory” (Santos, 2018). HR discourses should confront and critique the position of the investigator when Western in unlearning one’s privilege as one’s loss, and enhancing more spaces for the subaltern woman to become the speaking female investigator in women’s scholarship.

The historical colonial past cannot be denied or escaped, trapping discourses of knowledge and information within it. The erasure of this past may be said to thus present itself continuously. Said states as an example that he doubts that it would be controversial to say that “an Englishman in India or Egypt in the later nineteenth century took an interest in those countries that was never far from their status in his mind as British colonies” (Said, 1978:11). This portrays histories of domination translated into contemporary discourse of reflection. While this may have been evident to some extent, hegemonic identities and divisions of people, however, do little to de-frame the frame but may perhaps produce another. The lack of controversy to such statements is perhaps what Said wanted to draw on. Patri-colonially based naming classifications between politically charged fragmentations among men may largely silence women’s accounts which are subjected to the discourse through widespread, hegemonic divisions, and recurrently through the traps of its language. Such framing further implies that Orientalism is reproduced in “all academic knowledge about India and Egypt [and] is somehow tinged and impressed with, violated by, this gross political fact” (Ibid.). This examines the notion of knowledge production from external frames which reproduce generalized depictions of the other, as entire nations or colonies, among men, and discounting the specificities and locations of knowledge. In this way, dominant political power, as with a “colonial or imperial establishment” (Ibid.:12) constitutes discourse that is both “produced and exists in an uneven exchange” (Ibid.), if and when it does not acknowledge its point of production nor attempt to challenge it. To dismiss all potential knowledge between people, women and men from different sociocultural realities as fundamentally and always flawed, would error itself as a hypothesis by its own position of absolutism. It may be said that from hegemonic canons of production, intellectual power such as language and epistemologies of production reinforce and may impose their own cultural standards. Discourses of direct and indirect cognitive influence: “power

cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values), power moral (as with ideas about what “we” do and what “they” cannot do or understand as “we” do” (Ibid.), may also be said to repeatedly segregate and confine the perceptions of an imagined other through the content and tone of these frames. These established canons of taste and value are a result of authority and language which dignify certain ideas as truth “from traditions, perceptions and judgments it forms, transmits, reproduces” (Ibid.:20), in addition to how this process is presented. The power of naming and classifications develop a “crisis [which] dramatizes the disparity between texts and reality” (Ibid.:109) — referring to humanists who regularly confine their “attention to departmentalized topics of research” (Ibid.), as limiting. Classifications suggest that they have “neither watched nor learned from disciplines like Orientalism whose unremitting ambition was to master *all* of a world, not some easily delimited part of it such as an author or a collection of texts” (Ibid.) to recognize that it may neither be mastered nor that it is a separate world.

Mohanty categorizes “Third World” women in Anderson’s (1982) “Imagined community” as follows:

“‘imagined’ not because it is not “real” but because it suggests potential alliances and collaborations across divisive boundaries, and “community” because in spite of internal hierarchies within Third World contexts, it nevertheless suggests a significant, deep commitment to what Benedict Anderson, in referring to the idea of the nation, calls “horizontal comradeship.”

Mohanty, 2013:46

Hierarchies in media images, however, demonstrate perpetuation of the imagined community (Anderson, 1991) against global mechanisms power, thus linking feminist struggles to an inescapable (non)agency. Located within the parameters of the “Third World” it is displaced by what has been imagined by the Eurocentric, Western means of knowledge production and superior lens of describing the other —“what is not here”— as a separate entity. When framing an imagined space, the “more subtle, deeper forms of discursively and institutionally structured racism remain unrecognized” (Shohat and Stam, 1994:201) as they are normalized in the (im)moral contest of HR. The claim and definition of feminists should not be alienated in contrast to Western feminisms, which is similarly not hegemonic in its modern diversity and critique; recognizing the agency and

capacity of self-definition of women from particular regions, political diversities and structures. To assume horizontal comradeship so long as these women are within the parameters of the “Third World” excludes potentials of communities across divides and other feminisms, and promotes hierarchical patri-colonialist structures which are essentially dubious. As this does not challenge the racist derogatory terming of the “Third World” and fails to recognize the reality of power structures within the region; the need for greater solidarity between women and men and forming communities across imagined cultural and political divides and borders is emphasised. To address a feminist struggle or collective grouping the classification of “Third World” is epistemologically unjust as it reinforces its location of disempowerment from its patri-colonial point of departure.

2.3 Doctrines of Exclusion: The “Civilising Mission” and The Burden of Representation

The moral crusader justifies its Empire itself due to its perceived ethical advancement, championing itself for colonialism as benevolent guidance, and infiltrating its powerful authority in shaping perceptions as an innocent helper or burdened saviour: a blatant racist claim for asserted civilization of the asserted savage. When HR discourse carries the same languages, forms of feminism and women’s rights may be easily dismissed as “just being an anti-religious western idea, even though the West has historically certainly had no monopoly on women’s self-assertion against patriarchy, or indeed men’s” (Young, 2015:166). The displacement of rights suffers as a result of the battle of language and alienation in doctrines of exclusion on several fronts, which is arguably an intentional displacement. Derailment inhibits true HR recognition and feminisms of the South to feel solidarities with Western feminisms or even to self-identify as feminist due to cautiousness of being presupposed as a foreign intruder and learned distancing due to exclusionary apparatus’.

The responsibility of accountability of representing implies “religious, esthetic, political, and semiotic” (Shohat and Stam, 1994:182) connotations that are largely performed and theatrical. In several languages “to represent” means “to enact” or play a role (Ibid.); in Arabic *tamtheel*. The meanings associated by representation in cultures reflect differing historical positionings to the frame. To be burdened by representation implies a power dynamic of being obligated to speak for and learning to speak to the other; therefore as if the other is incapable of self-explication and conversation. Ahmed (1992:149) charts that

through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, traveller's interpretations of their observations in Arab societies "approximated more closely the meanings that the male members of the visited societies attached to the observed customs and phenomena". She adds between parentheses:

(Male travelers in Muslim societies had extremely limited access to women, and the explanations and interpretations they brought back, insofar as they represented a native perspective at all, essentially, therefore, gave the male point of view on whatever subject was discussed.)

Ahmed, 1992:149

This overlooks the burden imposed on whom is subject to the frame, the normalized claims for some positionings for access to producing self-definitions and more so, how the deliberate implication that the other cannot speak turns to the fabricated burden of defining another, and false claims of having encountered them at all. The colonial burden is constructed as a social, ontological and epistemological system deploying methodical injustice and overlooking the impact of domination, as merely coincidental while amplifying its oppressive framings. There is an undeniable impact on Arab, Muslim and non-Muslim people particularly women, under religious, legal and sociopolitical structures in every very act of representation of Arabs as contrasting entity of a violent, homogeneous mass. Sensitivity around stereotypes and distortions is due to "powerlessness of historically marginalized groups to control their own representation" (*Ibid.*:184), reflected in media frames. Due to the misconstrued translation of blatant rapid colonialism — "by the 1930s, the imperial powers controlled as much as 80 per cent of the world" — (Mama, 1995:39) the institutional power of the discourse "construed black people as unquestionably mentally inferior and as exhibiting racially specific forms of pathology" (*Ibid.*). The repressive practices that accompanied this global expansion should not be underestimated in active reductionist undermining of cognitive capacity and humanity of the "other" in international affairs, particularly in contemporary HR discourses in every instant of being misleadingly depicted as being backwardly, secluded or less than.

In response to Kipling's *White Man's Burden* (1899)¹⁶, a critique by H.T. Johnson, *The Black Man's Burden*¹⁷, depicts the continuation of colonial United States rule on vulnerable populations and recent slavery stating:

Pile on the Black Man's Burden/
His wail with laughter drown/
You've sealed the Red Man's problem,
And will take up the Brown,
In vain ye seek to end it,
With bullets, blood or death/
Better by far defend it/
With honour's holy breath.

Johnson, 1899

The fact that the burden is used for the white man to validate such interventions claiming to be holy may be contemporarily translated by terms of global responsibility, humanitarian aid, war on terror, and other exploitative frames reinforcing ironic dependence and hopelessness for the global South. Silence may be a result of several factors; social barriers where the “utterance that will express your desires, or intentions, or beliefs is never born” (Lakoff and Bucholtz, 2004:210). Such complicated silences due to misunderstanding derived from what has been said to what has been heard, or “only seems to be heard when it is appropriated and restated by someone else” (Ibid.), of higher status, claiming moral authority exclusively and correspondingly, moral inferiority of the other. Speaking in the name of and assuming the responsibility to define another objectifies non-Western women and men, more so women living in Muslim societies such as Egyptian women, through what may be said and what may be heard in a regimented process of displacing human realities and their rights.

Of further significance to note is this exclusion of the woman in the argument which contemporarily persists, whereby questions of race, war and fields of contestation are regarded as belonging to man: the man carries the burden and the racial representation. It

¹⁶ “The White Man's Burden”: The United States and The Philippine Islands.” Kipling's poem to U.S. to assume the “burden” of empire and colonial control in Philippine-American War. Hymn to U.S. imperialism and empire: “To veil the threat of terror/ And check the show of pride” as a burden. The veil, threat, and terror, are relevant in contemporary media terror threats depicted as being veiled: exoticised and forcibly distanced the Other.

¹⁷ “The Black Man's Burden: A Response to Kipling”: A “Black Man's Burden Association” was also organized to exposing mistreatment of brown people in the Philippines as an extension of the mistreatment of black Americans in the United States. Contextually, slavery was in the recent memory lasting from 1789–1861, emphasising the hypocritical mission, and “divine”, vain claim of defending honour and moral ethics after the crimes committed over seventy years, referring also to Native Americans and American brutality and bloodshed. “Wail”, symbolizes grief and pain from suffering of the torture, lynching; which is extremely loud even as a word – to be “drowned” by the laughter, and silenced by the mockery of the inhumanity. Laughter is evil in this case, and being so loud that it obnoxiously and arrogantly refuses acknowledge reality, in continued power plays and domination; “Hail ye your fearless armies,/ Which menace feeble folks” (Ibid.:1899).

may be therefore argued that the heaviest burden of all is to a high extent the most silenced one, deemed voiceless and blatantly unrecognizable through patri-colonial frames devaluing the woman's burden. Racial discriminatory exclusions divert and enhance the heaviest burden: on the non-Western, other-ed woman. The burden is of any people who do not fall under the dominant classification of power, even within the same national boundaries: based on race, ethnicity, and womanhood. Many if not most defined Arabs and Egyptians would neither consider themselves as Black nor Arab as such. This distanced identification exemplifies the hegemonic power of naming another and what is self-articulated from relational borders and how. It is important to conceptualize the standpoint of defining the gaze, and in relation to whom, in distinguishing against colonial identifications of African, Black, and black or Muslim women when discussing Egyptian women who do not identify as black, and women who do identify as black, due to the vast nuances within such mass naming and what lies beyond them.

While distinguishing complex situational identities is significant to epistemological research, women cannot pretend to isolate themselves in detachment to these namings as fragmentation in itself is also perpetuated by patri-colonial structures among other factors of framing apparatus. The gaze representing and framing non-white, non-European women, the other of the other, is influenced by historical patri-colonial roots of racial and women's segregation from men, from the colonial, and from their own selfhood and sexualities. hooks argues that the "designation of all black women as sexually depraved, immoral, and loose had its roots in the slave system" (hooks, 1982:52). She adds that it is from such thinking that the stereotype of black women as a "sexual savage" derives; in sexist and racialized terms as a "sexual savage, a non-human, an animal cannot be raped" (Ibid.). However, since the use of burden is not applicable for the White Man, historically and until today, it may be a burden of guilt, of debt, and holy sin in its divine claims of democracy and HR which it actively breaks. It is an invented burden; to justify and divert from further forms of colonialism and imperialism on physical and psychological levels, on the global South and the South within the North. Santos (2018) refers to the "anti-imperial South" describing it as an

Epistemological, nongeographical South, composed of many epistemological souths having in common the fact that they are all knowledges born in struggles against

capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. They are produced wherever such struggles occur, in both the geographical North and the geographical South.

Santos, 2018:1

This is symbolically and directly evident in other geopolitical fields where the South and North are relationally existent. In the new languages; the white man's privilege which may be connected to this ordained position of power, is depicted as a mere coincidence. This diverts attention from structural systems of domination ruled by the epistemological North, and from patriarchal discrimination against women across cultures and race. hooks (1982:99) infers that "racism has always been a divisive force separating black men and white men, and sexism has been a force that unites the two groups". Anti-Arab and Anti-Black racism while essentially different employ similar structures of exclusion, and which are more severely impacted in productions of women of these geopolitical locations where the lines have been rigorously assigned and then blurred. The burden may be de-oriented as an epistemological advantage in deconstructing the words which reproduce privilege and oppression across race and just as cuttingly, between women and men. Wording is dictated by the dominant male establishing the social realities of affairs as reduced manipulations of power; and in doing so, self-proclaims its authority over the rest. Dangerous moral superiority and imposition in representations and languages of HR discourses occur systematically as massacres under the name of freedom, reducing the value of human life and freedom in how it is framed and by whom. In the "new common sense, international conflicts are reduced to a 'clash of civilizations'" (Abu-Lughod, 2013:114) in which entire regions of the world are represented as rejecting values such as freedom and nonviolence when it is rather these values which seem to reject them. The alleged moralistic obligation and burden of Western-centric frames of HR uses paradoxical language and responds to what it distinguishes as terrorism from one standpoint imposed as global standard; amplifying its own dissonance. External definitions and sensors to threats largely neglect other terrorisms stemming from within patri-colonial hierarchies, in addition to condemning the Arab other and the other of the other — the Arab woman and her complexities — to sentences including but not limited to subjections to crime, violence, and non-worthiness of existence.

Discrepancies are seen in killing in the name of the "common good" or in the name of "democracy or security" (Butler, 2009:36) — valuing life differently, and claiming to

bring or “install democracy” — what is supposedly based on “popular decision and majority rule” (Ibid.). As this is designed for and by another time and political power, it is highly contradictory as it is firstly essentially impossible and secondly, anti-democratic. This acts in juxtaposition with the essence of democracy in that if a “form of power is imposed upon a people who do not choose that form of power, then it is, by definition, an undemocratic process” (Ibid.:36–7). The notion of democracy and rights (or perceived lack of) in the Arab world is largely a Western one denouncing the universality of HR and women’s rights virtues. This notion highly subordinates people who are contrasted, discounted (non)priorities of the supposed humanitarian mission but subjects of it, ironically through discourses where being human or woman is considered a limited qualification. Moreover, the clear-cut distinction between the Western civilized policies and the chaotic, hopeless reality of the rest of the world further commands patriarchies of oppression.

The classifications of developed, underdeveloped or developing result to more harm than good for countries of the South and distance this region from true, attainable hope in terms of HR conscious, democratic governance, and economic welfare from their very point of departure. In terms of bringing democracy, or attempting to obscure exploitation with imposition of moral or ethical code; the North is not only exacerbating the divide through arrogant domination, but additionally making it impassable and forbidden to catch up, in vain, to a model which is fundamentally hypocritical and Eurocentric in its essence. Fanon (Fanon *et al.*, 1965:58) powerfully states that “moral reparation for national independence does not fool us and it doesn’t feed us”, emphasising the insubstantial deceit. Many developing countries call for financial reparations for years of occupation, slavery and exploitation of resources, in addition to moral reparation for inhumane histories. In spite of their official declaration of independence, the majority of developing countries are still subject to exploitation under several forms of continued imperialism and military overtone. Continued imperialism is used here not in the sense of a new-colonialism but one that has never ended as it is the reason for much economic, political and social pressures imposed on alleged former dependencies, which remain dependent. Imperialism persists due to its normalized perpetuation and alleged validation by being indirect and continuously self-proclaiming an overruling authority through these very constructed words. The

Third World finds itself and speaks to itself through his voice. We know that it is not a homogeneous world; we know too that enslaved peoples are still to be found there, together with some who have achieved a simulacrum of phony independence, others who are still fighting to attain sovereignty and others again who have obtained complete freedom but who live under the constant menace of imperialist aggression.

Fanon *et al.*, 1965:9

Canons producing languages of polarization, systems of non-recognition and FoO¹⁸ largely condone liberal policies as the self-proclaimed champions and police of HR. Views from the “colonizer’s perspective, the pre-colonial past of Egypt (like that of other colonized peoples) had to be dismissed as a pre-civilized limbo”; as to think otherwise is to “negate the supposed *raison d’être* of colonialism” (Kadhim, 2004:16), the contrived need for a civilizing mission. The underlying tensions in historical and contemporary relations are largely reactionary, based on nationalism and exclusionary in essence despite women’s participation within the imagining of development and governance. It can similarly be argued that while

nationalism provided new spaces for women to mobilize in — and even to use and endorse the universal construction of ‘the citizen’ in particular contexts — at the same time it framed those spaces, landscaped them through rhetoric and language in particular ways.

Rai, 2008:10

The contradictions are implied in imposition which restricts as much as it extends through signifying boundaries and standards. Democracy is in vain in these instances, and the pervasive divide grows when HR violations continue and are somewhat legitimated by its theatrical implementation or (lack thereof). Violations that are unreported or selectively recognized by hierarchical order enshrine violations as a normalized outcome of racialized projections, determined by their geopolitical origin and positioning.

Deconstructing naming which derives from the Western gaze — including the West as an invention of itself — implies a “re-orientation of the way the modern world is imagined” (Bonnett, 2004:163). The West was “developed and imagined in important, new and influential ways in the non-West” (Ibid.) — thus portraying the tautological use of phrases such as ‘Western modernity’. The hegemonic construction of the ‘West’ as

¹⁸ FoO acronym for Frames of Oppression will be used from this point onward.

dominant and civilised is said to have been “employed, and deployed as an idea to develop and secure a variety of geo-political projects across the globe” (Ibid.), imaged as supreme in a highly comparative politics. In resistances within self-definition of identities, the “West has been model and anti-model, but also a site of innovation and transcendence” (Ibid.). My research analysis critically recognizes and interrogates the “mutually defining relationship” (Ibid.:164) between the ‘West and the rest’, the ‘Third World’ which has seemingly “come to colonise the political imagination, excluding many communities whose attachment to vast entities, like the West or Asia or Africa, is weak or non-existent” (Ibid.) — or existing but dismissed due to self-validating structures of opposite-ness across forged national, regional and patriarchal borders.

Many of the “subtle dynamics of power arise from the duty of protection” (Mulgan, 2007:46): a battle of control on women’s bodies and social realities alienates them from their own autonomy. Multilayered doctrines of exclusion are as coordinately patriarchal as denying women’s rights under religious pretexts; which require denouncing the patriarchal status quo within feminist academic and HR discourses. Creatively reassessing the encounters in women’s rights realms suggests strongly that languages and acts of “translation, hybridization, and even dislocation might be more useful metaphors than imitation, assimilation (forced or attempted), or rejection for grasping what happened in the colonial encounter” (Abu-Lughod, 1998:18). This reconsiders women’s interventions as full accounts in themselves, reclaiming autonomy of each self-situated narrative and expression. Resistance — despite being largely monitored “curtailed and surveilled by government bureaucracies, political elites, and ideological/religious apparatuses” (Castells, 2009:57) — may work within within communication contexts as a national defense rather than perceived across as foreign threat, towards moving beyond misconceptions of borders of limited access to women’s rights.

2.4 Double Patriarchies: (Non)Recognition of the Other of the Other

Due to the confines both of and in between the nation state and democracy, the mere possibility of feminism within a non-secular, culturally Middle Eastern or Arab framework is contested from within and outside the region. Arab feminisms largely employ their claim to their rights with the sociocultural and traditional realities from which they derive, when Western feminisms largely assume a liberal and secular path for emancipation. Such “framing in terms of “cultures” has a long history, great contemporary currency, and, it must be added, an imperial genealogy” (Abu-Lughod,

1998:14), which is reproduced in contemporary frames. Culturally alienated in systems of patriarchy, feminism as a word and movement has caused scepticism and fear conceivably almost as detrimental as Islamophobia. Feminisms are contested internally due to blurred historical impositions:

colonialism's use of feminism to promote the culture of the colonizers and undermine native culture has ever since imparted to feminism in non-Western societies the taint of having served as an instrument of colonial domination, rendering it suspect in Arab eyes and vulnerable to the charge of being an ally of colonial interests. That taint has undoubtedly hindered the feminist struggle within Muslim societies.

Ahmed, 1992:167

The politics of such terms and evocations of fear may not only be seen regionally but additionally instrumentalized by dominant global discourses; the “projection of evil onto a faraway culture was also a significant aspect of medieval Europe's bulwark of bigotry” (Kabbani, 1986:5). The coupling of Islam as a system of backwardness towards women stigmatizes the advance of women's rights in society under Islamic pretext and is a preeminent injustice. As HR is pertaining to the rights of the human, humanity is naturally not only applicable to the people of the West. Parallely, feminism too, must be deconstructed to be regarded as pertaining to the rights of the woman and equality of the sexes and as naturally not only applicable to the West, nor deriving from the West.

There is not a singular word translation of feminism in Arabic but rather addressed as women's “*nashat*” (literal translation: energy, meaning: women's agency and activities) or as a longer statement describing views on equality between women and men). Conforming to — rather than seeking to destruct — disconnecting discourses reinforces dismissing structures of non-recognition: the “unquestioning (and some would say unscientific) reproduction of dominant racial assumptions in psychological theory results from the uncritical retention of Eurocentric philosophical premises” (Mama, 1995:39). Canons creating such projections must be contested for limitations of schemas they reinforce. While racism encompasses more than discrimination against Black people, it may be connected to Islamophobia in the production of an external evil based on their symbolic production as paradoxical to the dominant canon, racially, ethnically and religiously. The very distinctions in naming areas of research in essence impose a sense

of dichotomies and disconnectedness if not methodical supremacy and disempowerment. It is therefore important to reassess and through acts of reassessment, to reject the binary polarization between West and East, secular and Islamic, European and non-European other, for the destructive discourses they reproduce in contemporary times and the complex entanglement within which the languages thrive to realize themselves.

Supposed “Third World” people, feminism(s), the Arab man and Arab woman — very much similar to Ahmed’s (2000:1) “alien” — can be said to be represented in an exo-worldly manner: the alien is “over-represented in popular culture that it has become quite recognisable” (Ibid.) in its connotated projection and not essence. In dominant media representations connotations of chaos, violence, human suffering and oppression are seen in the vast number of non-Western countries filled with complex and numerous nations and regions. The stereotypical frame of representing the Arab portrays “what is over-represented and familiar in its very alien-ness [and] cannot be reduced or *found* in such representational forms” (Ibid.) as it is never indeed captured or fully comprehended. Othering distance, as if from another planet rather than continent is systematically and increasingly recreated to secure situations of power and claiming knowledge authority in systems of domination.

The “way that in the postcolonial world women have become potent symbols of identity and visions of society and the nation” (Abu-Lughod, 1998:3) is worthy of conceptualised analysis in terms of the possibilities of feminism(s) and solidarity of women’s power. Resisting regional and global patriarchies critically assesses the way by which spaces are occupied through education, sociopolitical interpretation, and academic writing which interrogates and deconstructs dominant semiotics and framing. The “language of rights that promised equality to women could be seen as problematic not only because it was actually unavailable to women but because of the assumptions about personhood and subjection to the state it carried” (Ibid.:8), highlighting the blurred ambiguity of women’s rights for women in Egypt and the global South.

Feminism, the word, political ideology, social construct and arguably even, the need for official actualization of the social construct, is largely understood to be Western; creating much debate, controversy and mostly fragmentation on questions of women’s rights, exposure of women’s struggles and dialogue between feminisms of the North and South, particularly within and between countries and identities of the South. Said is said to have

“braved accusations and condemnations coming from many sides as he criticizes both the various forms and instruments of Western domination *and* the failures of Middle Eastern societies” (Abu-Lughod, 2001:112). This conveys the “entangled political engagements” (Ibid.) inevitably faced by women and feminist scholars of the region as he sets core framework to unfold and stem off from. Polarizations are not one-sided or only occurring in the global West, but historically and contemporarily amplified through stratification in the global East or Arab region, in several spheres of patriarchies of oppression.

Women of the Arab region, to different extents — contingent on complex social intersectional factors — face DP as Arabs and as women within the patriarchal implications in their countries, as Arabs outside of it, and as women from Arab backgrounds from outside of the region. The projection of “evil onto marginal or powerless groups within a society has always been a convenient method of producing scapegoats” (Kabbani, 1986:5), used as explanation for HR violations such as mass genocide, women’s condemnation, and collective and individual racial and ethnic targeting. Due to the framing of a conceived evil, the recognition of diverse realities is limited: thus reproducing injustices on social consciousness. Language reflects the alienation of women from their bodies when manufactured by a male perspective or dominant canon: “bodies have become de-gendered, and the specific relevance of maleness and femaleness disappears” (Smart, 1989:92) and at the same time is highly incorporated. Disqualifying women’s rights to their bodies denies “women’s responsibility (they can’t help it) whilst ironically discovering them to be culpable (they bring it on themselves)” (Ibid.:96) signifying that constructions of helplessness and blame subject the woman as inferior in her society and rights.

Evident in formal and informal communications and conduct; women are discredited and weighed down in struggles to freely express their bodies or femaleness in the public eye, unless they are designed, exoticised and subjected to the acceptable mass or private male-gaze. Specificity or pluralizing in the male form extinguishes channels of relevance to women and feminist work as they continue to be “marginalized, or regarded with suspicion as if it is a form of special pleading, rather than a fundamental critique of intellectual thought” (Ibid.:93) and HR. Polarizing languages reinforce non-thought and false claims of intellect, shaping FoO in various forms and fragmenting identities in their generalizations. This largely overlooks works of Arab feminists within the region for decades if not centuries, and conjointly further invisibilizes the complex struggles and

realities of these women as those who do not fit within the patri-colonial frame and thus are not immediately — if ever — recognized as women in the region in the first place.

Disunity is largely due to Eurocentrism and the more subtle new forms of colonialism evident in vast classifications within the African and Arab region, yet continually perceived as a singular unit from the foreign gaze that produces them. The Orientalist trap largely persists in the power politics of naming, the retelling of history, reporting of news, and the homogenized recurrence of the image and standardization of the Arab woman. Polarized and uniform namings antagonize women from their individual reality, and from European, African and Arab women. In the case of Egypt and other North African countries, in addition to European societies, pluralities of these identities intersect and are not disconnected even on the level of the individual. I will argue that Said's comments on the invention of the Orient may directly be connected to this portrayal. The specific categorization of geographical space and vast continental realities alienates the multifaceted diversities of African and Middle Eastern identities while limiting exchange across them to European and Western women. Just as he describes the Orient as being "almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experience" (Said, 1978:1), the Arab woman and her body, has also been invented and reinvented as an (in)curious, exotic, veiled, oppressed space.

Legal and political agendas highly impact local cognitive thought, women's recognition and rights; the highest influencer of human happiness for most populations is the "quality of government in its widest sense" (Mulgan, 2007:5), and people's capacities for self-determination. Women of the region struggle to combat moralistic assumptions of the incompatibility of rights with religion and challenge the injustice of such exclusion in their national, regional and global space. It is an act of injustice to the millions of people and each woman in the region that would simply and horrifically, by default, become unentitled to their own civil rights due to racist, discriminatory presumptions. The persistent "patronizing vocabulary" (Shohat and Stam, 1994:35) defining women outside Europe and United States as "Third World" women displaces the realities of the people portrayed by reproducing colonial generalizations and alienations in the global discussion of HR. People considered as deriving from non-European and "non-Western" regions continue to be reduced and expressed as "non", and in this way as an absent, negating and lacking

otherly hegemonic world. These peripheries impose a troubled and faulty point of departure that does not prioritize HR or proper recognition — inflicting numerous obstacles to women’s rights in the South regionally and globally.

Connotations to violence and invalidation of the Arab largely obscure recognition of the other and particularly, the other of the other who is secluded in a separate abstracted antithesis. This is considerably evident in Western conservative and arguably even less conservative frames of international media. The nation which welcomes refugees or social integration is argued by Ahmed to use centrally

the role of difference in allowing or even establishing a national imaginary [which] presupposes the proximity of those who are already recognisable as strangers as well as the permanence of their presence: living together is here simply a matter of being aware of cultural diversity. The strangers become incorporated into the ‘we’ of the nation, at the same time as that ‘we’ emerges as the one who has to live with it (cultural diversity) and by implication with ‘them’ (those ‘specific ethnic groups’).

Ahmed, 2000:95

Separate development describes a policy working toward the erasure of difference, the other, and “Third World women” and urges women writers, academics and activists of the South to maintain ethnic values “within the borders of your homelands” (Minh-ha, 1989:80). Regimes of (non)existence within and outside these borders limit and silence voices into conforming with hegemonic constraints on them. This evokes further struggles in speaking freely, speaking at all and being heard: “the humiliation of having to falsify your own reality (...) often cannot *say* it. You try and keep on trying to unsay it, for if you don’t, they will not fail to fill in the blanks on your behalf, and you will be said” (Ibid.). Separateness merely tolerates and mutes women at a distance within structures of conformity of difference. In this approach, if and when women are recognized; it is from an othering lens which does not recognize the frame as their own to compose.

On a regional level women continue to be challenged by contradictions and tensions in women’s rights struggles contemporarily: “while remaining central to the project of ‘nation-building’, women were made ‘invisible’ through universalized discourses of citizenship and economic development” (Rai, 2008:13). Patriarchies are perpetuated directly and indirectly and encompass exclusion of some women in the writing of history,

including vast systematic schemas of non-recognition. Naming and linguistic schemas largely consolidate power hierarchies which produce them, significant in women's representations. Patriarchal naming is evident in that a woman's name is buried with her. Nawal El-Saadawi, Egyptian renowned feminist activist and writer states, "for in this class patriarchal world of ours a mother's name is of no consequence, a woman is without worth, on earth or in the heavens" (Saadawi, 1999:4). Patri-colonial classifications continue to subject and silence women's lived agencies in this way, within family, national and global networks of naming. As such representations reinforce divisions and exclusions in the national context, the social and political reality within an Arab nation remains completely alienated from the non-secular, liberal, Western paradigm and the illusion of liberal choice. Drawing on Said; Arab feminists criticize "multiple forms of injustice", and are consistently "aware of the complex ground we tread" (Abu-Lughod, 2001:112) in addition to new territories which may be opened and claimed through daring re-articulation beyond minefields of prejudice. Women in the Arab region and other postcolonial societies are faced with complex struggles against othering mechanisms both regionally and globally:

while the new citizenships allowed women to take their place within the political space of the nation as individuals, the ambivalence that surrounded the new citizenships meant that this individuation remained fragile; the social symbolism of 'woman' continued to threaten the civic rights of women.

Rai, 2008:13

HR violations under various political pretexts or linked to radical terrorism are normalized when seen occurring on the geographical plains of the region, in contrast to how they are reported when seen in Europe or otherwise affecting the Western global North. Systematic framing practices representing conflict, violence and oppression directly affect networks of communication and affect civil and legal action driven by

Specific societies, as defined by the current boundaries of nation-states, or by the cultural boundaries of their historical identities, [which] are deeply fragmented by the double logic of inclusion and exclusion in the global networks that structure production, consumption, communication, and power.

Castells, 2009:35

Efforts towards critical de-appropriation of knowledge challenge marginalization within its apparatus. These must “gain and regain, within the realities of the present-day world, the independence lost, to enable these margins to become their own center and to participate actively and responsibly, in the construction of a common future” (Hountondji, 2002:257). In conclusion, FoO and DPs are questioned as to which “comes first” on the tautological margins and how may this convey the superficiality of race? In this note, it may be argued that women’s construction too can be deconstructed, as can race. The continuity of race and DPs it induces reinforces a superior naming which assumes the binary woman within fragmenting frames of (dis)empowerment: postcolonial, other of the other. Classifications in the academy and media may be said to at times suppress discourses which recognize and value knowledge of women as leaders in social and institutional fields, hindering self-claimed articulations. DPs are reinforced to assume misfortune of the patri-colonial, limiting the classification from its outset against moments of encounters and conversation with the complex identities of the woman. The term *postcolonial* carries resonances of oppression through its recall and use from Western frames of imagination and is worthy of further examination. As with the “decentering of any discourse [...], this re-imaging of the postcolonial closes as many epistemological possibilities as it opens” (Suleri, 1992:759). The term to some extent traps the weight of memory of dual infringement every time it is used unthinkingly in reference to the woman of the South.

Chapter Three

Polarized Geographies and Polarized Feminisms

Global representations largely falsely singularize and exoticise Arab women in an Orientalist manner, patriarchally marginalizing them, as if of the home, of their men and of their *Oriented* fate. Internationalist feminist commitments to the urgency of women's praxis, its boundaries and all-encompassing solidarity recognize the tensions from which struggles are born and the significance of non-hegemonic, conscious feminisms. Rather than self-proclaiming to be "border-less" (Mohanty, 2003:2) feminism; it is instead one that "acknowledges the fault lines, conflicts, differences, fears, and containment that borders represent" (Ibid.), recognizing and thus deconstructing polarized dichotomies in identities. Anti-racist feminism — reactionary to colonial and anti-colonial realities — regards borders as ambiguously present in several forms: "lines between and through nations, races, classes, sexualities, religions, and disabilities" (Ibid.), to self-declare, move across non-fixed margins of depolarization and shape perceptions of complex realities in HR advances.

Through the recognition of differences in sociopolitical histories and divisions; the intellectual and political construction of what may be called "Third World" feminisms must simultaneously deconstruct and critique hegemonic Western feminisms and strengthen "autonomous feminist concerns and strategies that are geographically, historically and culturally grounded" (Ibid.:17) and inter-dimensional. Under the hegemonic Western gaze, the production of the "Third World woman" as a singular, monolithic subject is said to be a discursive construction. It may be deconstructed or dismantled by analysing the

certain mode of appropriation and codification of scholarship and knowledge about women in the Third World through the use of particular analytic categories employed in specific writings on the subject that take as their referent feminist interests as they have been articulated in the United States or Western Europe.

Mohanty, 2003:17

Socioeconomic exploitation and the appropriation of struggles and experiences has come to be broadly used to characterize the "most evident economic and political hierarchies to

the production of a particular cultural discourse about what is called the Third World” (Mohanty, 2003:17), enforcing polarizing and oppressive structures. However “sophisticated or problematical its use as an explanatory construct, colonization almost invariably implies a relation of structural domination and a suppression — often violent — of the heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question” (Ibid.) and relative condemnation of the subject(s). It is important to underline that Western feminisms are likewise not all a hegemonic, non-critical monolith. Western feminisms refers instead to the evident production of thought and text that codifies “others as non-Western and hence themselves as (implicitly) Western” (Ibid.:18). Similar to the construction of the “Third World” woman, any situated production of knowledge that automatically assumes its position as the norm, defines the other as contrasting to a hegemonic self. These frames cannot neglect their own centric patri-colonial language and blinding generalizations based on the normalized perpetuation of superior and inferior definitions. Social order and sociocultural frames in contemporary societies are understood as ongoing processes operating “in a state of *disorder* compared with the conception traditional in the history of ideas” (Therborn, 1999:77) which constitute complex identities. Changes in thinking may then manifest in “practices of political mobilization” (Ibid.:116-7) highlighting the importance of critical cognitive thought in feminist interventions to redefine self-situated identities.

The problematic of dichotomies of power in language must be reassessed as direct intolerance to universal humanity and to the women of the region facing prejudiced recognition as Arab and further as women, both regionally and by the global actors that assume the role to emancipate them. Scapegoat opposition to Arab Feminism indicates that since feminist and national consciousness “emerged at the same time and as a reaction to Western imperialism, feminism is an illegal immigrant and an alien import to the Arab world and, as such, is not relevant to the people and their culture” (Golley, 2004:521), therefore perceived as extrinsic to Arab culture and women. To emphasize hesitation in engagement with politically charged naming of feminist struggle as previously discussed in commitments to women’s rights; non-Western women may avoid self-identifying themselves as feminist. Seen as a linguistic structure designed to refer to societal and individual placing of identity and self-definition, many Arab women agents opt rather to identify as advocates of feminism in defending the equality and the rights of women on their claimed terms — distinguishing themselves from the word yet relating

themselves to its core aim. In this way, women agencies examine how and when feminism is relevant to them rather than as a question of whether or not feminism is relevant to Arab women, shifting the debate to positioned concerns directed towards their rights. Choices to re-monitor deflects “attention away from stereotypes [and] is necessary if we are to revise our strategy and direction” (hooks, 1984:29). Actively challenging the power complexities of situation of feminism itself as not subjecting the women in its politics yet of purpose as a tool of women’s rights; critically reassesses and de-oriens fixed languages of alienation from some ethnically non-specific, silencing Western feminisms which may be exclusionary or unconscious when speaking for the other, while self-articulating and outlining their own located claims and frames of reference with deliberation.

Just as destructively and somewhat along the same point of departure; Arab feminism, when falsely perceived en masse, is understood by the West as being an exotic version, or, imitation, of a likewise falsely singularized Western feminism. Arab feminism was “born within, and continues to suffer from the predicament caused by, the double struggle: internally against the old religious, social and economic order; and externally against European colonisation” (Golley, 2004:529) due to histories of contradicting oppression in moral impositions. The problematic of terms such as Arab and Western feminism is that they further polarize and mute the diversity and tensions present within each, which must be recognized depending on how each feminist structure defines its mission and ethical and epistemological standpoint.

Global solidarity across borders of feminism diagnoses a “common enemy— patriarchy— [which] supposedly affirms the sisterhood” (Abu-Lughod, 2013:105); further intimidating the patriarchal religious and political affairs to revert to patriarchal extremism while blatantly discounting the underlying variances between women. Reductive definitions of power imbalance reinforce binary divisions between women and men, and inclusionary and exclusionary praxis of oppression by limiting the conversation to geopolitical region rather than truer sociological conscientious research. Only through “context-specific differentiated analysis does feminist theorizing and practice acquire significance” (Mohanty, 1984:347) to contest homogeneous representation which oversimplifies contradictions between women within the power structures they exist. It can be argued, therefore, that Western feminisms and media discourses delineating

women's rights are universal to the extent that they organize the "universe of a system" (Ibid.:348) of representation. This reflects the framing discourses of HR as a Western imposition of standard rather than a process concerned and committed to the protection of the rights of humans, against all violence(s), and more peculiarly, against the violence of selective, discriminatory, patri-colonial recognition of all human lives as in fact, human. This chapter explores polarizations between feminisms and geographical locations to assess firstly, Veiling and Unveiling: Injustice(s) on the "Arab" and the Arab Woman's Body, secondly the Social Construction of Vulnerability and Violence on the Woman's body, thirdly the way by which Purity, Honour Crimes and Crimes of (Dis)Honour come to be represented and understood and finally, Orientalist (Mis)Representations and the Egyptian Women's Burden(s) to unfold analysis of women's agency against polarizing frames and injustice.

3.1 Veiling and Unveiling: Injustice(s) on the "Arab" and the Arab Woman's Body

Women's rights representation and protection is significantly affected by ethnic, religious, sociopolitical affiliation and geopolitical location. Since bodies are said to be socially interdependent; structures of power inhibit reciprocal recognition in shared precariousness. A "targeted population" is exploited and the lives are "cast as destructible, ungrivable, (...) and lose-able" (Butler, 2009:31) when framed as already being lost if not never to have lived to begin with. Such populations and (more severely their women) are "cast as threats to human life as we know it rather than as living populations in need of protection from illegitimate state violence, famine, or pandemics" (Ibid.). Framed as a contrasting enemy; their deaths [and their bodily and psychological integrity] thus, are not only not considered a loss, but they are "deemed necessary" for the welfare and protection of those lives that are "living" (Ibid.). It is in this injustice that physical and cognitive violations against all Arabs and more particularly, women of the Arab region, occur, become silenced and trapped within a double frame of racism and patriarchy and falsely justified. Here, falling beyond the realm of those from which feminism is thought to derive is considered as incompatible to another society or, just as dangerously, to be applicable to any society using a hegemonic, duplicated model. It is similar as to think, visible directly and indirectly; these are the people who may be exploited, who may live in chaos, who may be massacred, and who not only have no

protection but oppression is structurally legitimated as duty or burden; as they are subhuman or not women enough — existing outside the West and Western ideals and not applicable to women's rights.

Assuming the power to define and analyse traditions, realities, cultures and people, in this very act, normalizes the power to do so. Racism, a 'true social phenomenon' is said to inscribe itself in

practices (forms of violence, contempt, intolerance, humiliation and exploitation), in discourses and representations which are so many intellectual elaborations of the phantasm of prophylaxis or segregation (the need to purify the social body, to preserve 'one's own' or 'our' identity from all forms of mixing, interbreeding or invasion) and which are articulated around stigmata of otherness (name, skin colour, religious practices).

Balibar and Wallerstein, 1991:17-18

FoO claiming to represent Arab women in forms of media depicting the region historically and contemporarily reproduce polarizing terms such as 'harem'. Episodes of patronizing authority and languages of confinement are contested for their racial and patriarchal prejudice, as until today, the "mere utterance of the word conjured up a whole set of exotic and erotic images, because of a long history of representing the "harem" through the eyes of the coloniser" (Golley, 2004:523) in women's rights global discourses. Women are grouped as a victimized, claimed subject, overlooking the significant strength and humanity of each individual woman's complexity and voice defending women's rights, and living under intensified barriers due to structural silencing not only within their own environments but also in the "global" context. Positioning of power and "race", legitimated through scientific, anthropological, and legal discourses do not reflect reality of distinction but rather construct race as a "signifier of difference, of otherness, created by colonizing ideologies of Western culture" (Ferri and Connor, 2007:82), and as of diminishing value from the standpoint of "Whiteness". The body of the other is framed within a "state of perpetual subjectification" (Ibid.:83) because in its representations; is a "site where knowledge and power are constantly accepted and/or contested via discourse" (Ibid.). The body in this way is perceived and occupied as a space for abstract symbolism rather than situated reality. Similar to discourses of non-specific Western feminism and the imaginary of the harem, in media and film;

White men and women occupy the center of the narrative, with the White woman as the desired object of both male protagonists and male antagonists. Third World women — when not merely erotic tokens of their virgin lands — are marginalized, appearing largely as sexually hungry subalterns.

Shohat and Stam, 1994:156-7

The harem images perpetuate Orientalist fantasies and “offer an “open sesame” to an alluring and tantalizingly forbidden world, seen as infinitely desirable to the instinctual primitive presumably inhabiting all men” (Ibid.:161), exacerbating both patriarchal and racial objectification. In describing the Arab woman, the discourses of Orientalization evidently perform a collective illusion rather than convey located, diverse and complex reality(ies). Said (1978:6) refers to French novelist “Flaubert’s encounter with an Egyptian courtesan” Kuchuk Hanem, which “produced a widely influential model of the Oriental woman; she never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence or history. *He* spoke for and represented her”. Being foreign, European, wealthy and male: all “historical facts of domination that allowed him not only to possess Kuchuk Hanem physically but to speak for her and tell his readers in what way she was ‘typically Oriental’” (Ibid.) in his gaze; as an objectified muted, incompetent species. This matrix of power hierarchy is not an isolated incident: it portrays the “relative strength between East and West, and the discourse about the Orient that it enabled” (Ibid.), in addition to the relation between women and men, more so from polarized regions, as a direct result of cultural hegemony based on patri-colonial objectification.

Obscured by the image of the veil, *hijab*, literally meaning cover is largely evident in depictions of women of the Arab region and Muslim women, although not all Muslim women use the veil, not only women in the Arab region use the veil and not all Arab women are Muslim. The notion of concealing the nature of the face or hair from public eye as to protect it from analysis and discussion has in fact been the topic of controversy and debates for decades both within and outside the region. Ahmed (1992:166) describes, due to the “history of struggle around it, the veil is now pregnant with meanings”. Moments where the signifier of the veil is used in the Orientalist context are argued by Yegenoglu¹⁹ (2005:47) as acting as structures of “interrelated meanings [which] work as

¹⁹ Meyda Yegenoglu is professor and writer in cultural studies, sociology, postcolonial and transnational feminism. She is born in Turkey and among her work she researches multiculturalism, secularism and religious identity.

tropes of representing the Orient, its women, and their dressing” in an exoticised fashion. The polarized obsession with the veil through the Western gaze almost defies its initial purpose, to conceal the woman’s femininity or sexuality as a desirable object to men. It attracts fascination by default of *oppositeness* in mainstream discourses and Western liberal feminism; thus producing veiled women if not *all* the women of the region as oppressed objects of analysis to be veiled and unveiled accordingly for another’s gaze and not themselves.

The multilayered signifier which hides the Oriental woman is thought to conceal the essence of the Orient keeping “its truth from Western knowledge/apprehension” (Ibid.). From the extent of its obscurity it can be argued that it appears to be keeping its truth even from its own self-comprehension. In the same sense, Western apprehension and knowledge is still produced in an exoticised fantasy of the veiled woman and the Orient; in centering interest and speculation on what is covered, why, and which private moments and spaces it may be uncovered and understood in its natural state. The element of clothing is almost costumed, similar to the projection of Arab men as bearded or in costume-like, traditional clothing; reproducing an orientalist theatrical fantasy of the distant other that represents what is enacted, abstracted and mythical.

The more conventional Western gaze produces the veil as a “privileged concept-metaphor in the construction of the reality of Orient; it’s very ontology” (Yegenoglu, 2005:48), centralizing the veil as “unique strategic-rhetorical move, precisely because it is assumed to conceal not only [the] Oriental woman but also, through her, the very being of the Orient” (Ibid.). The exoticised other — more particularly being the other of the other under patriarchal structures — imposes tensions for Arab women’s rights as the non-European other in global discourse, and within regional backlashes under sociocultural religious pretexts. The production of the Orient as mysterious; consistently as “more and other than what it appears to be” (Ibid.) obscures its essence. Just as the essence of Arab women when portrayed as veiled is obscured — in the “very act of its concealment that the Orient reveals itself, reveals that there is Orient, a place, a culture, an essence that needs to be grasped, known, and apprehended” (Ibid.). Precisely because the essence of the Orient is grasped in its concealment; it is never in fact accurately cognized as inquiry remains predestined in producing it as unfathomable and distant. The veil symbolizes the “curtain which simultaneously conceals and reveals; it conceals the Orient’s truth and at the same time reveals its mode of existence” (Ibid.). The veiled Arab woman is thus

reinvented as “a being which always exists in a disguised and deceptive manner, a being which exists only behind its veil” (Ibid.) and in this way is made to discontinuously represent “simultaneously the truth and the concealment of truth” (Ibid.). More so, analysis on the veil reflects Western parameters of choice and truth rather than any closer understanding of the political and personal dynamics of the complex veiled women; dismissing their contextual views in addition to those of the women who are not veiled. The discussion remains in this way external to women’s choice from plural factors, and polarize feminisms further:

items of clothing — be it bloomers or bras — have briefly figured as focuses of contention and symbols of feminist struggle in Western societies, it was at least Western feminist women who were responsible for identifying the item in question as significant and defining it as a site of struggle and not, as has sadly been the case with respect to the veil for Muslim women, colonial and patriarchal men.

Ahmed, 1992:166-7

The idea of the veil and images of women in the region are predominantly confined to an Orientalist style which channels irrelevance of the true essence or Arab concern in the stereotypical fantasy of imagination; overlooking whom is veiled and the underlying complex politics behind the veil and in its framing. For these reasons it is said that the “veil emerged as a potent signifier, connoting not merely the social meaning of gender but also matters of far broader political and cultural import” (Ahmed, 1992:129), retaining its merchandise of significance in relation to patri-colonial politics of oppression. Evident in several levels of imposition on women’s lives and bodies inside and outside the region, the discussion validates itself through its abstraction of the other when analysed as an objectified, vast unitary group without context and rarely situated or in-depth. It may rather project descriptions of surface appearance and obscured alienation in focus of how women can be unveiled as objects of Western gazes of emancipation, oppression and feminism. The veil symbolism seems to be employed by the superior need to polarize the other to confirm patri-colonial power of judgement in the production of truth. In this sense the very “attempt to represent what is concealed behind the veil and what the veiled being of the Orient/feminine is, is one that starts and ends with the subject of representation” (Yegenoglu, 2005:49). Therefore the Orientalist’s production of his or her own self-validating presumptions emphasise the disregard of diversified reasoning and voices and imposes DP in its framing.

3.2 Social Construction of Vulnerability and Violence on the Woman's body

Western feminist scholarship to a large extent reproduces the “Third World” difference and reinforces DPs when inscribing Arab women through academics, media and other influential realms of knowledge. The construction of vulnerability and violence on the other and most particularly the woman's body is a process largely characterized by “assumptions of privilege and ethnocentric universality” (Mohanty, 1984:335). These discourses convey “inadequate self-consciousness about the effect of Western scholarship on the ‘Third World’ in the context of a world system dominated by the West on the other” (Ibid.). Women in imposed patri-colonial systems are faced with paradoxical media frames of HR which speak for rather than with varying feminisms while deliberately ignoring their own imperfection, positionality and histories of the reasons for self-proclaimed privilege to define and construct. Privilege has many layers and intersections, and implies exclusivity in recognition of life and worthiness based on racial and colonial means of classification which actualize it: in that the “dialogic orientation of discourse is a phenomenon that is, of course, a property of *any* discourse” (Bakhtin, 1981:279). Humanness, female-ness and universality cannot be exclusive; and must critically deconstruct the politics of who distinguishes against whom. When women are depicted as a singular, mass victimized, subordinate object, they are sentenced in a frame which re-embodies violence(s) against them perpetrated by men and other women's accounts on them.

Spaces acknowledging the “seriousness of violence against women without contributing to the stigmatization of particular communities and their representation as exceptional” (Abu-Lughod, 2013:114) are controversial in addressing and expanding discussions. Extending the producer of frames re-assesses the right of representation and the selective narrative of privilege to represent. Gazing back at frames of violations and violence(s) against women counters how these are further stigmatizing the subject of representation in doctrines of exclusion and are thus not neutral from their epistemological outset towards the Arab woman. Objectification in frames of representation when producing the other of the other as victims of custom, male violence and religion result in DPs of oppression. The representation of women as victims of their own sociocultural realities arguably distances HR advance. Characterizations of victim status rather than as agencies of emancipation reproduces labelling “generalizations”; which are “sprinkled liberally” (Mohanty, 1984:339) in global and regional HR discourses. Politics of inclusion imply

exclusion which reflects the problematic of the grouping of women as a fixed category of analysis; it “assumes an ahistorical, universal unity between women based on a generalized notion of their subordination” (Ibid.:344) to men, and furthermore disregards complexities of power and vulnerability between women.

Political institutions are understood as “manifestations and materializations of power; they petrify and decay as soon as the living power of the people ceases to uphold them” (Arendt, 1970:41). It can therefore be argued that challenging and dismantling such power from within the structures they exist lessens violence against existences and flourishing lives. Patriarchal and racially discriminatory discourses threatening power apparatus may however perpetuate suffering:

every decrease in power is an open invitation to violence — if only because those who hold power and feel it slipping from their hands, be they the government or be they the governed, have always found it difficult to resist the temptation to substitute violence for it.

Arendt, 1970:87

Violence against women is a term connecting different violence(s) against majorities of women who have experienced it incongruously. The term impacts women’s solidarity across borders — the common cause being the belief in the “importance of the protection of the bodily integrity of women and girls — which was central to liberalism” (Keck and Sikkink, 1998:172) and simultaneously the “core of understandings of human dignity in many other cultures” (Ibid.) as a “transcultural value” (Ibid.:195). Focus on bodily harm and integrity avoids the “indifference resulting from cultural relativism and the arrogance of cultural imperialism” (Ibid.), and yet employs its own politics of selective other-ing gazes and requires situated analyses. Situated analysis is important in scrutinizing particular acts of violence and condoning them in their contextual realities and moments of occurrence. Methodical blurring of the acts due to context or frequency, as seen in the following discussions, repeatedly conceal vulnerability, violation and murders of women as typical of the sociocultural background in which they exist.

A paradox in information processes of the campaign on violence against women is formed in every instance that violence becomes more visible when it is recognized and contextually reported as abuse rather than normalised behaviour. While languages

addressing violence impact action; the existence of solid networks “appears to be the precondition for drawing enough attention to the issue so that accurate studies begin to be conducted” (Ibid.) to mobilize spaces of women’s self-agency and solidarity. The frames of violence shift and expand domains within which women’s networks attract “new allies by situating them within the larger “master frames” or “metanarratives” of violence and rights” (Ibid.:196). In international and regional discourses, representation impacts how violations resonate with “different audiences and which institutional arenas women have access to for redress” (Ibid.:197); actively reshaping more supportive agendas. Feminist discourse frameworks based on physical and social differentiation are said to still be

prepared to grant an uneasy selfhood to a voice that is best described as the property of "postcolonial Woman." Whether this voice represents perspectives as divergent as the African-American or the postcolonial cultural location, its imbrications of race and gender are accorded an iconicity that is altogether too good to be true.

Suleri, 1992:758

Metanarratives continue to subject women as constructs which may be manufactured and sabotaged by the discourses of ownership and authority over women’s bodies and lives. Classifications of perceptions of violence and tradition affecting women are largely governed by an “array of social arrangements extending from marriage, family, education, social hierarchy and property to the management of the body and everyday hygiene” (Herzog, 2004:55). Such arrays “derive their character and justification from the myth of protecting the purity of the blood and preserving the race; and in nationalism” (Ibid.). Rejections due to labelling under structured dictations on honour and (im)purity of the woman’s body impact not only her existence but that of her family and her country on the global level. This is largely due to injustices in narrating or representing her complexity, alienating women from their own claims to their bodies, narratives and experiences of violence and simultaneously further inflicting it. Patriarchies operate and disseminate in every retelling account on behalf of a woman’s body in her absence and silence. DPs are further inflicted by metanarratives of (dis)empowerment on psychological, legal and political discussions of women in their immediate environment when they circulate around, assess and condemn women while subduing their crucial intervention.

Cultural demands offering ideals of the emancipated or oppressed woman's body or speaker for any being are seen to foster different degrees of "rejection, shame, and fear in relation to both failures to control the body and deviations from body ideals" (Wendell, 1996:85). This suggests that "any idealization of the body" (Ibid.) is the "rejection of some kinds of bodies or some aspects of bodily life" (Ibid.). Violence in representation and persistence of Oriental fantasies hyper-sexualize and at the same time completely diminish discourses of women's understanding(s) of their own connections and claims to their bodies. The emphasis of culture and mystification in contrast to the exposed, emancipated ideal exacerbates extremist reactions. Possible interconnections between sexual violence, coercion and a "lack of engagement with sexuality" (Chi-Chi, 2013:187) is another factor which limits a plurality of experiences overlooking what does not fit into the "frame" under perceptions of sexual oppression and alienating silences. Such systems of cognitive injustice denounce, vacate, invade and detach not only the woman's humanity, but also her right to her own body. Such imagery and its perpetuation alienate the space of the woman's body as a safe space of her own claimed boundaries of self ownership and determination. This site is not free from violence but rather imposes further patri-colonial forms of occupation in her being, discourses representing her sexuality and crimes against her of the utmost encroachment and violation.

Sociocultural physical connections in representational frames of concern to the Arab woman appear to occupy her body, rituals and existence by a hegemonic, value system based on the woman's inferiority and operational descriptions. This reinforces boundaries of the subject by politicizing women's physical and psychological existence as mechanic and public, to be discovered if concealed and threatened even if by knowledge production depicting it, when seen. In both racist and nationalist thought, and biological, familial and nationalist continuity; it is the "woman's body that constitutes the criterion for examining the principles of commitment, belonging, obligation and loyalty to the collectivity" (Herzog, 2004:56). The woman's body and therefore, essence is identified as the space to occupy with patriarchal allegations in the name of hierarchies of difference which aim to justify and amplify power imbalances. Repertoires of presumption contribute to women's invisibilization and alienation from their own bodies. This directly and indirectly poses multiple obstructions to women's empowerment at national and international levels of representation and maintains "ideologies that objectify, rage against, and attempt to control women" (Wendell, 1996:167). The consumption of the woman's body within the

discourses that oppress women, as if intrinsic of them, and not originating from them or for them; the woman's body becomes the signifier of its constraints, extrinsic to its own gaze. Disregarding how women define themselves and their own limitations and elaborations on discussions of their personal lives and bodies; thereby solidifies the borders within which the oppressed exist. Women's living is framed and objectified from the dominant hegemonic lens condemning them and other marginalized sects.

hooks underlines feminism as a movement to end sexual oppression, emphasising the importance of solidly basing the foundation of future feminist struggle on "recognition of the need to eradicate the underlying cultural basis and causes of sexism and other forms of group oppression" (hooks, 1984:3). She further defends challenging sexual oppression as a crucial step to eliminate discriminatory injustices: "since all forms of oppression are linked in our society because they are supported by similar institutional and social structures, one system cannot be eradicated while the others remain intact" (Ibid.:35) primarily focusing on self-articulating women's sexuality as power rather than weakness or as existing for the purpose of another. Classifications and labelling are "regimes of justification that refer to collective traits (race, nationality, ethnicity, traditionalism/modernism as innate, inherited traits)" (Herzog, 2004:57), acting as indicators of women's social experience based on multiple layers of oppression and inclusion. Deemed as intrinsic to women, boundaries may be used to claim separateness from oppression as empowerment to challenge the binary code and the shakeable hegemony of oppressive frames through self-articulated social reconstructions. It is argued therefore that "between and within these processes of exclusion and generalization identities are forged that are hybrid, changing, multidimensional and often conflicted and contradictory" (Ibid.); illustrating potentials to redefine limitations and bring forth complex realities and struggles which have previously been rarely visibilised. In sites of resistance bodies and constructions of knowledge on women's bodies are claimed and hegemonic regimes of language are contested. Through different modes of report, coping strategies and habits, each woman's self constructed reflection of her reality begins to be seen, heard and respected by state actors, other feminisms and global solidarities of freedom resisting against patriarchal and racial blurring systems of oppression.

3.3 Purity, Honour Crimes and Crimes of (Dis)Honour

The “true effects of traumatic experiences cannot be factually rendered since no one has ever been able to see pain, except in its consequences” (Depelchin, 2005:220), in how violence comes to be known and how the aftermath of pain is communicated. In colonial times, “brutal force was rationalised through mental abstractions which reduced Africans to the levels of beasts of burden” (Ibid.), to some extent seen in moments of media frames’ depictions of Egyptian women’s rights when speaking of misconduct against women as sociocultural and in descriptions of women’s agencies in their society. The way by which pain, trauma and violence come to be depicted is selective of the subject of trauma and therefore largely dependent on the sociocultural climate from which the experience occurs, whether it is considered as a crime, or as a dated tradition. The “past glories of Africa were forgotten” (Mothe, 1993:21) under the weight of slave trade, and the ravages caused by it were seen as “the ‘normal’ condition of Africa and its people, not as the disaster it was to the continent” (Ibid.). The underlying historical patri-colonial struggle against all normalised instances of violence poses the challenging question of “how to move away from the embedded practices of policing knowledge, how to prevent the sterilisation of knowledge (history), and instead to allow it to be emancipatory” (Depelchin, 2005:1). From the situation of women from Egypt, abstractions are clarified in their contextual frame as claimed, humanized and conscious accounts to de-orient patriarchal visions in the global discussion and the languages of rationalization of violence in frames.

In producing connections of sexualised violence against women to religion; anyone “concerned with representations of Muslim women, with the lives of actual women in the Muslim world, and with the global enterprise of ‘saving Muslim women’ needs to look hard at this category” (Abu-Lughod, 2013:114). The direct connection implies that “behaviour of a specific ethnic or cultural community”, and thus; “the culture itself, or “tradition,” is taken to be the cause of the criminal violence” (Ibid.) against its own women. Honour crimes are largely connected in debate to Muslim populations even outside the Arab region. Being accepted as a direct unquestionable linkage in national and regional discourses is unproductive in that it reproduces the violence(s) on women by blindly defining them as fated victims and disregarding their individuality, struggles and voices when living within Islamic societies and legal structures, in conjunction with the varied beliefs within each religion. Through this connection, knowledge segments that are

produced in the global sphere stereotype dichotomies of other(ing) languages and conceivably dismiss the potentials of the reality in which the women exist as a possible solution for emancipation. When discourses of representation in these accounts of violations of women's rights do not delve into specificities or commit to different naming, the very violence is legitimated and accepted in a hopeless frame; further amplifying pretexts of oppression.

The value and existence of a life appears only whether it is considered a life (Butler, 2009) and arguably, of the woman's body whether it was considered a claimed autonomous body in her society, in the first place. Normative frames of recognition and apprehension are predetermined by the epistemological capacity to acknowledge a life as a life and by the same token: human suffering. Cognitive norms "precede and make possible the act of recognition itself" (Ibid.:5); in that "recognizability precedes recognition" (Ibid.), dictated by power mechanisms "through which ontological fields are constituted" (Ibid.:7). This sequence highly shapes the recognizability of violence through the languages that depict it. Honour killings, in the act and the naming of the crime of murder which should have no rationale to be carried out, portray the value of men's honour based on women's suffering and dismissal of the recognition of the woman's value and honour. The act of honour killings in this way falsely upholds the dignity and honour of a man's name (family reputation), and robs or disowns the woman from her own being, body, sexuality, and choices due to ignorance and claiming misinterpretations through structural dominance. Falling outside the frame from which the norm is reproduced the subject is not recognized, for what is framed becomes the "viewer's inevitable conclusion" (Ibid.:8), which may be argued to endorse further disregard to women's humanity. This ignorance, to be contested, cannot be dismissed as religion or culture. Namings of honour crimes and female genital mutilation reinforces their dissonance, the disempowerment of women's agency and choice, and does not focus enough attention on internal struggles, complexities, and factors affecting such acts, their prevalence and resistances to them.

Conceptual literacy is a "recognition that debate and contestation impact on the development of a field of study, on the production of different forms of knowledge and on changing the language of theory and research" (Hughes, 2009:10), each shaping what

is “viewed as the necessary politics of that field” (Ibid.). Countering the hierarchization binary: deconstruction is “concerned to illustrate how language is used to frame meaning” (Ibid.:19). Misconceptions are widely reproduced; posing an epistemological injustice of DP on the being of the Arab woman in depicting her suffering which detaches her from her own narrative, story, and body, in addition to the act of violence. The manner by which the HR atrocity is projected to the Western reading public reinforces ideas of the other as a singular barbaric entity rather than addresses the act as criminal, femicide, aggressive patriarchal violence, and a cruel unfathomable absurdity. Global discourses of media and academics must be a platform for action against such acts as powerful potential spaces for pressure and influence in reshaping blasé attitudes to its happening.

The victim is victimized several times in her existence, through the moment of the act, the terror preceding it, and again beyond her assassination, in the narrative of murder and bodily invasion which does not refer to the crime using this wording. Frames of victimization of all the women she represents in the region are portrayed for every crime of genital mutilation and of (dis)honour, in her own death of a part of her in cutting, or total death by a family member and by her own society, what should be the closest unit of protection. She is further victimized as a woman from the African, Arab or “Third Worldly”, of a culture and religion that would not protect her life and harshly delude her honour. To ignore the patriarchal crime in such an instance of vulnerability and injustice; even once, towards one individual is to reproduce it, let alone reinforce it and falsely dispossess justice for the woman in manipulations of honour, women’s claims to her body, and continuous Orientalist discourses in frames of international HR rhetoric.

The space between the viewer, the global community and the losable life, is what reinforces the tragedy or rather the indifference of its lose-ability. To know a name, a history, to see the images of people, their families, their reactions and their aborted ambitions is to relate to them if not value their situated reality and lives. By refraining from using names and personal stories not only does the global community treat lives and grieving of life differently, but in its distancing framework has in fact given its own names to the subject in the frame if not reduced them to mere discrepant and vast statistics. I would argue that, similar to FGM²⁰ and the ways by which it is explained and

²⁰ FGM acronym for Female Genital Mutilation will be used from this point onward.

portrayed, such reportage²¹ seems to disqualify the symbols of tradition and “entire cultures or communities” (Abu-Lughod, 2013:114) as what is severely stigmatized, rather than articulated, located “particular acts of violence” (Ibid.). The barbaric light conveying FGM studies, in numerous international and Western methods of surveying and statistical production depict the act as prevalent in African and Arab societies. Discourses are thus affected by the representation of the violent, dubious tradition, and the implications the languages used in the frame on the portrayal of the Arab, African other.

The very name; honour killings apropos to the exoticised other, appears to be anthropological, paradoxical and detached from the ritual of sacrifice, which is of no self-will, nor depicted as a sacrifice nevertheless in affiliation to the woman but rather; as a glorified act of protection of male honour. The loss is lost further when it is neither contested nor empathised with from its situation and receives random instances of global attention only to reproduce the frames in which it is falsely justified. The framing alienation feeds polarized dichotomies between “us” and “them”, and dismisses the act as irrelevant to the civilized global sphere. Such distancing does no justice to the woman’s story and the rest of the women in depicting what stands for her life and the violent taking of her life against her will. It explains the act as if definitive; and detaches from the woman, further exacerbating non-recognition of the woman by turning the conversation to the shock value of male honour, barbarism in a patriarchal, blatant moral superiority and systems of other-ing which continue to refer to the murderous act as one of honour. The act is initially carried out due to the belief that the man is he who possesses the honour of the family with great value and must take responsibility to protect it, and the woman’s very body and existence is in his possession with no value to live without it. The projection of this act of murder; as honour killings — honour in single form due to the perception of wholeness of man’s honour and singular focus on only the male’s concern in the act, and killings in plural as if never-ending, fragmented yet prevalent —

²¹ Media Monitoring analysis of reportage representing Egyptian women’s rights is explored in further depth in Chapter 5. For the specific search on FGM; A Guardian Article entitled: “*FGM: number of victims found to be 70 million higher than thought*” was analysed for the languages it used to represent non-western women victims of FGM and narratives of violence. The wording of barbaric and ritual is followed by a large photo portraying the hands of a woman in Kenya showing the “razorblade she uses to cut girls’ genitals” (Elgot, 2016) – followed by the name of the photographer rather than the name of the woman or her face. Her disembodiment, only seeing her open palms and the violence of the razor, disconnects us from a face, or a full human body and the repetition of the word “cut” expresses vivid violence in a mechanical and detached form. The vast numbers impersonalize and generalize the region – stating that Indonesia, Egypt and Ethiopia “account for half of all FGM victims worldwide” (Ibid.:2016).

sentencing the subject and dismissing the killing. This further objectifies Arab women to violence and international acceptance of a false pretext they are fighting within and against. Questions of a woman's purity are claimed by males, in her family or her husband, in extremely conservative societies more influenced by patriarchal status quos including limited access to women's literacy and education.

Supposed claims on women's bodily purity are associated to men's honour in aged tradition. A woman is expected to prove her virginity in blood on the night of marriage and display it to the family, who is sometimes present during the act, or nearby with other village spectators, awaiting celebration of the male-headed and named family's honour (or dishonour and shame should there not be blood). The patriarchal narrative "demands, under the sanction of social penalty, that the performance of femaleness styles the body that is called female as virginal" (Odeh, 2010:917). The woman's emotions during this moment are disregarded and the intrusive pressure is also an instance of claiming ownership of the woman's body used as a signifier of honour or dishonour to the man. Honour is a thing of the woman, as is her body, her virginity and her notions of purity. While it does not result in her death, it is a vivid example of her blood in theatrical dispossession of her. The absence of blood results in her being taken back to her family to kill her due to shame, inflicting psychological images of violence which underline the need to question the very languages used in these instances and particularize their variances, causes, and resistances. The hymen "acquires the double function of being both a mark of virginity and of delineating the boundaries of the body that is called female" (Ibid.). It is preserved for the male's pride and claim, and "distinguishes it from the male body, since the latter can bear no such mark of virginity" (Ibid.) and yet cements it at the objectified expense of women.

The act of killing a woman, no matter the reason, is a murderous crime. This act is one that has existed across cultures, outside the Muslim religion as well, but perhaps across most conservative, traditional societies, on smaller geographical scales and under different names. Connotations to religious practice and the classification therefore further stigmatizes the way the term is used and understood as connected to particular societies. Shame, public humiliation and legal action must be taken to deconstruct the words honour killings for their lack of sanity, inexcusable justification and social inaction, if not perpetuation of the act. Patriarchal connotations are further reinforced: the man "who kills

his sister to defend his honour epitomizes in a dramatic way, through his act, the performance of his gender" (Ibid.:919). This must be deconstructed by epitomizing women in their claimed autonomy on their own bodies. The juxtaposed name (there is no honour in killing or assuming possession over any human life) reflects the contradictions by which it is communicated; as a ritual of barbaric practices which naturalizes the killings merely sparking mystery, then shock, then dismissal of a separate world. The acts are labelled as honour killings but should rather be resisted for their dishonour, their horror and as crimes against humanity to recognize languages of activists, intellectuals and feminists which strongly condemn connections to religion.

The double violence is produced in such representations and depictions of HR violations — linking to Said (1978:1), that “perhaps it seemed irrelevant that Orientals themselves had something in stake in the process”. The irrelevance of the Arab concern and African and Arab women’s resistance undermines these struggles and their agencies by neglecting atrocities and defining them as pertinent to this region and these people. To relate such violence to culture or religion limits its conversation and is as if forgetting that women suffering violence and death at the hands of men occurs beyond the Arab culture and under different names. Depending on geopolitical location; select stories, situations, and descriptions individualizing the murder as personal, emotional, or of the attacker being under the influence, when reported, languages and depictions are selectively given great care in details and specificities. The differential way by which crimes are archived, handled, and reported largely evokes more feelings of recognition, value, compassion towards the victim’s death, and her justice beyond her death: “cultures cannot simply displace or undermine each other” (Abu-Lughod, 1998:263). Atrocities towards women in the Arab region are largely defined in a different grammar; such as invasive methods of condemning women’s sexuality and bodily integrity and blurred hypocrisies between private and public issues. Detachments the woman’s body even in the way the violations are reported arguably additionally impose acts of domination on her being. The suffering that is almost naturalized in attribution, as of the other; produces a deeper reduction of being framed and constrained within this representation, and owned by injustice in life, in death, and beyond the point of death.

Global solidarity must commit to efforts which recognize the complexities of such acts and their naming to support the Arab women’s right to claim ownership over their own realities and bodies, to be perceived as complete beings despite and particularly because

they are living within a patriarchal society in addition to being subjected by patriarchies outside it which also claim to define them. Many Egyptian women are active agents in rejecting the mechanisms which objectify them; empowering themselves as whole and undeterred by the forces of patri-colonial discourse and barriers within it through education to support consciousness and legal protection of their women's rights. Male honour which is "upheld due to *aib* (shame) of the women's lack of purity" (Odeh, 2010:917) is reclaimed as of their own, to de-stigmatize constant productions of shame on the woman's body and being. This is not a new or a single act but a process in which women are actively partaking for decades in the HR discussion and cannot continue to be regarded as culturally distant and abstracted, even from their own sites of existence, their societies and crucially, their bodies as physical and conscious beings autonomous from societal wrongs.

Any act of murder or bodily occupation over another human life must never in any way be understood as negligible or dismissible to culture in a racial pretext by global discourse in media reports, international assemblies, courts of justice and other spaces of influence and global solidarity. In this mere connection and difference in language, the victims of such crimes are denied the sense of a shared solidarity in tragedy across borders and moreover further objectification under dominant apparatus which took their lives. Her existence, body and narrative was not considered her own to begin with, and the global arena instead perceives massacre and bloodshed of women in the name of culture in the projected, blurry, distant Orient which perpetuates collective apathy. The victim's tragedy is not recognized or claimed as a collective human or feminist solidarity; instead stolen from her to build a political and social fear of Islam and consolidation of patri-colonial discourse through rejection of Arab women's rights to their own bodies and lives. Abstracted stories of un-belonging recounting that even their own families choosing to mutilate or kill them due to purity and honour feed the image of the Arab as a monster. Impersonalization through graphic public exposures of the private portray the image of the Arab woman as victim while living abstractedly, being murdered and after death, and subject to the Arab man, who is conveyed as the underdeveloped aggressor in discourses which may maintain the echoes of injustice in language.

3.4 Orientalist (Mis)Representations and the Egyptian Women's Burden(s)

The complex theoretical and practical politics of framing and recognition come to address the critical enquiry of some Egyptian women agencies to decenter and de-orient representations on them in both the national ground and international feminist scholarships. Facing several barriers to access of knowledge and its production, Egyptian women activists and scholars to a large extent undergo further critique not just as Egyptian, women, but more so when they actively engage in, articulate and claim their emancipation. Critique and the burden faced is not dichotomous but a minefield of complicated, intricate frameworks and language to use, to avoid, to justify and defend themselves for their actions before they have started, nevertheless finished articulating them. It may be questioned “why European thinkers have been credited for being self-critical in their attempts to overcome arbitrary and theological regimes, while Egyptians are easily discredited by notions of ‘aping the West’ — not only by European and North American scholars, but also by Egyptian intellectuals” (Al-Ali, 2000:27) contemporarily. Rather than displacement, some Egyptian women seek to position themselves not between the dichotomies or within them, but rather in “value systems and political struggles that are not necessarily framed by the ‘West’ as ‘the other’” (Ibid.:33) to escape apparatus’ of oppression.

From being excessively framed and coming to see ourselves beyond various frames; women from Egypt in women's rights become very conscious of framing and not committing the same destructive generalizations from several sides when discussing foreign feminisms and Western discourses. Women are non-homogenous and whole in their individuality. Fragmentation mutes nuances and yet inhibits collectivity across differences. This recognition enhances efforts towards authenticity without abandoning non-secular beliefs. It rather, dissects and re-fragments what divides Egyptian women and the systematic orientation of their lives on more than one front. Accordingly, misrepresentations are not confined as produced solely from Eurocentric productions. Saadawi (1999:6) states: “I was proud of my country despite the almost constant alienation I felt towards the society in which I lived”, revealing the dichotomous conflict between nationalism, roots and a misplaced affiliation in a woman's own nation. Patriarchy is prevalently felt and yet concealed within languages used to frame women's rights, as not of the woman but rather concerning humanizing argumentations;

they conceal the gender oppression of women behind brave words about human rights or the human being, distinguish between the liberation of our country and the liberation of women who are half of society, apply the norms and values created by the class patriarchal system and their signifiers in both spoken and written language.

Saadawi, 1999:10

This dissonance reproduces and internalizes feelings of contradiction and shame rooted in presenting the feminine being as autonomous. Women's public action is concerned with not existing solely for man, for children or for the home, but as nonetheless sovereign of her life choices and relationships. Dissonances hinder some women to concealment even of their own identity, body and presence in the public sphere and in her immediate surroundings. International understandings of choice are said to be "entwined with the individualism, rights and freedoms of liberalism" (Hughes, 2009:83), dangerously associating human agency as a liberal concept. Choice is often structured by its languages which limit the scope of horizon; therefore underlining the significance of reassessments of definitions of women's agency and their situational set of choices. Challenging the concept of choice and its patriarchal structures examines alternative re-articulations of the self within and outside the schemas which produce and influence it. The self-determination of selection considering contexts outside liberalist schemas explores the apparatus of choice.

Choice may also be prevalent between a fine line of resistance which on one side marks bravery despite threat of danger, whether to speak or self-censor. On the other, choice may indicate the safe spaces of speaking for another society and therefore not self-risking as correspondingly as the one's speaking for their own claimed realities. In this case and some other illusions of choice, liberal concepts may to a high extent dim and make vague underlying states of fear and the reasons for them. Self-censorship is a choice restrained by its political and social context, while at the same time can be construed to empower women as a protective blanket of their lives and thriving careers and activism, rather than seen as an oppressed unassertiveness or lack of power to select, when it is nevertheless a choice from its contextual standpoint.

Feminist scholarship is the political “mode of intervention into particular hegemonic discourses” (Mohanty, 1984:334), which seeks to deconstruct the production of “woman” as a cultural and ideological composite other. It is constructed through “diverse representational discourses [...] — and women — real, material subjects of their collective histories” (Ibid.). Private and public boundary markers on women’s lives and bodies may be patriarchal structures which reproduce themselves. The “definition of household and kin-based controls over women as ‘private’ presupposes the existence of a central state apparatus that subordinates such entities to its own political ends” (Kandiyoti, 1991:46), in addition to foreign boundary-marker impositions. De-orienting the constructed “Third World” woman is hence driven by diversified, non-monolithic production in women’s scholarship, recognizing and resisting all patriarchies misrepresenting and limiting shared exchange within spaces of knowledge production. The crossing of “historical boundaries that have separated the academy from the world” (Amadiume and Na’im, 2000:1) concerning postcolonial African, Arab people and women in academic and non-academic realms is considered “crucial to the success of a transformative cross-cultural discourse on the politics of memory” (Ibid.) and women’s epistemologies in HR.

From my own experience as an Arab woman having lived in Egypt and also having had the experience of living in foreign Western and European countries and educational systems, I consider myself fortunate for the situation to be able to obtain my education. Personal experience and academic pursuit of new questions and answers has driven my efforts to understand my own positioning in the world and my own society. The journey of making connections between my own sociocultural origin, the diversities within it, my comparative identities outside of the region and how to comprehend these, formed my understanding of my own delineations to compliance and resistance, both when living abroad and when living at home. At several moments I come to the discernment that being home and being away are two spaces which are not so rigidly set apart, and across these borders, women are not either. To feel that would impose more minorities of living on my identity, in sociopolitical bureaucracy and barriers, than to traverse terrains across these vast identifications based on numbers and perceptions rather than intrinsic belief in common humanity. More differences can be said to be found within misinterpretations and segregations of societies, and between women and men in

discourses of representation than across international spheres and boundaries of distinction.

I do not see the fortune of women that did not have to endure bodily cutting as privilege, as such an oppressive violent act and its absence is not celebratory. The act however cannot be spoken for, and women and men who have not been subject to it cannot authorize any entitlement to speak on behalf of other women, as it was never any woman's choice. It does not mean that the act should be silenced rather; more women and men condemning the act should be regarded in the discourses and question how it is being framed. I have to recognize I cannot speak for the acts of all violence against all women. The very need to acknowledge this is personal and brings my argument of the private and public to the surface. The question of such an act and its normalization cannot be compared to its' discourses of occurrence or lack thereof, but may also have crossed a boundary of graphic speculation in speaking for another, or in exposures of direct accounts, even in the way it has come to be discussed. I intend to include these examples and discussion as it continues to spark alarm and anger in me to hear of the crimes, what could be of any woman, had she been born in a different situation. Furthermore, these vital concepts to women's anatomies and rights; the occupation of bodies is repeatedly epistemologically suffocated through patri-colonial reiterations of the acts which must be scrutinised.

Abroad, from a few conversations about my nationality since it is not directly visible, I have come to realise that the gap between some perceptions and realities may be due to (mis)representations confining Arab women as of Arabs and thus of their own oppressed fate in discourses of violence and violations of HR. Patri-colonial frameworks are not only extended in the Arab region. Questions on veiling and not using the veil are just as discriminatory as each other, as if all Arabs should be veiled to be Arab enough to be categorized. Those questions are intrusive, patriarchal and racist questions. Many women from the region abroad or speaking to an international stage from their situations largely find themselves justifying, explaining, and defending. This is not restricted to their societies but perhaps may be argued to be to a higher extent outside of them; as women are questioned not only of their societies but layered complexities beyond the boundaries of our bodies, personal choices, experience, void of particular experience, eagerness to share these, and regions. Surface level markers and false attributions to diverse

complexities of religion and the Arab region do not enhance the conversation to the prevention of further violence and murders.

Patri-colonial discourses also do not address the double if not triple claims made on the woman's body and rights in her own individual social reality but may impose more claims of ownership on her by focusing on the phenomenon rather than stopping it. Interest in identity should be more in depth than reduced to physical attributes or to oppression and pain, such as that one does not look like an Arab or what extent of violence or victimization a woman has undergone. This Orientalist gaze reduces articulations to materialistic moulds; as to what the woman is wearing, and not wearing, and why, and bodily anatomy as to what this woman endured, did not endure and why not. Simplicity and apathy to violence is reduction at the expense of the women that do not have a chance to explain themselves, to be heard, and are not here to tell the story of their murders. Deflection of blame, patterns of fixed categorization and selective recognition are forms of apathy to violence which cannot be justified.

If a woman is killed or mutilated in the countries of the global North by European non-Muslims the act is highly individualized, labelled as psychosis on the male part, as a case of domestic violence, and a disturbed person committing murder or assault.²² Due to its occurrence in the field of the non-European other, it is produced and thus understood as a cultural act, a ritual, and dismissed as such. Discourses provoking horror at the region, hate and violent connotations to Muslims are reproduced in addition to silencing the resistance and internal general disagreement condemning violence against women and femicide. Nawal El-Saadawi describes the traumatic memories of her experience of FGM as a child in vivid description and is one voice of many silenced records which remain

²²*For example*; recent The Guardian article describes women's agency in Spain in response to 19 cases of domestic violence (precise, situated across named cities of Spain and less than 20 compared to millions stated across nations regarding honour crimes and FGM) and women's murder by men in which names are mentioned, the time frame is within the summer, the main photo and emphasis is on women speaking up and protesting in their streets which conveys the difference between private and public. Murder and rape are words mentioned rather than purity and honour or any spiritual belief which may have led these men to commit these crimes. The issue is depicted as a "feminist emergency" further highlighting the sense of urgency to "raise the alarm and protest against apathy, indifference and a lack of attention from politicians and the media" (Jones, 2019) to the atrocious issue in comparison to the normalized depiction of violence against women in non-European countries. The focus against machismo and stating that "violence has no gender" detaches the shame, guilt and focus from the women's body and focuses on violence against humans which is also compared to the distinction and hate created when violence is normalized and vividly described in force on the non-western women's bodies, objectified, owned and killed for the sake of man's honour.

unknown and reported as mere statistics with external authorities on them if and when quoted at all. She portrays the brutal sense of loss of a woman from her own body after the extreme pain and no explanation; she saw a “red pool of blood” around her hips, and writes decades later from her point of authorship and personal experience

I did not know what they had cut off from my body, and I did not try to find out. I just wept, and called out to my mother for help. But the worst shock of all was when I looked around and found her standing by my side. Yes, it was her, I could not be mistaken, in flesh and blood, right in the midst of these strangers, talking to them and smiling at them, as though they had not participated in slaughtering her daughter just a few minutes ago.

Saadawi, 2007:13

She goes on to describe how afterwards the same atrocity happened to her sister, and unlike many has been able to write about her experience and mobilize others in the international arena to condemn FGM. Saadawi condemns the way FGM is depicted as normal, by personalizing the assault as closely as possible while at the same time distancing from the act in that she did not comprehend exactly what is happening, but illustrates vividness of the pain and shock which persists in her memory. She situates herself by describing the raw cruelty of the fact that her own mother who was relatively educated, and more surprisingly, a woman too, let alone her own mother, symbolically the utmost bearer of care and protection, believed it to be a regular procedure. This conveys the lack of awareness of the custom on a very personal level, after graphic depiction of the violence and bloodshed, the female figure of safety she was seeking was right there knowingly subscribing to her own torture. Such accounts show the controversy of the act and the need for spaces condemning it through eloquent first-hand accounts of it as torture, rather than legitimizing it further, in its regional and international representations and as mere statistics which are detached from the women’s pain, essence and body. I choose FGM for this example as no woman can speak of her experience of her own murder. FGM should not be compared to Honour Killings but also regarded as crimes of (dis)honour, which unlike the latter can produce first-hand accounts of women’s narratives even when continuing to live; a part is ripped away from her. The misconceptions recounting the crime and cutting of sexuality; numbs out the voice of the woman herself, which feeds further patriarchies in describing its reoccurrences and

burdens women to explain the unexplainable act whether or not they have undergone it, and burdens incomparably further the women who have.

Both colonial and nationalist structures continue to impose an other-ing lens in their fixed frames of identity and productions of definition from a perceived superior lens of exclusion: “demarcation of the ‘self’ and ‘other’ that had been at the heart of the colonial encounter needed to be carried on for the nation to be secure in its borders” (Rai, 2008:23). These discourses bypass if not somehow internalize their own affairs on women’s rights, its own vast complexities, and social and ethnic differences. Exclusions and forced identities continuously define postcolonial societies. The

nation — imagined as well as imaged, remembered as well as forgotten, traditional as well as modern — was to be built through the efforts of mobilized ‘masses’ led by nationalist elites imbued with a vision of the reclaiming of a glorious, if vanished, past.

Rai, 2008:23

This impels interrogations of women’s access to legitimacy and deconstructions of both patri-colonial and nationalist schemas of recognition in contemporary HR discourse. Ahmed (1992:166) delineates: the “resistance narrative contested the colonial thesis by inverting it — thereby also, ironically, grounding itself in the premises of the colonial thesis”. The subordination of women’s rights under the dynamics of misrepresentation and the burdens of the colonial past persist in contemporary times, and are somewhat confined through the dichotomies and boundaries of speech and access to knowledge which are present in the discussion.

Critical efforts in knowledge production require close analysis for the

need to stand outside these struggles, writing the history of feminism in Egypt with an awareness of its multifaceted nature, historical stages, and complex intertwinement with the West while regarding the claims of the Islamists to cultural authenticity or counter-modernity with healthy suspicion.

Abu-Lughod, 1998:264

Border crossing — W.E.B. Du Bois’ “double vision” — opens the “field of vision without being expansionist; it includes without consuming; it appreciates without

appropriating; and it seeks to temper politics with ethics” (Henderson, 1995:27) to counter polarizations, doctrines of exclusion and invisibility. It may be inquired whether the “body in race [is] subject or object, or is it more dangerously an objectification of a methodology that aims for radical subjectivity?” (Suleri, 1992:760). This outlines the dilemmas of epistemology and identity in researching and defending women’s rights in the Arab region and particularly Egypt. The claim to authenticity, political and social consciousness and responsibility of scientific critical research deliberates my intentional commitment to address and circumvent the same crimes which subject women within a frame. Frames of speaking for, measuring, misunderstanding, and disregarding, emphasise alternatively the significance and necessity of sites of listening to. In her language and without the epistemological injustice of confining frames and alleged regulations on veiling and unveiling; each active woman eloquently speaks against HR violations and advances against them.

Part II

Methodology and Self-Reflexivity

The thesis analysis encompasses methodical critical assessment of the production of the other — more so — the other of the other in framed global depictions *on* Egyptian women's rights and the self-articulations *of* Egyptian women leadership agents through Media Monitoring and Semi-structured interviews respectively. Stemming from the theoretical groundwork, my epistemological approach employs critical discourse analysis through a dual epistemology in the spectrum of the thesis' keywords: De-orientalism, Egypt, Representation, Rights, Self-Situated, Women. I accordingly aim to investigate the focused keywords of Egyptian women's rights from two different sources. In this light I seek to actively challenge moral championship in HR doctrines by investigating the ways in which the phenomenon has evolved to be measured and represented in contemporary media frames of women's rights. Correspondingly, this critique speaks directly against polarizing languages in adherence to the struggle towards full recognition of women's rights, for the purposes of my thesis; situated in Egypt and concerning Egyptian women's rights. The temporal spatial research in media monitoring focuses on the eight year aftermath of the Egyptian uprising in 2011 and the global frames in this time frame which represent Egyptian women's rights from the Guardian newspaper as a global source. The specificity of using this British international newspaper in addition to the specificity of the search from the moment of the Arab Spring and its aftermath emphasizes the lack of abstraction in the dual epistemology. The approach of focus on the same keywords and the same branches of knowledge from different authors is mirrored in media monitoring and semi-structured interviews, to de-frame the frame by a critical effort for more concrete precision in cross-analysing its content. The author's origin is also speculated in terms of where they derive from in a qualitative and quantitative analysis. The temporal and spatial research in interviews focuses on Egyptian women leaderships in their societies' self-situation, in the moments of their availability for at least two personal communications. The spatial origin of the participants is from Egypt, more specifically from cities in Egypt of Alexandria, Beni Suef, and Cairo.

De-orienting scrutiny of publications to examine perspectives and power apparatus' sequentially contributes to deconstructions of languages of (dis)empowerment in framing. The research's dual epistemology on one hand investigates the frames by which women in Egypt are represented in HR discourses at the global stage, and, on the other, examines the transcending dialogue between the woman leaderships' accounts. Epistemologically, the thesis frames the frame by dissecting media analysis in English; examining statements depicted as factual as well as the choices of imagery, layout, content and language employed. The thesis simultaneously explores the junctions and gaps between frames in the agency of Egyptian women's self-articulations in their own linguistic terminologies of their rights. De-framing the frame; the media monitoring approach seeks to deconstruct rigidity, presumptions and oppressive languages. Interviews recognize the point of reference of the researcher; as an insider, an Egyptian woman speaking Arabic, and concurrently as an outsider in terms of living abroad and exposure to foreign education. In this acknowledgement I believe I am an insider at a distance for scrutiny. Insider-outsider would seem to produce a divisionary approach of dichotomies between the frontiers of knowledge as isolated from each other rather than reflect the possibilities of each one from multilayered perspectives and views. In this way the epistemological research is aware of the intricacies involved in carrying out interviews in Arabic and writing in English, while based in Portugal, a European country, and studying at an international academic institution.

I critically analyse discourses through media monitoring concerning each specific contextual frame and moment. This approach delimits the complexity of Egyptian women's rights through semi-structured interviews and researcher's resonances with women in theoretical and grounded discussions. The recognition of standpoint is of core consideration to commitment, authority and responsibility. In order to contribute to the production of ethical scientific knowledge, it is crucial that the need for deconstruction of structural silences and barriers between women and their rights on several fronts is emphasized. Embracing conversations of HR after deconstruction of hegemonic frames maintains the purposes of this critical assessment. For maximum objectivity, one global source analysis cannot come without efforts of de-fixation of frames from situated articulations. HR epistemologies of postcolonial women's critical dissent stress the tensions that arise between feminisms and languages of HR and capacities of socio-critical interpretation to unravel adequate interruptions. Semi-structured interviews are

employed; opting against closed-ended, multiple choice questions or mass-surveys which would further limit the frame through pre-fixed qualitative and quantitative reductions. Quantitative mass data in generalizing canons of FoO implies reduction in a preformed manner; the numbers

explain themselves — whence the contortions with which you are pretending to grate, scratch, or graft some supplement in the corner — up to a certain limit which does not bound all the text's powers from the outside but rather, on the contrary, through a certain folding-back or internal angle of the surfaces, conditions their envelopment and development in the finite/infinite structure of the apparatus.

Derrida and Johnson, 1981:299

Analysis across fields in both global media frames and the direct voices of women leaderships in HR in Cairo reflects the significance of located narratives under the same keywords: Egypt, Women and Rights. They convey in their own words the continuous struggle in the spaces between dichotomies and beyond frames of representation. The persistent speaking for, and when speaking; speaking from the margins, further reflects the limitations for women of the theoretical South. It also mirrors barriers to reclaim wrongfully claimed territories of power confines in women's rights and on women's bodies. Fundamentally, the burden to represent and be represented underlines efforts which recognize the injustice within the many contexts of women's realities and solidarities across national, regional and international discourses of influence and frontiers of emancipation.

Valuing the significance of origin and situation of who is producing knowledge and from which sociopolitical location adheres to the weight of epistemological specification in shaping research. This recognition invites discontinuance of hegemonic frames to elaborate diverse fields of knowledge moving beyond being merely inclusive and tolerant: the “controversialism of standpoint theories turns out to be a resource” (Harding, 2006:89). Capacities of feminist advance and methodologies challenge the “perspective of the mainstream philosophy of science” (Ibid.:109) by producing knowledge with scientific objectivity and authority. Turning to more located production creates concise realms of trueness rather than reductions implied by pre-allocated categories. The political unconscious of Western science based on presumptions and ideals determines

which scientific questions are asked, and the ways in which they are conceptualized, “practiced, and for whom the results of research will be especially useful” (Ibid.:113). It is also important to note for whom they may be less useful, what the findings subject within them and according to what criterion. Dialogic positionalities involve asserting the “role of talk and voice, the right to be heard and the responsibility to listen” (Anthias, 2007:42), in orientation to the interviewee in the politics of encounter. Grounded in everyday realities, media and sociopolitical debate, this research is sociopolitically and theoretically relevant to contemporary HR discussion. At a time of political turmoil, fear, growing social inequalities within and between countries of the South and North and mass violations of women’s rights, it is vital to ethically understand HR in the region and claims to it which can neither be rejected as alien nor as Western.

The articulation of different philosophies opens the spaces of their criticism thus magnifying the quality of knowledge. Western sciences have largely been able to “achieve unique universality only in an authoritarian way” (Harding, 2006:129). The very concept of universality from one perspective excludes and subjects masses into a “lesser reality, if any, than the objects of scientific scrutiny” (Ibid.:130). The objectification occurs in homogenized authorities directly undermining complex intersectional identities impacting women’s rights in Egypt. The scientific void in knowledge may therefore be argued to create spaces for critique and intervention against it, towards fuller recognition of all humans. Recognition as human is not enough, nor to be seen and heard when merely from the lens of the other. Rather, it is necessary that Egyptian women speaking their rights are seen, heard and valued in the production of knowledge from their own lens as humans of intrinsic and extrinsic worth and dignity, across their own claimed bodies and realities and across terrains of race and gender.

Chapter Four

Egyptian Women's Rights: Epistemology and Methodology

Seeking to present itself as a work which does not commit the epistemological injustices it aims to put into question; my thesis framework underlines the valuable contribution of situation of voices and conscious realities of women's HR in Egypt. Discussion is cultivated between theoretically relevant literatures and critical discourse analysis of HR politics of frames to reveal the gaps which dominant frames may perpetuate. This methodological approach seeks to present narratives of Egyptian women's lives, experiences and thoughts which are intact in their fullness for the aspirations of the study. For analytic purposes different standpoints which have been "identified according to their source, topic, content, or interpellated subject" (Therborn, 1999:79) outline the value and limitations of each article and narrative. Ongoing processes of interpellation are not representative of absolute knowledge in that they "have no natural boundaries, no natural criteria distinguishing one ideology from another or one element of an ideology from its totality" (Ibid.). Frames analysis' therefore employs a systematic continuous effort assessing languages and trends reproducing FoO and DPs across time, and narratives of self-situation which are considered in their contextual moment. Alternative discourses in regarding fixed data collection or extraction as all-encompassing in sample and time are often limited by language and confines of expression. Expressions may partly represent the moment in which women express their own perspectives but are not considered as fully representative, isolated, absolute truth. Even then, "imagination, dreams, reality, memory are all imprisoned, surrounded by walls, slower than the changing truth" (Saadawi, 1999:2). This underlines the fluidity of women's articulations which are not circumscribed in essence, notwithstanding, the comparable concreteness of frames which allegedly seek to define them.

For this reason, the research epistemologically scopes across eight years of analyses from one international newspaper source for keyword articles from a point of reference of the January 25th revolution of 2011. Not focused in one particular instant in time, it spans across it, systematically compassed around an Egyptian date in collective memory and its aftermath. The choice in doing so catalyzes the de-orientation of Eurocentric and western-centric dates in collective memory. In their outset and reinforcement, these dates,

such as the September 11th attacks of 2001 in the United States of America, act as scapegoats in further normalizing negative hegemonies on the Arab and hence the Arab woman. My choice of epistemology recognizes the ever-changing nature of truth; “like the sea, like the movement of water, of air, and soil. We do not swim in the same sea more than once, so how can I cast it in a mould of three letters on to a sheet of paper?” (Ibid.). The incapacity to capture all truth into one frame is reflected in this statement, which recognizes that truth, while valuable in itself, always encompasses more. What is beyond the frame is abstracted through scope, language and the contextual source and purpose of the frame.

Critical epistemology is vital in rethinking the fixed, “anti-racist project away from the binaries constructed by discourse which set up anti-racism as the radical voice of the black disadvantaged and multiculturalism as the soft hand of liberal conscience” (Anthias, 2007:1). Such discourses of relative deficiency express the need for different types of knowledge for truer assessment rather than perpetuation of the same polarized dichotomies. The time frame of media monitoring and interviews is therefore conscious not to concentrate itself around one pivotal moment or occurrence. Rather, this methodical analysis critically foresees patterns over the extent of a continuous nature for as much outreach as possible, higher chances of accessibility to participants and their timely narratives of analysis. Nevertheless, the interviews remain politically and socially aware of the context of contemporary events and HR climate which may impact answers, and willingness and hesitance to answer. Understanding the discourse as non-isolated considers realities with consequences on social thought and on each other, and such enrichment of dissonances as pivotal to the HR discourse.

Focusing analysis on Egyptian women’s rights delimits broad narratives on Arabs as a whole which silences and reinforces divisions; by polarizing Arabs as other-ly identities on both national and global fronts. The term ‘ethnic’ group, for example, is “always constructed relationally” (Ibid.:33), underscoring the significance of assessment of frames of this construction. In addition, it emphasizes the complex relation between situation and gaze, and hence the impossibility of unbiased research completely free of prior opinion. The process of deconstructing the means by which Arab people and particularly, the Arab woman is on one hand represented and viewed, and on the other, empowered in her

diction and claims her own self-situation and vision, reveals the potentials of the HR discourse. It is the most critical realm for crucial discussions which de-frame and de-orient oriental visions. Urgent de-framing critical discourse analysis of the Arab region is needed in a world of growing power inequalities, fear-based oppressive politics and patriarchal “justifiable” HR violations and crimes. The evidently dominant image must continue to be deconstructed to portray the complexities and intersectional identities that exist beyond it. In order to contribute to research efforts seeking to de-orient the discourses which define the Arab woman in how she defines herself in her agency, I choose to focus on Egyptian women as a constant variable. This epistemological choice invites complex multiple voices and intersectional identities so as to bring forth points of contact and de-homogenize destructive frames through the critical process of consciousness in women’s empowerment.

Dialogue, interventions and hybrid women’s organizations in HR blend between bureaucratic and collective structures. These are impacted by the institutional environment of their situation and political struggles: “when individuals forming organizations do explicitly challenge institutionalized definitions of “appropriate form” [...], they are not necessarily immune from all institutional pressure” (Bordt, 1997:52). Affiliations and surrounding environment may empower or limit women according to their situation and articulated purpose in knowledge authoring. While focusing interviews on active women leaderships and seeking disclosure, the limitations of truth are acknowledged. The limitations are also assessed in themselves as reflections of societal dynamics and to what extent politics impacts diverse views, intentions to articulate and hesitancy to utter, and how. For this reason, choices to remain anonymous, to affiliate with a particular organization and degrees of self-censorship even of the author of research, all have implicated evidence. Surrounding climates of learned hesitations and willingness to engage in HR research may in this way shape and enhance safe spaces which securely acknowledge and address the rights of all women and humans.

The ethics of such acknowledgement sheds more light on praxis of knowledge production and representation as complex even when self-situated, and more so when framed. Standpoint theories largely focus on how “women’s experiences can be the source of knowledge about both oppressive forces and modes of resistance” (McLaughlin, 2003:47) in their contextual struggles. The choice sample of women agents’ in women’s rights may

be argued to be limiting, however, for the purposes of my research it is a critical choice. This is due to the necessity of scope and in the difficulty to claim to address all Egyptian women, and in the effort to de-orient the image of women as mere victims. That is not to say that women in lesser positions in society are not directly advocating for their women's rights, nor to undermine the collective struggle. Rather, to voice empowered narratives which are eloquently speaking for their own positions in society as women, and recognize their strength in educational access and literacy is to authorize more spaces of their own claims on their rights and perspectives on the sociocultural climate. Marginalized groups are said to "achieve a better standpoint because of their position outside mainstream epistemologies and explanations" (Ibid.:64) of societal and global (dis)functions, challenging inferiority in ways otherwise "unlikely to come from the dominant modes of thought which produced the ideas in the first place" (Ibid.). I argue furthermore that persistent naming of marginalized does not do enough to de-orient marginalization but may perpetuate its confines. Media monitoring reveals the gaps and injustices of hegemonic frames silencing mechanisms in focus of men or foreign women centralized framing of Egyptian women, as well as concentrations on victimization, violence and alienation. Marginality is also relational according to a dominant classifier, as to gender, class, race, religion and ethnicity, and thus is aware in this case of forced margins and confines of exclusion of women in the global sphere and in their societies.

4.1 Setting the Feminist Epistemological Framework in Methodology

Peripheries are defined by the point of their production which is always, by default ingrained within the study as one cannot separate themselves from their own origination. Outsiders-within standpoints largely incite creativity enhancing otherwise limited academic and social structures. Emerging groups who "share an outsider within status vis-à-vis sociology-into the center of analysis may reveal aspects of reality obscured by more orthodox approaches" (Collins, 1986:15) through interruption and self-articulation on two fronts. Production of knowledge differs from deduction of another from assumption: "while Black feminist thought may be recorded by others, it is produced by Black women" (Ibid.:16) which solidifies insiders' perspectives towards epistemologically just research in HR discourse and claims of self-determination in production. In analysis of records and productions of Egyptian women's rights, as the other of the other and de-oriented as their own speaking agencies, I aim to understand the

peripheries of trends and complexities respectively. In the same focus from different sources, Egyptian women is the center of research in women's rights so as not to be bound or isolated by exclusivity of focus on a specific ethnic, religious or political group. Moreover, rather than perpetuating hegemonies of exclusion; commonality across differences is embraced to articulate the complexities of assorted experiences and expressions. Diversity then results in different expressions of prevailing themes shaping individual women's lives: "class, region, age, and sexual orientation" (Ibid.). This promotes delimited deviations from preconceived patri-colonial oppression, without detachment and alienation in their rights across imaginary borders.

Self-introduction and definition in interviews scrutinizes the "political knowledge-validation process that has resulted in externally-defined, stereotypical images of Afro-American womanhood" (Ibid.). Pre-definitions in frames which precede or exclude hearing women's self-presentations and speaking their rights are misrepresentative and silencing. The process of resistant production occupies such documentation through "self-valuation" (Ibid.:17) which "stresses the content of Black women's self-definitions — namely, replacing externally — derived images with authentic Black female images" (Ibid.). Framing participants is thus avoided through the first question of the interview which invites each participant to introduce herself, in however manner she chooses to self-present. Moreover, dismantling dichotomies of Blackness and Whiteness for less race-centric definitions reveals what exists in between but relates completely to neither. Similarly, language dictations limiting women's agency to the word feminism (largely Western and when it is not: it is postcolonial, "Black" or "Islamic") remains exclusionary to many women in one word. Participants' views on whether or not they consider themselves Arab and feminist and their own rationalizations are outlined to shed light on the complexities in identities and perspectives which may only become evident when Egyptian women are speaking rather than spoken for. Mass classifications do not consider dynamics of agency of non-Muslim and Muslim, Arab women who do not consider themselves as Black, White, or Arab. In addition, these exclude women do not see themselves represented in global representations and women's solidarity efforts aiming to combat oppression yet other-ing the other, from one point of identity. De-framing feminism seeks to dismantle alienating frames and stereotypicised violence which are central in the produced victimization and subjection of women's agency. Moving beyond inclusion of other-ly identities is to be considered as centric to the

discussion. Centricity and value further contributes to reduce fear of imposter syndrome for Arab women, Muslim women, Black women, and non-White and non-Black women in academia and HR who do not fit with the epistemological majority or minority. Women active in the writing and speaking of their own rights and representations would arguably be less likely to feel as foreign in knowledge production had they never been produced outside of it, and had there never been discourses of power and disempowerment imposed upon them. Resistant means of epistemology are thus critical to the decentering of the status quo which unapologetically reinforces oppression(s) by maintaining negative (mis)representations.

Assessing media frames questions the credibility and intentions of knowledge produced in portrayals of Egyptian women's rights. Bringing forth the expressions of women speaking beyond the frame in their eloquence(s) underlines the power of production:

Black female self-definition reframes the entire dialogue from one of determining the technical accuracy of an image, to one stressing the power dynamics underlying the very process of definition itself.

Collins, 1986:17

The road is not paved for scholars from non-Western realities as it is up to each to enhance webs of solidarity and address the complex inter-dynamics impacting different lives and struggles. While this may have been discussed as a heavy burden to different extents, it may become lighter when it is not carried in isolation. Knowledge and definition may be described as a tool of “dark and true depth which understanding serves, waits upon, and makes accessible through language to ourselves and others. It is this depth within each of us that nurtures vision” (Lorde, 1984). It also may be used to silence and breed blindness to seeing other-ly realities and struggles that fall beyond the dominant frame; underlining the influential significance of ethical epistemological approaches.

The feminist epistemological framework emphasizes the potential of standpoints as “calls to political action” (McLaughlin, 2003:68). In limiting exclusion: “women and others do not experience outsider status as individuals, we become this by proxy, via our bond to particular communities and groups” (Ibid.), emphasizing the need for strengthening

authorities of depth in producing knowledge both as individuals and networks. Outsiders within; Arab women, Black women, and women from the theoretical South in more layers of intersectionality with

strong foundation in Black women's culture (e.g., those that recognize the value of self-definition and self-valuation, and that have a concrete understanding of sisterhood and motherhood) may be more apt to take a critical posture toward the entire sociological enterprise

Collins, 1986:27

Thus, dismantling false, harmful and silencing pre-conclusions. Sociology and academia must counter invisibility and FoO so that female scholars from the South are not systematically “struck by their own invisibility, both as full human subjects included in sociological facts and observations, and as practitioners in the discipline itself” (Ibid.), under two-fold patriarchal bonds. Alternatively, to conserve the “creative tension of outsider within status by encouraging and institutionalizing outsider within ways of seeing” (Ibid.:29), strengthens sociological academic discipline in trusting claimed, own “personal and cultural biographies as significant sources of knowledge” (Ibid.). Rather than succumb to the annihilation of self and identities to fit fixed boundaries which determine whom produces the frame and shapes who is within and external to the frame, women may through their interventions shape the frame and become interlocutors of their own discourses on their lives. Outsider-within status offers its possessors a

powerful balance between the strengths of their sociological training and the offerings of their personal and cultural experiences. Neither is subordinated to the other. Rather, experienced reality is used as a valid source of knowledge for critiquing sociological facts and theories, while sociological thought offers new ways of seeing that experienced reality. What many Black feminists appear to be doing is embracing the creative potential of their outsider-within status and using it wisely. In doing so, they move themselves and their disciplines closer to the humanist vision implicit in their work — namely, the freedom both to be different and part of the solidarity of humanity.

Collins, 1986:29–30

The empowerment in access to knowledge production, to define rather than be defined and to choose to correlate and distinguish between personal first-hand experience,

observation, reflection and rationale created, is to reframe the epistemology of women's lives and essentially, personally readdress the ways by which women are defined and perceived.

4.2 Analytical Model of the Thesis

The dual epistemological approach unfolds from the core theoretical framework of the thesis which investigates firstly, through my core research point of departure; I seek to inquire the extent to which media frames portray FoO and DPs on Egyptian women's rights. Secondly, to depolarize contests and contestations of HR aims to emphasize the value of multi-faceted research in questions of representation, cultural speculations of Arab identities, feminism, and women's self-situated views of their rights. De-Orient the Arab Woman draws from Said's work from a feminist perspective which deconstructs patri-colonial hegemonies. I aim to contribute to knowledge embracing depolarization of FoO and DP in frames which claim to depict Egyptian Women's Rights in the global platform of representation, moving beyond a study of Orientalism to its deconstruction in epistemology. Under the keywords: De-orientalism, Egypt, Representation, Rights, Self-Situated, Women, my main thesis focus is constructed and deconstructed through representative frames and self-situated realities of Egyptian women's rights. The dual epistemology of firstly, media monitoring encompasses the eight years aftermath of the Egyptian revolution in 2011 and secondly, semi-structured interviews spans across the recent contemporary years of 2018 and 2019. This systematic time scope of analysis in specificity is core to Egypt and conveys the historical and contemporary need to revise frames and canons of knowledge production from their source of origin and centric focal point.

Core Research Question

In my thesis I research the production of languages of women's rights in representing Egyptian women, examining to what extent these may convey trends of ambiguity or arrays of de-orienting self-situated perspectives, depending on the situation of their production.

Core Aim

Through critical discourse analysis of representational frames I aim to deconstruct and delineate hegemonic global imageries of Egyptian women's rights, investigating how

languages, content and imageries may reproduce DPs. Situated realities of Egyptian women and my resonances within the research intend to contribute to efforts of de-orientation of oppressive external definitions in language, enriching research of critical voices of specificity in women's empowerment, outside the frame.

Objectives

My thesis objectives are to inquire

1. The theoretical extent of polarizing geographies and representational dichotomies to assess whether these are perpetuated in global frames of Arab women and Egyptian women's rights.
2. The extent to which FoO may be abstracting societal and personal identities and agencies of women in their specificities, according to the sample search of Egypt, Women, Rights from the global frame.
3. Framing the frame through critical discourse deconstruction of its limitations; such as in naming and focus of West and other, men and women, empowered authorities and victimized subjects and assessing its' diction.
4. Through this epistemological approach, the potentials of decentering efforts of Egyptian women's situated accounts in reexamining theoretical and practical contemporary exclusivity of power grammars which claim to represent Egyptian women's rights. Consequently, bringing forth Egyptian women's views of their rights and of the frames towards knowledge of what exists in between and beyond fixed languages.

Research Questions

1. I inquire media languages in assessment of systematic discourse analysis to explore trends in languages representing the other of the other, particularly how Egyptian women are framed and constructed through global representation(s).
2. I assess the extent to which the epistemological formulation of knowledge largely impacts the results, in production of frames and in their deconstruction.
3. I question to what extent canons of knowledge may be examined from different perspectives to de-homogenize frames through empowered agencies and situations in Egypt.
4. Through cross-analysis I question to what extent my mixed epistemology reveals FoO and DP and capacities of situated approaches in women's rights discourses as

feminist de-orientation of patri-colonial structures from the voices of women as speaking agents in their rights.

Research Hypotheses

1. The research hypothesizes the perpetuated reinforcement of epistemological injustices of FoO and impositions of DPs in global representations when claiming to represent Arab women and Egyptian women's rights specifically.
2. I hypothesize trends in the process of representation defining the subject within sentences of injustice from the epistemological outset of knowledge and the naturalization of hegemonic epistemological canons of production.
3. Divides between women and men, and focus on men and Western women as authorities in Egyptian women's rights expressions are also prognosticated as silencing narratives of self-situation, agency and sociocultural histories of complexities which are not sufficiently accessed.
4. The research predicts patterns of differences between representational women's rights frames claiming to depict Egyptian women's lives, experiences and aspirations which are apparent within and outside exclusionary doctrines and thus the occupancy of epistemological (de)focuses when Egyptian women are not depicted as speaking.

Dual Epistemology Analytical Categories and Scope

Data Collection Keywords: Egypt, Women and Rights	Time Scope	Method of Data Analysis	Examination	Content Analysis Egypt	Women in Egypt	Egyptian Women's Rights
Media Monitoring Sample Source: The Guardian Egypt, Women, Rights (Twenty-Eight Articles)	2011-2018, systematic search and analysis	Mixed Methods Qualitative and Quantitative Data	Language, Content, Layout Imageries, direct quotes and references	Frames of Egypt	Frames of Egyptian Women	Frames of Women's Human Rights in Egypt
Semi-Structured Interviews Sample Source: Egyptian Women	2018-2019, At least two interviews each participant	Qualitative Data	Tone, Conversational value, direct quotes and references	Self-Positioning in Egyptian Society	Women's Rights Authorities Education as Critical Empowerment	Perspectives of The Current Moment of Women's Rights in Egypt

Leaderships (Five Participants)						
				Reflections on Identifications in Egypt	Egyptian Women’s Perspectives: Media Frames and Distinguishing Feminism(s)	Networks of Solidarity
				Depolarizing Feminisms and Public and Private Comfort (Discomfort)	Memorable Representations of Egyptian Women in Egyptian Arts	Spaces of Further Articulations

Construction of Instruments of Data Collection

For the purposes of my thesis, a multi-method, mixed epistemological research is employed to reflect the significance of different sources and situations of knowledge in producing and influencing HR perceptions and thought. This methodological approach is interpretative and socio-critical in comparing and contrasting representations of Egyptian women’s rights from sources of a global frame of media through qualitative and quantitative research, over an eight year time scope of data collection. By the agency of direct narratives of women agents in Egypt; the research seeks to unfold the significance of language and situated location in the production of knowledge in women’s HR. The research presents itself from its point of epistemological departure as committed to move beyond constraining fixed frames. (Dis)regarding women in theoretical works and HR discussions is investigated for its extent in reproducing patri-colonial silences in HR epistemologies. The imaginary and framework of “Western political thought reflects a vision of politics that is gender-myopic” (Jones and Jónasdóttir, 1988:11), thus establishing fundamentally flawed frames of representation of non-Western women in their relevance and location. Western-centric women’s rights discourses impact international understandings of HR discourses through moments of systematic discounting of gender, religion, politics and sociocultural differences in contemporary HR theory and practice, and the dynamic relations between both.

Media monitoring is employed to assess global language discourses impacting identity and rights through imagery portrayals and how these may reflect and impact social perceptions. As social cognition draws maps in relation to external events, a communication process must occur: “the human mind is activated by accessing the brain maps via language” (Castells, 2009:141), prompting the “development of horizontal networks of interactive communication that connect local and global in chosen time” (Ibid.:65). Although alternative networks reach a digital age, representation from dominant canons which are accessible online and widely distributed may largely be continuing to shape doctrines of inclusion and exclusion in HR discourses by reproducing discriminatory frames of the so-called other. Media monitoring requires understanding of the structural mechanisms of representation. This encompasses a “comprehensive analysis of the institutions that generate and distribute mass mediated texts,” (Shohat and Stam, 1994:184) investigating “whose stories are told? By whom? How are they manufactured, disseminated, received?” (Ibid.) by the audience who receives them? In assessments of media influence, the source and how the accounts are constructed, inquires most crucially the moments and prevalence of levels of participation by Egyptian women themselves in the process of production.

Assessments of international source articles for their language, layout and content explore the ways by which Egyptian women and their rights are framed and if, when and how their participation in the formation of global representations is conscripted. Media spectatorship interrogates the power fashioning (normalization and exoticisation) of other cultures from “historically situated spectators” (Ibid.:347) shaping an “imperial imaginary” (Ibid.). Forming a “dialog between texts, readers, and communities existing in clear discursive and social relation to one another” (Ibid.) may deconstruct the rigidity of frames. De-framing the frame brings forth sources which may denounce misrepresentation to a negotiable questioning in the “site of interaction and struggle, seen, for example, in the possibility of ‘aberrant’ or resistant readings, as the consciousness or experience of a particular audience generates a counter-pressure to dominant representations” (Ibid.), in the systematic monitoring and critical examination of global media frames.

Research conducted externally on the region and on the people concentrates largely on generalizations diminishing if not excluding the voices and realities of populations which

do not constitute the dominant political representation. Even when applicable; people's affiliations and beliefs are vastly diverse outside and within minorities should they not identify with the domineering canon. Representations from Occidentalist patronizing lenses imply an epistemological injustice in HR discourses from their outset due to the fact that the region and nations are home to vast identities and religious affiliations and applicability in HR does not suffice. While it is important to recognize diversities of Arab narratives the study aims to avoid reproducing silences of oppression or non-existence. The work declares itself in its very point of departure as seeking comprehension of the individual and collective voices of some Egyptian women's claimed Arabic expressions and accounts, towards crucial solidarity in full recognition and participation in women's rights narratives.

I aim to question knowledge production apparatus through a diverse blanket embracing women's claims from positions of empowerment of Egyptian women leaderships whom even as Egyptian, rather than across Arab countries, present diverse, complex and intersectional identities. The critical discourse analysis and semi-structured interviews expands scientific sociocultural research in the urgent debate surrounding women's rights progress in the Arab region and external mass-studies on them. Discourses defining the being of the Arab under continuous wrong pre-assumptions and interpretations silence if not blatantly legitimate physical, cognitive schemas and violence(s) in systems of oppression and the confines of non-exclusive HR. Such misrepresentations inhibit knowledge of the other by reproducing discourses of other-ing; both between the South and North, and women and men across the region. Spaces of knowledge(s) that are aware of and in defiance to the confinement of hegemonic canons deconstruct them from within their spaces of production.

Data Collection Methods

Media monitoring global mainstream media attitudes towards the non-Western world assesses frames of the other which forge displacement of realities. Hypothesizing; within a "system of pressures and constraints by which the whole cultural corpus retains its maddeningly imperial identity (...) and direction" (Said, 1994b:355), inquires languages in frames which may be seen to be isolating; and position the subject in direct relation to the West at different levels. Newspapers representing truth may be seen to largely deceive the multitude through lack of diversification shaped by the institutional facts of

ownership, selective bias and distortions: “omissions are an even greater defect than errors, for much of historical interest is not recorded in any documentary source” (Lummis, 1988:11). Language, symbols and normalization of myths as factually-backed evidence of otherness shape consciousness and production of histories in processes of silencing and diminishing complexities to them. The claim to authenticity is said to be the practice committed to producing the “best account that is possible to achieve by self-conscious methodologies” (Ibid.:15). For this reason the epistemological focus is aware of its positioning and limits of objectivity while seeking to critically scrutinize what is said and how, what is not said and why, all in pertinence to the consciousness from which it derives.

Interviews with Egyptian women leaderships are semi-structured and employ open-ended questions to delimit fixed frames of answers and expand spaces of individual narratives and authorized points of view. Women from different intersections of identity in ethnicity, religion and geographical spaces are invited as Egyptian women leaderships. This sample highlights the essentiality of women’s agency and voices in all domains and their authoritative claims to their bodies, choices and realities. The aim is to try as far as possible to produce a scientifically objective research, which does not commit the injustices it seeks to deconstruct; most specifically the act of non-recognition, silencing and sociopolitical exclusion. A person’s honour, dignity or status refers to the degree of authorization, worth, social esteem and self-realization. Therefore, when the “hierarchy of values is so constituted as to downgrade individual forms of life and manners of belief as inferior or deficient, then it robs the subjects in question of every opportunity to attribute social value to their own abilities” (Honneth, 1996:134). Women leaderships explore empowered identities on behalf of their own views, at times outlining other women’s struggles and their experience in women’s rights in Egypt without claiming to speak for them. How each participant relates to perceptions of their own society and global home either as a protective net which values their human life, as the opposite, one which diminishes their spoken feelings, identities and complex realities or as another articulation in between and beyond these ends is inquired. The research highly values the process of de-framing as paramount to reveal what has been invisibilized outside the frame of recognition, and alienated by remote polarizing generalizations in languages of the global media, its cognitive thought and representational structures.

Media Monitoring: Defining the Scope of Critical Discourse Analysis of Representational Frames

Media Monitoring constitutes the core of research of global frames, employing Critical Discourse Analysis. Each newspaper article is critically assessed in its context and the wider scope, patterns and anomalies. Investigating the frame directly examines frames' visual and cognitive resonances under specific topics and imageries observed in repeated trends and disregards. Media Monitoring scopes a systematic analysis of quantitative and qualitative data selected from the global source of The Guardian Newspaper under the time frame of articles from 2011 (an Egypt specific date), to the more contemporary moment in 2019, examining discourses in the eight years aftermath of the Egyptian Revolution of January 25th in 2011. Consistent and consecutive searches of articles with three keywords: Egypt, Women and Rights cross-examine each media article for its contextual frame. I examine articles through the following criteria: 1) Content, which considers the topic, in what is being said, the thematic argument of the article and the contextual sources and issues addressed according to the themes, 2) Language, which focuses on how it is being said, the wordings and symbolic trends used, considering how the subject is portrayed under the key themes of analysis, and 3) Layout, which contemplates the overall impression, the positioning of imagery, headlines, shockingly large or small details, importance attributed in the order of information and the imprint of the article as a whole from its visual design. The Guardian Newspaper²³ is used to represent a global internationally circulated newspaper in the English language which is largely western-centric, yet considered somewhat liberal in relation to other channels of coverage in that it does not assume a fixed political extreme position and assimilates broad arrays of authorship origin.

²³ Choice of the Guardian discussed further in Chapter Five, Section One

Media-Monitoring	Content	Layout	Language
Critical Discourse Analysis of Articles	Authorities in speaking for the frame, when and how are women mentioned, portrayed and quoted directly?	Prioritization of discussion in terms of authority, headlines, photography and their captions	Words and imageries depicting keywords, trends in languages of FoO and DP and in direct quotes of empowerment in Egyptian women's rights.

Data collection and analysis critically examines each article according to the keywords as a whole and separately. It tabulates references and quotes thematic instances collected from all the articles accordingly. This method also counts the repetitions of each trend in addition to noting quotes, references and examining imagery and layout formulated under each article. Occurrences of repetitions and trends in representation are calculated according to the full number of articles collected as a representative sample on the subject. The formulation of percentages is determined under each scope of themes of the key in accordance to the total number of instances recorded for all articles. Qualitative and quantitative data produce the media monitoring analysis and the main critical findings are thus derived. Main findings are coded by categories and analysed in detail for the framed subject that each article claims to address, outlined with correlated quotes and references. The source has also been acknowledged and analysed, as despite being from the Guardian, the names and roots of origin of some authors compared to Western names cannot be ignored, inquiring how the frequency and difference of origin is included. The ratio of authorship origin (whether non-Western, Egyptian, Western or double nationality between non-Western and Western countries), and the frequency of women and men writers of the articles are inquired as standpoint and location dynamics mirror whom is authored, who has access to speak in global frames on the subject of Egyptian women's rights, and what structures they may be employing to write for the Guardian on the contextual subject.

Investigating the implications of wording and imagery used in global dominant media frames representing Egyptian women — as well as those of words and imagery which are avoided or less frequent — directly examines current languages and epistemological schemas for their significations in Egyptian women’s rights global discourses. Media texts are critically analysed “within the contexts of both their production as well as the wider cultural circulation of gender discourses in society” (Carter and Steiner, 2004:37) in their frame, chronological sociopolitical moment and subject. Feminist women’s critique offers a discussion of the patri-colonial disempowerment on Arab women in global hegemonic discourses of representation and the languages and expressions of resistances and spaces outside it; thus challenging the suppression of diverse perspectives of HR across cultural, sociopolitical and economic disparities.

Critical discourse analysis of media frames does not employ the same singular structured epistemology of frame production; in that texts are studied as “representations as well as interactions (strategic or otherwise)” (Leeuwen, 2008: 4) across time and not as fixed, absolute or isolated knowledge. The oriented allocation of values and authority to allocate and diminish value in discourse construction sheds insight on patterns of defining the other in global HR frames. Legitimation through determination; where “one activity is defined in terms of another, moralized activity” (Ibid.:116) implies that for a “definition to be a definition, both activities must be objectivated and generalized, and the link between them must either be attributive (“is”, “constitutes,” etc.) or significative (“means”, “signals”, “symbolizes,” etc.)” (Ibid.). Newspaper articles are assessed for what symbolism they constitute, how the subject is represented and meaning or abstraction is attributed. The relationship of situated narratives from their own perspectives gazes back at frames for their allegorical sense in the wider context as well as their specific moment of definition. The authority of definition legitimizes and delegitimizes particular acts of violence against women, the rights of the subject to be represented, self represent and the sociopolitical entanglements between these discourses.

Assessment of contemporary representation dialogues with the thesis’ core theoretical framework by grounding critical analysis of media discourses. Reports and coverage across the world in HR affairs which have a wide outreach and are read internationally in print and online; channel discourses which may act as moralistic signifiers of social awareness and cognitions of HR abuses. The choice sample of one media newspaper

source is to reflect the possibility of other global news sources to be producing similar languages. However the focus on the frame of representation in one media source rather than a cross-analysis of various newspaper sources is chosen to place emphasis on de-framing interviews and alternate epistemologies. Likelihood of spectrums of international sources to portray patterns in their methods of knowledge production is not overlooked, framing the frame by focusing on The Guardian across time rather than different media variables of the same political event or fixed moment. A comprehensive chronological collection of each referenced article inquires the images the frame echoes, and the way in which it frames the subject of assessment. Analysis also considers foreign HR prevalence or priority in authority when critiquing a more distant geopolitical climate in social, economic and cultural realms and male prevalence and authority shown in direct quotes or positions of patriarchal power when speaking pertaining to the subject of women's rights.

Semi-structured Interviews: Defining the Scope of Voices and Self-Situated Perspectives of Egyptian Women Agents

The choice of scope and the interview method was determined after carrying out a wider outreach questionnaire survey as a first exposure. This approach was beneficial in developing my understanding of main recurring topics, consciousness across regions and genders and in experimentation of the optimum way of designing questions. The process helped me come to the realization that despite some open-ended questions which sought to delimit answers and cut across identities; the broader scope of the survey method compromised depth and articulation in focus specificity. While cutting across gender and was an open invitation for people from several nationalities from Arab countries I found that pre-defined, written-form and fixed impersonal questions reproduced hegemonic limitations rather than expanded spaces for Egyptian women leadership's voices, and my investigation would have limited my adherence to the thesis' epistemological mission. The commitment to clear-cut, qualitative semi-structured interviews with women from Egypt active in their societies occupies the frames of representation; reinforced through the more personalized specific cohort of women. Moreover, closer familiarity of Egyptian women is developed over two personal communications (or more if warranted or welcomed by them).

Strengthening the focus to women leaderships underlines women in power positions and the interpretative spaces they employ and produce. Following is a table portraying the participants' cities of origin and occupational backgrounds. Their own self-presentations and introductions are explored in Chapter Six of the thesis.

B.M.	Egyptian Lawyer, providing legal aid for women in organization with mission of improving support for women in family courts, Cairo
D.S.	Doctoral Graduate, member of organization focusing on research and awareness on HR and women's rights issues, Alexandria
F.A.	Member of local council, community development mission, representation and participation of women in governorate decision making processes, policy and strategy reports from citizen's complaints and civil protection, Beni Suef
J.D.	Civil Society, freelanced writer, interned at multi-national NGOs ²⁴ in Egypt and digital activism initiative, Cairo
N.R.	Education sector, teaches young children, previously on radio program representing women's voice and speaking of social issues, Alexandria

Semi-structured interviews point to relevant topics to cover and at the same time uncover individual cross-sections of women's standpoints in epistemologies and experience. It recognizes that the ongoing struggle for women's empowerment commits to "ongoing dialogic interchange and evaluative processes between and among women's standpoints" (Hesse-Biber, 2007:77). On the margins of the canon, the constantly evolving experiences of women's perspectives and the issues they face cannot be reduced to universal or regional frames. Breaking down "boundaries between academia and activism, between theory and practice" (Ibid.), thus embraces feminist standpoint epistemology to acknowledge women as knowers and active practitioners of multifaceted social change "without risking the repression of difference" (Ibid.:78) of their identities, experiences and perspectives. Due to diverse intersectional racial, ethnic and sociocultural backgrounds all sharing the identity of Egyptian women; language barriers are lessened further when Egyptian women may express themselves freely in their mother tongue without reducing translations or imbalance of fluency in the language of interaction. The

²⁴ NGOs: acronym for non-governmental organisations will be used from this point onward.

communication may be said to become more of an exchange between people of shared mother tongue rather than one of extraction, dictation and hesitance to fully understand and be fully comprehended without the added effort of speaking in a language other than one's own with a fluent speaker, whether in Arabic or English. This process adheres to reflexivity and recognition of differences to guide the selected projects, which "informs the questions we ask, and directs how we collect, analyze, write, and interpret our data" (Ibid.:144), and elements of difference despite shared dialect, and variances even as Egyptian women.

Identity politics are redefined in spaces beyond obscuring polarizations: "sweepingly identified as 'the West' and 'the Arabs', these two discourses functioned as dialogical counterpoints whereby meaning was created at their intersection" (Kraidy *apud* Taylor, 2006:195). A prevalent concern among interlocutors was "their inability and unwillingness to exclusively belong to one or the other of what they saw as two irreconcilable worldviews" (Ibid.). The methodology in between which acknowledges the deconstruction of polarizations cites new ways to inquire data while respecting ethical knowledge production and the participants' wishes. Critical interruption of the dominant discourses seeks to reveal resistances in the spectrum outside dichotomies and potentials of collective solidarities and de-framing efforts. In the denial of recognition, the use of a single term threatens to efface the "categorical difference" (Honneth, 1996:132) between the "blatant degradation involved in the denial of basic HR, on the one hand, and the subtle humiliation that accompanies a public allusion to a person's feelings, on the other" (Ibid.). The research exposes capacities of more decentered recognitions in representational women's rights frames in depictions of Egyptian women's lives, experiences and perspectives to counter exclusion and epistemological (de)focuses.

Elements of emotional expression beyond the words used such as enthusiasm, pauses and silences, hesitance to continue and redirection of questions are acknowledged as significant to the enrichment of the research in an effort to combat impersonal, confined imposed censorships of representation and translation. In concentrating emphasis on women's opinions the questions adhere to and value freedom in their answers and intentional, conscious and subconscious choices of language and articulation. Analysis coherently acknowledges entailed and omitted information, and subsequently responds to and de-frames representations in this epistemological space. While interviews do not

speak directly back to counter frames of media; the thematic categories in news reportage are nevertheless considered of relative contextual significance. In this way interviews are not restricted to merely dialogue with fixed frames but self-articulate from their own points of reference; so as to move beyond hierarchical dichotomies even among sources of knowledge production to full recognition and focus of Egyptian women's voices and agency, comparably found to be present albeit relatively less by default of epistemological focus in media frames.

Articulations were transcribed word for word. This captured close consideration of the contextual moment as non-fixed and non absolute but preserved expressions as closely as possible to the original in their essence. The interviews' working language was thus conducted in Arabic as the research converses with Egyptian women by an Egyptian researcher. Interviews were fully transcribed by instantaneous notes in Arabic before being translated to English and at times due to simplicity, translated by writing simultaneously upon listening. Answers were kept as complete as they were relevant to the subject. Even if the participant went on to another subject outside the focus, this was coded as relevant and at times echoes within my resonances. While transcribing analysis is written and academically discussed in English, the epistemological strength is valued in speaking the Mother tongue with participants for my initial comprehension. Arabic words and expressions which were untranslatable were written in Arabic and explained as clearly as possible. In this way, words in their linguistic essence are not compromised and reduced by the pretension to be fit into an English word embracing a culturally ethical epistemological approach. If an Arabic word could not be translated or even fully translated into an English word it was described as profoundly as possible to convey the complexities of the Arabic expressions and the irreducible interpretation of language and native expressions. The value of individuality in semi-structured interviews strengthens knowledge production as it challenges the hegemonic knowledge in the academy and media's collective pressures. Existing within a complex array of social constructs and "racialized and gendered social sites" (Herzog, 2004:53), the capacities of women and other subordinate groups are subjected to and exploited under sociopolitical power relations, and are collectively accounted for by them. For this reason, women strive to create "various modes of interim spaces and multi-dimensional, shifting identities for themselves" (Ibid.) thus voicing and claiming their own narratives of emancipation and self-determination of accounts. Efforts in researching and envisioning outstanding value

to self-expression articulate more grounded dynamics of identity and act as an incubator for emergent realms of knowledge production; in the claimed words and languages used in HR narratives and socio-complex frameworks.

Trust and security is a primary value in the ethical mission of my research for full rapport with participants, ensuring participants' wishes and sociocultural invulnerability, and that of the researcher. Personal interviews enrich the research through women's accounts on their rights and in regarding that individuals "present a different image of themselves to different people and at different times so that no single account of themselves will ever be complete or quite the same as an account given on a different occasion" (Lummis, 1988:51). Interviews are albeit delimited in comparison to frames of representations from an outsider perspective in that they are direct, full accounts of themselves in the moment of their occurrences and in response to their women's rights. Therefore, awareness between interviewer and interview of each other as people is also conscious of "setting about a common task of recording the experiences" (Ibid.) through flowing discussion of questions "in an open and conversational manner" (Ibid.). This is carried out by speaking more than once which has been particularly effective if the interviewer is unknown for more familiarity and representational accuracy in the articulation of each participant's discourse.

Conversational intimacy recognizes, however, the limits of "customary social conventions" (Ibid.:68) highlighting that authenticity is "best served by maintaining an atmosphere of professional inquiry" (Ibid.). Authenticity cuts across the strive between ethical and moral responsibility towards both the interviewees, the critical scientific inquiry and the interviewer's own insider-closeness and distance for these reasons; regarding structured interviews as a strength in delimiting open-narrative production. The introduction of research to participants is conscient of not over-exposing blatant indications on the thesis aims — excluding the title for example — and evades notions of leading the discourse and extraction. By presenting accurately and yet more broadly, I sought to evade interviewees' mere responses to researcher aims and to limit bias through "feedback and reinforcement" (Ibid.:62). The interviews had no set time limit, continuing until the point of theoretical saturation of the women's account based on the questions and the moment in order to maximize as much as possible the scope of information and depth. At the same time, this is carried out to adhere to value without over extending

interviews or pre-defining and limiting spaces and duration of what she chooses to particularly omit or reveal for publishing purposes. Probing at the right moments is considered essential to the interview process where the participant appears to either cut short a question or hesitant to disclose further, while respecting hesitancy and avoidances as significant of regard in themselves. If the “information is at all relevant one should never simply listen and then move to the next question one had intended to ask” (Ibid.), but display flexibility in conversation rather than rigid adherence. The balance is between natural flow and listening to other important anecdotes and details which were not included in the fixed questions. To ask a “question related to what has been said before returning to one’s own line of inquiry” (Ibid.); is considerate compliance towards considerate conversation and enhanced articulations in addition to maintaining structure and time of the interview.

Analysis helps to comprehend how interviews themselves view the structure of the sociocultural context in which they live in addition to the gender politics in their inter-dynamic environment. Women who struggled against victimisation and do not choose to identify as victims may or may not wish to speak against pain or against FGM, a widely recurring subject in media discourses and theoretically discussed. This is not the question I ask them due to personal regard, and the authority of each woman to present herself as she wishes rather than be obliged to share her personal story according to my structures. For the purposes of my research I do not attempt to dictate or gain control over the discourses. Bodily disrespect and humiliating discourses which convey it reinforce DPs in their passive generalizations: “every attempt to gain control of a person’s body against his or her will — irrespective of the intention behind it — causes a degree of humiliation that impacts more destructively than other forms of respect on a person’s practical relation-to-self” (Honneth, 1996:132). This ethical consideration is evident even in avoiding imposition of questions regarding the subject if not self-willingly divulged, and the choice of not directing interviews according to a woman’s victimhood.

The possession and ownership of knowledge in experience and memory is strengthened when recognized and valued for situated authenticity in women’s accounts of their rights: “they have not kept their past in their houses or their pockets, but in their heads” (Lummis, 1988:154). This recognizes the importance of women’s experiences at one particular moment in time and their reflections of an everyday basis. The identity

dynamics of language create points of similarity (and difference), which, in themselves, promote growth for new spaces of emergence towards HR and feminist solidarities across borders and sociopolitical boundaries. “Experience and social structure often make the difference between them undecidable” (Young, 2005:6), thus claims and “speaking for ourselves to one another from our own female flesh and imagination, our creation of a different voice can pierce the smug universality of transcendental subjectivity” (Ibid.:68). Personal experience is eloquently defined by the women and albeit affected by social structures, the imposition and extraction in interview process is as limited as possible.

The research focuses on women in leaderships from diverse ethnic, religious and geographical origins in Egypt to inquire frames rather than feed them or impose itself, once again, on oppressed women which is paternalistic in its epistemological outset. The focus on women leaderships contests the dominant oppressive, silenced frames of patri-colonial doctrines through women’s re-articulations in their own language and realities in a non-subjective environment. Their results are in themselves valued as whole rather than used as a measurement or according to a specific uniform standard for scrutiny. I purposefully intend to in no way undermine participants’, Egyptian woman’s rights, expression of self-definition, self, societal awareness, and social emancipation through systematic critical analysis of FoO and their active resistances. The study is an anti-patri-colonial work seeking to contribute to efforts deconstructing both global and regional patriarchies and fixed narratives which dissect information by opting for an exploratory work of voices and lives as leaderships. The choice of women in sampling is not a neutral factor and acknowledges each situation and selectivity to women leaderships, in addition to the advantages of women researcher interviewing women: women “could be less willing to report holding non-traditional attitudes to their domestic and womanly role to a man than to a woman” (Lummis, 1988:51). Situated interviews offer closer understandings of HR discourses, occasionally illuminating how they are used and interpreted in socioculturally specific contexts. Biography, said to be “mainly a form used by elites” (Ibid.:86), appears more self-conscious of “public image and how to present themselves” (Ibid.) moderately limiting the perspectives chosen to be published, read and heard and what is said and not said within them. Such historical record proves records of biographies to be selective and unrepresentative due to being “determined by a complex web of economic, social and cultural power” (Ibid.:84) in patri-colonial apparatus. Certain types of social experience, such as accounts of male leaders are at the forefront of

history and contemporary perspectives are challenged through focus on more accessible interviews rather than exclusive collections of biographical and historical preconfigured accounts.

Consequently, Santos (2009) states “only an intercultural West will want and understand the interculturality of the world and contribute to it actively” (Santos, 2009: 105), in that centric hegemony cannot produce de-oriented, de-homogeneous accounts. Despite the “apparently unshakeable hegemony of the historical, philosophical and sociological arguments invoked by the canonical history of Europe” (Ibid.), there is “room to think of a non-Occidental West” (Ibid.). This refines a culturally embracive global capacity to shake current supremacies; enhancing new dimensions for HR discourses and practice. In a capitalist, globalizing world, social emancipation is “every action aiming at denaturalizing oppression (showing that, besides being unjust, oppression is neither necessary nor irreversible” (Ibid.: 122-23). This research aims to offer a critical feminist contestation on the power of representations on Egyptian women in efforts resisting and gradually dismantling patri-colonial narratives of oppression. Interviewing, “fundamentally a process of asking people about a set of circumstances which they have experienced” (Lummis, 1988:51) enhances spaces for interruptions to FoO in HR discourses. The process urges for full recognitions of multiple narratives of self-representation. De-orienting frames of produced and bound captives of the constructed Oriented classifications — strengthens the capacity of HR domains and idioms as transformative spaces. This listens to and equally embraces Egyptian women, Arabs and the South to the discussion as hosts and creators of their claims of their struggles, identities, realities and the conversation of their rights.

Potentialities and Limitations of Empirical Work

Crucially, the research delineates the urgent need for critical efforts to redress women’s rights interventions in the global sphere to underline adherence to the values that it seeks to protect; of scrutiny in the delineation of barriers and channels of such knowledge production. The potentialities of women’s rights focus strengthens the spaces for direct voices of women rather than perpetuated male portrayals and the inclusion of men over women under the pretense of equality. Through cross-examination, HR epistemologies are enhanced to reconstruct the potentials of new translations, languages and equal participation in HR progress in Egyptian society and the discussion at the global stage. At

the same time, cross-examination of different samples and sources may compromise the depth and magnitude of each epistemological scope had each been the exclusive method of empirical data collection and analysis.

The samples are therefore limited to some extent, as I cannot claim to represent all global frames through one international newspaper source, or all Egyptian women's voices through the sample of women leaderships in their societies and five out of a population of over fifty million of Egyptian women's voices. While the sample is not fully representative it may shed light on the need for closer specificity when producing knowledge on Egyptian women's rights and the embracement of diverse complexities of identities of one Arab society. In addition to this, a more intensive and in-depth interview process would enrich the research although constraints of time and scope were limiting, in addition to the levels of understandings of defining personal, and in-depth interviews, differ across region. This helped me to understand that more personal interviews and spending longer than two hours in the Egyptian context may not always be in accordance to Egyptian sociocultural epistemology in terms of access to the personal and circumstantial markers of time. In this way, semi-structured interviews have been chosen in accordance to the sociocultural conditions of time, availability, and the lines of public and private and personal and too personal information according to the participants. The research may be thought to be limited in focus on Egypt, where I would have also benefited from a larger scope across nations of the Arab region. Having acknowledged this, the focus on Egyptian women is for greater scrutiny and depth to reveal the non-homogeneity within one country of the Arab region. This focus seeks to de-orient the images and languages which claim to represent the Arab woman by outlining the necessity for knowledge positioning and situation across even different cities of one country rather than to claim to speak for all Arabs in one study. Accuracy and objectivity are still somewhat compromised by the producer of each research and their own positioning, which must be addressed to re-envision depolarization of frames geographies and de-orientation of women, by women themselves.

4.3 Self-Reflexivity

The “story of the interview process becomes part of the story told” (Ellis, 2004:73). My own feelings and resonances upon each interview are recorded in order to dialogue with the narratives rather than put them under a microscope as if I were a separate, outside element isolated from them. My reasons to choose the thesis frame reflect my personal identity experience between Egypt and Europe, and the contradictions and likeness that are encompassed in this space. The vast differences and non-hegemony led me to choose two methods of data collection and analysis for this reason. Media monitoring, although on the other spectrum from speaking interviews, is similarly an epistemology of framing. By assessing the frame in media monitoring and seeking to de-frame it through the interviews, I was able to shift the focus to suit my specific research interests. My main observations comprised my thinking, how have I asked women to speak back to the frame and against it, and to what extent that opens and limits other enhanced articulations and at the same time, reductions. As it is impossible to deny my insider situation or to separate oneself totally from any sociological scientific study, the element of recording resonances to dialogue with expressions from every interview, their contradictions, emotions and further conversations are significant. I adopt Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin’s (1934) heteroglossia approach, which harmoniously allows for a diverse and even contradictory heterogeneity of language, perspectives and narratives of speech. Efforts toward epistemological interference ensure that Africa and Arab “unique vantage points inform methodological and pedagogical strategies that pursue freedom” (Mama, 2007:2). Critical scholarship holds itself accountable and commits to social and political responsibility, and avant-garde in grounding and identifying other-ly realities as our own realities in epistemologies of ethical knowledge.

Ethical challenges and assets to working within home country but from a European academic institution and residency allowed me to situate myself within both fields of being. Discrepancies emphasise points of contact between them while recognizing my own proximity in both; “subjected to all the social and political allegiances and tensions of working in one's own backyard” (Ibid.:8). Questions of political correctness and self-censorship inform personal responsibility to secure solid academic intervention while remaining contextually affected by my own positioning. Limitations reflect the centrality of location and identity in epistemological frames and when recognized; evolve academic integrity in HR discourses. However, while limitations may shed light on shadowed

spaces; situated critique of postcolonial state in countries of the South largely results in regional backlash against scholars and authors limiting academic freedom and endangering lives and livelihoods of researchers and intellectuals. Through systematic evidence of this; academics and activists opt for self-censorship and evading direct misdemeanours towards the fruitfulness of multi-radical epistemologies. Marginalization of perceived threats to the status quo in both regional and global spheres amplifies elements of identities and borders in tension: perpetuating epistemological silence. Exposure is augmented when nationals are conducting the research from duplicate positioning. Alternative epistemological de-framing therefore recognizes that “ethical scholarship is socially responsible scholarship that supports freedom, not scholarship that is free from social responsibility” (Ibid.:23). Critical epistemology therefore cannot claim to be un-political as it exists within the political dimensions from which it derives. In circumscribing to its own ethics of emancipation; it becomes multi-radical across all fronts in order to deconstruct FoO and DPs.

The research furthermore in itself concedes that it is inevitably influenced by decentering languages from personal and academic experience and sensibility which is a rendition of the societal frame it exists within and departs from. Recognizing the limitations of framed analysis acknowledges that any discourse cannot pretend to be entirely void of perspective or situation, which emphasises the power of discourse in reflecting and shaping consciousness. Said (1994b:349) questions the mere possibility of a “style of thought and language that pretends neither to get past the world’s embroiled semantic history, nor to restore it, cleansed and sparkling new, for further polemical use?”. Through this consciousness, and the consciousness that all fields of knowledge production are inherently positioned, the struggles and potential capacities of knowledge are manifested within its spaces for contestation beyond it. Fieldwork collection and analysis values the individual voices and complexities of women, rather than a collection of statistics according to set standards to delve deeper. This methodological approach is carried out to understand the impacts of representations, and of the means by which political and social formal and informal spaces are occupied. Knowledge authorities on their own rights, the frames of viewing the other of the other must be delimited, in questions and answers, in that they are not constrained from their point of departure and break away from other-ing lens’.

Caring not to reinforce censorships the research recognizes the politics of its ethics and yet was under constant scrutiny to avoid extraction from interviewees to correlate with subjects of the media frames. The link, while essential to the thesis, may have impacted issues raised regarding women's rights not only of themselves, but in direct and indirect references to the frames. As media monitoring was done in advance, I wonder how interviewees may have been influenced by my initial approach and introduction to the study. In this light, I am aware of the lack of completeness of knowledge acquired from both data collection mechanisms in that there is always more information beyond constraints of time and confidentiality. This is subject in media and identities that are hidden and not always present, and likewise, participants' identities that are exposed intentionally and unintentionally, within the same participant let alone across them as women. Having acknowledged this, the interview questions were formulated after exposure to the field of Egyptian women's leadership concerns in their rights, rather than in undivided reverberation to the media topics. In this sense, the interviews contributed the self-eloquent re-articulations of women, which are different and yet not completely separate from other interviewees, the media frames, or myself as the researcher. In further work I would endeavour to improve the consequences of cross-analysis with more in-depth scopes of global media frames including other newspapers and their authorships, and more crucially, across diverse women's accounts of not only those speaking from leadership positions per se, but are nevertheless active in women's rights defenses on the ground and in closer community works.

As a knowledge producer I felt the awareness of formalities, both towards the academic quarters and to the women I interviewed, even as an Egyptian. Most women are willing, some are excited and others are weary of work conducted on the subject from foreign frames of HR or concerning women's rights, but I may say that most if not all women invited to participate and participants were exceedingly strong in their articulation and questioning me and my motives before making the decision to participate. These instances when the women I approached wished to speak with me before the interview, to establish what we will discuss and for them — before deciding to participate — to interview me, were fascinating to the journey. While this may have framed the interview, I found it of great value in portraying the women's self assertion to participate, the cautiousness around speaking on the subject and to whom, in addition to the power of them analysing me, whether I am driven, what are my intentions and my situational

positioning in Egypt, and in the thesis. Approvingly, the participants of the research were willing to go on with the interview within a more comfortable setting, only after their questions had been answered and more knowledge was obtained.

My limitations of being close yet far away produced some elements of caution in access to interviewees and willingness to communicate with me. Closeness to a professional level was essential to the process, to convey my aims without divulging too much of my hypothesis or dictating the interaction. The consciousness I developed towards the end of the research itself changed from the starting point, which emphasises the ever-changing, non-fixed thought of influence on one individual woman from Egypt, let alone the vast rest, each in her uniqueness. The research and writing process resonated with me in new ways upon starting the epistemological research, with priorly only the theoretical ideas in mind. The practice brought forth new questions which I had not conclusively foreseen. The balance between respecting the participant's wishes, the sociopolitical cultural climate of Egyptian society, and producing objectivity in academic research proved in itself the ethical boundaries and politics of conducting research. I gather that I was enriched through the process, learning to produce an interview, and from the women leaderships' I interviewed, particularly when the situation seemed to be in reverse in moments where I felt they were sometimes interviewing me.

The dynamics of this method of data collection was for me an exchange more so than mere extraction of data from a source, compared to the media monitoring, where I knew what I would investigate and locate after assessing trends, and to some extent envisioned findings of my hypothesis. I considered the moments in media monitoring global frames which communicated agencies of Egyptian women, when they did, and whether they were lacking. I knew my choice to interview the sample was carried out to assess the narratives that lie beyond these polarized dichotomies and FoO. I did not presume, however, that the questions I formed were going to change several times before conducting the first formal interview. Unlike the media frames which do not speak, through the exchange and process of translation it became clear that it was a very critical process in the drafting of the interviews, where questions formed in English were then translated to Arabic, and when speaking them in Arabic, needed adjustments. The difference of language for me as a researcher was very significant in understanding the ways in which sentences are structured, and the way adjustments may undermine

originality of the work in Arabic. I decided therefore to conduct interviews in Arabic based foremost on questions produced in Arabic. I then translated the questions back to English, so that the essence of the language I am conducting interviews in is not undermined. I then still underwent moments in conducting the interview where I was questioned back, or asked to repeat the question. I understood that my formulation of questions was not only predetermined by language, but more so by my prior theoretical research and intensive scrutiny of media monitoring assessments.

I became aware of the way I am asking questions and which questions I chose to ask, and had to cut a lot of questions out that would have been overly conducive. My emission of the title of the research also was not in my first thoughts, thinking to provide all information transparently, but then I realized its inclusion would compromise objectivity. Keeping the title directed to the invitation of the interview, and briefly explaining my dual epistemology to participants in writing before they agreed or rejected to participate, was the most ethical approach without accentuating possibility of bias. My positioning in creating the frame and choosing the questions and participants' was predetermined by my research but was also impacted by my exposure survey, and the potential participants' choice or rejection of participation. I approached around twenty women in Egyptian society with the work and received responses from half. Others showed willingness to participate but after the first or second communication they were not responsive, perhaps due to busy schedules, and perhaps due to scepticism, or not wanting to discuss the matter with an unfamiliar person from a foreign research institution. Being Egyptian helped me greatly, in speaking Arabic and reassuring participants' that their wishes will be respected as a priority to me, and being transparent about my assessment of Frames in Egyptian women's rights discourses. I sought to be as objective and professional as possible in carrying out the interviews in this way. The participants' which responded and followed through customarily always held pleasantries before the interview officially began, which made me recollect the human part of data collection and ethical exchange, and be very thankful for them taking time to participate and their commitments to the work which necessitated a duration of their time.

Some elements of epistemology of interviews are evaded due to the ethical and academic commitment to disclosure and security. Interviewees were respected ethically according to their wishes to include the initials and not names and some of the participants' choices

to articulate their professional positions more closely than others. The decision not to record audios of the interviews was due to security of the participants and their wishes to partake in a less official, conversational interview. The tape recorder would have been mentioned from the invitation and even without mentioning it I encountered the hesitance of some women to participate asking me reasons for the study and for whom, in addition to no response. Scepticism and lack of time were understood as the main reasons of not participating from the potential participants who did respond but declined the interview. The tape recorder in my opinion would have limited the answers to learned, diplomatic and very cautious answers which they always to some extent are when speaking of this sensitive topic in the sociocultural climate. I wanted to limit the element of apprehension by being an insider myself, but this also made me aware of ways to achieve authenticity according to ethical specificities and participants' comfort. The symbol of tape recorder for epistemology of Egyptian research may have been seen as surveillance. Every word, hesitance, pause, was manually written and noted in the moment of its occurrence, which was noticeable and known, but more natural method of record under the circumstances. Some responses from women included them offering willingness to fill out the interview as if it is a questionnaire which I had to insist to please carry an audio and face-to-face conversation for all methods to be the same, and audio style only if they wish. While it was known I must record and fully transcribe interviews, by hand and in the moment was the way to ensure most raw results that were included as entire quotes into my thesis.

In the consciousness of taking full notes, some participants asked whether I am going to include this or to write it in a different way instead. These were all recorded but reflected the direction of answers to conform to the question, frame of study, and most crucially, the degrees of relationality to the interviewer and the considerations sociocultural environment from which they speak. They specified their full wishes before the interview was officially held to be comfortable to talk and when I was typing every word, pause and clarification even in moments when they thought they are not answering or asking for clarification of question, they could hear or see that and became conscious of the notes. Some women extended the wish to remain partially anonymous and not fully recorded by telling me preferential analysis of their words, how to possibly remark these moments and co-conducting the interview; conscious of these acknowledgements in their homeland and in the foreign appearance of our HR. I had to always consider the country I come from and the difference of epistemologies and ethical regards depending on situation and

intent. This reflects notions of security, willingness or hesitance to speak completely freely and my approach from a European university institution in the subject of HR. As an Egyptian myself I had to not only ensure their security but my own as well. This also proved to be a point of strength of the interviews due to the select number that agreed to participate and to spend considerable time in each encounter despite their busy schedules. The participants' sample disclose information in a more at ease and resolute mode than one of worry concerning who I am and what are my intentions, as from the higher number of potential participants approached these women were the ones that followed through.

Participants which are bilingual would speak in Arabic, and at times even tell me how I would say particular expressions in English in the way they choose to translate their own words. Foreign standards measuring the other, of conducting interviews and the element of extraction all indicated my decision to take notes in front of them rather than after the interview. The conversational flow was comprehensible to the participants and myself, having been carried in my language, and was thoroughly translated and transcribed. For the purposes of research, this methodological choice to ask questions and listen and write in the moment and return to them for a second follow up had I seen it necessary to ask some more clarifications or if the interview took place in two parts due to time constraints was significant in delimiting contextual and full accounts from their source.

The choice to assert their preference is inscribed in the ethics of the epistemology; the right to claim their articulations and the right for the privacy and protection of all participants. The comment made by one interviewee resonated with me, in that the names themselves may reflect patriarchal continuance of last name pertaining to the father's last name, and where only men carry on the family name. Choices towards the anonymity of the interviews pertain towards the multi-faceted complexity of each woman in several contextual moments, in which full naming may have been reductionalist pretence of claims. Aliases would reinforce the same, and may translate a sense of fear in using names which was not the reason. I imagined that using aliases would portray the importance of names while protecting the interviewee, but at the same time, women of all backgrounds could have any name, given to them, and the name is not sufficient to authenticitate the women's essence and complexities over her full chosen articulation. The reflection underlines the consciousness of recognition and what women themselves

decide to divulge. The choice therefore to omit names is for the participants to be encouraged to speak with full disclosure outside the boundaries of naming and classification.

In conclusion, in comparing my two methodologies, I recognized that the media monitoring has more so been a comparatively solitary work of critical discourse analysis: assessing languages and global frames without them speaking back to me. The interviews were educational for me, as an Egyptian, in that there is no way one can know everything that will be said, regardless of source of origin of people, even if we were thought to be like-minded. Every answer by every participant was somewhat different even when infrequently answers were very similar, women added different examples, spoke in different tones, and offered their views from their own perspectives also determined by their own experience, interest, occupation, social and family experience and situational location. The presence of frames was therefore present throughout the research, not only in the frames I address, but the ones I myself produce, in scope, in questions, in epistemology, and the frames produced by the women leaderships' in their perspectives, their answers, and their questions to my questions.

Part III

Data Presentation and Analysis

Part III of the thesis is designated for data presentation and analysis of my dual epistemological approach. Chapter Five and Six respectively describe the critical discourse and content analysis of Media Monitoring and Semi-structured Interviews. The keywords under both methodological approaches are Egypt, Women and Rights, over systematic collection. The key themes of Egypt, Women in Egypt and Egyptian women's rights are examined as set focuses to outline the aspect of differences in framing scopes according to standpoint of production. Perspectives are therefore set apart to understand complexities between representational frames of Egyptian women's rights and the self representation of agencies of women of their own rights, and yet understood as fluid under the comprehensive search of data collection and content of analysis.

I compare and contrast the prevalence of self-presentation of women as agencies in their direct speaking of women's HR and self-situated realities in media in order to examine the frequencies of instances in which this occurs and the manner of these communications. The semi-structured interviews are correspondingly based on these themes, focused on the direct voice of Egyptian women leaderships' due to the default of epistemological choice examining framing dependent on situation. The methodological approach of interviews with research participants is solicited to challenge these representations in the discussion of foreign media frames depicting Egyptian women's rights. This inquiry of contrasting analysis across the constant subjects is contextually sensitive and seeks to de-frame homogenizing representations and address elements of abstraction and oppression in frames vis-à-vis women's full speaking realities in their entireties. Discourses are not considered as fixed but fluidly regarded as entire within their contextual moment of production, as complete of their momentary purpose, rather than as all-encompassing, absolute knowledge. In this way some aspects of examination converse although they are not identical in source and voices, perspectives and reflexivity.

In seeking to offer a description on the women's rights discussion in Egypt since 2011, the groundwork on international HR law and the protection of HR in the Egyptian legal system is drawn upon. The following analysis introduces the case study of frames' critical discourse analysis by setting the larger framework of political conventions and ratifications of women's rights in Egypt to briefly establish elements of the sociopolitical contextual situation and discussion. Frames of Egyptian women's rights are explored from their situated representation, addressing HR violations and advances in Egypt. For this reason, the current political conventions ratified by Egypt concerning women's HR²⁵ are outlined in this introductory section, including legislations, reservations, and statistical figures from reports on protection of women. Although most of HR instruments ratified by Egypt have implications on women's rights, The Convention on the Political Rights of Women and The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, are both ratified by Egypt in 1981, and address women specifically. Egypt²⁶ was one of the forty-eight countries which voted in favour of the milestone document of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Although not legally-binding, languages of protection of all HR in the global stage were incorporated into legal national frameworks. In 1990, in Cairo, Egypt, the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, "which purported to establish a framework of human rights compatible with Islamic culture" (Darraj, 2010:106) was adopted. Egypt's historical engagement and cooperation in languages of global HR treaties of formal political conventions may be said to have continued contemporarily. This summary is not to portray all existing formalized efforts of women's human rights but to understand the main connections and gaps of the legal frames with the sociocultural realities. Presenting international and national critical bodies' dynamics is crucial to come to analyse media frames and the political environment which they seek to illustrate, and in the self-situated women's accounts for the political climate from which they derive.

The National Council for Women — "in line with the law governing its activities 39 and article 214 of the Constitution — is responsible for coordinating programmes and activities, raising awareness and promoting values of equality and non-discrimination, with a view to the empowerment of women" (Human Rights Council, 2019: 13). This

²⁵ See Appendix (Figure 1) for the full list of all the international HR instruments ratified by Egypt (United Nations General Assembly, 2016).

²⁶ Contemporarily The Arab Republic of Egypt was at the time the Kingdom of Egypt (from the year 1922 to 1953).

Egyptian Council has produced a report clarifying Egypt's adherence to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The international treaty has been adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979. Contemporary reflection on historical fluctuations in Egypt's prioritisation of women's rights marks the date that the "Arab Republic of Egypt ratified CEDAW²⁷ on September 18, 1981" (ElChazli, 2012:6). The report addressed the claims raised in accordance with "women's rights under the Islamic Shari'a and the international conventions ratified by Egypt" (Ibid.:4). While this may imply limitations and concerns the reservations, it is evident that the element of translation of political conventions to Arabic, or Egyptian dialect and community values are to be written in a different way: "it is not true that CEDAW is not enforceable. It should rather be translated into national legislations" (Ibid.:7). Arguably therefore, had the Convention been written from Egyptian legislations and adhering to forms of international protocols of protection of women's, minorities, and children's rights, it may be investigated that the ratifications of it will not have such misinterpretations or gaps. The gaps imply absences in between the political and social and the national and international interlinking dynamics at the HR stage. The fixed frames constitute of the areas of language which do not transcribe into legal practice. Between political statements of commitment and persistent institutional and covert discrimination against women under discourses of minor reservations; the protection of the woman in non-secular society is a crucial concern in HR theoretical and political advance.

CEDAW seeks to grant women's rights, with the most fundamental being the "right to equality with men without discrimination on the basis of gender" (Ibid.:8). The reasons given for Egypt's reservations to Article 2 of the Convention, which delineates legal protection and principles of equality against the discrimination of women, indicate a contingent "willingness to implement the provisions contained in the above article in such a way as not to contradict with Islamic Shari'a" (Ibid.:11). This is a contradiction in itself in that reservation on this article "amounts to a reservation on the whole convention" (Ibid.:17). Reservations due to interpretations of HR discrepancies with religion inherently imply that the "latter does not approve equality between men and women, and that its provisions consecrate inequality" (Ibid.). The manipulation and misuse of religion

²⁷ CEDAW: Acronym for Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women will be used from this point onward.

promotes further misunderstanding and dismissal of women's HR under patriarchal pretexts:

While the truth is that Islam is not responsible for the legal situation of women and their unfavorable conditions in most of the Islamic communities that are due to a societal culture towards women that always relegates them to an inferior position, and this is not the state of women under Islam.

ElChazli, 2012:17

This articulates the reservations that may convey variations between the international and regional as well as national contexts. The second paragraph of Article 9 of the Convention reads "States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children" (Ibid.:11). Reservations towards this statement are said to be for the interests of the child. The reservation infers that the "right should be given without prejudice to the children's right to acquire the nationality of their father to avoid the possibility that the child might acquire two nationalities in case the nationality of the parents were not the same" (Ibid.). The reservation is contradictory and implies "absolute injustice" (Ibid.:13) as "Egyptian law recognizes the equal right of men and women to pass their nationality to their children" (Ibid.). These differentiations between women and men reflect attempts to equality which may be positioned as external as they do not derive from within the climate they seek to protect. Clarity must be underlined as vital for the positioning of implementation in a way that does not conflict with sociocultural context, and yet does not maintain the distance as a mechanism of women's subordination in social thought and legal practice.

Article 16 was also faced with reservations. The article of the Convention reads: "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women" (Ibid.:13). This basis covered equality in marriage, property, personal rights and guardianship of children. The reservations are based on the notion that "marital relations in Egypt are based on a form of sanctity derived from the established divine religious instructions which should not be violated" (Ibid.:15). In reviewing the provision it is found that there is no contradiction to religious rules. The "reservation on this article is not based on objective considerations; it was rather intended to justify the unjust practices committed against women in some Arab societies, practices

which could not be eliminated or changed by the national laws” (Ibid.:19). The personal status laws have evolved towards granting women’s rights contained in Article 16, and these rights derive from the Islamic Shari’a. This “allows women to retain the right to divorce themselves and document this in the marriage contract. There is also the Khul’a system which allows women to obtain a divorce through mutual consent with her husband or through resorting to the court” (Ibid.). The only right in contradiction is that it is exclusively the man’s right to terminate the marriage which may be defended in the light that the husband is “not allowed to inflict harm on his wife, nor is he allowed to force her to continue to live with him in a marital life which she detests” (Ibid.:20). The difference in accessing power translates continued polarizations between women and men, and drafting laws across the global sphere. The structures transcribe themselves within apparatus of HR, and may arguably be attested through them. Frames which adopt the same standards across different regions highly inhibit discussions that may connect non-isolated identities and HR exchange.

While all countries can do more to ensure they are not merely virtue-signalling with regards to equality; in recent years Egypt has made a concerted effort to improve the quality of life of marginalized groups. Women have been said to “represent over 15 percent of the membership of the Egyptian Parliament for the first time in its history” (United Nations General Assembly, 2016:5) and that such “developments reflect the wide participation of women in all aspects of life, including the formulation of the Constitution itself” (Ibid.). As reported by Egypt to the Human Rights Council, “The Government has taken rapid steps over very few years to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, with a particular focus on the empowerment of women, young people and persons with disabilities, and the rights of children” (Human Rights Council, 2019: 26). The “latest statistics point to a drop in illiteracy rates, from 29.7 percent to 25.8 percent between 2006 and 2017; 30.8 percent of women are illiterate and 21.1 percent of men” (Ibid.: 11). Moreover under education, it is said that “Egyptian women still suffer from lack of educational opportunities. Egypt came in 116th rank among 142 countries in the world in terms of female literacy rate” (Egyptian Center for Women’s Rights, 2014:12). While the tone of statistical collection and reflection mirrors the languages of the source and audience of each report, the evident decrease in illiteracy portrays higher access to education. Illiteracy remains high however, and with women with considerably less access than men to it. This statistic furthermore determines ability

to read and write, the main key of knowledge production; it does not address the levels of education and curriculum being taught and the unrecorded segments of the population which may remain uncounted.

To “monitor the problems women face and to raise awareness about government services, in 2016 a campaign was launched in villages and hamlets under the title “knock on the doors”. By July 2019, it had reached 11,784,289 women and girls in 991 villages” (Human Rights Council, 2019: 12). This outreach towards political participation is high and portrays efforts of awareness and services women can use across Egypt. Furthermore in the field of women’s direct engagement in political empowerment, “six youths were appointed as deputy governors of whom three are women” (Omar, 2019). In addition to this,

the parliamentary elections have resulted in the election of 90 women, thus increasing the percentage of women members in the parliament to 15%. There are also 8 women ministers in the cabinet now, representing 25% of this cabinet. There are also 17 women assistant ministers, and for the first time two women have been appointed as governors. The women deputy governors represent 27% of deputy governors. Egyptian women have also been appointed in the judiciary. A woman also holds the post of adviser to the President for national security. All these efforts have been crowned by the constitutional amendments of 2019 allocating at least 25% of the seats in the parliament to women, as well as at least 25% of the seats in local councils to women.

Omar, 2019

Women taking space in national political spheres may be similar to elements of access and inclusion in the global media, as authors and direct speakers in HR discussion. Media, education and political access embody structures that are not free of positioning, and are powerfully influential to the national context whether in positive or negative respects concerning women, and largely dependent on their epistemological basis and content.

Under combating violence against women:

Three national strategies were launched in 2015 to address the issue of violence against women: the national strategy to combat violence against women, the national strategy to combat female circumcision and the national strategy to prevent early marriage. The penalty for female circumcision envisaged in the Criminal Code has been made more

severe. Perpetrators are now liable to a term of imprisonment of between 5 and 7 years, and the terms of imprisonment are harsher if the act leads to permanent impairment or death. Moreover, a new article imposes a penalty of imprisonment of between 1 and 3 years for persons who request that an act of female circumcision be performed.

Human Rights Council, 2019: 14

Condemning such acts through punitive laws portrays the lack of denial of their criminality and the lack of incorporated legislation validating these acts of violence and misconduct against women. Misconceptions and false legitimacy of harassment cannot be claimed to be normalized and over linked to culture in other conversations as this counters national denouncements of them and promotes discourses which exclude women's security from their own societal situation. The "government has also launched several campaigns for the promotion of the health of Egyptian women, students in schools, and prisoners in punitive institutions" (Omar, 2019). The application of these laws however is still to be implemented on more absolute and multi-layered levels of outreach and enforcement which such statistics and declarations in legal frames are a step towards justice for women but not the ultimate indication of success in Egyptian women's rights adherences.

The Egyptian women's report, under the Economic and Social Rights, outlines that the "unemployment rate is 24.2 percent among women while it is 9.8 percent among males" (Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, 2014:11). Women's unemployment levels are considerably higher reflecting less access and opportunities for women to the formal work field including tertiary and quaternary work, as well as to literacy. It is evident that while efforts are made to promote equality in rights and political representation, and protect women from violence and oppression, the cognitive divide in practice between international and national legislations must be bridged through more situated realities rather than only methods of statistical collection. This would also bridge the gaps between the legal frames and the sociocultural reality. External and distanced methodological assessments framing the contextual reality as abstract or out of reach for some, is exclusionary to the recognition of women in both national and international discussions and representations. Moving beyond quantitative statistics and beyond translations brings closer precise understandings of deconstruction of cognitive patri-colonial measurements and systematic discriminations and provisions of human freedom from both regional and global contexts.

Chapter Five

Frames of Arab Women in Global Media

In this chapter I critically examine the main themes employed from the key of analysis. Through each set of categories I examine thematic instances across the newspaper articles which appear under the keyword search of Egypt, Women and Rights from the Guardian newspaper from 2011 to 2018. Articles underwent systematic collection under the same keyword search. Data is quantitatively referenced, calculated and displayed. Quotes and imageries are then deconstructed qualitatively through my content analysis. While each line and image in frames is independently investigated, these articles are perceived as whole when analysed and the thematic categorization and calculation has been carried out with the objective to discern general trends in external frames of representation. The trends assessed then examine the representation or comparative lack thereof of direct quotes from Egyptian women as agencies in their self-situated realities, in comparison with perpetual evidence of FoO and DP.

5.1 Why the Guardian?

The Guardian is my chosen representative sample newspaper in the critical discourse analysis of frames in media monitoring coverage. This well-established newspaper — having been founded in 1821 — is a widely read British newspaper popular both within the UK and internationally. It advocates for diversity amongst its contributors and aims to present fair and balanced reporting. It is perceived as a left-leaning, centre-left newspaper rather than right-wing in how it presents its views of the world as a globally distinguished media channel. With its digital editions it reaches a vast number of multi-generational readers and it is one of the most highly regarded and heavily circulated English language news sources. I chose to cover one newspaper for systematic research over scope in time on the particular subject, rather than a cross-analysis of media reports. In this way the choice in epistemology is constant in terms of keywords and locational source of specificity of frame. Through this decision I intend to portray the likelihood of framed conceptions from a homogeneous source, in addition to de-framing the emphasis on media narratives by focusing also on the interviews of women themselves, which is the multi-epistemological value of the study.

5.2 Media Monitoring Main Findings: a Critical Analysis of Global Representations

The following presents my critical discourse analysis under the key themes: Frames of Egypt, Frames of Egyptian Women and Frames of Women's Human Rights in Egypt. The methodological approach of deriving qualitative data to illustrate percentages of recurrences of each instance of themes is carried out to delve into specific detail in the description. The numbers are calculated out of a thorough reading and coding of all articles, which were referenced and quoted in their categories. I then counted the total number of quoted references and imageries to code them according to their thematic frame under the content, layout and language of examples gathered from the twenty-eight collected articles. Each article presents images, out of which I chose some for visual examples of my descriptions. Articles are assessed for their chosen diction and standpoint, and some images are included in the analysis descriptions, but all images have been considered in the calculations and perceptive analysis.

5.2.1 Frames of Egypt

In this thematic section I seek to outline the newspaper articles under the general search which speak more broadly on Egypt. The frames produced under the keyword search illustrate more generalized discussions on the sociocultural climate, in comparison to other Arab countries, in comparison to the West, or in and of itself, when contemplating a particular matter of contention in the Egyptian space. Under this thematic category, my analysis examines ten out of the twenty-eight articles which is equivalent quantitatively to 35.7% of the total number of data collection in critical discourse analysis of media. This division is for the sake of analysis rather than deemed to be fixed under these categories as it must be acknowledged that articles under the three searches to some extent overlap and encompass parts of the three sections.

Frames of Egypt are portrayed in descriptions of the political rulings of Egyptian women's rights. The newspaper article entitled: **“Egypt court ruling upholds decision to freeze assets of women's rights activists”** (Ford, *The Guardian*: 2017, Accessed on: 10.3.2017, Available at: www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/jan/12/egypt-court-ruling-upholds-decision-freeze-assets-womens-rights-activists) describes the backlash against women agencies in Egypt. The article is chosen under this thematic key

as the title positions Egypt as the general spatial subject and describes the sociocultural stagnation of the contextual moment six years after the uprising.

The article reports that HR and women's rights defenders have and are being arrested and the "growing rate of violence against women in the country" (Ford, *The Guardian*: 2017), conveying forces of suppression of women as active participants in the political representation and agency in their own country. This is depicted as "clampdown on civil rights groups continues as government pursues case against campaigners accused of using overseas funds to destabilise Egypt" (Ibid.). Women in Egypt are subjected inside a frame of victimization in between and outside their societies in seemingly hopeless HR despair and friction, for example, under patri-colonial masquerades of power. Internal repression is communicated in further mention of another women's rights defender who was arrested and had assets frozen. It is said that the constitution "ratified in a 2014 referendum is by far the most liberal and progressive Egypt has had, but clauses in that document guaranteeing freedoms, privacy or human rights have been largely ignored by the authorities" (Ibid.). The emphasis on positive statement followed by dismissal of interest and priority in these factors implies a sense of hopelessness or minimization of Egypt's advance relative to its own historical politics.

The frame captures Egyptian women's rights activist: Mozn Hassan with direct quotes from her and from Nazra organization. The head of Nazra for Feminist Studies Egyptian organization is mentioned as one of the activists, said to have undergone problems. The "eight face allegations that they illegally obtained foreign funds subsequently used to destabilise Egypt" (Ibid). This statement portrays polarized dichotomies between rights and Egyptian society, abstracting the other elements complicating the situation with other fundamental rights including "decent housing and healthcare" (Ibid.).

The subsequent article framing Egypt and the situation of rights in Egypt under this search is entitled "**Muslim Brotherhood backlash against UN declaration on women rights**" (Kingsley, *The Guardian*: 2013 Accessed on: 4.3.2017, Available at: www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/15/muslim-brotherhood-backlash-un-womens-rights). The extremes appear to occur between Westernized clashes and overly repressive extremism on women's rights in the country. These describe polarized extremism in the sociocultural climate between external measurements of rights on the country and internal politicized radicalism confused with religion. The article discusses tension of HR

imposition: leading with “UN's call to end violence against women” (Kingsley, *The Guardian*: 2013) conveying foreign and male-oriented authority against women from Muslim Brotherhood. This now banned terrorist militia organization, seen to have hijacked the revolution with false hopes of “freedom and justice”, are said to have claimed the declaration would lead to the total “disintegration of society, says Egypt’s ruling party” (Kingsley, *The Guardian*: 2013). The main image (Figure 1.1) portrays women “in an anti-Brotherhood protest in Cairo” (Ibid.) as agents of change. Unnamed faces are seen in the main image encompassing women, holding un-translated slogans in the midst of revolutionary protests occupying space. This conveys obscurity and undecipherable realities in addition to Hatshepsut from ancient Egypt, in black and white and centered in the frame conveying a historical gap and disconnection between contemporary women’s struggles in Egypt and ancient female icons of power.



Figure 1.1 (Kingsley, *The Guardian*: 2013)

Abstraction in representative small segment of protesters also displaces vast majorities of women as detached from their societies, needing to take a stand against the ruling party which criticized basic calls of HR in Egypt including “allowing wives full legal rights to take their husbands to court for marital rape” (Ibid.). Women are said to have undergone assault and harassment in public place of their country as a “systematic attempt to stop women from protesting” (Ibid.). Women’s agency is controlled within public space, and confined in the frame of their subjection to misconduct in their own city’s streets and squares. Religious patriarchal male figures impose authority on women’s dress code and impositions. Framed in this way imposes DPs of oppression by reinforcing male dominance over informing and interpreting scriptures. The defense of women’s rights is conveyed in contradiction to a literally patriarchal: “brotherhood” (Ibid.).

Widespread speculation and debate is said to occur in conference in a located megacity of the United States: New York City (Ibid.), debating the wording of the declaration on the status of women. Western cities are located precisely where Egypt is referenced as entire country which reflects precision and specificity when speaking of foreign discourse and obscurement when reproducing images of the other of the other. Mentions of sisterhood are confined to a “Muslim Sisterhood” (Ibid.) in that languages of belonging and exclusion not only separate between men and women but may further ostracize Egypt’s ethnic and religious minorities. Woman HR leadership Souad Shalaby, National Council for Women, is directly quoted to condemn extremism and use of pretexts saying that it was “disingenuous to use Islam to justify the erosion of women's rights” (Ibid.). She states that misinterpretations undermine HR advance: “it goes without saying that Islam never encourages violence against women. On the contrary, it gives them rights” (Ibid.). A foreign speaker is then directly quoted saying that "we're asking them to stop using religion and culture to undermine negotiations and to justify violence against women," said Lynn Darwich” (Ibid.), which conveys foreign authority, and some lack of specificity and precaution of the sociocultural location in the “we” and “stop”. This encompasses the external rejection of religion and culture rather than using them as a tool through which to condone rights, largely denouncing what was previously said by Egyptian woman’s statement.

The article entitled: **“Egypt's Bedouins begin to demand equal citizenship rights”** (IRIN, *The Guardian*: 2011, Accessed on: 7.5.2016, Available at: www.theguardian.com/global-development/2011/jun/17/egypt-bedouin-risk-of-exclusion-citizenship-rights) appears under the search result of the keywords Egypt, women and rights. The article speaks broadly of minorities or ethnic groups, further abstracting the importance of location and capacity of national government for support across different cohorts of Egyptian people. The situation in Egypt is detached from the people’s trust, conveying feelings of exclusion and (non)recognition towards Bedouins: “Egypt's new government faces a challenge in overcoming mistrust from Bedouins who feel excluded from society” (IRIN, *The Guardian*: 2011). The following image (Figure 1.2) is presented at the beginning of the article captioned with: “a Bedouin woman from al-Aweida tribe heats bread next to her tent in north Sinai in Egypt. Photograph: Amr Dalsh/Reuters” (Ibid.). The separation of women from their very faces and names portrays protesters as anonymous not only as individual people but as oppressed, dehumanized

subjects of oppression even in their moments of active protest. The other of other is portrayed as women and minorities (ethnic, religious), as seen in the framed photograph.



Figure 1.2 (IRIN, *The Guardian*: 2011)

The description focuses on her framed activity and ‘function’ of “heating bread” and naming her North Sinai tribe rather than her own name, identity and story. The lack of humanization is compounded by omitting the nature of her relation to the young boy beside her: the reader is not told whether or not she is his mother. By missing the opportunity to introduce her in a personalized and relatable way, the woman is exoticised as a distant, abstract character with no distinguishing features beyond being an Egyptian Bedouin woman. This image eludes the woman’s face, agency and detaches her human relations and identity from her. Omissions of name by not directly naming or citing her are also considered including frames of helplessness which may reinforce notions of non-agency and dehumanization of Egyptian women from their lives and rights. Imageries of alienation are assessed not only as relative to depictions of Egyptian women but also in addressing other factors which dehumanize the status of women such as mentions of other names rather than their own, under their photographs, and mentions of their reality as framed by their function or victimization, and neutralization of this image.

The article entitled **“Egypt Election: No Revolution for Women”** (Tomlin, *The Guardian*: 2011 Accessed on: 15.2.2016, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/dec/01/egypt-revolution-women-elections>)

outlines the contextual aftermath of the revolution and the oppression of women within it. Oppression is depicted in terms of rights, violence and political misrepresentation. The following Image (Figure 1.3) is captioned “Women shopping in a Cairo market. Photograph: Ofelia de Pablo and Javier Zurita” (Tomlin, *The Guardian*: 2011).



Figure 1.3 (Tomlin, *The Guardian*: 2011)

The image is positioned at the very start of the article, as the visual point of focus immediately after the headline and preceding the text. The caption is ambiguous as is the contrasting photo of colours and revealed mannequins facing the frame. Veiling and unveiling discourse portrays the backs of veiled women or wearing burqas, not showing their faces or active shopping or agency but rather looking to unidentifiable, less covered and unrelatable, yet similarly objectified mannequins. Fragmentation of women's consensus is evident in lead heading: "while female voters are turning out in huge numbers for the elections, some feminists are boycotting them" (Ibid.). Political context is said to be clear in impact of influence under pretexts of freedom and equality compromising the rights of women. A foreign speaker is quoted saying she "believes that, in the early days of the revolution, "women really missed out in the political process and on ensuring that women's rights were considered as important as those of anyone else"" (Ibid.). Her beliefs are legitimated by condemning women's participation as victims after the uprising and denying their agency in passive phrasing as "missed out" in claiming the importance of their rights. Further questions of legal frames of HR and languages of expression, identification and representation of the body of the Egyptian woman are seen to be framed as a monolithic subject.

The blurred photo of the back of veiled women depicts irony of claiming the debate in frames of silenced subjects from the back of their bodies. It does not quote directly or convey womens' resistance afterwards, and provides brief surface information. Egyptian "high-profile" women are said to have "criticized the Western media's preoccupation with

women's involvement in the revolution, arguing that it belittles those women who fought and died as men's equals" (Ibid.). This statement chooses unfair focus on men as core of the revolution in status being the highest comparative measuring point. The dismissiveness of women's rights by political candidates by not showing up to one event "speaks volumes" (Ibid.) of their disinterest; remarked by a foreign analyst speaking of mostly male candidates rather than women in Egypt.

The founder of Harassmap is directly quoted as authority conveying foreign imposition obscuring complexities in the region and dismissing what is a national revolution for women despite their agency within it and struggle beyond it. The foreign source expressed internal turmoil and that she does not wish to be part of competition between Egyptian feminist networks: "me and my friends don't seek to be part of their network" (Ibid.). The conversation is framed as "us" and the "other" and there is a lack of solidarity between women which is racialised rather than in between women and men. The focus moves quickly to the Western film-maker's gaze, in producing films about women and election, depicting violence on women and only saying that "raising questions about women's issues 'is really difficult' in the current climate" (Ibid.). This is ambiguous and does not require the referencing of foreign authority but seems to instrumentalize the situation as a tool for theatrical publication and commercial benefit.

Patriarchal influences are outlined as convincing even women to support them: "campaigners are concerned at what they see as links with the old regime as well as the women standing on pro-Islamist and, in some cases, anti-feminist tickets" (Ibid.), and in this way further highlighting internalized dissonance of cause. HR organization Egyptian Feminist Union which was previously banned is now said to be used as facade: giving the appearance of supporting women's rights. Speaking of an Egyptian NGO advocating women's rights as part of the framework of facade does not reveal or enhance occupation of women's spaces and potentials of ongoing resistance; it however illustrates to an extent the vilification of societal discourses and locally established networks of HR.

The article entitled "**The Muslim Brotherhood has shown its contempt for Egypt's women**" (Nowaira, *The Guardian*: 2013 Accessed on: 24.12. 2016, Available at:www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/mar/18/muslim-brotherhood-rejects-egyptian-womens-rights) opens with the lead heading: "in rejecting a draft UN declaration calling for an end to violence against women, the organisation's blatant

misogyny is exposed” (Nowaira, *The Guardian*: 2013). This frame further portrays the current contextual climate as oppressive towards women to the point of being “contempt” towards women which is “blatant misogyny”. The notion that the organization excludes women goes beyond exclusion to notions of worthlessness and being beneath consideration let alone respect. This perspective frames the situation in Egypt by placing more emphasis on male authorities and Brotherhood than women’s agency, struggles and well-being. Women in the image (Figure 1.4) are framed as subject to this “contempt”, excluding direct voices or translations of slogan in the photo. The image portrays women’s active protesting however the lack of voice to the frame despite the women’s clear shouting and resisting mutes the element of agency. The women encompassed in the frame are all veiled which is not fully representative particularly when they are broadly classified as Egyptian women.



Figure 1.4 (Nowaira, *The Guardian*: 2013)

There is an absence of direct referencing of violence(s) against women, including FGM and women’s experience of “shocking acts of violence against them” (Ibid.) which were overlooked and ignored. Vivid descriptions of violence are depicted after asking the male authority at the time on his views of FGM, it is said that

Instead of clearly and unambiguously condemning the practice, he said that it was a decision that should be left to the family concerned. Thus the brutal cutting up of a piece of a girl’s flesh was treated by him with the same kind of callous indifference as the decision to go for a family picnic

Nowaira, *The Guardian*: 2013

From the answer that the decision should be left to the family, asking the question also shows that the practice is continued to be called a practice due to its abstraction, which also does not condemn the crime “unambiguously”. The graphic comparative description

is exaggerated to the extent of mockery in juxtaposition, contrasting the violence of mutilation to a polarized contrasting and detached activity as “picnic” suggests further lack of sensitivity in the discourse.

The element of speaking for women in claiming the violations must be accounted for and recognized while recounting male discourses of oppression:

women are often figuratively referred to in demeaning terms. How often have women been described as precious stones that are so valuable that they need to kept under lock and key and protected against theft? Or as candy bars that have to be wrapped up in order to keep away the flies?

Nowaira, *The Guardian*: 2013

Frames of lack of solidarity in between women and men and among women are reinforced through narratives of male thinking of women as generalized, subhuman and subject to facing misconduct: “systematic sexual harassment of female protesters” (Ibid.) and non-protesters.

The article **“Is Egypt ready to join growing global movement to end FGM?”** (Abu-Dayyeh, *The Guardian*: 2014 Accessed on: 7.01.2017, Available at: www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/nov/30/egypt-join-global-movement-end-fgm-sohair-al-bataa) is presented as focusing on the “acquittal of those involved in the tragic story of Sohair al-Bata’a, who died after undergoing FGM, highlights the need for Egypt to outlaw the practice” (Abu-Dayyeh, *The Guardian*: 2014). The need for legal action is connected to the lack of justice for the people who committed the act, found not guilty of a crime and thus were not accordingly sentenced for it. The value attributed to lack of justice while valid may somewhat overlook the act of crime in itself as of the murder of thirteen year old girl, Sohair al Bata’s, and the act of FGM, having happened and additionally having killed her, is in itself reason for validated condemnation and shock. The meta-narrative of the crime may be somehow thought to be further detached from the woman but rather described in the larger array of Egyptian male legislation. Descriptions of societies convey that dangers are implied on women’s presence in the private and public sphere. Women are bullied to seclusion and authority on their bodies in existence under mass threats, acts and repetitions of violence as systematic and happening across countries of the South (the article also mentions Kenya and Indonesia). Lack of conceptualization of the different countries further abstracts the crime as of particular

countries and blurs concepts of private and public as both of danger. An external English organization said to collaborate with Egypt: “Equality Now is currently working with local lawyers at the Centre for Egyptian Women’s Legal Assistance to ensure that Sohair gets justice — justice for one girl, but in the hope it sets a precedent to help ensure that countless others are protected” (Ibid.). Mention of this intervention may be directing the essence of morality from external imposition which seemingly diverts if not undermines national capacities for resistance and moral reasoning.

The violence and death of underage girls are detailed and a case of “father and the doctor who carried out the mutilation were acquitted” (Ibid.) is discussed. The termings of “medical practitioners” and mention of “medicalisation of FGM” (Ibid.) as increasing are used which may further institutionalize and normalize FGM as a practice by professionals and thus as institutionalized and harmless, abstracting the violence and present risk of the act of itself. This is recognized in the concluding acknowledgement of efforts claiming to make FGM “safer”, said to largely

Conceal the severe violence it represents and hide its lifelong and life-threatening physical, emotional and psychological consequences. Sohair’s death tragically highlights FGM as an extreme violation of the human rights of girls and women with serious health risks, regardless of whether it is performed within or outside of the medical establishment.

Abu-Dayyeh, *The Guardian*: 2014

The recognition of concealment is significant in depicting alternative narratives to those placing emphasis on the male authority or Western authority but rather the act and the subject to it regardless of location and naming. The attempt to shed light on the discussion of the woman occurs in this statement and specificity of humanizing the story of named, Sohair as one of many albeit of the atrocious crime of itself.

The article entitled: “**The UN Commission on the Status of Women unmasks equality's enemies**” (Filipovic, *The Guardian*: 2013 Accessed on: 5.1.2016, Available at: www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/mar/18/un-commission-status-women-enemies-equality) begins with the statement: “there might not be many things the Vatican and the Muslim Brotherhood agree on, but one is keeping women 'in their place” (Filipovic, *The Guardian*: 2013). This statement depicts mutual patriarchal authority

across culturally polarized spheres. A quote illustrating the problem of misogyny states that the

divide over women's rights fundamentally comes down to the question of whether you think women are equally as human as men, or whether you think we're a sub-category of person, designed to serve men's needs and desires, and unworthy of protection from humanity's most awful impulses.

Filipovic, *The Guardian*: 2013

This quote implies a cognitive divide: “you” addresses men as superior in the decision making process and attributing value to women. This frame of DP thus implies that what men think is what may be translated into women’s societal status and rights. Reducing women’s capacities as at the most in relation to men’s may therefore be limiting in addressing women’s agency in self-emancipation against patriarchal oppression. Religion is seen to subordinate women, alienating their agency from their own abstracted realities and dangerous lives: “it's not that misogynist governments and organizations support violence against women, exactly, although some of them do. It's that they directly benefit from the sexist system that violence against women enables” (Ibid.). There is alienation of agency and influence of women as religious themselves in addition to living under the system which enables violence against them as a structural tool, under the basis of political misinterpretations of religion.

Ironic, non-scientific correlation is shown in the statement: “women, as it turns out, are just as smart and capable and hardworking as men, which is why keeping women disempowered and vulnerable requires large-scale coercion and violence” (Ibid.), using a sarcastic tone. This measures women to men rather than to their own terms of emancipation and rights as humans. This paternalistic statement goes on to imply that the divide is said to be cognitive; whether you think the woman is equal to man. The division between women and men and justifying violence after blaming religion not only alienates women from their rights in their societal reality but also absolves men from any responsibility to respect HR. Such discourse is counterproductive and neither invites progress nor positive changes in mentality. The wording of this demeaning revelation that women are “as it turns out” beings just as intelligent as men, conveys a highly problematic perspective. Violence is depicted as widespread, and this sentence condones violence against women as a mechanism of control. Crime against women is seen as a

nationalistic tool for maintaining male power. The misogynist frame and language systematically reinforces violence and fear of it as maintaining the “male monopoly” (Ibid.).

The article ends with a false “we”: “culture, religion and tradition are all very important to billions of people. But none of those things is static: we determine what our culture looks like, what our traditions are and what we believe” (Ibid.). This describes “we” from an external perspective to Egypt, as a common women’s solidarity which overlooks sociocultural situation. While this is an optimistic approach it displays a sense of appropriation should “we” be the mould to fit into the Western frame. The notion of winning battles “this time round”, margins: “back to our corners”, awaiting next “knock” down (Ibid.) imply violent defeat in a physical dispute and exclusion from society. Vague, hegemonic statistics are mentioned abstractly across. These entail: “some 603 million women live in countries where domestic violence remains legal” (Ibid.) and “three million women and girls are subject to genital cutting every year, with 10% of them dying from the practice” (Ibid.). Furthermore the article speaks of mass pedophilia and rape as “more than 60 million girls are married as child brides every year” (Ibid.), offering statistics as fact with no specific location or evidence of how this data was collected. This reflects the perpetual defeat of women and marginalization, and the focus is on benefitting misogynistic systems of control rather than women’s subjectification to violence for male power.

The enemy of women’s rights is depicted as a problem of misogyny in governmental leaderships as follows, the “honest truth: systematic violence against women maintains the male monopoly on political, economic and social power” (Ibid.). While this is largely evidently true, it may be argued that discourses illustrating the disempowerment of women as a mechanism of men’s power may limit the conversation within the spectrums of difference between women and men. Speaking out as the oppressor and oppressed may be further disempowering as it translates as hatred between women and men rather than solidarity among humans as equals and deconstruction of patriarchal barriers. Patriarchies are seen to largely come together and are perceived as inevitable and justifiable due to their purpose against women in the Arab region and of countries of the South, which further maintains monopolies of power. Reasonings of inequality may somewhat abstract that women are human, and should not be subject to violence for any reason.

White feminism and Russian feminism are depicted in the image (Figure 1.5); the faces of women are shown and they are not covered or shamed, but smiling. The image is captioned “Russia, which imprisoned the feminist group Pussy Riot last year for “disrespecting religion”, opposed language in the UN's agreement on women's rights” (Ibid.), with only the photographer named. This portrayal of exemplary feminism imposes itself as the complete opposite; and there is insensitivity towards extremism in name and overt secularism. The female foreign author of the article is also photographed smiling before the image at the beginning of the article. This humanization contrasts with the portrayal of Egyptians and also shows Western visual assertiveness in claiming their agency with their own faces and the languages which they choose and find suitable.

Figure 1.5 (Filipovic, *The Guardian*: 2013)



The relevance and importance of unpacking extreme differences in protest imagery the article is said to be about is key as it is framed as the UN unmasking “inequalities enemies” (Ibid.). Foreign HR imposition: United Nations Women, and Commission said to have mobilized discussion: “brought hundreds of international leaders to New York to discuss strategies for ending violence against women” (Ibid.). There is mention of the foreign external United Nations Women call that “women in every corner of the world have a right to bodily integrity, and that religion, custom or tradition are not excuses for governments to skirt their obligations to protect all their citizens” (Ibid.). While this statement appears fair, there are no representatives from Egypt on UN Women Executive Board (and only one from an Arab country that is Saudi Arabia) abstracting direct regional participation.

Societies are illustrated as in conflict with HR: as cultures of violence and misogyny and efforts towards qualifying and identifying women as human beings “too” as if not assumed as such in their societies (Ibid.). Arguments of language and religion are seen as opposition in agency: violence is “necessary to maintaining society-wide male dominance” (Ibid.) blaming “misogynist” governments. Mechanisms of blame reproduce notions of inevitable doom and focus more on oppression rather than empowerment

capacity. Further monopoly of male in power and feminism from the north is depicted to speak against DP in terms of religion “many of the usual suspects (and some new ones) were unwilling to adopt the "women are people, not punching bags" framework” (Ibid.). Sarcastic tones and blames of tradition, religion and beliefs in three vastly different regions “Vatican, Russia and Iran” (Ibid.) are evident in a tone of oppression, in efforts to strip out the language that would block governments from using the "it's our custom/religion/tradition" excuse” (Ibid.). This reduces the complexity of the situation and does not deconstruct the rationalization of inequality and the implication of absence and lack of conceptualisation of tradition is to further distance the possibilities of rights in particular societies.

The following article entitled: **“First woman to head a political party in Egypt says it proves the revolution has changed attitudes”** (Kingsley, *The Guardian*: 2014, Accessed on: 10.6.2017, Available at: www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/02/egypt-christian-woman-leads-dostour-party) portrays indications of journalists “bothering” woman in power.

The named candidate is said to feel that “she was elected for her ideas, which appeal to her party's revolutionary youth, and her plans to change the culture of Egypt's political parties, which too often centre on a single figure, rather than encouraging broad grassroots engagement” (Kingsley, *The Guardian*: 2014) rather than for being a woman. Despite positive hope, “in changing this culture within Dostour, she hopes to encourage a similar transition across a society that has relied on strongman leadership” (Ibid.). The article moves on to contradictorily state that “but cynics say that Shukrallah's election, and what she stands for, matters little in an Egypt that again has narrowing room for political debate” (Ibid.). The change of tone contrasts the previous “cause for excitement” (Ibid.).

In the article entitled: **“How Egypt's radical rulers crush the lives and hopes of women”** (McVeigh, *The Guardian*: 2013 Accessed on: 5.5.2017, Available at: www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/31/egypt-cairo-women-rights-revolution), a top-center image (Figure 1.6) captures an unidentified woman covering her face and veiled (McVeigh, *The Guardian*: 2013).



Figure 1.6 (McVeigh, *The Guardian*: 2013)

The photo is captioned: “A woman marches on the Muslim Brotherhood’s headquarters in Cairo to protest at plans to reduce the legal age of marriage to 13” (Ibid.). She is described vaguely as a “woman”, with visible men in the background looking on behind her back. The following description conveys a sense of chaos,

ambush came from the left, from a side street which led up the hill to Mokattam mosque. A rush of hundreds of men running down on the march of anti-government protesters, bringing a sudden clatter of rocks landing all around, the crack of shots fired and the whizz of tear gas canisters.

McVeigh, *The Guardian*: 2013

Violence surrounding women from all around their society conveys notions of danger and mass attacks by men. Foggy smoke appears in background due to tear gas canisters. Descriptions of violence are impersonal but nonetheless painted emotionally and depict hurt: “with a bleeding mouth and eyes streaming from the tear gas pulled off her headscarf and stood yelling at the other side” (Ibid.). There is an impersonal and direct quote from an “angry woman” condemning the practices as against humanity, religion and the nation. She is unnamed but the emotion of rage defines her being, alienating the collective consciousness of the reasons for her anger and her particular narrative: she states “You are not Islam! You are not Egypt! Where is my freedom?” (Ibid.). She is described as unveiling herself and reveals herself to stand against her oppression. Describing her as “angry” is an emotion of outrage that is validated considering the circumstances and her graphic pain. Further depictions are present of being “subjected to a skyrocketing number of sex assaults, rapes and harassment” (Ibid.). Violence on women’s bodies and oppression is depicted as vast figures without further details. Male

authority of the time is said to have “stopped short of decriminalising Egypt's practice of female genital mutilation, carried out on almost three-quarters of Egyptian girls, making it clear he would not tackle an issue he called "a family matter" (Ibid.). The vast majority of FGM is reduced to a private matter between family, when it is evident that external pressures and the large number of occurrences should be considered an urgent public concern in Egypt.

The statement that the “gulf between sexes widens” (Ibid.), places blame emphasis on gender inequality. The language looks to blame the political atmosphere as against women, barbaric and dangerous: “women keep close together, arms linked and eyes alert for the men flying down the side of the demonstration on motorcycles grabbing and screaming at females” (Ibid.), at risk in their country. Another statement speaks of a girl who was engaged but “her family allowed her to break it off when her best friend died in childbirth aged 16” (Ibid.). The frame of representation focuses on protesting against child marriage: “opposing a new constitution that sweeps away their rights and opens the way for girls of 13 to be married” (Ibid.), and victimhood of women in Egyptian society by multi-layered patriarchy.

There is a direct quote from named woman demonstrator, “Fatma”, describing women’s oppression by men, the male gaze and physical veiling of her counterparts: “they see women as, number one, objects of sex and, number two, to clean their floors’ (...) said Fatma, 24, an engineering graduate marching with her friends, some in burqas, some in headscarves” (Ibid.). The chosen description of her direct voice depicts the “us” and “them” dichotomy and how men see women. In addition to this statement, the way she is perceived by the journalist and described according to the women she was with at the time, as her friends, with focus on their exoticised clothing and costume depicts Oriental descriptions centered on being veiled and to various extents, and may be further subjecting her agency and resistance.

The following article is named: “**Majority of men in Middle East survey believe a woman's place is in the home**” (Lyons, *The Guardian*: 2017 Accessed on: 5.5.2017, Available at: www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/may/02/majority-of-men-in-middle-east-north-africa-survey-believe-a-womans-place-is-in-the-home). This title in itself suggests a factual statement without critiquing the way by which this conclusion has been deducted, but simply adding: “study carried out across Middle East and north Africa

shows sexist attitudes prevail, with men's views of equality at odds with hopes of young women" (Lyons, *The Guardian*: 2017). The notion of hearing men's views over women may come to shed light on cognitive injustice in men, but it excludes women from the study and silences their voices and perspectives. It also generalizes over the "Middle East", a vast array of countries, without specifying how this information was attained in the survey, what was the sample of men, and the further oppressive placing and confining to home, of women according to men's thought.

The main image (Figure 1.7) is captioned: "a woman in the City of the Dead in Cairo. More than half of the Egyptian men surveyed agreed that 'there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten'" (Ibid.). Naturalization and desensitization of violence is evident in the statement depicting the male majority condoning a remorseless belief in violence against women. Domestic exoticisation and subjectification of women in the image of the unidentified woman in the "City of the Dead" (Ibid.) is evident and is accompanied by the description of men's views. The abstraction of life and death is accentuated by capturing her as a passive presence in the frame, and blurring the lines between the living and deceased.



Figure 1.7 (Lyons, *The Guardian*: 2017)

The framed woman is located in abstracted alienation from the element of "life", being alive, living and a thriving if not humanized existence. She is unnamed, and not facing the camera. She is unidentified, giving her back rather than eye contact, and depicted as one of many women subject to violence, barely living, on top of cemeteries in a poor district on the edges of historic Cairo in Egypt. Locating her with this grim naming of

location, and focus on tombs rather than women's lives further connotes to her demoralized, dehumanized representation.

The framing and emphasis on patriarchal oppression is communicated through vast generalizations of "majority" of men and "Middle East" and places emphasis on men's thought on women's situation on a mass generalized scale. DPs are legitimized by diverting fault to the men of the region; proven by "studies" portraying that men's "sexist attitudes prevail" (Ibid.) without further specification. Preference appears to be given to male voices over those of women. This is evident in statements of authority such as "more than half of the Egyptian men surveyed agreed" (Ibid.) and "across all four countries, we see that one of the biggest disruptors of gender inequality is when men take on more of the activities in the home typically defined as women's roles" (Ibid.). Gary Barker, Promundo, is a foreign male who is quoted for saying this statement which further conveys the double irony in focus on men which is reflected in his statement. In fixated "women's roles" there is a tendency to perpetuate inequality and focus on men through seldom references to "men's roles" because they are naturalized as the main roles. When some roles such as domestic care are assigned and continue to be assigned to women in statements like this, the private exclusion of women is attributed to them in a standardized way. The article finishes by stating the psychological fears of men as providers, the

Study also looked into men's fears and mental health, and found a key stress for men was the challenge of finding paid work in times of economic uncertainty, particularly in those countries affected by conflict. The effects of conflict and unemployment were frequently cited as a factor in causing depression among men.

Lyons, *The Guardian*: 2017

In this way socioeconomic hardship is attributed to be a main reason for pressure, shame and aggression (rather than bringing forth the impact on women). Mentions of female headed households, the stigma on single women, women as breadwinners, are brief if not absent, with the accentuation remaining on men, further framing Egypt as a patriarchal society through these discourses.

5.2.2 Frames of Egyptian Women

This thematic frame of representation encompasses a total of twelve articles from the Guardian newspaper which appear to mostly frame Egyptian women at a percentage of 42.9%. This number has been derived through the fractional calculation of twelve articles out of the total of twenty-eight. While the search encompassed the three keywords systematically over the time frame, the articles have been analysed for their general patterns of framing particular focus of perspectives of the search. The frames under this section present themselves as speaking of Egyptian women, although elements on Egypt and women's rights are present. Titles of articles, content, layout, language and imageries are assessed to comprehend the formation of the frames and determine the main epistemological and practical centrality of its author's gaze.

The article entitled: **“Egypt's women have had enough of being told to cover up”** (Tadros, *The Guardian*: 2012, Accessed on: 4.12. 2016, Available at: www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/may/29/egypt-women-cover-up-coptic)

describes that “politically charged calls from a Coptic bishop to follow a Muslim example have infuriated women already suffering harassment” (Tadros, *The Guardian*: 2012). The patriarchal impositions from religious leaders are depicted as oppressive towards women. Said to be “already suffering harassment” (Ibid.) focuses on the state of injustice subjecting women rather than focusing on controlling men.

Image (Figure 2.1) appears at the forefront of this article seeking to convey the dynamics of power of control over women's bodies. It is captioned: “the political battles over who reigns over Egypt are not only being fought over presidential and parliamentary seats, but also over who can claim more control over a woman's body” (Ibid.). This description excludes the resistance of women in control over their own bodies by confirming politicized discussion that competition of control which is likely not directed to their protection but invisibilization, furthermore remains outside of them.



Figure 2.1 (Tadros, *The Guardian*: 2012)

The image frames a depiction of a completely covered burqa-donning woman with a male politician and former presidential candidate in the background comes with only the name of the photographer. The woman in the frame is anonymous in name and face, portrayed as a veiled non-face, mysterious, exotic subject rather than as a conscious agent. The overtowering background poster implies relations of power and disempowerment on women's bodies and public and private realities. Her eyes are barely visible which further promotes disconnectedness from her and the frame, and from her and from her sociocultural agency. DPs are evident in background of political propaganda lurking above of a male political candidate who will decide women's fate. In addition to the title implying women's subjection to men's orders; women have "had enough of being told to cover up" (Ibid.), women's infuriation is translated into compliance in the chosen frame.

The political context is still under extremist influences and manipulations of abuse and bodily and mental violence, described apathetically: "on the streets of Egypt, inch by inch, bit by bit, women's rights are shrinking. Women, Muslim and Christian, who do not cover their hair or who wear mid-sleeved clothing are met with insults, spitting and in some cases physical abuse" (Ibid.). Descriptions of violent reactions to women's choice of their own mode of dressing are seen to further inhibit women's secure presence in the public space:

Another woman told me that girls and women wearing mid-sleeved clothing had been slapped on their bare arms by men on bicycles shouting slurs. Another told me she had been spat on by men telling her to cover up. Another told me that she had her hair up in a

pony tail and a young man pulled it so hard that she thought her head was going to fall off.

Tadros, *The Guardian*: 2012

The contrast of covering up and nakedness of body as a space to be monitored and face repercussions stresses veiling and unveiling as patriarchal enforcement. Describing Egyptian women's experiences: "another" is said to recount "how she was pushed and elbowed by a passerby telling her to cover her nakedness (she was wearing a mid-sleeved blouse and trousers)" (Ibid.). These portrayals may portray Western definitions of emancipation or undressing which are usually framed as women's choice, when these may also be under a patriarchal gaze of society and authority apparatus setting standards of what is acceptable, rather than claimed by the woman herself. The conversation is fragmenting as it depicts women in terms of their religion in a dual spectrum of Christians and Muslims. How women are oppressed is communicated through unidentified, plural victimization of Egyptian women seen in these direct sentences sourced only as "another" woman's account. Exaggerations of nakedness and clothing do not specify other facts such as some women are conservatively dressed and still face harassment; some women are harassed by other women, abstracting geopolitical location and city.

Questions of public transport, overcrowded population, contradictions of power and subjection of women can be specified in relation to socioeconomic conditions rather than all over the country, in all streets and between polarized dichotomies of religion. Ironic dehumanization is evident in the language used here: "thanks to the lax security situation, they have restricted their mobility to all but the most essential of errands" (Ibid.) which frames women as passive and confined in their society in a degrading manner, perpetuating DP. The discussion of women's oppression from patriarchal sectors in their society merely conveys the apparatus as enforcing power for themselves at the expense of women. It does not question religious interpretations or convey spaces of solidarity between the religions but to some extent perpetuates divides between them in addition to consensus between women and men. The article ends with direct resistance speaking against sacrificing rights for any political purpose: "we will not allow ourselves to be used as pawns by any leader inside the church or out to achieve his own political ends" (Ibid.). In this statement resistance is portrayed as defying the political religious pretense, in all spheres of society by a woman who is a religious minority speaking from a place of

authorship in writing the Guardian article and thus an effort of depoliticizing discriminations against women.

The following article under this frame is entitled: **“Egyptian women: 'They were doing better under Mubarak’”** (Ramdani, *The Guardian*: 2012, Accessed on: 4.9.2017, Available at: www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jun/04/egyptian-women-better-under-mubarak). It seeks to reflect upon women’s diminishing rights despite their agency in the Egyptian uprising: “in Egypt, women were at the forefront of the Arab spring, but in the new regime their rights are being eroded” (Ramdani, *The Guardian*: 2012). The main image (Figure 2.2) portrays women voters of which most (if not all in the frame) are veiled and one woman at the front, dressed in black who cannot be overlooked, is in a burqa. The image caption is ambiguous: “women line up to cast their vote at a polling station in Cairo” (Ibid.). This description does not specify the situated polling station and abstracts women’s agency, identities and diversities. The opening line implies a frame of regression from revolution in terms of women’s oppression. The lack of location and the homogenization of sameness of women in the depiction may convey a sense of alienation and further concealment from their bodies and societies despite voting. Voting for a system which may increase their victimization: where women “find themselves marginalised, if not ignored” (Ibid.), highlights the extent that women are framed as validating and participating in politics of oppression.



Figure 2.2 (Ramdani, *The Guardian*: 2012)

The contradictions of conservatism are evident even amongst women, quoting woman in brotherhood’s voice saying that men may defend women: “fathers, brothers and husbands to march and protest on behalf of women” (Ibid.). The conversation is redirected to men:

The notion of male "guardianship" prevails everywhere — from the cafes and restaurants dominated by pontificating men, to the huddles of teenage girls making do with cracked civic benches for their social life as burly male police officers keep an eye on them. One veiled Salafi woman, one of around 300 female candidates in the parliamentary elections, put her husband's photograph on her campaign poster.

Ramdani, *The Guardian*: 2012

The recurring reference to women as veiled, in addition to the surveillance of men on their societies reflects to some extent evidence of patriarchal apparatus even within the discourse of representation. Men's control over women in the public sphere is seen to blur into private confines and into women's decisions as well; particularly from politicized religious groups blatantly oppressing them. Women's opinions are directly shared, largely showing barriers to hope in the national society with quotes as "we do want to succeed as independent women. Going abroad may be the only way we can do this" (Ibid.), and "what the frustrating narrative of Asmaa and thousands like her prove is that Egyptian women are deemed fit to inspire and mobilise, but not to assert themselves in the political process" (Ibid.). This representational frame limits women's agency and capacity to engage in the political process by largely focusing on men's power, Western comparisons in notions of emancipation, and a sense of hopelessness in narratives as this one.

Another article evidently framing Egyptian women is entitled "**Egypt's women: a revolution in thought?**" (Bastawy, *The Guardian*: 2012 Accessed on: 10.2.2016, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/journalismcompetition/egypts-women-thought-revolution>). The title may reduce the revolution for Egyptian women as a cognitive one, inquiring whether it is even that. Notions of disconnectedness and undecipherable realities are distanced and muted, evident in languages of silence and void in pre-elections in agent's space: Tahrir Square "with the elections nearing, it seems that all has gone quiet in Al-Tahrir Square" (Bastawy, *The Guardian*: 2012). The article goes on to describe the tension in that; "women of Egypt are holding their breath" (Ibid.), reflecting women as not breathing, and in apprehension. The notions of emptiness are reinforced in the description of the "absence of women on governmental committees" (Ibid.).

The Blue bra movement is mentioned when a woman was “stripped and brutally attacked” by “military cruelty” (Ibid.). It is said that the “image of the young woman, whose *abaya* was pulled over her head exposing her blue bra, marked the beginning of a new kind of fight” (Ibid.). A veiled woman using *abaya* or *niqab* was fully exposed as a result of violence, and the description of the colour of bra rather than name has been used to protect her identity. The force of pulling her clothes over her head alienates her name, face and expression to the exposure of her body, what she was trying to cover by wearing the *abaya*. Exposing jeans and a bra further portrays male brutality in violently shaming her in-front of the world, even if it had been a woman who does not use the full veil, she has the right to her clothes and dignity. She is clearly unarmed and the brutality of the men to make her vulnerable and exposed remained an iconic example of violence against women in Tahrir square, in the revolution. Danger is further connotated by a woman, who is quoted as a foreign authority without introduction of position, speaking of the “unsafety” (Ibid.) for women to hold ministerial positions. Another external standard also defines the situation: a survey by Amnesty “gives us little reason to be hopeful. Amnesty recently asked parties running in the upcoming election to sign a "human rights manifesto". Point nine of the manifesto addressed women's rights” (Ibid.). This statement portrays foreign imposition and the lack of prioritization of women’s rights.

Levels of consequences rather than hope in the new government for women and minorities are communicated in asking “how significant is the freedom won in the revolution, if the women of Egypt are deprived of the fruits of that freedom?” (Ibid.). Furthermore, references of “medieval attitude” (Ibid.) describes backwardness in policies of candidates of the election. However, it is said that “while men may be trying to make victims of women - through institutional discrimination or otherwise - women are not making victims of themselves” (Ibid.), which delineates the self-assertion and resilience of Egyptian women despite elements of patriarchy which produce them as victims.

The article “**Women in ancient Egypt were more than just mummies**” (Fletcher, *The Guardian*: 2013 Accessed on: 4.3.2017, Available at: www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/tvandradioblog/2013/mar/28/women-ancient-egypt), is introduced by the following statement: “as my TV series shows, with queens so powerful they were known as kings, women 'eliminated gender hierarchy for a brief period in classical antiquity” (Fletcher, *The Guardian*: 2013). The frame of reference of Egyptian women in ancient Egypt is according to a foreign director and researcher. Egyptian prehistoric civilization and

culture in terms of women is framed as a further abstracted reality; opening with it is “a little-known fact that ancient Egypt was populated almost entirely by men. Or at least, this is the impression one would gain from reading many of the publications about ancient Egypt in which women appear as some sort of minority sub-group” (Ibid.). The photo (Figure 2.3) is captioned: “ahead of their time ... the women of ancient Egypt achieved an equality that we can only dream of today” (Ibid.). There is no mention of contemporary Egyptian feminist or historian in the article seeking to illustrate Egyptian’s women’s power, reflecting void in history and alienation between ancient times, history and the contemporary moment. While seeking to articulate the absence of narratives in history, the writer does not bring forth contemporary women’s agency, causing in this way further absence. The image takes top-front of the article and is largely domineering in preceding the writing. The photographer is named, rather than particular women leaderships in Ancient Egypt.



Figure 2.3 (Fletcher, *The Guardian*: 2013)

She describes women’s absence in history publications “in which women appear as some sort of minority sub-group” (Ibid.) and yet is similarly overbearing in front of the background of the image portraying ancient Egyptian women. Additionally, she states “now I’m not for one minute saying Egyptian women ran around doing exactly as they pleased, since most were wives and mothers and the most common female title was Lady of the House, meaning housewife” (Ibid.). She measures the status of ancient Egyptian women according to the judgement and assessment of the researcher rather than according to the contextual sociocultural complexities of the moment. These references alienate women from their own history in retelling of existence and presence of women as

foreign researcher's discovery, claiming it in relative consideration to her own studies and notions of emancipation.

The following article entitled: **"The future of Egyptian women is in danger' - Samira Ibrahim speaks out"** (Hussein, *The Guardian*: 2012 Accessed on: 4.3 2017, Available at: www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2012/mar/13/women-samira-ibrahim-egypt-virginity-tests) describes that the "verdict over 'virginity tests' was a blow to the feminist struggle in Egypt. Here, the woman who sacrificed everything to bring the case to court, warns that women's rights are now under threat from two sides - the military and the Islamists" (Hussein, *The Guardian*: 2012). The violence of the tests and threats to women describe danger on two patriarchal fronts as prevalent in the representation. Furthermore, there are descriptions of alienation and violence on women's bodies in different forms, should they be unmarried. Tests were said to be justified "with the rather bizarre notion that it was done to avoid allegations of rape against military soldier" (Ibid.), which in itself is an act of intrusion and rape, let alone control of women's bodies.



Figure 2.4 (Hussein, *The Guardian*: 2012)

The image (Figure 2.4) is captioned: "activist Samira Ibrahim reacts after the verdict of a military court, in Cairo, Egypt, 11 March 2012. She now vows to take her case to the international courts" (Ibid.). The frame captures her moment of defeat in a society that does not seek justice for her integrity seen in the need to resort to external appeals of justice. There are further descriptions evidently focusing on men's subjection of women to "torture and sexual assault" (Ibid.) which is said to be under pretence of "medical check-up" (Ibid.). Ibrahim is directly quoted saying "these violations have always occurred against us [Egyptian women] and many people are frustrated and depressed because of the verdict yesterday" (Ibid.). She implies that this is not an isolated incident

and the reputation of women in media has “forsaken” her, depicting her feelings of being abandoned and deserted. The military and Islamists are described as oppressive, and the judicial system as inapt to defend women. The arrest of citizens is said to be a “heavy price for being the first to speak out and become the representative of the victims of the sexual assault” (Hussein, *The Guardian*: 2012). This not only portrays the climate of harassment but furthermore the silencing machineries which inhibit prospects of HR through Egyptian discourses.

The article entitled **“Egypt’s women refuse to be intimidated”** (Salbi, *The Guardian*: 2013, Accessed on: 4.3.2017, Available at: www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/15/egypt-women-refuse-intimidated)

opens as follows: “a new report says they are treated the worst in the Arab world, but many are hopeful their campaign for a voice will prevail” (Salbi, *The Guardian*: 2013). The empowerment and resilience of Egyptian women is evident in the image (Figure 2.5) and its caption: “Egyptian women were prominent in the demonstrations against former president Hosni Mubarak in Cairo’s Tahrir Square from the start” (Ibid.). The presence, however, is not specific to the woman in the frame, what she is shouting and what the sign on the Egyptian flag she is wearing says, to some extent abstracting discourses of women’s strength and agency.



Figure 2.5 (Salbi, *The Guardian*: 2013)

Following, there is further focus on men speaking of police brutality against women. This is graphically described, in addition to their isolation from political activism by the “male-dominated military” (Ibid.). The description goes on to say that

police also targeted female political demonstrators, going as far as stripping them naked in the street and urging molestation by thugs. They introduced virginity tests for women

arrested during political demonstrations. The message was clear: women should go home and leave politics to the men.

Salbi, *The Guardian*: 2013

There is a need to hear agency of women as “hope” for the region, concluded after the mentioning of a “poll from the Thomson Reuters Foundation [that] has declared Egypt the worst country for women in the Arab world” (Ibid.). The external frame of measurement is counteracted through narratives of women’s agency in speaking out and not being passive to this sentence. Sexual harassment is depicted as previously occurring, but the difference is less silencing: “if they stayed silent about sexual harassment in the past, today they are writing testimonials on Facebook or creating public campaigns to confront it” (Ibid.). Egyptian women are said to go beyond being activists but furthermore “they are going beyond gender or class to demand citizenship rights” (Ibid.) and reframing the debate on their representation and rights as one of hope rather than despair from patriarchal impositions.

In the article entitled “**You need to hear us': over 1,000 female aid workers urge reform in open letter**” (Ratcliffe, *The Guardian*, 2018: Accessed on: 7.5.2018, Available at: www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/mar/08/1000-women-aid-workers-urge-reform-in-open-letter), women are portrayed uniting “in call for charities, donors and the UN to support and protect staff who report sexual misconduct” (Ratcliffe, *The Guardian*: 2018). The foreign appeal transmits notions of victimization and perceived discourses of emancipation from external organizations over societal potential. The images in the frame may be further polarizing dichotomies among women across the global sphere in addition to between Egyptian women. The open letter is said to have addressed harassment among women and men and differences among women’s access to agency:

Patriarchy impacts women and girls from the global south and women of colour hardest. We acknowledge that these women are most affected and vulnerable to exploitation and abuse by aid workers, yet are also the least likely to be heard and least likely to be able to sign to support this letter.

Ratcliffe, *The Guardian*: 2018

There is mention of foreign experts in the international call to be “saved” against violence in the letter which was “addressed to the leaders of international charities, the United Nations and donors, urges organisations to treat allegations of sexual harassment and abuse as a priority” (Ibid.). Foreign legitimation and de-legitimation of harassment illustrates power relations in condemning and condoning violence: in that the “aid sector is reeling from allegations that charities including Oxfam, Save the Children and the United Nations mishandled claims of sexual misconduct” (Ibid.).



Figure 2.6 (Ratcliffe, *The Guardian*: 2018)

The main image (Figure 2.6) is captioned: “women hold banners during a protest in the Egyptian capital Cairo against alleged sexual harassment by human rights lawyers” (Ibid.). While this is a foreign appeal and the posters they hold are written in English, the women’s depiction in the frame appears to be unveiled, as if to be relatable to the Western reading public and decipherable (in polarized contrast to other women depicted as veiled or in burqas holding signs in Arabic). This framing raises the questions on the diversity of women and how frames may be exclusionary to some complexities of Egyptian women in their society when seen in polarized, singular frames.

The article entitled “**Egyptian women protest in Cairo against brutal treatment**” (Harding and Johnson, *The Guardian*: 2011 Accessed on: 4.2. 2016, Available at: www.theguardian.com/world/2011/dec/20/egyptian-women-protest-cairo-treatment) opens with: “hundreds of women join rally against Egypt's military rule as Clinton denounces treatment of female protesters” (Harding and Johnson, *The Guardian*: 2011). This spotlights a foreign savior with “Clinton” denouncing violations. Reportage seems to need Western authority to publicly expose and condemn violations, above active local agents already denouncing violations. Western authorities are seen to be speaking for Egyptian women, reflecting a direct barrier to more accounts of agencies of women’s rights in the politics of framing and blurring between the global and the patri-colonial. Condoning or validating violations of violence against women and women’s status in society exterior to them is to some extent apparent throughout articles framing Egyptian women. Such impositions and measurements according to foreign standards are not directly applicable to Egyptian society and promote oppression of women’s self-

positioning, Egyptian women authorities, networks of their solidarity and their own valid perspectives.

Violence against protesters has led to the point of murder: “women rallied outside a government office complex in Tahrir Square, the scene of violent clashes earlier on Tuesday in which at least four demonstrators were shot dead by military police” (Ibid.). The absence of their names and stories abstracts the value of their lives and its grievability (Butler, 2009). In addition to this, men’s solidarity is depicted as “sympathy” with women by joining the demonstrations: “they acted as a protective cordon and chanted: "Egyptian women are a red line" (Harding and Johnson, *The Guardian*: 2011). The notion of “red line” may be connected to the bloodshed and violence, but in this case portrays notions of being a forbidden barrier unacceptable to be crossed or violated. Sympathy also emits notions of compassion if not pity, which translates a degree of ironic dis-correspondence with the previous statement, depicting violence and the extent of murder at the hands of men.

The photo documentary Article: **“Women Suffer under Egypt's Radical Rule – in Pictures.”** *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 31 Mar. 2013. (Colton, *The Guardian*: 2013 Accessed on: 4.3.2017, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2013/mar/31/egypt-cairo-women-rights-revolution>) collects photos framing Egyptian women. It is introduced as:

Photographer Gary Colton and reporter Tracy McVeigh travelled with Plan Egypt to cover the story of the women taking to the streets, opposing a new constitution that sweeps away their rights and opens the way for girls of 13 to be married. Their protests bring them into violent confrontation with government supporters.

Colton, *The Guardian*: 2013

The introduction portrays the foreign sense of mission for excursion in the streets of Egypt due to the foreign photographer, reporter and organization involved. The complexity of the situation is ambiguous as women are not hegemonic and not all opposition and danger are described. For the photo documentary on women in Egypt, the Western male photographer’s name is mentioned on expedition travel rather than using an insider approach. In this way frames of images of women suffering are produced. In the photo documentary there is mention of “Plan Egypt” as location in frame. Foreign organization: “Plan International” is said to be founded originally to “protect the lives of

children” (Colton, *The Guardian*: 2013). The photo documentary is said to “cover the story of women taking to the streets” with imagery of “violent confrontation” (Ibid.) with the government. The frames are analysed for their presentation, which women they sought to capture, and how they are described. The numbered labels refer to the images in the order they are seen in the article.

First: In the first image, a woman appears alone. She is unnamed among a male-dominated background. Men are depicted as agents in the middle of chaos, and the woman is simply described as “yelling”. The darkly veiled anonymous woman “yells in defiance”; what she is yelling is not quoted and the frame remains silent. There is a lack of her direct narrative when framed as subject of oppression, “as tear gas pellets are fired into the crowd by supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood during clashes at Mokattam in Cairo” (Ibid.). The woman is referred to as “anti-government protester” amid chaos; in the passive description and imagery among men. This portrays contradictions of the attacker, and as to which group she is affiliated with, on the receiving end of violence, as the government at the time of publication in March was before the ousting of Morsi and his regime four months later in July of 2013.



First, (Colton, The Guardian: 2013)

Second: In the second image, violence is conveyed in imagery and description of clashes breaking out, “anti-government protesters pick up stones to hurl at the opposing crowds” (Ibid.). Mostly men are depicted in the frame with the exception of two women, with the position of their backs and seen in the right side of the frame rather than center.



Second, (Colton, The Guardian: 2013)

Third: The third image portrays only men visible amid “dust storm” (Ibid.), excluding the presence of women. There is ambiguity and emptiness in the desert frame. Fogginess seems to depict a distant reality from the world. The secluded, vacant and desolate image reinforces alienation and obscurity. The buildings appear eerie, deserted, void and distant.

Third, (Colton, The Guardian: 2013)



Fourth: Only men are depicted in frame in the fourth image, recurrently when women are said to be the subject of image documentary. The battle is located and captioned: “anti-government supporters clash with Muslim Brotherhood supporters (in foreground)” (Ibid.). Violence is divisive in protest and the figures are blurred in an atmosphere of chaos.



Fourth, (Colton, The Guardian: 2013)

Fifth: The fifth image captures a veiled, named woman looking down (not directly at frame or up in hope). Her narrative is depicted: “Rasmia Ahmed Emam was 17 when she

was married to a 50-year-old stranger. Not an uncommon fate for an Egyptian woman but Rasmia's family had been conned. She had been married to a Saudi sex tourist who left her and the country after two weeks” (Ibid.). Under-age, arranged marriage and abandonment are depicted as “not an uncommon fate for an Egyptian woman” (Ibid.) which to some extent normalizes the severity of the situation as one of doom, without analysing the complexities of the individual case. The conception of marriage is said to be extrinsic to the woman’s choice, evident in that she “was married” (Ibid.) and the vast age difference, rather than she chose to marry. She is used as an example representing



other women, mislead and used by a criminal.

Fifth, (Colton, The Guardian: 2013)

The close-up of Rania captures lack of direct contact with her eyes, names, and broken posture. This conveys notions of shame and passivity in her claims to herself after her background story was described. She is directly quoted as saying “my life is over” (Ibid.), her own despair is framed as normal of the society and the dehumanization is portrayed in the chosen frame of her image and by her own words. In the direct quote; her words show resilience despite condemnation of reputation. She adds “everyone thinks I am a prostitute and my only option in life is to become one. But I will not do that” (Ibid.).

Sixth: Three “young girls”, unnamed, smiling, in “poor district of Manial Sheiha” (Ibid.) are situated vaguely in the sixth image. They are all veiled and pictured in private, confined space. The space is whitewashed, with a fan that seems to be off, as the only visible decoration. The location, whether they are at school, their relation to one another, and their specific activity is not mentioned, alienating the framed moment from them and omitting the occasion, further context, conversation or any quoted expression. The smiles may be from feeling captured by a frame and without knowledge on how this will be used in the documentary. It is also captured in a way that further illustrates accentuated

detachment from their emotions and agency in accordance to the mood of the moment which is said to be captured: women in the revolution, who “suffer”.



Sixth, (Colton, The Guardian: 2013)

Seventh: A young couple waiting to have their photo taken is seen in the seventh image, framing other frames. The background images of the photography studio orient the woman’s image by constructing her as naive, exotic or heavily blurred. The notion of fear and oppression of women is said to affect wealthy women: in that for them, “marriage comes later but they fear the scrapping of the legal marriage limit will start to affect their lives and rights too” (Ibid.). This homogenizes and exaggerates polarized dichotomies based on poverty and wealth. Exclusion of choice of women countering societal pressures does not explore nuances or what is in between the polarizations. The woman seems doubtful, looking down and fated near the man rather than filled with joy which is the standardized depiction of Western wedding photos.



Seventh, (Colton, The Guardian: 2013)

Eighth: The eighth photo captures an “ice-cream seller in Manial Sheiha” (Ibid.). The caption reads: “few women are allowed out of their houses without their husband’s permission and behind many doors are dozens of tragic tales of young women whose lives have been destroyed by the effects of early marriage” (Ibid.). The image shows

women on the sidelines or boundaries of the private realm in a small alley, where the male ice-cream seller is depicted in the center. The description reinforces dependence on men for public presence in addition to conveying the misery of private life further destroying women's lives through under-age marriage and control on their bodies without their consent. The poor neighbourhood is framed as the space of broken stories in "tragic tales" and conveys further exoticisation of veiled women at the margin, in the doorways. Children are seen in the alley and the visible woman in the frame is veiled, dressed in black and her face is not visible. She is not looking at the camera and the frame captures only the mysterious veiled profile and another woman who is sitting down on the left, completely covered by the head of a child. Both women are unnamed which may further convey FoO in the frame of shattered lives.



Eighth (Colton, The Guardian: 2013)

Ninth: The ninth image frames a victim of FGM looking directly to frame. She was described as having undergone brutal treatment and violation. Her expression is ambiguous between pain and a sign of a broken smile. Her face and story identify her according to her oppression, as a victim of violence in her own society, by her own family and not only by the surrounding culture.



Ninth, (Colton, The Guardian: 2013)

The frame reveals “Karema” in this case of vivid direct violence in the following statement depicting cruelty she and many women like her experience at young ages:

19, who was forced to undergo female genital circumcision aged 13. Her mother bribed a doctor to perform the procedure without anesthetic. Although both FGM and underage marriage are presently illegal, they are widespread across the country. An estimated three quarters of females aged from 12 upwards, have been subjected to FGM. The present government has indicated FGM is a "family matter" and proposes to reduce the legal age of marriage from 18 to 13.

Colton, *The Guardian*: 2013

The description of the brutal violation and mutilation of the woman’s body is described as a procedure performed by doctors. The written fact that her mother arranged for it to be done without anesthetic portrays barbaric and shocking induction of raw violence encouraged by the utmost figure of protection and care. The underage barbaric act is described as “widespread”, including statistics of occurrences of FGM in terms of control on women’s bodies and lives.

Tenth: The tenth image captures in its frame a store vitrine showing wedding dresses modelled by mannequins and a poster of woman in a wedding dress in the background.



Tenth (Colton, *The Guardian*: 2013)

The caption highlights the exclusivity of wedding dresses: as “only for wealthier families who can afford to allow their daughters to marry a little later” (Ibid.). This depicts the control on women’s dress, age of marriage and pressures despite being wealthier; all victimizing the woman in what should be a celebrated occasion of her own consent. The caption goes on to state that “there is still enormous pressure on girls to marry young and to think of a life inside the home rather than outside of it” (Ibid.). The costumes of disempowerment of headless wedding dresses and mannequins in the framed vitrine may

be correlating to the description and the entrapment of marriage, subject to patriarchal and socio-economic impositions.

Eleventh: The eleventh image can be described to be shocking and grim. It frames a woman looking from behind curtains through holes like a confined animal and in this way dehumanizing. Her face is covered in burqa and there is a double cover veil of curtains which are fully draped and she is peaking behind from. The caption normalizes the image of oppression: she remains in isolation unnamed, not speaking, and not even with the mouth and face visible.



Eleventh (Colton, *The Guardian*: 2013)

This isolation is described as “daily life in Manial Sheiha” (Ibid.). The woman is merely existing inside the confines of home as protection or hiding from exterior violence. Despite the located district; the exclusion of her name and face abstracts her reality and her from her reality; conveying the image as routine. Normalization is implied as this is a typical day in her life or lack thereof and frames the woman as a voiceless, nameless victim in her own community.

Twelfth: In the twelfth image there is a description of fear of women of losing rights: “young women are scared that their rights will be stripped away by conservative forces in post-revolution Egypt” (Ibid.). The image captures a young veiled girl smiling and standing to the side (not as center of focus but near a run-down, stationary vehicle). Another woman in the background can be seen in a burqa (covered and rendered invisible), captured in the frame of the poor neighbourhood.



Twelfth (Colton, The Guardian: 2013)

The man depicted on his motorcycle in the middle of the street contrasts gender and agency (lack of), and the notion of women's fear and "stripping" their rights is a metaphor conveying the element of veiling and unveiling, harassment and force.

Thirteenth: The thirteenth image is briefly described as "Cairo's Manial Sheiha district" (Ibid.). While the street is abstractly situated, there is an air of mystery, foreignness and exoticisation in the short caption which does not mention the only person in the center of the large frame; a woman portrayed at a distance, from her back. This portrayal of the framed, veiled woman reinforces a desolate imagery of danger, unrecognizability and lack of connections to her identity, thoughts, body and her society.



Thirteenth (Colton, The Guardian: 2013)

Fourteenth: Only men are visible in the frame of the fourteenth image; which presents chaos in the streets of Egypt and men protesting against Muslim Brotherhood in a frame of action.



Fourteenth (Colton, The Guardian: 2013)

Fifteenth: The fifteenth image additionally portrays only men visible in frame, in mobility and agency protesting or heading to protest when the documentary is said to portray women.



Fifteenth (Colton, The Guardian: 2013)

Sixteenth: The sixteenth image depicts the faces of five out of six women captured in the frame, almost all of whom are veiled. The image is captioned: “women show their strength of feeling against the government of President Morsi outside the offices of the ministry for women's affairs which was torched during the 2011 revolution” (Ibid.). The face of the woman who appears to be unveiled is concealed by the arm of another woman. Women are all unnamed despite being mostly clearly visible and recognizable by face. The omission of name and their opinions on their struggles is also an excluded

expression of their “strength”. The women show different emotions; further conveying ambiguity and abstraction of their common presence and views in the historical moment.



Sixteenth (Colton, The Guardian: 2013)

Seventeenth: The seventeenth photo frames a little girl inside, looking out of the window which is barred and her view is invisible. Her gaze and face are alienated from the frame. She is inside, as if trapped with no emotion showing. She is unnamed, described solely by her age, as a twelve year old girl. The room looks familiar to the sixth photograph whereby older veiled, girls were captured smiling by the camera. While she is abstracted, the space is now described as a “women’s group” setup by international charity. Her future is described as undefined yet doomed, and the girl, looking out is only described by what she may be faced with: “at the moment she faces a grim future of poverty, underage marriage and female circumcision” (Ibid.). The description and frame reinforces helplessness and condemnation in the innocent girl’s future. She is dehumanized from her face and childhood and the shocking description further detaches her rights to her body.



Seventeenth (Colton, The Guardian: 2013)

The vilification of Egyptian women is perpetuated in condemning and excluding narratives of women's agency in knowledge production and additionally deeming them as voiceless or oppressed. The repeated element of "fear" may reflect the inside and outside as a space of Western confinement or protection; in describing a young girl situated inside "Plan Egypt", labeled as "charity" and as "women's group" (Ibid.).

The article entitled: **"As a Muslim woman, I see the veil as a rejection of progressive values"** (Alibhai-Brown, *The Guardian*: 2015, Accessed on: 2.1.2017, Available at: www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/mar/20/muslim-woman-veil-hijab) is presented as: "when even young girls are being dressed in hijabs, we need to ask what the female cover-up symbolises" (Alibhai-Brown, *The Guardian*: 2015). The main image (Figure 2.7) names the illustrator as "Noma Bar", and is captioned: "in 1899 Qasim Amin warned that unless Muslims embraced modernity and equality, the future would be bleak. We are in that bleakness now" (Ibid.).



Figure 2.7 (Alibhai-Brown, *The Guardian*: 2015)

The description of "bleak" isolation and lack of hope is mirrored in veiled and forbidden existence. Resistances are said to be "written out of history" or "dismissed as Western" (Ibid.). Women are labelled as "marionette", which communicates control over them and veiled, silencing as inability to communicate; as if incapable of knowledge of themselves or conversation. Silence implies women are not speaking and are passive in fear, "the silent many, watch and tremble" (Ibid.). This depicts fate and doomed violence in resistance, and there is further vague mention of domestic violence and mental health disorders: "sexual violence in Saudi Arabia and Iran is appallingly high, as is body dysmorphia" (Ibid.). This statement puts together different nations of the region without contextualization and thus reinforces regional and bodily distortions.

Political religion; “some are drawn to reactionary dogma, and preachers while a good number have thrown themselves into political Islam to resist and combat Western hegemonies — or so the story goes” (Ibid.), is conveyed as diverting reality. Bodies as spaces are seen as signifiers of society and reflection of men’s cognitive states. Value is said to be attributed to women and not intrinsic. There is evidence of selectivity of respect in “women I respect” (Ibid.). Furthermore, there seems to be mistrust in interrogating women’s choices as misinformed: “many women who take up the veil, in any of its forms, do so without delving fully into its implications, significance or history. Their choice, even if independently made, may not be fully examined” (Ibid.). Women are said to be “‘contained’, lest they raise male lust and cause public disorder” (Ibid.), which may reinforce DPs in the discourse of representational patriarchal reasoning. Havoc denounces choices reinforcing the male gaze and sexualisation of women (in mentions of plastic surgery, choice of clothing), quoting male on “bleakness” and a “few dare to speak up for values” (Ibid.).

There is evidence of irony of fashion: “of even more concern are young Muslim lives. Little girls are being asked to don hijabs and jilbabs, turned into sexual beings long before puberty. You can even buy stretchy baby hijabs with fake Calvin Klein and Versace logos” (Ibid.). In addition to polarized feminism and culture in mocking influential conflicts:

Like a half-naked woman, a veiled female to me represents an affront to female dignity, autonomy and potential. Both are marionettes, and have internalised messages about femaleness. A woman in a full black cloak, her face and eyes masked walked near to where I was sitting in a park recently, but we could not speak. Behind fabric, she was more unapproachable than a fort.

Alibhai-Brown, *The Guardian*: 2015

Women’s clothing and covering of their bodies are said to be indicative “visible signs” (Ibid.) of regression from education and other progressive values. Division and lack of solidarity are blamed on religion: women “have to be sequestered or contained” (Ibid.) in their own societies. Hoda Shaarawi's act of removing her veil is retold as it serves as a powerful tangible demonstration for the announcement of her “right to be visible” (Ibid.) thus implying invisibility of the veiled.

The article entitled **“Egypt's women-only taxi service promises protection from male drivers”** (Youssef, *The Guardian*: 2015 Accessed on: 22.10.2017, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/07/egypt-pink-taxi-service-women-safe-haven-patronising>) introduces Pink Taxi as a “response to widespread sexual harassment but critics say it segregates women without addressing the problem” (Youssef, *The Guardian*: 2015). The very need for women only taxis reflects the un-safety of mixed spaces for women and dangers of misconduct. Segregation in society thus is the basis for need for Pink taxis which are deemed as “infantalizing” towards women, when “according to the UN, 99.3% of women in Egypt fall victim to sexual harassment” (Ibid.) and the taxis are colour-coded as feminine.



Figure 2.8 (Youssef, *The Guardian*: 2015)

Image (Figure 2.8) portrays women pink taxi drivers and Egyptian woman founder: Reem Fawzi is directly quoted speaking of the “privacy and safety” from male taxi driver, she states: “just enter ‘taxi driver’ into Google [in Egypt] and it will suggest ‘taxi driver kills’; ‘taxi driver rapes’; ‘taxi driver steals” (Ibid.). Dalia Abdel-Hameed, head of the gender program at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights is directly quoted saying: “Pink Taxi and segregation in general says [to women]: ‘Harassment is inevitable. Here is how you can adapt [to it]’,” (Ibid.). The discussion between Egyptian women illustrates contradictory elements in the struggle against sexual harassment and dismissal of efforts working around it as accepting of the misconduct.

“A ban on the niqab won’t end the injustices meted out to Egypt’s women” (Saadawi, *The Guardian*: 2015 Accessed on: 7.3.2017, Available at: www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/oct/16/egypt-niqab-ban-women-oppression) explores that the “ruling that female voters and university lecturers cannot wear a full-face veil does not address the roots of their oppression: a patriarchal class system

bolstered by the free market” (Saadawi, *The Guardian*: 2015). Male authorities are described dictating whether or not women should be veiled or unveiled. Image (Figure 2.9) depicts a woman’s covered half face, fully veiled using the *niqab*. The image conveys alienation and oppression in portraying one visible eye, further concealing the woman’s face and her emotions from the frame.



Figure 2.9 (Saadawi, *The Guardian*: 2015)

The woman’s name and narrative are unidentified, portraying a look of fear and disconnection to her body and surrounding reality. The caption names the photographer and describes that “it is a tragedy that women professors in parts of the Arab world have to hide their faces under the niqab while teaching” (Ibid.). The tragedy of having to hide or veil women’s faces even in spaces of empowerment such as teaching is emphasized in the same way as being forced to unveil faces by male authorities. It is described that “Cairo authorities last week ruled that women wearing the niqab will not be allowed to vote unless they take off their headgear. Female lecturers at universities, likewise, will be banned from wearing the full face veil” (Ibid.). Clothing impositions on women imply that if not veiled or if fully veiled it is because they are forced to be in order to conduct themselves in public space and political participation. This abstracts specific contexts of women’s choice and conveys estrangement from the notion of their choices of clothing and individual situations.

There is an evident dichotomy and polarized feminisms between Islamisation and Americanisation which is mentioned, somewhat obscuring what is in between and alternate paths:

women’s fashion reflected this curious mixture of Western commercialism and religious fundamentalism: women in Egypt covered their heads to comply with the Muslim Brotherhood, and wore cropped tops that bared their belly-buttons in submission to the free market.

The oppression of women is said to be related to Ancient civilization in depictions as “bodies without brains” (Ibid.), and as rooted in culture “whose shameful heads full of knowledge must be hidden away” (Ibid.). Chaos within the country is the focus with contradiction between women’s rights, women’s rights activists and foreign impositions and ulterior motives subjecting Egyptian women.

In the article, the Egyptian feminist scholar argues that veiling and unveiling alike; are patriarchally oppressive of women: “we should remember that concentrations of power — whatever their form or location — can feed off each other even if they might seem opposed on the surface” (Ibid.). She further argues the intersections of patriarchies — despite claims of difference between them — may be reinforcing each other, as in DPs. Furthermore, she declares that “when Eve’s face is no longer hidden, it will challenge all the established powers” (Ibid.) of the patriarchal class system. She further indicates that global frames must be challenged “they refuse to examine the roots of their problems: the patriarchal class system which they defend with all their physical and metaphysical powers” (Ibid.). When her face is no longer “hidden” describes the imposition of covering rather than the woman’s autonomy to reveal or hide her own face.

5.2.3 Frames of Women’s Human Rights in Egypt

The third and final thematic key of assessment examines newspaper articles from the keyword search focusing primarily on frames of women’s HR in Egypt. The quantitative comparative calculation finds six articles under this thematic category out of the total of twenty-eight, which sums up to 21.4%, the lowest ranking category of the three. This lower percentage may be significant in portraying the prevalence of broader and more general frames which seek to portray Egyptian women’s rights but lack specificity and seem to focus more principally on the larger framing scope of Egyptian society. This may be further due to the contextual time scope of the search when political instability and violence were prevalent after the Egyptian Revolution.

The article entitled “**Women have emerged as key players in the Arab spring**” (Rice *et al.*, *The Guardian*, 2011, Accessed on: 4.3.2017, Available at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/apr/22/women-arab-spring>) portrays languages and imagery of women's rights depiction as ambiguous despite their agency. It is said that "women have taken a central role, but it remains to be seen whether their rights will improve" (Rice *et al.*, *The Guardian*, 2011). There appears to be alienated depiction of unnamed women in imagery (Figure 3.1) showing women covered in burqas with their eyes barely visible, resisting the government in their country of Yemen.



Figure 3.1 (Rice *et al.*, *The Guardian*: 2011)

Despite insinuations of agency, it is said that

as revolt turns into hiatus and stalemate from Yemen to Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, Bahrain and Syria, one thing is clear: for all their organising, marching, rabble-rousing, blogging, hunger-striking, and, yes, dying, Arab women are barely one small step forwards on the road to greater equality with their menfolk. Women may have sustained the Arab spring, but it remains to be seen if the Arab spring will sustain women.

Rice *et al.*, *The Guardian*, 2011

Women's agency is questioned in their facing violence and martyrdom and contradictions as to the results of the uprising on recognitions of their rights. This quote emphasizes the barriers to women's recognition and well-being in their own society post-spring as well as adjectives of women's agency for their rights as chaotic and compromising their well-being. Countries are located across a narrative of Arab, in this quote, and under the search of Egypt, instead of contextualized detail of each case and experiences.

An unnamed Egyptian woman protester is said to have told named, Ashton, a foreign authority and Western woman described as "European Union foreign policy supremo" (Ibid.) that men have been unsupportive of their cause and want women to go "home" (Ibid.). Aside from the depicted battle between women and men, the American founder of Harassmap is named and speaks as an authority on the situation as if from an insider view using "us". She states that there was "already a backlash against gender equality", adding

that “there's a propaganda campaign against us, saying now is not the time for women's rights. I'm concerned about that”, and that the “gender gap is gaping in Egypt” (Ibid.). This translates despair and lack of hope in women’s rights.

The following article is entitled “**Women's rights and their money: a timeline from Cleopatra to Lilly Ledbetter**” (McGee and Moore, *The Guardian*: 2014, Accessed on: 22.2.2016, Available at: www.theguardian.com/money/us-money-blog/2014/aug/11/women-rights-money-timeline-history). The main image of Ancient Egyptian pharaohs (Figure 3.2) is captioned: “women had plenty of financial rights in ancient Egypt, but it’s been a little woozy ever since” (McGee and Moore, *The Guardian*: 2014). “Woozy” describes a confused and unknown state of unconsciousness, abstracting the current contextual situation. The word describes intoxicated unsteadiness and is reflected in the lack of naming in the photo, blurring reality. There is no solid description of equal pay in contemporary Egypt; emphasizing distance and lack of information and reinforcing ambiguities of abstracted women.

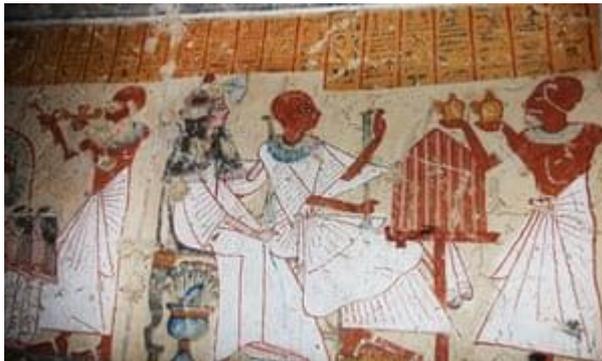


Figure 3.2 (McGee and Moore, *The Guardian*: 2014)

In the section on the Middle East there is focus on men’s inheritance and religion. There is a yearly description portraying updates of US dates and advancements in HR whereas others are ambiguous and all-encompassing (non-specific and eras at a time): “the Middle East, AD600” (Ibid.). Photos under Western geopolitical spheres contain vivid descriptions, faces are named and humanized. For example “Lilly Ledbetter, being hugged by President Obama here, is a modern women’s wage-activist” (Ibid.). This personalization of Western modernity vis-à-vis non-Western women’s rights ancient depictions reflects epistemological apparatus of framing which define and selectively blur particular histories and current moments.

The article entitled **“Women's rights activists use social media to get their message out”** (Ford, *The Guardian*: 2015, Accessed on: 10.3.2017, Available at: www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/mar/19/womens-rights-social-media-get-their-message-out) depicts how online activism may impact women's rights: “through sharing experiences and focusing on key events, online activism is boosting women's rights issues — but its effect on policy change is still unclear” (Ford, *The Guardian*: 2015). The relevance in women's rights frames “of the other” seems undermined by lack of access and selectivity of women with online access in addition to ambiguous abstraction of participation as if undecipherable and unobtainable to comprehension.

There is emphasis on foreign influence to promote HR and domain of social media to empower voices, solidarity and authority: “speakers at the event, held during the Commission on the Status of Women and organised by the OECD Development Centre and United Nations Women” (Ibid.). The institutionalization of measurements of change explores the politicization of activism and the new technologies it brings. “Hashtag activism” (Ibid.) conveys the need for international efforts to call for an end to sexual harassment, using a broader approach in not situating each country or regional efforts and who would fall behind.

The article portrays the limits of online activism: “limited access to technology and language barriers” (Ibid.), due to lack of speaking English. This selectivity is victimizing since many can not learn due to accessibility and imposes English as the standard language. Being “unable” (Ibid.) to use online activism places blame on lack of capacity rather than women's surrounding environments which inhibit them. It is said that “some blogs and websites written by women have been censored by governments, and sexual harassment of activists in online discussions has also been witnessed” (Ibid.). This describes selectivity in access to internet, education, platforms of expression and literacy and problematizes the infiltration of surveillance of misconduct into the online space.

The article **“Egyptian activists fear female genital mutilation initiative will fall short”** (Malsin, *The Guardian*: 2015 Accessed on: 22.2.2016, Available at: www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/jun/15/egypt-female-genital-mutilation-abandonment-strategy-activists-sceptical) explores that “aggressive government strategy to enforce law against FGM and alter public perceptions lacks reach and fails to emphasise women's rights, claim sceptics” (Malsin, *The Guardian*: 2015). The article

underlines different opinions on efforts condemning FGM. The initiative “national FGM abandonment strategy, announced in the ballroom of the Grand Nile Tower hotel in Cairo on Sunday, calls for doctors to be trained, prosecutors to be mobilised, and a media campaign to be launched to change public perceptions” (Ibid.). The situated location may be a site of the restricted reach, in that the hotel is hardly a grass-root community space but one inviting particular groups of people. The voice of activists is conveyed in saying that it is “emblematic of a state-centered approach that will face obstacles, particularly in reaching the rural districts where FGM is most prevalent” (Ibid.). Furthermore, “Dalia Abd El-Hameed, head of the gender programme at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights”, said the campaign represented “a top-down approach to dealing with the issue of circumcision, which is extremely problematic” (Ibid.). She adds the contradictions in socio-economic and political access shed light on the focus on religion and lack of addressing the main concern of women’s rights: “there is no rights-based approach in this strategy, which is very disappointing. There is no emphasis on women’s rights to bodily integrity, to be free from violence, to sexual pleasure” (Ibid.).

Image (Figure 3.3) frames a young girl’s innocence. One of the adults, who appear to be her parents, is holding her around the shoulders and neck. The way the image is framed signals control of their hands, with the other parents’ hands holding the potential influence of booklet against FGM. The image is captioned: “a young girl looks on at a meeting in Minia, Egypt, outlining the dangers of female genital mutilation” (Ibid.). Subjecting the girl in this frame as a child perpetuates the helplessness of the fate of women and girls, and the connection of control of her life and body depending on influence and change in perceptions. Her wellbeing and fate are abstracted in doom; without naming her the caption goes on to describe prevalence of the harmful crime in that FGM “affects 90% of Egyptian women” (Ibid.), naming the photographer after conveying this mass majority statistic of aggression.



Figure 3.3 (Malsin, *The Guardian*: 2015)

The father holding the booklet portrays the front cover, a photo depicting the violence of the act and a young girl lying down between a male and female figure, one holding her down and the other holding a big knife. This violence and close-up contradiction between the girl in the frame and the debate portrays the topic in a more personalized manner, while outlining its harsh violence and the potentials in directly impacting the girl's fate. There is vivid language of the "practice", said to "often involve the removal of the clitoris" (Ibid.) as a result of "social and cultural pressures, which experts say are designed to control women's bodies and sexualities" (Ibid.). Barbaric descriptions may impose DPs rather than deconstruct them, as they denounce sociocultural awareness on bodily integrity; rather explaining the act as fulfilling a cultural status quo. There are references of foreign authorities which can be seen as civilizing missionaries being present at the conference: "attended by officials from the European Union and United Nations, both of which are participating in the initiative" (Ibid.), conveying an internationally renowned seal of support to local organizations and national ministries.

There are direct quotes from women leaderships for example; Soraya Bahgat, women's rights advocate stating that there are barriers to entry to campaigns and efforts condoning against FGM which are not being acknowledged. She adds:

We're being told that we're welcome and thank you and everything, but the reality on the ground is if I go and tell them, 'I need to get this done' — with the paperwork and everything — I'm facing red tape. Especially in this time when NGOs are becoming a very bad word.

Malsin, *The Guardian*: 2015

The conversation outlines the nuances of the initiative and brings forth the voices of Egyptian women activists in their women's rights. Their perspectives are valid of themselves, and seem to be connected to organizations of women's HR and legal positions of power. The outreach is accordingly said to need to spread to smaller villages to be effective and appeal to judicial systems, and not just remain a "glossy 43-page document detailing the anti-FGM campaign" (Ibid.).

The podcast entitled: "**Block like an Egyptian: roller derby team get women's rights on track – podcast**" (Lamble and Jones, *The Guardian*: 2018, Accessed on: 2.5.2018, Available at: www.theguardian.com/global-development/audio/2018/mar/28/block-like-an-egyptian-roller-derby-team-get-womens-rights-on-track-small-changes-podcast)

consists of a conversational interview: “Lucy Lambie talks to Angie Kaster, co-founder of Egypt’s first roller derby team —the all-female CaiRollers — about how this brutal contact sport is empowering local women” (Lambie and Jones, *The Guardian*: 2018). The terming “brutal contact” may hold connotations of force and strength which may be perceived as characterizing male sport and not stereotypical of women’s empowerment, if not with a perspective of violence in women’s sport.

There is an alienated depiction of self-care heard in audio podcast recorded by Western interviewer and interviewee, who is named and described as “Kaster, an ex-London rollergirl” (Ibid.). The choice of a foreign competitor rather than interview with an Egyptian team player reflects a silencing of the main subject of the article, Egyptian women’s rights through the sport. Kaster’s experience and gaze of the other is what is valued and documented, in tones of difference between the Western and non-Western in a common sport. The words used speak of abstraction: “silence” of women, “struggle”, “dust”, “isolation” (Ibid.) and difficulty of participating in sporting activities without hearing their own situated perspectives. These words were recorded upon listening to the audio podcast.

In the podcast the voices of these Western women are heard discussing Egyptian women’s “local” empowerment with sport. The space of discussion is only between the two women. Non-Western women are heard in background with unidentifiable words even for an Arabic speaker, alienated as if discussing an unfathomable other. They use words as “hectic” and “physical”, as sports are, which is stating the obvious in an exoticised manner to assert their own voices in a tone of authority describing the sport. The Egyptian woman is not heard expressing her opinion on the game either as spectator or practitioner, but discussion is focused instead to description of space control and founding by Western woman (began in London). Egyptian culture is described as “conservative”, covering the body and (re)veiling women is described: “we would “worry about overheating”, “remind them to drink water” (Ibid.) as if they are incapable of remembering to fulfill an instinctive human survival need on their own. The Western women who started the league for women’s empowerment in this way undermine Egyptian women’s agency and solidarity across sociocultural situation. Through subtle exclusion and speaking for their Egyptian women counterparts, they convey their own assumptions in thinking that Egyptian women must be taught basic self-care such as

drinking water in hot temperatures while playing imported sports, and defending their rights.

The article entitled: **“‘Virginity tests’ on Egypt protesters are illegal, says judge”**

(Butt, *The Guardian*: 2011 Accessed on: 10.2.2016, Available at: www.theguardian.com/world/2011/dec/27/virginity-tests-egypt-protesters-illegal)

outlines that the “decision may open door to financial compensation for women subjected to tests during anti-government protests” (Butt, *The Guardian*: 2011). The act is a patriarchal violation of sexual misconduct if not rape, and is wrongly masked as an examination of the woman’s purity if she is unmarried, to check therefore if her virginity is intact. There are vivid descriptions of physical violence and struggle on women’s bodies and voices of violation of HR and legal actions against “forced ‘virginity tests”” (Ibid.). Shaming and humiliation are evident in the narrative. There are further depictions of even women involved as officers in the harassment ordeal from a victim’s primary account: “a woman prison guard in plainclothes stood at my head and then a man in military uniform examined me with his hand for several minutes. It was painful. He took his time” (Ibid.). The detailed descriptions imply barbaric violation which was carried out and referred to as the “practice.” Further discourses of the victimization and humiliation are described: Ibrahim said her treatment showed the tests were intended to "degrade the protesters. The military tortured me, labelled me a prostitute and humiliated me by forcing on me a virginity test conducted by a male doctor where my body was fully exposed while military soldiers watched" (Ibid.).

A male authority figure is mentioned: “Fekry, head of the Cairo administrative court, decreed that what happened to Ibrahim and six other detainees was illegal and any similar occurrence in the future would also be considered illegal” (Ibid.), as the one to de-legitimize the “virginity tests”. The judge is the authority to decide, conveying patriarchal and religious control. He charges the “military doctor who undertook the tests” with “public indecency and disobeying military orders, but not sexual assault” (Ibid.). There is an evident censorship in the statement which continues to refer to the torturous sexual assault as medical tests and that denies that the act is one of assault. Image (Figure 3.4) depicts Samira Ibrahim, veiled activist flashing victory sign and a big smile.



Figure 3.4 (Butt, *The Guardian*: 2011)

She is surrounded by seven visible men in the photograph and only two other women, one veiled and one unveiled and not sharing the same smile. She is one of seven women recorded to be subjected to the “test”, violation. DP is evident in the number of men and legitimation of protection and HR abuse by men. In her description she conveys the male gaze around her and inflicting violence in uniforms: “there were lots of soldiers around and they could see me” (Ibid.). It is further stated that “campaign groups have been documenting the escalation in sexual violence towards female demonstrators and claim brutal tactics are used to deter, intimidate and humiliate those taking part in political activities” (Ibid.). The body is portrayed as the victim of male control and is restrained from political access while exposed by it.

Concluding Notes

The quantitative and qualitative evidence I gathered serve to confirm my hypothesis to some extent; that external structures of representations may reinforce oppressive languages in depicting Egypt, Egyptian women and Egyptian women’s rights when framed solely from externally situated sources of production. Media languages in systematic discourse analysis explored trends in imagery and content on Egyptian women’s rights. In imageries and trends of frames depicting women’s rights it is to some extent evident that schemas of exclusion, if not alienation and violence, focuses on men, foreign impositions as well as vilifications of Egyptian society are employed. The elements which were coded as Egyptian women’s direct agency and empowerment in direct quotes and referencing were present albeit fewer. Lack of women’s self-situated realities and insufficient direct quotes as agents rather than subjects is more prevalent in the different elements of FoO and DP under the key thematic themes. The impactful production of the epistemological formulation of knowledge, from author and the source

which they adhere towards writing for, reflected the construction and capacities of deconstruction of frames. Frames of Egypt more widely, were found to be at a high percentage: 35.7% of the framed articles. Frames of Egyptian women were also considered relatively high, amounting to the largest proportion at 42.9%. Frames which place the majority of their focus on Egyptian women's rights in particular were considerably lower, at 21.4%, and even within these frames there are other focuses including other countries of reference. While this analysis is not rigid as all articles were collected under the three-word search of Egypt, women and rights, the critical discourse analysis portrays patterns of abstraction and focus on the subject under the three different main perspectives.

Knowledge canons should be examined from different, non-linear perspectives to de-homogenize frames through critical interruptions of women speaking in the conversation on their rights rather than captured as subject to them. The languages representing women's rights in Egypt may be said to be reinforcing FoO and DPs in some instances. While this is seen in the Guardian newspaper under this scope, these languages may alternatively be considered as a space with the capacity and potential to transform discourses in women's rights and Egyptian women's rights to be producers of their own coverage or at least welcome speakers in them. In cross-analysis of the results compared with the following chapter, the main focus of women's discussion and framing is considered from the context of their own claimed articulations and the framing point of the researcher, formulating and carrying the semi-structured interview with the media frames in mind. This may to some extent limit the analysis between two sources of production as since they are not considered in isolation, the dynamics of the discourses and elements of themes I considered in both epistemologies may be influenced by each other. This acknowledgement reaffirms the hypothesis of the production of frames in correlative relation with their contextual source and apparatus of analysis, by default of the epistemological choice and as non-fixed, non-absolute and interdependent perspectives of knowledge.

Mixed epistemology aimed to reveal FoO and DP in frames, although non-hegemonically. The non-absoluteness of results and the multi-layered dynamics of more rounded analysis may reflect potentials of higher numbers and more in depth situated approaches of women's rights discourses, as feminist de-orientation of fixed structures.

The source and origin of the Guardian articles by country and if female or male was analysed to assess the trends in standpoints writing on the subject and whether source may impact articulations. It is interesting to note the frame of origin to embrace diversity and understand the quantitative statistics behind the producers of the frames, in addition to the extent to which they continue to reveal particular structures of representation. The authors whom were found to be Western and non-Arab are predominant, being more than half: 53% of the total of articles. The authors which are clearly Arab and non-Western sum up to a total of 21.4%, and the rest were writers with dual nationalities combining a country from the North and South summed up to 17.9%. These authors were partly British, American or French with other roots of origin; Egyptian, Pakistani, Iraqi, Algerian. A total of twenty-one female writers (75%) and seven male writers (25%) of the total of twenty-eight published articles are counted. If there was repetition of authors in two instances, the writers were counted accordingly. It is interesting to note that only five Arab women (17.9%) constitute these authors, and four of which are Egyptian, and one with dual nationality Egyptian-Welsh.

While it is clearly eminent that the number of female writers exceeds male writers, it must be added that out of twenty-one women, 35.7% of these are Western women authors compared to the close number of 25% males overall and 14.3% of whom are Egyptian women authors. This reflects the evidence of DPs in “speaking for” by men or Western women and men and the levels of access in international production and relatively lower levels of direct quotes of Egyptian women as agents, rather than as victims within these frames. Women, however, are present in constructing the frames depicting women’s rights and although there are different nationalities and not only Western women speaking, and in recognizing the British newspaper frame, it is evident that attempts of sharing knowledge production are followed. The closer dynamics of requirements and language patterns which must be adhered to in writing for the Guardian needed more analysis. This was not addressed in my hypothesis, which investigated the root of the source and their positional nationalities without the underlying dynamics and structures of the different women and men in producing articles. Moreover, the nationalities do not reflect fixed mentalities but portray fluidity in each experience, and their reason for research and work on representational frames of Egyptian women’s rights. It was not found that all frames are written by Western men, or that all frames are by Western women and men, but rather an incorporation of presence of non-Western and Egyptian

women and men writing. The lack of a 50/50 balance in gender of the authors is a result of several factors. Firstly, there simply happens to be more women than men writing on women's rights. Secondly, in an attempt to do my small part in correcting mass historic underrepresentation, I wanted to be sure to include and unpack as many voices, stories and concepts as possible from women themselves. Thirdly, as we find ourselves in increasingly non-binary and globalized times, it would seem somewhat restrictive and anachronistic to dilute reality by pedantically pursuing false balance in terms of gender and country of origin.

Chapter Six

Egyptian Women Leaderships

This chapter is dedicated to the unfolding narratives of women agencies' self-expression of their rights and situated realities, which constitutes the semi-structured personal interviews and the second part of the dual epistemology. I carry content and discourse cross-analysis between themes of women's self-articulations in the interviews. Five semi-structured interviews²⁸ were carried out over a minimum of two conversations each. The main interview and subsequent resonances were shared comfortably due to the establishment of a sense of familiarity during the first exposure. The interviewees were also welcomed to add and modify their answers at any point if they wished. All in leadership positions, the women's busy schedules and great responsibilities meant most sittings were limited to two hours. The time and dates of interviews were according to their availability to offer their accounts as these women are career and homemakers, and it was clear that they have limited time particularly in the hustle and bustle of Egyptian everyday life.

The process of interviewing involved the preparation of questions after carrying out a larger survey questionnaire. I defined my scope of Egyptian women's rights, to be synonymous with the media monitoring keyword search, and developed the choice to carry out content analysis of semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews focused on a smaller scope rather than cutting across more than one Arab country, and women and men inside and outside the realms of HR to delve deeper in the importance of de-framing. Furthermore, a highly ambitious attempt of larger scope; encompassing all diversity of views would have compromised the significance of depth to definitive questions and answers and more homogenous results. The fixed variables across the dual epistemology are therefore the focus in the keywords, and the assessment of language and content under them which may pre-constrain, and contrastingly which depicts agency. The constraint and expansion of frames to what lies beyond them is the reason for source variables which change across and within the two methodological approaches. While Media Monitoring examines articles over a time scope since January of 2011 representing Egypt, Women and Rights, the Interviews focus on women leaderships in Egypt. The

²⁸ The interview invitation may be seen in Figure 6.2 of Appendix and full transcripts of interviews which were translated are attached in Figure 6.3 of Appendix with page numbers from beginning of transcription.

chosen sample is different due to the scope of five women's interviews in leadership positions in Egypt, directly and indirectly in women's rights of their societal realms. While I am aware of the limits this research may have on my results, I acknowledge my direction in sampling as the producer of the work. This sample communicates the power of representation depending on standpoint, focus and objective. I furthermore could not claim to encompass all women's voices across Egypt, and the choice had to be made. The choice of leaderships is reflective of my effort to de-orient FoO in Egyptian women's rights discourses to challenge doctrines of victimization. As an Egyptian woman author of the work, I mirror my own contribution to the importance of non-hegemonic knowledge to seek the voices of women leadership's agencies. This is not to mislead the study but is a further method of compensation of focus speaking back to the significantly fewer instances of women agencies' direct quotes in the media monitoring analysis. To reinforce these schemas of invisibility would stand against the default of my epistemological principle of de-orienting schemas of victimization and silence in images of oppressed, helpless women.

In this chapter, and throughout the discussion of the thesis, the Egyptian woman reiterates herself as the most crucial agent in her rights not as the other of the other, but as herself in her expertise and expression. While I recognize the conditions in doing so, and that some women in this way are left out of the conversation, I present the sample as just five women, each diverse and complex and never speaking for all the women of the study or all the women of Egypt. Aspects of literacy and education are seen to be crucial in their advance as leaderships', and focus on victims of violence would subject my participants which I could not ethically risk, for the purposes of objectivity in my research, nor was that the intention of my focus. The choice of whether or not to divulge personal information is present in these women's resistances against patri-colonial control, but they are not however chosen due to such acts of violence. This choice asserts itself as central to the focus of my research, to speak back to (mis)representational misconceptions, to challenge and deconstruct them, and to do so by using different languages of emancipation rather than employ a perpetual repetition of oppression from two different standpoints.

Interview questions were developed after reflecting the theoretical and practical evidence of research thus far in English; written in Arabic, and then adjusted in English so as not to

be direct translations from English, but the contrary. The scope was further defined after contacting women leaderships from networks such as the Alliance of Arab Women and across other realms of Egyptian society and networks. My approach was to ask if they are willing to be involved, and then upon approval to send the official invitation to participate in the interview with the questions, excluding the title of my thesis research so as not to be overly leading. While many women agreed and showed interest, the full commitment to participate in the interviews and complete them was limited. I fully transcribe the interviews and emit in the chosen quotes of the thesis elements of pleasantries upon beginning the conversation, and anecdotes which women specifically asked to be off the record of transcription. Otherwise, all wordings in response to the conversational flow of the interview are recorded in Arabic, translated to English and considered. Words kept in Arabic are ones which could not be translated into one word and are conveyed with an effort towards accuracy in English descriptions between literal translations and meanings. The structure of analysis was distinguished from both the interview's questions and answers, which were thematically coded in discussion. Wordings and phrasing are kept as close as possible to the original for the purposes of direct quoting of women's agencies. The epistemological choice of the progressive structure of the chapter is to converse across expressions to convey the non-fixed, non-isolated, interpretation of interviews with each other, and with my own resonances to them. These therefore dialogue together and open the realm of questions and responses to non-fixed, semi-structured conversational spheres where the women are probed more on one hand, and not redirected in every instance on the other.

Through the exploration of women's self-introductions and presentation, women speaking their HR, and finally, the bridges of women's agency of self-situated realities; interviews are cross-analyzed for their content and thematic discussions. The interviewees' self-identity and languages of their own dictions accentuate women's direct self expressions in their rights and in Egypt. This responds directly to the media monitoring which rather than focusing on the unfolding of women's expression in their rights, examined how media discourses framed them. These interviews thus focus primarily on women's direct quotes as agencies of their self-expression. The media frames which have at times been seen to accentuate silences, patriarchal discourses, women as victims and organizational standards' impositions are challenged and de-oriented by women's perspectives of their generalized portrayal in external media. In this

non-identical yet comparative analysis, frames which have been recorded as oppressive and homogenous are deconstructed. Theme-coded analysis critically conveys Egyptian women's perspectives of their rights and the theoretical discussion of the thesis. The themes are drawn from their answers to the semi-structured interview more so than the questions (seen in Figure 6.1 of Appendix in both languages) in attempts to de-frame as much as possible the inquiry; with focus on the reclaiming of women's own dictions and views. While the participants provided disclosure of their full names to me, the majority agreed to be quoted directly and referred to with their initials to maximize expressions and if they wished to share personal experience. This choice is due to protection of their privacy and awareness of the security climate of Egypt, for both the interviewee participants and I; as the author of the interview, its interpretation and thesis.

6.1 Self-Presenting as Women in Egypt

The dignity and value (عزة نفس , *ezzet nafs*, which literally translates to pride or worth of self) of Egyptian women is strongly evident across various socio-economic, geopolitical locations, cities and rural areas and levels of education. In this discussion, they express their positioning as women's rights advocates, the translation of feminism from Arabic notions of it rather than vice versa, and their delineating boundaries between comfort, discomfort, and public and private realms. Women carry dignity and pride when instilled in them from early stages of life, and it grows or unfortunately may diminish according to their life struggles to assert themselves in their homes and in the wider context of their societies. Women interviewed are mostly based in Cairo, with some originating from other cities, including Alexandria and Beni Suef. The scope of women in leadership positions meant that all women had achieved higher education, and all assert the importance of education in their own empowerment and as a critical factor in women's advance.

D.S. introduced herself with her name and educational achievement of a doctorate of philosophy (2001) in hotel management and tourism from Alexandria. N.R. introduced herself as a Sociologist, Bachelor of Arts, from Alexandria, her work is teaching in child-care services in a non-profit organization. The openness of the first question for the participant to present or introduce themselves as they wish to be seen allows the women to frame themselves as their own agents of self-definition rather than being described as subjects of case study. The discussion of the interview frame is impacted not by the title

of the thesis but the invitation to participate in an interview about women's empowerment. The reasoning of why they are invited to participate implies their position of leadership as women, and may have led all participants to introduce themselves by their full names and occupations, or educational degrees. It may be evident therefore that women choose to introduce themselves in different ways depending on whom they are speaking to and for what purpose. F.A. introduced herself with her name, city; Beni Suef, occupation, as a member of the local council and familiarly; by stating that she is married and has "a boy and a girl" (F.A., 2018:13). The path of self-identification is not fixed, and reflects a deeper understanding of the societal networks running behind their names and self-determination(s). For example if it was to address an unknown male in a non-academic platform, some women may have used their own names and occupations in addition to husband's and father's occupations for further recognition and authority, or opt to carry the same tone of answer.

It is worthy of note that most of the interviewees come from educated backgrounds not only in their own education but also where their families; mothers and fathers achieved higher education and worked high-level professional jobs. The means of introduction may prove different across different social identities as well as introductions to the research, and is a point of interest for further work. J.D. is the youngest of participants, who introduced herself saying her name, age, personal and work experience; as "newcomer in civil society, well-travelled, foreignly educated Cairene" (J.D., 2019:8). The participant in her mid-twenties names her work affiliations with experience in International Organization for Migration and UN Women. She also founded her own initiative as an "informational online support forum" (J.D., 2019:8). B.M. introduced herself with her name, occupation, location and academic degree of education; as a "*mohammeya* (female lawyer) for family courts in Cairo, Law degree, Faculty of Law, Cairo University" (B.M., 2018:11). Like a few of the other participants she does not speak of her family ties which may (or may not as it is not directly asked) imply a single-woman lifestyle or not bearing children, or as a mere response directed by the invitation of interview. This self-censorship is thus understood in terms of not divulging too much information to me, and fulfillment and pride in her own positional attainment by placing sole emphasis on her work. The following table illustrates interviewees' initials in how they are used in the analysis, their positions as they presented themselves, location of their cities in Egypt, dates of the interviews and means of communication. All interviews were held in Arabic

and were fully transcribed. Transcribing was then coded according to its themes, underwent selection and was cross-analyzed. Out of my approach of around twenty women, these were the ones who I was able to contact more than once and twice. There was some reluctance to discuss the interviews by some women due to lack of availability for the initial interview after the invitation or to the follow-up interviews full completion.

B.M.	Egyptian Lawyer, Cairo	Oct. 11, 18, 2018	Personal Communication (Audio)
D.S	Doctoral Graduate and Mother, Alexandria	July 12, 25, 2018	Personal Communication (Face and Audio)
F.A.	Member of local council and Mother, Beni Suef	Oct. 30, Nov. 5, 2018	Personal Communication (Face and Audio)
J.D.	Civil Society, Cairo	Jan. 7, 22, Feb. 4, 2019	Personal Communication (Face and Audio)
N.R.	Teacher, Alexandria	Dec. 8, 10, 2018	Personal Communication (Audio)

6.1.1. Self-Positioning in Egyptian Society

The women's positioning in Egypt is considered crucial to understanding their situation, and how they have come to contextually identify themselves within the location in which they live and work. Upon being asked in what manner do participants identify as an Egyptian woman in society, women asserted themselves in varied ways. D.S states: "I identify as *masreyya* [the feminine form of 'Egyptian'], conservative and *motanawerra*" (D.S., 2018:1). The latter is one word in feminine form, meaning open-minded, and with a literal meaning of enlightened. It is worthy to note the double identification after the nationality, of both being somewhat traditional yet open-minded. N.R. identifies herself as "open-minded" (N.R., 2018:5). It may be that because this woman is open-minded, educated and religious, she knows the context of her traditional society and refrains from calling herself "liberal"; so as not to be mistaken for Western ideals, nor religious so as

not to be thought of as too conservative in her views. Many enlightened or educated women may therefore validate if not strengthen their own ideals and education by choices of referring and not referring to their conservatism, so as to suppress any ideas that they may be non-religious or non-traditional, diverting from the dominant critical thought. F.A. identifies herself as “*masreyya*, educated” (F.A., 2018:13) adding that she takes care of the home, her children and her work. The precise self-identification affirms the complexity of re-articulation in what is said and unuttered.

Similarly to speaking of Arab women, speaking of Egyptian women and even Egyptian women in leadership positions may to some extent be homogenizing. It is the same as questioning what all women want or their struggles as one; under categories such as Middle Eastern women and other wide-ranging speculations. The notion of intersectionalism is divisionary to some extent. Being understood as complete through all the diversity in one woman is more accurate. B.M. positions herself as “conservative and traditional” (B.M., 2018:11), without saying she is open-minded. The acknowledgement of her own ideological belief lies in the fact that she does not need to specify her open-mindedness as it may be that she refrains from the term, compares herself to more liberal people as quiet traditional, or that she feels there is no juxtaposition between her conservatism and being open-minded. This translates the rights of women to work and be in their own right without having to communicate external discrepancies. The very term may be used as opposed to closed-minded people, which in itself is not homogeneous. Thus, her expression does not compare herself to the wider population of women but is articulate and in full form in and of itself; as conservative or traditional. It was her full answer, which illustrates that there was no need to assert her views further as being open-minded according to relational standards and peripheral confines of open and closed cognitive and societal visions.

Richness and complexity of identity should thus be embraced rather than fragmenting or pigeonholing homogeneous and fractured characteristic divides. When asking J.D. where she places herself on the political spectrum in Egyptian society, she answers that she is “center-left, quiet liberal and open-minded but respectful of my surroundings” (J.D., 2019:8). Once again the clarification of respect to culture after defining oneself as open-minded is recurrent twice. I probed, for further unravelment of this statement, as to whether she is respectful due to having “no other choice”. J.D. said “no, I could not be respectful, but I choose to be sensitive to the local culture” (J.D., 2019:8). She validates

her sense of choice in making the decision to respect the culture rather than being compelled to do so begrudgingly, reluctantly or in contrary to her desired lifestyle. This assertion of power of her selection augments the non-dissonance between being open-minded and still mindful of the environment in which she lives by her own judgment and not blindly or exclusively identifying as one or the other.

6.1.2. Reflections on Identifications as Arab

The question of Arab identity and the name of the thesis, which was not included in the interview title or invitation so as not to overly lead the dialogue, proved to be another example of the diversified perspectives and reflections of the personal and national identification of Egyptian women as Arab women or as affiliated to another classification according to their reflections. Participants were asked whether they identify themselves as Arab and why or why not. D.S. said: “no I do not identify as an Arab woman, but as an Egyptian woman. Egypt is the cradle of civilization and I take pride in that. I identify as Mediterranean, much more than Arab” (D.S., 2018:2). She positions herself by her city of Alexandria and national identity history which distinguishes Egyptians from other Arabs who some, if not most Egyptians consider and name as Arabs in relation to themselves (Qataris, Bahrainis, Saudi Arabians, Kuwaitis, *etc.*) in other Middle Eastern, Arabic-speaking countries. N.R. however fully subscribes to her Arab heritage, identifying as Egyptian-Arab, stating that “yes I consider myself as an Arab. It is one culture, and the common language: *el-Arabeya*, Arabic. I am an Egyptian woman, but the culture and tradition are the same” (N.R., 2018:5). While she distinguishes herself as Egyptian she feels a sense of Arab belonging.

In another perspective; F.A. replies: “no I am not too concerned with being Arab, I am an Egyptian woman. Some Arabs are like us some are not. We are not all the same” (F.A., 2018:13). Such discrepancies in views of identity portray the diversity in perceptions of Egyptians as Arab, depending on their backgrounds and affiliations. J.D. likewise does not personally identify as an Arab, expressing “no I do not. I only identify as an Arab when I am abroad; and people view me as an Arabic speaker. I just do not feel a strong affinity with Arabs. I feel a stronger affinity with Africa and the Mediterranean region” (J.D., 2019:8). Here not only is the sea mentioned but Africa, as the first of the participants who relates more to being African than Arab. Egypt is in North Africa yet Africa is not mentioned by other participants. This is perhaps due to the religion which

connects most Arabs, in addition to likeness in language. Her reflection of her self-identification from the exterior gaze sheds light on elements of grouping from foreigners, where they may consider her as an Arab when speaking — without her uttering the word as her identity. The mere fact of a shared language and concept that all Arabic-speaking countries are Arab is echoed. However, the distinction of J.D. in how she sees herself in contrast to how she is seen is worthy of note and analysis.

B.M. identifies as an Arab and describes her home country of Egypt as the “most important country in الوطن العربي, *el-watan el-Arabi*, the Arab region (literal translation: the Arab motherland)” (B.M., 2018:11). This reference shows both nationalistic pride in addition to the affiliation of the Mother with the land; the mother tongue and the mother land may communicate the value of the mother and the feminine as the origin of nations, land, history and furthermore seen as home. The statement is also used by men, when saying that Egypt is Um-el-donia (the Mother of the World) which is a very widely known national nickname illustrating honor in the country and associating this honour to the woman. The land as being the mother is not only particular to Egypt but is evident across other territories. The statement may be used as a symbol of nationalistic pride and may be used to divert from the reality of status of women in Egypt. While the land and the capital city, *Al-Qahira* - Cairo (literally meaning the victorious in feminine form), the occupation of patri-colonial forces may use “mother” as all-encompassing, deviating, description of creating solidarity among differences and maintaining male territorial violence. B.M takes pride in her nationalism by relatively comparing her country as the “most important” (B.M., 2018:11) in the region. There are nuances and incongruities behind what areas some women may distinguish themselves as different to the rest of Arabs and in which cases they perceive a cultural commonality, a family. These comparative identities reflect deeper senses of belonging and experience that move beyond those of language — which itself differs in dialects across Arab countries despite being mostly mutually understood.

6.1.3 Depolarizing Feminisms and Public and Private Comfort (Discomfort)

When interviewees were asked what has led or sparked their interest in HR and women’s HR; home and university education reflect as significant markers of awareness. This question is an open question to make a space for the participant to share their own narrative on their experience if they so wish. It is their choice as to whether to make it

personal or share any violation of HR on them which they may or may not have experienced. The reason I did not ask directly is not to be invasive in my approach. I recognize the fact that I am conversing with women agents in their realm of empowerment and not from a paternalistic frame in that I am not viewing them as victims who need their story heard. This discussion reflects the significance of privacy and privateness. It must also be said that women's responses were pronounced as sparking from a moment of empowerment rather than discrimination. This recognition of power is seen to evolve over time, from their education, experience, and ambition. For other women it has evolved before formal education due to their upbringing and in seeing other women as respected, and present in domains of empowerment. B.M. sets forth the influential impact of her family role-model: "all my life I have wanted to work in this realm because my aunt was a teacher and from her example I saw that women can be just as strong as, and even stronger than men and do whatever they put their mind to" (B.M., 2018:11). She describes her sense of aspiration in relation to a woman role-model and also in relation to men. This perhaps mirrors her success in accessing the work place and realising her own strength as a woman not as compared to man, but not less than the man in anyway. This description is from the Arabic expression to describe a strong woman; it is said she is a woman like "one hundred men". The deconstruction of this expression signifies the male as the force of strength, and that women measurably can be tougher, stronger, or brighter in being a stand-up woman. It is a patriarchal expression in language as the woman should be recognized for her strength as a woman, rather than in relative comparison to a man or multitudes of men. The significance of the feminine exemplar inspired her own capacity and potential and led her agency in HR and women's HR.

N.R. locates her inspiration to defend women against discrimination as having developed "from the times of university" (N.R., 2018:5) as the defining moment which solidified her ideologies that women's rights are essential as of the woman. D.S. affirms; "from a long time ago, I find the topic very important. Since university, as a moment I can define as the time I started to become more aware of issues of women's rights, HR, and to see discrimination against women, and we are speaking about the era during the eighties" (D.S., 2018:2). F.A.'s interest in women's rights is said to have developed from her upbringing, in seeing the treatment of women in her family. She reflects;

In my home, my childhood, I knew that my mother has karama (dignity) and every female in the home has karama, and this was not a question. My father always took care of my

mother and showed consideration trying not to ever upset her. And the mother also carries a lot (of responsibility) and never complains.

F.A. (2018:13)

In describing her interest in women's rights as an intrinsic learning she developed from the home, F.A. delineates the importance of background and experience in forming memories which protect and value the woman and her dignity. The fact that it was not a topic of concern signifies the nature of the respect of women in her family, and the man as a caring role depicts the gentle relation between her parents. In stating that the mother takes on a lot of responsibilities and duties "and never complains", she reiterates the mother's resilience and dignity, particularly when valued and respected. J.D. deliberates that it was her own "sense of public spiritedness and personal belief that women in Egypt and everywhere deserve to live their lives fully and safely and have the same opportunities as their male counterparts in the workspace and otherwise" (J.D., 2019:9). Without pinpointing a particular moment, she communicates the essentiality of women's rights as an unfinished pursuit, which she as a woman could not overlook since she can remember.

Interviewees were asked whether or not they consider themselves a feminist. Most participants did indeed view themselves as feminists; D.S. (2018: 2) states "yes, more on the family level. I am an activist in both public and private realms but more so inside the closer network since I have a sister and two daughters". N.R. confirms that she believes in women's rights and advocates for them; defining the word feminist according to the Arabic translation *nashita* "women's activist". She added that she supports "whomever is right, it is not only about women and men or women always having their way regardless, because they are women, I support the human being with reason" (N.R., 2018:5). An anomaly derives from F.A.'s response as she does not associate herself with the word. In Arabic, feminist is translated from women's rights activist. "I do not like the word *nashita* (activist), I am a wise woman and when I see something wrong in front of me I am not silent. No one who sees *zolm* (injustice) is silent about it" (F.A., 2018:14). It is apparent that F.A. carries negative connotations to the word, although maintains clear agency in voicing and defending the rights of women nevertheless. J.D. communicated her uncertainties about identifying as a feminist:

I do not know. Now feminism has taken on new meanings so I don't identify as a feminist but I do subscribe to the ideals of feminism. I believe we should all be equalists. I say equalists because we don't want there to be a struggle of women's rights versus the disconcerting contemporary trend for a men's rights movement which is countering feminist culture.

J.D. (2019:9)

To some extent J.D.'s response echoes with the other participants' in saying she believes in equality rather than women's rights over men; and adds the conflict of struggle between women and men particularly alarms her as men, threatened by advancing equality, are racing ahead to raise their rights even higher. It may be said that the word feminist is packed with connotations whether positive or negative which have produced their own nuances within them, whether or not women choose to identify as such defines their own articulations regarding their understandings of feminism, and whether choosing to identify as feminist means letting other struggles fall behind. While there is inequality in power relations and male privileges, her choice to deter from identifying herself feminist may be reflective of society's interpretation of feminism as implying a detriment to men's rights or as implying inferiority of the masculine. In Arabic the word is different, and J.D. outlines the hesitance some women's agencies may have in identifying as feminist. Equality is not an abstract thought and seeks for the abolishment of denial of men as privileged, to measure up the struggle of women's rights in a way that does not imply fewer rights for men but for women to be treated equally, with as much right and opportunity. Most women seem particularly cautious with the use of this word distinctly in English, in caution not to catalyze repercussions of a war of ideologies in terms of binary thinking; between women and men. It may seem as advocating the rights of women over men, which seems threatening to men, or as an imported term. We do not have one word for feminism in Arabic and this may reflect hesitance to identify with the word and the ambiguities surrounding its ownership and use.

The different diction and language may therefore be seen to shape discourses of knowledge and identities in affiliating themselves with or disassociating from the English word. While the questions were all asked in Arabic, to the three women that were bilingual and spoke English I additionally asked in English: and "feminist?" This was the point I was met with either agreement, yes if it means the same as what we mean in

Arabic, or hesitance, as in with limits, and as in not subscribing to the Western import of the term. This word is met with caution which is conscious of the different struggles between feminisms, and the different languages which are used within society. Women are cautious to clarify equality, as not wanting to become men and not wanting to surpass men or emasculate them; either because this is not the experience that they have in their close relationships, or for self-protections to avoid being associated with the broader image of liberal feminisms of the west, which is also a generalized view from this polarized stance.

B.M. accords with considering herself as a feminist. She states:

Yes, I am because the Egyptian woman has to have her rights so she can live in a fair society and move forward together on equal-footing, and we should all strive to gain these rights to make it easier for the next generation. There are new laws coming improving the status of women.

B.M. (2018:11)

The notion of women's rights is explained in terms of collective advance towards equal grounds. This repetition mirrors the intention of Egyptian women leaderships' to articulate their objectives as not wishing to surpass the rights of men. Their mostly optimistic approach cannot speak for all Egyptian women but demonstrates their anticipation of better times and comprehension that things could be worse. The fact that this stance is largely conveyed by this group of women reflects their belief in their agency and lack of sense of doom and subjection. They are neither reckless with their words nor ready to take any English word or phenomena on as their own, unless they themselves translate it to the Arabic phrasing of feminist: women's rights agent. The ambiguities around the word in fact may be seen to shed light on women's deeper specificity in precise descriptions of what they believe and work towards, rather than broader, unrelatable or intangible terms. When they stop and reverse the question back to me when I said the word in English they ask well is that not the same? Or have a somewhat different answer when they do understand the weight of the word, in distancing it from themselves and preferring the Arabic phrasing, or taking the "ideals of feminism" (J.D., 2019:9) but not the word. Perhaps also as in English the word is directly connected to identity; whereas in Arabic it describes the women's activism and beliefs, as what she is agent of rather than what defines her. The suspicion is assertion which recognizes

controversies surrounding the word and is conscious of possible resilience to it, from both men and women in the region. This caution therefore may be seen as a tool of power, to question back feminism in English and to refrain from identifying as such until they clarify the distinctions of the word according to their own realities. Their own voices within their societies are thus transformational in the enrichment and progress of women's rights in Egypt and in communicating the societal and global variances of boundaries and delineations.

When asked whether or not women feel comfortable discussing HR and women's rights and violations against them in public places the answers were varied to defining the public in my implication. D.S. declared: "I do not feel very comfortable. The reaction I imagine could be contradiction of opinions, as you do not know in public spaces who is listening; anyone could enter the conversation from a different thought perspective" (D.S., 2018:2). N.R. agreeably shares this thought, correspondingly: "yes, it depends who you are talking to and where you are. I am comfortable because Egyptian society claims to support equality in most of its organizations" (N.R., 2018:6). Comfort in speaking of violations may therefore be conditional of the particular community and location that is considered public. Public, in this sense, is not as limitless as it may seem, but constitutes its own spheres of trust and closeness which are indicative of women's willingness to express issues. The boundaries of the public may be said to be delimited by speaking with trustworthy listeners and women who exchange their views, rather than risk dangers due to unclear distinctions of private and public. The bravery in asserting themselves as comfortable or uncomfortable depending on their definitions of public and their own limitations of it reflect the choice of women to expand spaces of exchange within their capacities of agency. The fact that N.R. admits to being comfortable, but nevertheless, delineates her own cautious boundaries of this comfort is tactical in itself. Such articulations are reflective of the security of women bearing in mind the climate of HR in their society. Comfort is furthermore a strong word of over-ease, and discussing violations, it can be argued, always accounts for some controversial tensions which are further dependent on by whom and how the public is defined.

F.A. shares her discomfort in speaking about these issues by affirming that it is her decision to refrain from them, stating that; "no I do not enter these discussions and not involved in politics but since I am in school, my home and in the council when I find something wrong I do not mute myself. I am not silent, and I am not alone, we are many

(like me) and we all have our shoulders together in solidarity” (F.A., 2018:14). In that, while she speaks out against injustice she does not readily enter these discussions publicly and distinguishes herself from politics. The different approaches to comfort and discussion made me rethink the keywords in the question and how different women may interpret them in different ways, some with suspicion, some with censorship or defense, and others with clarification on the distinction between open, ongoing exchange and coordinated moments of defending rights. J.D. accounts for her comfort with its delimitations: “yes, maybe if I am speaking in English, and discreetly and with a close group of friends or acquaintances” (J.D., 2019:9). The importance of language and discretion are the primary factors influencing her willingness to discuss issues of women’s rights in a public realm, outside the home. Once again the public is delimited by defining it according to her understandings of the social climate and use of English as a tool of access and exchange in the conversation.

Circumspections regarding notions of public and private, feminist and women’s rights activists are dealt with powerfully, and yet sensibly in accordance to their own rationale of the community they are addressing. Who is being addressed is vital more so than whether or not the woman agent is outside or inside her home. This is not out of fear but rather caution and due to having experience and knowledge of strategic potential routes towards influential change rather than loud declarations that may rapidly vanish. Even through her experience as a young actor in the field she has defined her own confines and freedoms within them to articulate herself in consideration of notions of protection and responsibility. This strategy may be a combat against patri-colonial forces by using claimed languages to dissolve violations from within the environment in which J.D. lives. Her exposure to foreign schooling aids her involvement in international NGOs by shedding light on the differences of speaking within her country and abroad.

Choices to speak in English may be a filter of seeking to address like-minded people in avid struggles against oppression. Like-mindedness, as priorly evident, may be a main factor which is sought after in women’s exchanges. Her knowledge of Arabic is fluent, and yet speaking English is used as a tool of communication and exchange in her writing for complex reasons ranging from her experience and her comprehension of her sociocultural climate. B.M. asserts her comfort by discussing the necessity for discourse and exchange, that women must themselves actively partake in; “yes I feel this is a topic we need to discuss and it is not as controversial as it once was” (B.M., 2018:11). This

underlines the need to speak to overcome feelings of previous discomfort or mistrust in order to move beyond them.

6.2 The Egyptian Woman Speaking

The introductory section of the research leads on to women's deeper elaborations on their situational perspectives. Influential factors concerning authorities in their sociocultural climates are addressed according to their own interpretations of the questions which bring impactful circumstances in positive, negative and nuanced views. The notion of education is raised and explored as critical to women's empowerment and current positions in active agencies of their lives and other women's lives in Egyptian society. This discussion finally analyses the participants' speaking back to canonical frames of representation, in global media and in distinguishing feminisms according to their own compasses of women's rights.

6.2.1 Women's Rights Authorities in their Sociocultural Climates

The perspectives of main factors impacting women's rights in Egypt brought further discussions of access to authority in their sociocultural contexts. D.S. (2018:2), after deep pause, reflects that "in poorer communities, education for girls is lower, they prefer investing in boy's education as he is the one that supposedly goes on to take responsibility and they think girls will marry". This portrays the distancing between the rural cities and women with more educated backgrounds from urban realities where women's knowledge is based on their life experiences and the level of formal education they obtained. D.S. adds that "there is a lack of equality in inheritance, which affects women's rights in addition to access to education and employment" (2018:2). She describes optimistically after the less positive admission of women's discrimination that a woman's "تكريم, *takreem* (her honourful self)" (D.S., 2018:2) is always valued, bringing "good character" (D.S., 2018:2) to the home and country she is in. The word *takreem* has weight and wisdom in Arabic in essentialising the woman's honour as of her and her own. Here it is worthy of note that "good character" is translated from the Arabic word, "أصل, *asl*" and may be translated further to nobility of origin, kind humanity of enriched roots. D.S. adds that the woman has her place, "مكانتها, *makanit-ha*, (her positioning in society) which is highly respected — regarded as tying the family together" (D.S.,

2018:2). She describes this word as a highly position in the woman's place in the home and in terms of respect between the family unit; her perspective matters and through her word and respect, dignity is preserved. Her position in the family which although is not chosen, it is "rather known even from long time ago, even if not with very high education, she has wisdom, tradition, religion, story-telling and memory which reflects in her conversational narratives" (D.S., 2018:2-3). D.S. adds:

back then, even in my time, my mother and her mother, were respected by my family and the local community even if they just finished elementary school, the sixth grade. Times are changing, but these women never felt as lacking or uneducated back then, and their opinion matters to me and also to male members of the family, their passing of proverbs, sayings and advice always resonates with me until now.

D.S. (2018:3)

The reflection of advance in rights is prevalent; however there are still evident obstacles to be surpassed. N.R communicates the concern that "some organizations deny equality in promotion and leadership positions, and women's access to employment and the workplace" (N.R., 2018:5). F.A.'s point of view describes that there are "old, traditional ideas that people still did not change, and rigid opinions of dated patriarchal thought. Of course the television and cinema show the woman having more rights and fighting and defending them. But we do not do everything we see on television" (F.A., 2018:13). Her answer develops the notion of discrepancies between traditional ways of thinking and contemporary times, as well as in between Egyptian films, series and reality. J.D.'s response begins with her seeking clarification; "impacting for the worse? Hindering them?" (J.D., 2019:8). She deconstructs my question. When I say yes, she replies "I think there is an unfortunate lack of prioritization which is causing stagnation. We may be doing better statistically but it is not translating into real improvement in many women's lives" (J.D., 2019:8). Her analytical response places emphasis on other empowerments of other concerns over women's advance that may be overshadowing the struggles and pursuit of women's rights. B.M. reiterated the weight of "education of children" (B.M., 2018:11) as the main factor of influential transformational value impacting women's rights. Use of the word "children" implies both girls and boys. This discloses a lack of segregation between women and men from the outset of their upbringing in that; men

need to be educated as well as women on the importance of women's rights, in addition to the fact that men's education alone does not suffice.

6.2.2 Education as Critical Empowerment

The importance of literacy, education and knowledge is stressed throughout the dialogue as a critical factor to women's empowerment. The comprehension of proper education comparatively through time, geographical location and across different curricula of learning directly and indirectly encompasses the lives of participants' and their positions of leadership. In response to whether education has been a major factor to empowerment in publishing knowledge and commitments to expressions of women's rights, D.S. confirms that it has,

to a very high extent, it has been fundamental, of course. With time, women are more highly educated, now takes on ministerial positions, or can become a doctor, a particular branch of judge in court, although limited. We see women who can become a pilot, an engineer, a police officer, join the army (as doctors and engineers not for war, but with the titles of the army) and sports competitor.

D.S. (2018:3)

The occupational potentials of women in different societal realms are highlighted. N.R. further describes the correlative relationship between education and commitments to women's rights, in assuring that education has been vital to her empowerment. She states "to a large extent — the more the education of both women and men, the more acceptance of women's rights" (N.R., 2018:5). While F.A. further acknowledges the influential impact of education, she communicates the importance of knowledgeable authorities. Stating that even though "knowledge has a big role but what is important, is that the people in teaching positions have to be enlightened because some of them, instead of pushing people's thought to advance forward, make it regress" (F.A., 2018:13). This statement sheds light on the contradiction of education as well as deconstructing the myth that education alone is everything. B.M. endorses that education has been a major factor to access and agency in knowledge production; saying: "yes, but I get my information not only from educational sources but also from the field, because we have to be up-to-date with situations as they develop day by day" (B.M., 2018:11). In this sense knowledge is routinely renewed by way of social interactions and her own work as a

lawyer which enhances her networking capacities from another realm of positioning beyond the family unit. This is not to assume that the other women acquire respect from one source of dignity but declares that it may also be intrinsically instilled from family experience and memories. Her agency in becoming a lawyer was itself affected by her affiliation with community activism and speaking in the more public arena about private matters.

6.2.3 Egyptian Women's Perspectives: Media Frames and Distinguishing Feminism(s)

The interview progresses to inquire women's perspectives on the frames which attempt to define them, and their distinguishing mechanisms of feminist definitions between Egyptian women, Arab women and non-Arab women of the West. When asked for their thoughts about the claim of HR and particularly women's HR being a foreigner discourse disconnected with the Egyptian reality, women convey different emotional and rational responses. D.S. views that

Sometimes it is neither close, nor accurate. It is distant and they do not know the different realities they are talking about. Some things could be seen as a violation against women's rights for them and for us it is not to that extent a violation. For example: conversation about economic spending on something like pads, which is a question of hygiene and it is a private topic for women. Felaheen women in more rural communities manage without buying them or making it a public topic of conversation. They teach their girls privately, we do not see it as a correct issue to be discussed in front of men. Westerners may look at it from an international concept, and do not regard her situation and culture which may be creating gaps in women's concerns.

D.S. (2018:2)

The disconnection is said to be not between Egyptian women and their rights but in the frame portrayed externally which may abstract HR as dissociated from the region. N.R. expresses that "media and film are sometimes not very accurate in the image they convey about women, the dress codes and sociocultural levels portraying Egyptian women as backward, traditional and staying home; which is not the reality" (N.R., 2018:6). F.A questions my question in a somewhat conservative and strong-willed manner:

Who said that? The woman has her rights everywhere and we are not waiting for people from outside to come and tell us about it. It is true that not everyone always respects it, but the good people always stand with el-mazloom (the one who suffered injustice) and God does not leave anyone behind. Do you dare to think the one who has been wronged, God will overlook them?

F.A. (2018:14)

In this moment F.A. ascribed God into the conversation as in defense of women's rights by asserting that the woman is not neutral in times of injustice, even as a human before being a woman. The defensiveness in reiterating the unheard of question in itself strongly justifies her positioning on rooted rights in a non-secular society. In this question I may have been influenced by my own research and framed it accordingly, by asking if it is a foreigner discourse I already pre-dictated the question to some extent. I asked it because I felt I could not completely refrain from the entanglement of media de-framing. I resonated with her answer to wonder whether or not the subject of foreign imposition would have come up at all had I left it to the conversation. I appreciate the assertive lack of dissonance between religion and women's rights, on the contrary, rather, the validation of women's rights through religiously driven language. Her emphasis on divine rights accentuates the very rejection of any idea of women's rights being considered external, and further solidifies her argument through sociocultural expression and manner of speaking. I ended up being the one answering, no, of course not, and thanked her for her response.

J.D. articulates due to her bilingualism the politics of complexity of HR and women's rights and reveals her disagreement in considering the discourses as foreign or in disassociation to Egyptian society. She affirms:

I do not think it should be disconnected from Egyptian reality. I think human rights should be an integral part of reality universally. There may be indicators that are not as relevant in our society but that does not mean we should not put effort into understanding how to make them applicable to our sociocultural climate.

J.D. (2019:9)

The significance of cultural pertinence is underlined in her distancing of polarizations by seeking to claim rights of humans across regions and genders, and in strongly regarding

the relevance of their political and sociocultural conditions. B.M. reaffirms the lack of disconnection with Egyptian reality by stating that women's rights recognitions are a domestic virtue of Egyptian people; "I see that the strongest women in history were Egyptian, from the day of the pharaohs" (B.M., 2018:12). Her ethnic approach relates the rootedness of women's powerful figures of nationalistic pride, locating women's rights from a historical moment. This may mirror her concerns regarding women's rights as an import to society, displaying her knowledge of the structures which may deter rights if they are perceived as foreign. Furthermore, it represents a sense of belonging of Egypt to our ancient history, despite being centuries old or somewhat detached from contemporary society, the connection appears as more present than the thought of considering that women's rights are in any way inapplicable, abstracted or dismissed from Egyptian contemporary reality.

Egyptian women leaderships' opinions on global media frames' representation of the Arabs, Arab men, and Arab women generally offered greater articulation on women's agency in Egypt. D.S. responds;

they always portray the Arab man as aggressive and very oppressed, with a reluctant woman, and that is not correct, men and women are head-to-head, at the same level, you can say we see eye to eye, no one is higher than the other. But in films they show the harem; a man married to four and all these exaggerations. Even in Islam it is not so common that a man is married to two or more, because the economic situation also does not allow it.

D.S. (2018:3)

In D.S.'s opinion and experience she defends the image of Arabs in saying that women and men are largely equal. While her opinion does not speak or reflect all of Egyptian society, it is her frame of reference that the imagery of film representations is fictitious and does not represent her standpoint in society nor the women and men she knows or is affiliated with. In speaking for depictions, she speaks from her own personal view based on her perspective, and in defense against homogenous images she asserts the complexities silenced by extremes. D.S. comes from an educated background and speaks for her own preserved dignity as a "we" in the household and in the street. She dismisses false generalizations of men and the harem as uncommon and unrealistic due to the socio-economic situation. Aspects of poverty are interlinked with less education and convey

that even if the man wishes to do so he may not be able to due to financial lack which is a patriarchal prerequisite for this uncommon practice in her societal sphere. She deconstructs the abstracted Orientalism through her description of situation from more realistic perspectives when speaking for herself and for her knowledge of others in Egyptian society.

B.M. sees likewise that frames “do not show the trueness of reality in a sufficient way and there is a lack of middle class stories and struggles on screen as there is a tendency to sensationalise the story with extremes” (B.M., 2018:12). The over-exaggerations in depicting Arabs as a distant and chaotic other are thus said to generally reinforce polarizations which overshadow what is in between them, such as the majority of the population and the women of them, the middle-class and its diversities. My question has been influenced by my own research and while I did not want to validate existences of oppressive (mis)representative frames, I also did not want the question to be deliberately muffled by my own standpoint. The very act of asking it however reproduces an indication of what I may have been subconsciously hoping to extract. While the question was produced as openly as possibly, without excessive indications, asking it, in itself, may have led the participants who are familiar with the languages of the field to somehow reinforce my research outcomes. On the other hand, in the face of this acknowledgement, and as proven in the media monitoring of external frames, this is not an independent or fictional sentiment.

F.A. reverses the question once again back to me, by disassociating her-self and knowledge from global representations. She inquires; “I do not know what they say about us, they know us from where? They should focus on themselves better. Even the people in Cairo know us from where?” (F.A., 2018:14). The relative distance and incapacity to define or speak for another is portrayed not only in F.A.’s reaction to global media frames abroad but even concerning Egyptians between the capital city and rural areas. The dis-validation of external frames is claimed firstly by not repeating their ideas, and secondly by condemning their knowledge further in that she does not know what they say and no matter what they depict, they do not “know us” (F.A., 2018:14). The assertion that external frames may not claim knowledge of Egyptian women when they do not closely perceive us is very poignant. Reaffirmed in her statement is the implicated existence of women’s own struggles and HR issues in the West that they should focus on, as they are not the ideal image or standard in terms of moral ideals. Furthermore, the personification

of the frames to describe who produced them on general terms forces back the question as to abstracting the generalized population which represents Arabs as a homogenous entity, as “they” do to us. J.D elaborates the dangers of homogenizing portrayals and their false exaggerations: “I see there is abundant generalization in depictions of Arabs and lack of distinction between different Arabs. It has always been quiet caricaturist but now there is a heightened atmosphere of hysteria” (J.D., 2019:9). Her knowledge of international views allows her to recognize the discrepancies and trends in producing chaos as of the region. In this sense she de-validates external frames by reducing the false representations in referring to them as unrealistic and cartoonized, and communicating the panic and tensions these produce. This directly speaks to the media monitoring critical discourse analysis in the questioning of hyperbolic symbolisms, absences of expression and devaluations. Productions of the other of the other in this way illustrate that homogenizing trends of violence, alienation and vilification are systematically reproduced; causing conflicting polarizations and excluding the voices of women themselves as fellow human beings and as women.

Women were queried as to whether there exist differences or barriers between Egyptians and women from outside the Arab region. D.S. articulates:

I can even say there are differences between the Egyptian woman and the Arab woman. There are a lot of Arab countries who still do not allow women to testify in court or to take high positions and even forbidden to drive until recently. Between Egyptian and the foreign, yes there are differences, in restrictions. Some restrictions do not reflect only questions of conservatism. There are also differences of time constraints of coming home in the evening, regarding a woman's presence in the street at night after-hours. Presence in the public sphere may be restricted in Egypt to protection of reputation; what would people say? People worry about what people say, and the backwardness of thought of others. The issue of reputation is not so evident abroad, a woman who is more liberal may go and come as she pleases, and this is not a thing of age. It is also not negative for us. It is about women living in a dignified way, for them and their families. We look at it in a different way; it is sometimes protection of the woman, fear of danger towards her, even in reputation. It is not because there is more danger in the street in our country than in Europe. But here, someone takes the woman home, groups of women return to their homes together, or man accompanying them. This is not by force like in some Arab countries and not about having to hide or veil, but more about protection and that is not necessarily bad.

D.S. (2018:3)

The existence of difference is seen from cognitive points of view which do not necessarily idolize the mentality of women's rights as losing the feminine code of conduct and respect in society. The contrasts are blurred and are not between good or bad but rather reflect contrasts in sociocultural values and tradition, even within Egypt let alone outside of it. She adds;

There are also not as bad differences such as not over-thinking men's protection as control. For example a Christmas carol they changed "Baby it's cold outside" because it seemed the man was forcing the woman to stay when she was being coy. The new version emphasises the importance of consent, to be aware in case women are upset. She is not to be forced to stay or reminded of dangers outside when he was worried about her, why would he say that if she wants to leave she should leave. Romantic roles are always challenged in this obsession and the mentality is ruined.

D.S. (2018:3)

It may therefore be argued that foreign hyper-sensitivities reproduce a backlash in the region which overlooks the element of care rather than focusing always on women's autonomy or oppression. This, to some extent, in itself regards women as inferior and perpetuates the same if not its own patriarchal power relations. The obsession, as D.S. implies, focuses on the vulnerability of women rather than her ability to say no and have her own way. The difference in cultural focus portrays the roles of women and men and raises questions of superiority and inferiority in its inability to see women and men as equal and yet different in their own ways. Women do not have to assume a manly role to be respected and this is reflected in the women's leadership accounts. On the other hand; in B.M.'s description of differences she outlines contrasting momentums of struggles in terms of women's rights: "yes I think there are differences, perhaps abroad it is easier to lobby for laws for change and here there is a lot of resistance" (B.M., 2018:12). Seen from a legal perspective according to her standpoint she cross-analyses the pace of changing laws supporting women as maybe moving faster in non-Arab countries, including the issue of women's consent and decision making being supported in legal binding, constitutional amendments in addition to people's cognitions.

F.A. claims that there is indubitably a difference "the foreigners we find here do not dress like us, they do not behave like us and I do not enter with them in discussions" (F.A., 2018:14). Her stance on visible apparent contrariety in clothing and behaviour further

disassociates herself from any superior presence of foreign women by saying as if it is merely her decision not to converse with these women. Whether or not she has knowledge of English or had no exposure to foreigners particularly in her city is not clear. I did not ask. I realised that her self-assertion and made-up mind that these women are different also might imply that the foreigners she had seen had not made any effort to speak to her either. Rather than saying that, she gazes back at them in a manner of immediate classification as other, coming to her country and while they do not speak to her she validates her own power to select or refrain from dialogue with them as those that are not to be conversed with. In her short answer J.D. highlights the self-evident obviousness of the question in her blunt response: “of course there are differences all women are unique” (J.D., 2019:9). She does not attempt to outline differences. This reflects her understanding of women as diverse and unexampled even within the same intersectional realities let alone across them, encompassing multitudes of complexity which should not be framed as abstract, singular, or absolute.

6.3 Women’s Rights in Egypt

In this section I examine more closely women’s rights in Egypt, in their own perspectives, situational context in networks of knowledge production and representations. Compared to the media monitoring, frames depicting Egyptian women’s rights were relatively fewer. This section seeks to emphasise that direct voices of Egyptian women’s rights should not only be acknowledged but more crucially, valued in ethical and sociopolitical regards. In articulations of women’s opinions regarding their rights, the frame is de-oriented to reveal what lies beyond it; the women leaderships’ speaking and living lives in their own society. The frame is further delineated in the segment of spaces for further articulations. In this part I seek to open the conversation further before the conclusion, as a non-fixed effort to move beyond the structured questions. This explores other narratives of expression that were not previously covered or not covered sufficiently, according to the participants and my own resonances with the process.

6.3.1 Perspectives on the Current Moment of Women's Rights in Egypt

When asking women for their opinions concerning the current state of women's HR in Egypt, the answers were varied, rationalised and somewhat diplomatic. While not being overly satisfied, women also seemed to take pride in their country's lesser discrimination against women compared to other countries. D.S (2018:2) "Yes, there is gender equality and respect to the Egyptian woman, Egypt is one of the relatively better countries in terms of equality, especially regarding salaries in contrast to some Western countries with a continued gender pay gap". While she described the situation as relative to other countries, N.R. outlined the progress of Egyptian women's rights in terms of time frame. N.R. compares; "the Egyptian woman over time got more rights, such as education and work whereas back then she would stay at home and prepare for marriage. This is still prevalent in the rural cities. In urban ones it evolved at a faster level" (N.R., 2018:5). B.M. responds briefly and likewise cautiously and positively in relation to Egypt's own progress across time, denoting that "it has improved a lot in these past few years" (B.M., 2018:11). This may further indicate that the current state of women's human rights has not yet reached its full potential, despite having ameliorated to some degree in comparison to other times. The gaps between the current state of women's rights are relativised to earlier times and to notions of theory and practice, F.A. considers that the "law says there is equality but when you ask me about my practical experience not everyone equates between the man and the woman and gives the woman her rights" (F.A., 2018:13). J.D. contemplates the current state of equality in Egypt:

I think we have come a long way but there are still major issues that need to be addressed. The pace of gender equality is not the same across society, and there is inequality amongst women. Some sectors of society are now advocating for more tertiary concerns such as maternity leave, equal pay and promotions, while others are still struggling for basic rights.

J.D (2019:8)

This different response portrays the non-homogeneity of possible answers. J.D. reflects on time in addition to the diversity of levels and paces amongst Egyptian women, conveying that indeed there is not a singular answer but it differs across communities, cities and intersectional realities of identity. There is no absolute response as to the level

of equality in the current moment varies across different areas, both geopolitical and socio-economic.

6.3.2 Networks of Solidarity

Positioning ambiguities and complexities mobilize women to define themselves more strongly, closely and clearly. There is an evident need for rights to be institutionalised and not being held hostage by male authorities or foreign organizations. This responds directly to frames of imposition in DPs in terms of women's self-situated realities. Bridging gaps in between and beyond polarizations de-oriens what is in the frames on women by what lies in abundance outside of them, in the intrinsic and extrinsic factors which shed light on their agencies and self-articulations.

The network of solidarity which many of the women rely on most as the best medium of support for their agency is largely online, while some women affiliate themselves with organizations. B.M. connects herself to organizations which support her cause and career. She names being “part of the Association for Egyptian Female Lawyers — which is an NGO aiming to activate women's political access and participation qualified in different societal realms to change the culture of the local community” (B.M., 2018:12). Here B.M. uses the mission of the organization to realistically affirm potentials of change in her society. This to some extent contrasts to the previous tone of pride in that B.M resorts to change through legal sectors in society in addition to civil society networks. If the culture of the community hinders women's access, she claims that women must infiltrate these channels to change this aspect of the local culture. D.S. asserts that it is “Facebook”, where the “audience is more used to such discussions, in comparison to Twitter” which, according to her generation is not so easy to use and “too public” (D.S., 2018:3). D.S. expands her argument by stating “I like that I can control what to put in public and to which friends” (D.S., 2018:3). N.R. also names “Facebook”, as the best platform for her “online digital activism” (N.R., 2018:6). J.D. accredits “youth networks, co-workers and mentor figures which have more experience in the sector. I share knowledge gained on my online support forum and provide a space for others to do the same” (J.D., 2019:10). While digital activism is her platform for enhancing spaces of exchange and support, her primary source of networks are those with which she is affiliated and role-models she can learn from. Other women directly resort to oral communication. F.A. shares that her community gatherings are used for exchange and

conversation, daily, in the known public space: “all the people here in the area in the school and council if they see something wrong are not quiet, and we meet each other every day” (F.A., 2018:14). Word of mouth may therefore be a tool for women who report daily within their communities their struggles as a transformational mechanism without the reliance on digital activism.

The participants were then asked what, from their perspectives should be done for stronger networks of solidarity and dialogue on women’s rights. D.S. articulates that

Conferences are important. More advertisements on Egyptian television are helping to raise awareness in their campaigns addressing women. For example showing that having so many children is bad for women’s health or you will not be able to educate your children well if you have many. The audience watching television is higher than those attending conferences, who are already more educated, as well as the fact that the larger population of Egyptian women perhaps have less exposure to such areas. Places of religious worship are also fundamental as Egyptian society is a devout society. You can reach people, both women and men, from the inside of churches and mosques as people cherish what is heard from their religious institute, they know it is something right.

D.S. (2018:4)

Reaching people through channels of influence is thus said to promote cognitive change. B.M. reflects her affiliations in non-governmental and governmental realms; advocating for organizations to be “more inclusive and not selective or elitist at all, and associational life should be introduced from an early age via after-school clubs and activities” (B.M., 2018:12). In response, N.R. declares a need for awareness of

Equality, no need for women to be more empowered than men. Justice should support who is in the right, just being a woman does not suffice. Seeing beyond gender and surface is what is needed. Women should not be mistreated and I am against women’s abuse but women should be treated the same, we are the same and not of any lesser mind or status.

N.R. (2018:6)

Perhaps in her focus on the question in terms of dialogue beyond terms of women and men, she shifts the conversation to the need to address solidarity from a different perspective or on the lines of human beings rather than demarcating it from a feminine

and masculine debate. F.A. stresses the “need to be sure that all teachers in schools are aware and they know how to raise the children. And also there are also political religion that is harsh on women and girls, at their expense” (F.A., 2018:15). Proper education is hence important in the creation of authorized channels of influence, in addition to more women in transformational spheres whom are well-equipped to challenge the languages of the patriarchal status quo, which is highlighted as fundamental. J.D. delineates prospects of advance in networks as follows: “women should have a greater say in what kind of progress they would like to see in their local communities and there should be increased collaboration and understanding between women in rural and urban areas in Egypt” (J.D., 2019:10). The need for enhanced communication and alliances between women across different geopolitical plains in the country reflects the evident barriers in population, living in main cities versus smaller ones or in rural areas, and questions of tradition vis-à-vis modernization. Many women in both rural and urban areas living in both female and male-headed households struggle with poverty. While they may have different immediate concerns the exchange between Egyptian women is said to be crucial in avidly voicing their wants and needs as a stronger collectivism.

6.3.3 Memorable Representations of Egyptian Women’s Rights in Egyptian Arts

There are numerous Egyptian works that have been important and memorable to these women in terms of songs, films, books and poems. D.S. emphasises the movies and television series which reflect problems faced by women, including “divorce, domestic problems, and shows such as agony aunts which address issues anonymously” (D.S., 2018:4). She asserts the importance of “privacy, for women to be able to speak freely regarding taboo subjects such as sexually transmitted diseases, violence and intimacy without people that she knows knowing her name and private life without her being exposed” (D.S., 2018:4). The word exposed in Arabic “فضيحة”, *fedeeha* (literally meaning: scandal), has more negative connotations with scandal in this form and baring than mere exposure in English. This gap in a one word translation reflects the significance of private-ness in protection of names while publicly addressing concerns that affect women on mass levels but are somewhat taboo to be spoken about in the public sphere, if not with the woman’s name. The importance of the woman’s name is conveyed in that it carries her claim to her identity and life, and protects her from disclosing and concealing in public and private realms elements of her complex identity and narrative.

D.S. recalls an Egyptian film based on a novel entitled: ‘Sorry I Refuse Divorce’ (1980) film (Figure 6.2) co-directed by an Egyptian woman: Inam Mohamed Ali with Abu Saif, which

portrays a wife who is in love with her husband that refuses the idea of divorce and goes to court to stop the procedures, after a struggle at courts her husband who regretted losing her, tried to get her back but she told him one sentence that she lost sense of security and trust in him and that once lost, he does not have a second chance.

D.S. (2018:4)



Figure 6.2 Asfa, Arfod el Talaa (1980) Poster of Egyptian Film referenced by D.S.

Such relatively old, films on divorce break stigmas around women being shamed for failed marriages, and promote women's empowerment and voice in choosing to agree to or refuse divorce, what is a patriarchal construct in Egyptian society and has patriarchal impositions inscribed in its politics. Egyptian female director “Inas el Degheidy” is mentioned for her representation of her films of women’s struggles in sometimes taboo subjects (D.S., 2018:4). She refrains from labelling her films as “women’s cinema” so as not to isolate women from men and to illustrate that women’s struggles do not exist alone. D.S. adds that these films are old, and we have proof of the status of women since Hatshepsut (Figure 6.3), the second recorded female Pharaoh.



Figure 6.3 Hatshepsut Pharaoh Statue of Hatshepsut Pharaoh referenced by D.S.

N.R. (2018:6) reminisces “there are many arts supporting women from more than sixty years, showing the right to access to employment and organizations”. She particularly remembers “Mirati, Mudir Aam (1966) film”, translated to: “My Wife, the Director General” (Figure 6.4). The title in Arabic does not show the feminine ending of director as the word is typically in masculine form. The comedy focuses on the introduction of a man’s wife in this high position. N.R. adds that the actor “was concealing that she is his wife, she proved that she is just as capable as a man” (N.R., 2018:6) and he was then proud.

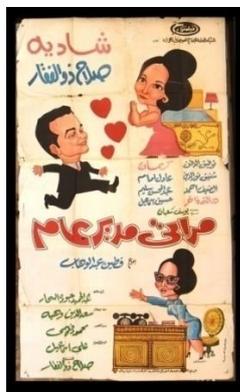


Figure 6.4 Mirati, Mudir Aam (1966) Poster of Egyptian Film referenced by N.R.

Films from the standpoint of the male may be reinforcing the centrality of the male but on the other hand they reinforce solidarity between women and men and validate the empowerment of women even in successful marriages and family life. This articulates the lack of agreement between the two in contrast to negative mal-perceptions that women’s empowerment may imply sacrifice in other realms of life. F.A. says that there are countless

films which when one sees them we see ourselves in them. They see the problems of the woman that her husband is oppressing her, her kids have left her, and the problems of separation, having many children, and the men who cheat and marry more than their wife, or divorce their wife and not give her rights, all this we see in cinema and television.

F.A. (2018:15)

While men or the husband appears to be the central point of the discussion it is important to note that she is speaking generally of films in this statement and the majority of films are directed by men from the male's perspective even when supporting women's struggles. Furthermore, while men are not more present than women they are the ones producing the narratives in most cases and the patriarchal status quo. Economic and sociocultural patriarchy are prevalent and do not disappear in assessments of women's rights and the struggles they encounter. They do have an influential transformational power when they reflect women's empowerment and support it from a male perspective. The speaking out of women in defense of not only their rights as women but basic rights is visible in film and clearly memorable for most of the participants seeing them as young girls and as an inspiration to take spaces of power. B.M. offers an Egyptian film which stands out to her entitled: *I Want A Solution* (1975), (seen in Figure 6.5) which depicts old family laws in Egypt that "were not fair to women and after that movie laws began to gradually change in favour of women's justice against discrimination" (B.M., 2018:12).



Figure 6.5 I Want A Solution (1975) Poster of Egyptian film referenced by B.M.

The film illustrates critiques of laws governing women's personal status rights and the woman's right to ask for divorce. While it is directed by a male it is important to note the production of such films which challenge patriarchal status quos by both women and men. Reflections of common problems on women's screens are thus historically evident. Television, songs and books illustrate channels of influence for change and the struggles

of women even before change is implemented in society. They may have transformational value when they are portraying national tendencies and different types of stories of women's narratives and situational positions. In this way, while being cautiously comic or distancing from governmental laws, these do not risk censorship before being aired or being considered as outrageous by society after the fact.

Aside from influential film and television programs, the question was open to Egyptian arts, poems and role-models that are memorable and meaningful in representations of Egyptian women's rights in Egypt. N.R. further gathers that women empower themselves intrinsically first; through the knowledge that they are proficient. It "comes from inside, to reveal her own potentials, that is why it is vital that girls from an early age need to be encouraged to have self-esteem and know that they are never less than the other, to surpass any conflict and tension as women in our society" (N.R., 2018:7). To have mentors and figures to look up to further helps this belief. N.R. names professor Sanaa El-K., "she was a role-model for me, and my teacher, if both recognize this belief things would be different, and it helped me in my own life that not because I am a woman I need to have an inferiority complex and be stubborn in my word" (N.R., 2018:7). She went on to state that "sometimes when I used to feel lacking it helped me to remember since I am young, that I am a girl like a boy without feeling a difference" (N.R., 2018:7). N.R. names another professor from her university whom she admired, reiterating the importance of education. Her name was Mariam M. and she remembers her being strongly against early marriage of girls under twenty years old, saying that the young women "should finish their education" (N.R., 2018:7) in her lectures. Having women role-models in positions of authority and influence is vital as she articulates the "girl of today is the woman of tomorrow" (N.R., 2018:7), thus having a transformational impact on society. J.D. (2019:10) names a book, of Leila Ahmed's, *A Border Passage* (1999) which she deemed as a significant read for her. The biographical account describes Ahmed's journey into feminism in America after her upbringing in Cairo. Her mention of a book written in English rather than an Egyptian film signifies her younger generation on one hand, who may have grown past the times of watching black-and-white or older Egyptian films, and her experience with foreign education on the other. The exposure to foreign distancing may to some extent influence women, like J.D. to experience and articulate their own societies in a different way after having seen it from afar. The

connection made through familiarity is evident in her mention of the book which remains fresh in her cognizance.

6.3.4 Spaces of Further Articulations

Further comments were probed, in addition to ideas and themes which brought discussions mostly on resonances of what had been previously discussed. B.M. proposes the significance of exchanges and advances in “activism and law” (B.M., 2018:12) and the relation between the two spheres of change in women’s rights. D.S. indicates that

Each society has differences in their gazes and points of view of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. In one society you can find something is very flagrant and unacceptable and in another, if it does not happen, the woman may be upset. For example, if no one takes her home, or paying the bill, now it can be split, where in Egypt if a more traditional woman is married and she is given the cheque the man can take it offensively.

D.S. (2018:4)

The woman, depending on her level of education and up-bringing may consider it as acceptable but unusual. Upon asking D.S. for further clarification she explains: “she may also consider if the man can provide for her if he is her husband and if he is chivalrous or not” (D.S., 2018:4). Men’s roles therefore may also be highly indicative of their social status, capability and cognitive thought on the equality of women and men. Traditional ways of thinking and courtliness may thus reflect some markers of women’s empowerment through culture distinctions, in their own language and ideals that they have grown by and have not necessarily had to abandon due to Western ideals of emancipation. Empowerment should not necessarily have to imply abandonment of these sociocultural ideals or tradition, even beyond women’s education. This recognition in itself is accredited by women as any notion of abandonment of sociocultural or religious tradition is seen as Western and immediately dismissed. It produces retaliation at the expense of women; regressing women’s rights in terms of freedom, age of marriage, levels of harassment, due to a section of society who fanatically politicise religion as a rationalised scapegoat to maintain patriarchal power and control on women’s lives and bodies. D.S. (2018:4) mentions an “initiative: Taa Marbouta”, which promotes awareness on women’s empowerment. The term

refers to the additional letter "ة" applied to word endings in Arabic, particularly adjectives, designating them as feminine. The logo of the campaign demonstrates this letter and calligraphically looks like two arms bound together.

Zeitoun, 2017

The slogan of the campaign, "*Taa Marbouta is the Secret of Your Power*", reinforces that the feminine distinction is not an obstacle but an asset.

When I asked F.A. for any further comments she wishes to add she said strongly and consolingly;

Do not worry about us, even if we do not have all our rights we are not silent, and our kids will turn out to be more aware than us. Even in the rural areas, do not think that people are ignorant, maybe she does not know how to read and write, but she is awake and she does not agree to zolm (injustice).

F.A. (2018:15)

In this moment of her reassuring me as not to worry about *them*, I felt she is talking to me as if I am an outsider, either because I am from the city, born in Alexandria and my family is based in Cairo, or because I am a researcher from a foreign institution. The fact that F.A. said that even in the cases of illiteracy do not "worry" about the girls from the village reflects the intrinsic knowledge of women of their value of rights even without education let alone knowledge of reading and writing, and furthermore, her pridefulness.

J.D. took the opportunity to commend my interview-style stating: "I like that the questions are open to interpretation, that there is flexibility in the questions and that they invite open-ended answers and encouraged me to consider the issue in new ways" (J.D., 2019:10). The method reflectively promotes diverse answers according to interpretation of the question. The lack of pre-arranged limit to answers in overly-directed questions or closed-ended "yes" and "no" answers reinforces the epistemology of de-orienting women's frames from their own limitless perspectives. Her inquiry and praise of my approach displayed her intellectual scrutiny and writing qualifications, as well as the knowledge that the authors of the frame mirror themselves within it; in constraining or delimiting it, according to how it is produced. This very last question or opportunity for participants to add what they wish to build up on is an example of the diversity of responses derived from an extended approach.

Concluding Notes

How Egyptian women's rights are framed through global representation(s) was deconstructed through this methodological approach, from the voices of Egyptian women leaderships speaking their perspectives on HR. The interview process provided insights that were not foreseen before carrying out the interviews with this sample of women. Each participant had a diverse answer while some agreed, and brought forth different perspectives to the content of the answer in addition to its tone. The choice of the small sample shed light on the need for closer specificity within each interview. Additionally, answers across the samples sufficiently illustrate evidence of non-hegemonic difference. The differences resonated with me in thinking of the extent of delimiting the frame not only by considering semi-structured interviews but to open the conversation further with a conversational unique interview with each woman. The approach of the same pre-formulated spoken interview was chosen to carry the methodology dually with media-monitoring, to focus on women's spoken narratives and critically assess the differences of discourses of frame production. Separate interview structures and content were therefore not carried out due to the need for methodical cross-analysis of the answers and subject of frame across the dual epistemology. This may however be done in further work to explore the relative nuances in discourse of a less structured methodology, allowing the interview to flow according to the participant and in doing so, the active participation of the interviewee in the frame production as well as its substance in consequence. The constancy of questions, howbeit, brought different perspectives within this sample, and to some extent may reflect the precision of contextual positioning of women's agency and self-situated perspectives that speak back to the ambiguities and polarizations of frames. The carefulness and contrasts are disclosed from women through situational positioning, geographical location of cities, ages, different occupations and different experiences of childhood and adulthood.

It has been revealed in this light that the epistemological formulation of knowledge highly influences the results, in both the production of frames and in their deconstruction. The critical reflection may be limited by its frame more so if the epistemology is centric in one perspective of source or approach, and if it is encompassed by similar or different subjective apparatus of further framing in its deconstruction. The participants were speaking from their own situated perspectives rather than claiming to present a sample

which speaks for all Egyptian or Arab women. The limitations of the sample in that I invited Egyptian women leaderships to some extent proved to augment strength in highlighting complexities even within what was thought to be a like-minded cohort. Due to the scope, the choices and effort towards de-framing formed the basis of non-fixed questions and correlatively, non-absolute answers. I conclude that my position in the research has largely influenced not only my questions in their formation, but furthermore in my analysis of the answers. The answers were also differently shaped by the women's perspectives in addition to the different perceptions they may have had of me, depending on how they viewed me, as similar, as an insider or outsider, how as a researcher, and how, then, as a fellow Egyptian woman (if at all). I believe that some of the participants were mostly prepared for the interview in their willingness to participate, and had seen the questions and thought about them.

The deliberate attention in participating, outlining elements of anonymousness but naming themselves to me, all exhibit selective politics of naming and languages of their empowerment which complexities of women steer differently, at different moments in time. The element of caution was present in the answers and the tone the women were taking, in addition to my own tone of approach, invitation, and in beginning and carrying the interview, which, perhaps together, we set the tone of some degree of formality. While the participants answered all my questions some interrogated questions back to clarify precise meaning for clarification or due to overlapping repetitions which were previously addressed through the flow of conversation from another question. This furthermore reflected how my framing of questions was, despite my consciousness to be as objective as possible, imminently in part shaped by my research and its framing and diction resonated this.

In the same sense, women's levels of discretion and diligence also articulated their own frames of reference and lives, in addition to the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee and the politics of the interaction which is not equal to begin with. I am not saying equal in power relations, of me as a researcher and them as subjects, on the contrary, I was the less experienced one speaking from a position of research rather than leadership and I was very thankful to have their shared time and moment for the enrichment of my research. They were contributing to my inquiry and I felt in this sense it was not a balanced exchange but one of commitment to the research and enrich it with their time and direct perspectives, which I regard as the most critical aspect of the dual

epistemology. The willing interaction and the production of semi-structured questions may be said to always display some level of mutual exchange if they are carried out ethically and not with the intention of extraction. I feel that I comprehended at closer levels women's self-situations as they spoke in Arabic and from the same sociocultural society I come from and try to discern my position within and outside it. I also distinguish their risks and earnestness in speaking as elements of fortitude in their agencies. This sociopolitical claiming is one of the factors self-asserting women's personal and professional realities, rather than as weakness.

The sample may have confined more discussion about violations of women's rights on a personal level as I was explicit in my invitation of women leaderships. Had I sought victims of violations specifically the results would be different, as would the questions. Examining different perspectives of knowledge to de-homogenize frames has been useful to emphasise some trends of canons present when women's empowered agencies and situations in Egypt are muted, and when the focus is solely on victims of abuse and misconduct and graphic descriptions of violence. My choice therefore to sample women leaderships was a further compensation for the systematic assessment of frames under the same keywords: Egyptian women's rights. The relative deficiency of direct quotes of agencies of women's empowerment in global media frames presented focus on discourses of helplessness or DPs, further subjecting women under male and Western authorities in their discourses of representation. The choice of sphere of Egyptian women may be said to have made attempts of de-orienting epistemological silences when articulated in global frames. External implications of vilification of Egyptian authorities as the cause for women's inequality were not absent from the interview frames and women's accounts and yet they were not as blunt. This reflects other factors which influence women's rights as seen from each woman's perspectives, most crucially, the value of her own claims to her rights from the realities of her own societal environment and context.

The comparative and relative gaze which was assessed in the media monitoring in some moments portrayed, elements of alienation, victimization and narratives of power between polarized regions and between women and men. On asking women themselves whether or not they identify as Arab the answers were nuanced, providing several reasons for affiliation and distinction as Arab women or as African, Mediterranean, Arabic-speaking women. The choice to relate or detach was their own rather than a homogenized

all-encompassing study which may have to a degree constrained these nuances. Their clear-cut perspectives were essential contributions to the epistemological focus and grasped the essence of counter-ambiguity in the balance between the women's personalized and political views. Bringing Egyptian works that have been significant explores the representation of women in local cultural arts, not only in how she is represented and by whom, more particularly in the works which were considered influential towards the participants in their journey in women's rights. The more focused gaze situated women's own differences between the country and societal spheres, and in their own contextual opinions, of fixed frames, and the state of women's rights outside the region. The question is unexpected as usually Western women and men speak as historical, political or social authorities on the South and this has been largely normalized to the extent that the reverse synopsis is not as prevalent.

The cross-analysis has not proved a dual blatant result but nuances in both methodologies. This helped to confirm my hypothetical point of departure to some extents, but has shed light on further questions and the complexities in results which cannot be framed as polarized dualities of complete oppression or complete emancipation. The frames in both epistemologies as representations and self-situated expressions convey that frames are therefore not exclusively dependent on their source of production. The discourse produced is additionally shaped by what frames seek to illustrate, respond to, and the contextual moment and other facts that are interlinked when they take place. Within these recognitions, this research contributes to spaces where Egyptian women may gaze back at the frames claiming to represent them and de-construct them with their own intricate positioning as a tool and channel to de-orient this gaze.

Chapter Seven

De-Orienting Frames: Occupying Spaces of Knowledge

In my thesis, I investigate theoretical and practical discourses of global representation of Arab women. With the core aim and my main argument: the need to de-orient hegemonic representational structures, I examine the extent to which frames reproduce DPs in their framing. The focus on discourses of portrayals of Egyptian women's rights adopts media monitoring data collection and critical discourse analysis. Through this assessment, my investigation sequentially sought to contribute to efforts which deconstruct epistemologies of knowledge in the paramount occupation of spaces of intervention, through comparative semi-structured interviews under the same scope of theme. The critical discourse analysis was in this way further enriched through the articulation of Egyptian women leaderships' own claims on their rights.

In seeking to de-orient oversimplifications, alienation and violence in discourses which frame Egyptian women and their rights in the global realm and in their contextual situations, I employed a dual epistemology as the groundwork stemming from the theoretical framework. This shed light on the degrees of research on access and productions of knowledge in quantitative and qualitative mixed methodology. The discussion is crucial to the rethinking of contemporary women's rights apparatus and the current state of perceptions and agency of women from the South, particularly from regions with connotations as Arab. The naming of Arabs, Middle East and "Third World" imply sociopolitical geographies of epistemological superiority in the production of an inferior other. The other of the other, women living within patri-colonial societies are impacted by legal, cultural and social frames and cognitive perceptions both in their countries and in the global stage. The growing distances evident in present politics of naming and in understanding women's rights violations as affiliated to a particular culture or religion are flawed from their default of manufacture.

The research sought to critically delineate the discussion from complex sources of women and men from the South and North in the theoretical discussion. This choice is to refrain from exclusion of choosing particular author's based solely on their overarching classification, and intended alternately to discuss relevant articulations across sociocultural perspectives for an enriched and diverse deliberation. The perspectives

which cut across and value de-framing of epistemologies deconstruct perceived barriers of gender, nation and religion to mutually inform the state of the art on representation and framing. The choice of a Western newspaper for the methodological consideration of the research was selected to sharpen specificity for scrutiny in inquiring the sample. Similarly, the decision to direct semi-structured interviews to Egyptian women was to delve into the small sample more closely as diversities — more so than patterns — of women's accounts highly constitutes the focal agent of my research.

The theoretical framework developed in Part I intended to set the focus of research more profoundly to the politics of media frames and women's resistance in epistemology. Languages of the media frames are explored theoretically to investigate reflective narratives of the perspectives of its source with regard to what the frame claims to represent. Through more balanced knowledge production between countries of the East and West and between women and men, patri-colonial frames are de-oriented. Epistemological rethinking promotes the potential of media as a capacity to decenter Eurocentric and patri-colonial influence in women's rights and feminisms. De-orienting approaches across sociopolitical boundaries are more effective when the gazes acknowledge the complexities and incapacity to define another, and when used according to wider outreaches of situated perspectives rather than homogenized blurred and silencing ones. Channels of knowledge of women's own claims and interpretations of their own societies in their languages interrogate and deconstruct boundaries of confinement.

Through the value of women's gazes, and precise located gazes outside the Western canon, women's self-definitions and representations are heard. Women's rights epistemologies directly challenge the moral standard to enhance spaces of knowledge production and contemporary media. In asserting against the false violations against them and the discourses which perpetuate them as normal; they pave renewed thought in politics of identity and women's rights. In setting the foundation of the research discussion I thus aimed to theoretically explore the politics of media frames and the human identities these exclude if not annihilate, and how. Languages and power of the media convey the reflections of representations in mirroring current thought and in normalizing acts of terror in the region. Eurocentrism is underlined as a central apparatus for productions of collective outrage to violations against some people and apathy towards others, depending on their geopolitical, ideological and sociocultural

classification. Women's resistance in epistemology is then explored to reveal instances of overlap and synchronicity between HR and Arab feminisms to deconstruct DPs of perpetual imposture on discourses of their lives, wellbeing, violations against them and advancements in claims to women's rights as their own.

Furthermore, the state of the art examined literature discussing constructs in representation in productions of the Orient, the "Third World" and Arab women. Frames producing the other from Western standpoints were deconstructed through methodological approaches and analysis of language outputs. Addressing historical and contemporary evidence of patri-colonial definitions in HR discourses contributes to spaces which de-frame languages distancing the land and lives of the produced other as a separate, violent world of chaos. The extent to which the self-validation of Western superiority has been conveyed is evident not only in assessments of frames but furthermore, theorized in doctrines of inferiority. Exclusion in diction is to some extent seen to contrast the Arab people as an uncivilized, homogenous, hopeless mass, vacant of independent thought and self-expression. The terms of FoOs and the extent to which they reinforced DPs were seen through trends in these instances. Such languages describe the further implications of effacement of the manufactured other of the other. Egyptian women, women from the South, from the non-west, non-European feminine existences are largely subjected in their individualities and collectivities under patri-colonial constraints in manifold dimensions of HR discourse and construction when framed.

Critically, theoretical, methodological and practical enveloped constructs of the Orient, of Arab women and men and the "Third World" more broadly, are produced as representational, informational discourses by the larger West. FoO evident in defining the other are seen to create an unknown, mystical and exotic other as opposite, in addition to the space the other is thought to be from. The process of representing, speaking for, is to a high extent to orient, the other and other of the other as such. The apparatus of externalized naming and framing largely dictates a cultural, superior gaze that does not encounter the framed subject, as it does not exist in reality or in discourse as a subject to be encountered, but rather a distant and inscrutable stranger. Productions of the "Third World" as separate portray patterns of speaking for it while silencing its complexities. These discourses largely preserve the centrality of their own identity by excluding and forgetting the production of meaning from other identities' located perspectives.

Orientalism and moral impositions are interrogated for being the opposite; as productions of themselves which perpetuate doctrines of inferiority on the so called other of the other. Numerous continuous classifications of “Third World” in media, education and academia representing collective and feminist struggles do not locate the people in the region as fellow humans but as extrinsic, isolated and doomed in separate world. Such frames are epistemologically unjust as they construct and reinforce, from their patri-colonial point of departure, disempowerment and DPs on women in the South and Egyptian women, relatively more specifically. The fabricated burden of having to speak for and represent another enforces heavier and plural burdening on women, who may struggle not only to produce their own discourses within their societies but moreover in the global stage. The manipulation of burden and privilege by coincidence are indicative of misleading representations and actions which legitimate subjecting whom is dissimilar to a frame of lesser capacity, in need of a “civilizing mission” and asserting authority and power in doing so. DPs assess continued and hegemonic (non)recognition of the other from the discourses which construct it and both attribute and subtract its meaning.

Finally, the scrutiny seeks to move closer to deconstructions of polarization of feminisms and their confinements in this way. In investigating polarized geographies and feminisms, I have crucially drawn on Said’s work of Orientalism to focus more particularly on its contemporary impacts on women’s rights and critical patterns of construction of superiority on her body, life, and violations of women’s HR. Elements of imposition and control on the portrayal and existence of the Arab women are examined for injustice. Veiling, like unveiling, is evidently seen to be patri-colonially oppressive in every instance the woman is not choosing to cover or reveal her self, but she is rather veiled or unveiled, metaphorically and physically by an extrinsic intrusion. Impositions of concealing and exposing overlook the politics of their own positioning and the intricate complexities of veiling the unveiled and unveiling the veiled in addition to the discriminatory reasons for each.

The unfolding of social constructions of vulnerability and violence on the Egyptian woman’s body reveals the ostensible dichotomies which these globally produce among women, nevertheless women in the same country and region. Through this discussion, I bring forth internal controversies in naming as seen in accounts of crimes against women. Purity and honour crimes are seemingly ingrained through language discourses as part of the culture of the women subjected to them and alienated from them by focal points of

male ownership of dignity. The terms describing these unethical and corrupt acts were discussed for their contradictions. Such discussion revealed these male attributions and female dissociations of naming as imperatively errored from both their epistemological outset and their perpetuated repetitions in global HR discourses. The abstraction of naming is shown for what these acts in fact are: crimes of (dis)honour to women, and how this overt masquerade of murder and violence functions in favour of men and patri-colonial discourse. To this end, portrayals of violations as normalized, sociocultural happenings evidently undermine the severity of each infraction and reproduce encroachments burdening Egyptian women and women from the South at large.

The production of languages of women's rights representing Egyptian women was assessed to understand the extent to which constructs of frames may convey trends of abstraction or, de-orienting self-situated perspectives, depending on the situation of their production. The existence of polarizing languages and dichotomies and assessment of how these are perpetuated is discussed through the theoretical and methodological analysis of frames, and articulated trends in producing the other of the other. The reflection of languages and wording used reflects the origin of their theoretical source of production. In this way, the potentials of decentering efforts in examining theoretical and practical contemporary exclusivity of power grammars which claim to represent Egyptian women's rights were explored. Through the theoretical discussion of violations on women and polarized feminisms; efforts were carried out to de-frame the frame through women's direct perspectives on their society and the frames which claim to represent them, as a valued source of knowledge. Elements of abstraction of societal and personal identities and agencies of women in their specificities, and selective inclusion were evident according to the sample search of Egypt, Women, and Rights from the global frame. Cross-analysis with Egyptian women's accounts revealed what exists beyond representational frames and that there are multiple voices in these sites of deconstruction. FoO were prevalent and yet cannot be said to be absolutely constant or all-encompassing in media frames or completely absent from interviews. I thus critically sought to inquire the extent to which the epistemological formulation of knowledge largely impacts the outcome, in production of frames and in their deconstruction.

I contributed to revealing gaps in the literature from women's perspectives of Egyptian perceptions of feminism and inquired the extent of media frames as Oriental in how they

represent Egyptian women. Literature which examines one side of the perspective — for example Western feminisms looking at Arab feminisms without the acknowledgement of their gaze, only male perspectives of Orientalism, and exclusive focus on Islamic feminisms — largely exclude the women's standpoint and diversities beyond mass-classifications. This is evident in contrastingly fewer instances which communicate Egyptian women's self-identification, speaking their HR and agency of self-situation, in addition to some abstractions of the national diversity of numerous religions, branches and degrees of religiosity, with more emphasis on religious entanglement with politics. I sought to counteract doctrines of exclusion by my dual methodology and choice of de-orienting the Arab woman, with a focus on the complexities between and across some Egyptian women leadership's accounts through semi-structured interviews which are considered as non-isolated, and yet of distinct value. In this way, I develop the research after determining trends in external frames that largely homogenize discourses of women's rights in Egypt and reproduce voids. Critical discourse analysis moves beyond reproducing and dismantling oppressive frames to speaking back to them to disprove them as epistemologically and ethically lacking.

Authorities and scholars producing knowledge on the region and on Egyptian women are thus challenged by critically bringing forth works of non-Western, feminist scholarships in addition to women's voices from leadership positions without excluding Western ones. I explored women's self-positioning in Egyptian society, their own reflections on their identity as Arab and concerning feminism. The Egyptian woman speaking her HR as the highest authority on herself delineates her visions from her situated reality as critical to knowledge; such as the need of proper education, and the different words regarding women's positioning and honour in Arabic. Lines between the public and private, and comfort and discomfort in discussion were furthermore investigated according to the awareness of Egyptian sociocultural environment in different theoretical and geographical locations and experiences. Notions of concealment in vulnerability and rejection of victimization also shed light on the intricacies of pride and protection of women's realities as a prospective for their empowerment. Insider and outsider dynamics of conducting research and between participants' willingness and diction of expression furthermore portrayed the politics of representation and framing externally and internally, delineating the boundaries and potentials of networking in women's agency.

In my epistemological choice of media monitoring, I explicitly chose an English source of reportage to examine the politics and languages of what was being said outside the region and how. My decision to focus on the aftermath of the Egyptian revolution aimed to de-orient Western dates which have been used exhaustively when thinking of the Arabs, in terms of violence and political patriarchal concepts alienated from women of the region. The focus on time frame is not to say frames were void of oppression or violent harassment of women before western-centric events, or before the Arab Spring. It instead sought to deconstruct hegemonic assumptions by centering focus on Egyptian contemporary dates, remarkable for the memory of women's agency and encompassed around the cognitive memory of Egyptian women at a transformational moment in recent history which also inflicted violence and unrest in Egypt due to different political tensions and highly at the expense of women. In my epistemological choice of semi-structured interviews, I sought to refrain from any paternalistic wordings in my effort of de-orientation by opening the spaces for women's articulations according to the matters which they deemed vital. This was also achieved by the choice to not select a victimized scope for the cohort of women for the sole purpose of their victimization. My sample does not seek to neglect realities of oppression within the region. I employ this method, alternatively, to outline how internal authorities of discrimination may be subject to further exacerbation by the polarizing frames of passivity seen to be systematically unfolded by the global discussion.

Through assessment of global reportage on Egyptian women's rights over the course of eight years, this thesis has conveyed how media discourses may directly and indirectly perpetuate discourses of oppression such as men speaking as authorities in women's rights, impositions of foreign superiorities and vilifications of Egyptian discourses in comparison to relatively lower spaces of direct quotes from Egyptian women agents, and more balanced relations of exchange between women of the South and of the North. Quantitative and qualitative evidence reaffirmed my hypothesis on representations from external sources of production to some extent. This investigated reinforcements under the thematic key elements and considered content, layout and languages to code different specificities of the discussion. Egyptian women's self-situated direct quotes of empowerment and referencing were found, in resistance to violence and in the spaces allocated to them, resisting discourses of misinterpretation increasing their burden. My problem statement is mirrored in my research choices and data collection, assessing the

scale of each frame, what is being said and portrayed and how. Media monitoring global frames on Egyptian women's rights to some extent may be seen to confirm my hypothesis of the presence of trends of imageries and languages of FoO, and their systematic discreet and blatant perpetuation in languages representing women's rights in the country from the chosen source of production.

However the evidence of my hypothesis is not as absolute as I presumed or was implying to determine, to the extent of looking for these languages. When I sought to be more objective and assess elements of direct depiction of agencies of women, direct quotes, women speaking rather than men in positions of authority I also found these instances. In determining the frame, in its production and analysis, it may be said therefore that it is highly indicative and dependent on the researcher's prior positioning, and what they endeavour to validate with proof. The presence of these languages was visible but may have been further emphasized through my gaze of assessment, and scrutinised view of each frame. Therefore, in assessing the broadness and specificity of Frames of Egypt, Frames of Egyptian women and Frames of women's rights in Egypt allowed me to more objectively describe the comprehensive field of the frames searched under the same keywords in the dual epistemological approach. Stances of general views, closer perspectives and specific frames outlined that the prevalence of specific frames was fewest. Tendency to cover more than one topic or cohort within each article was slightly prevailing as seen in the following table.

Themes under Egypt, Women, Rights	Frames of Egypt	Frames of Egyptian Women	Frames of Women's Rights in Egypt
(%) Percentage of Occurrences out of the 28 Newspaper Articles from the Guardian Newspaper (January 2011-March 2018)	35.7	42.9	21.4

Media Monitoring: Quantitative Table of Results of Frames Specificity

The decision to focus the themes of interviews under the keywords shed light on the discussions Egyptian women participants' have regarding these themes to de-frame the representational confines to their own compass of sociocultural, political and personal located visions. For the purposes of my scope of research I recognized that I had to pay attention to the construction of frame in itself, to avoid compromising depth and committing the same epistemological abstractions I sought to deconstruct. The source of authors of articles was further considered in whether they are women or men, Western, non-Western or from dual nationalities. The authors found to be of Western origin are predominant being more than half: 53% of the total of articles. This is due to the newspaper being English, Western source and while producing knowledge on Egyptian women's rights the authors do not exclusively exclude direct quotes from Egyptian women in their articles or as authors of articles. The authors found to be of Arab origin are a total of 21.4%, and writers with dual nationalities summed up to 17.9%. A total of 75 % women writers and 25% male writers are counted. While productions of frames portraying women are more quantitatively written by women, of the women writers, merely five Arab women (17.9%) constitute these authors (four of which are Egyptian, one with dual nationality Egyptian-Welsh). Out of twenty-one women, 35.7% of these are Western women authors. Of the total amount of articles, 25% are male-written sources and 14.3% of which are Egyptian women authors, considerably less than both women and men nevertheless present in the production of global knowledge.

My limitations to some extent may be seen to enhance the value of the research within complexities of scope, conveying the significance of semi-structured focus, rather than all encompassing studies on Arab women for example in sampling, to de-homogenize knowledge. For future work I would aim to examine women's rights voices across more Egyptian women rather than only through a cohort of highly educated leaderships. This would further investigate complexities in identities and struggles within the local sphere which may perpetuate stigmas against speaking of women's rights and the defense of women's freedom and claims to their own bodies from a more open approach. I also intend to develop a larger comparative analysis across other media and HR rights sources in one contextual moment to compare discourses depicting the same event concerning women's rights from newspapers across non-Western and Western sources, rather than from one source across time scope. The delimitations of my research open more spaces of academic interest which would benefit from ground analysis and exchange under the

topic of representations of women's rights of the South, Arab feminisms and global discussions across these and amongst women and men.

Novelty in the field of women's rights and feminisms is developed through my scientific positioning as both interpreter and producer of the research, in my recognition of my own limitations and most crucially in my choice of a two-fold epistemology to portray what may be abstracted inside the frame and to deconstruct it through women's elaborations on their rights. The systematic effort to de-orient the frame is seen in my critical assessment of one argument from several variables of measurement in quantitative and qualitative data. Originality is compounded by the multicultural and linguistic dimension through English analysis and Arabic interviews, in addition to the recognition of language in forming communicational channels of similarity and barriers of difference. Translation is not the primary focus in my transcription of the interviews but rather a part of scrutiny of how some words may diminish or abstract the original meanings in Arabic and language may influence the politics of the interview.

My consciousness of positioning both in Egypt and as an academic researcher in Portugal sheds light on the multilayered nuances of knowledge production and investigational prospects in between dualities. While my research samples are limited in the sense of one media source newspaper, I sought to delimit this through the time frame and systematic research in addition to the multi-collection of systematically collected articles which are not based on one case study or particular subject regarding Egyptian women's rights. The sample of interviews may also be limited in encompassing only women leaderships' and not carrying a research across more than one Arab country or across more cities within Egypt and larger numbers. With this recognition, for the purposes of the study and understanding of the need to define a frame to establish its' de-positioning, the limitations in sample portray the need for specificity. Having aspired to carry a broader scope in the beginning of my research, an all-encompassing study would have never been complete, as any research cannot claim to be fully representative. Further specificity of topic in media and branch of Egyptian women's rights may have also, to some extent, confined the effort of intercultural exchanges across perceived classifications of difference. Both extremes would have been an epistemological error due to my aim, as people cannot entirely fit under hegemonies and always affiliate with more than one sociocultural event and aspect of their identity.

I furthermore resonated with the research on theoretical and practical levels throughout my deconstruction of the media articles, and in the interview dialogues with women different and similar to myself, and none identical to each other. The evidence of diversity may have been more pre-supposed had the research been positioned to encompass multi-layered perceptions, sources of representation and participants. My own conscious closeness to the research and strive for as much objectivity as possible delineated the research further, where one is never fully detached from their study and yet cannot be muffled within it to be able to analyse the results. I understood through the process my own chance to learn that I may speak with some authority on the conversation I have always felt with great interest in my academic pursuit and in my personal experience as not “fitting” merely within one aspect of my identity nor perceptions of it.

This speculation enhanced my capacities to use my own voice rather than claim scientific facts to secondary knowledge as if it is exempt from my positioning and interpretation. Moreover, I developed a sense of sensitivity in learning the interview process and being hyper-vigilant in avoiding the feeling of extraction, in addition to awareness of this resolution, whether it is contradictory and how it may shape the process. Interviews for the purpose of research have proved essential to the conversation in the thesis which does not remain between the frames and myself, but is enhanced by more Egyptian women. I wish to remain in contact to these women in further exchanges, and reach more networks which discuss the processes and themes which were opened, within and across Egyptian women. I would like to share with the participants the chapter of their work and how much their interventions enriched the thesis discussion. Every voice and answer, and the complexities between them of different definitions, diversified the discussion across perspectives even within one pre-supposed cohort of women. This brought forth signifiers of strength in representations of women who shaped them, rather than ever being captured and wrongly framed by them. I learned from the interviews that my presumptions in the hypothesis were widely explored by the media frames. The interviews can be said to have been more unanticipated, by different answers and participants’ perceptions of me, in addition to some aspects of confidentiality of the discourses in Egypt and the politics of its discussion. While prior to the process I had imagined that complex articulations would be unraveled, I found myself learning from the women as an Egyptian woman myself; during the interviews that not all questions can be pre-dictated or prepared. The flow of conversation and the spontaneity of their

clarifications and questions in response to my own challenged my position as producer of the thesis and led me to self-reflect on my own presumptions four years ago when I started the research. My process defined my scope, and my own experiences and academic background shaped my questions which even then have changed since the first draft of the first questionnaire which was an exposure, and defined my decision against carrying an all-encompassing survey of fixed, impersonal and mass data. The women's interviews fortified the research's main aim in moving beyond my presentiments of the results in both methodological studies. From this speculation, I have developed my understanding of how acknowledgements of one's own production, interpretation, and limitations due to the researcher's gaze, may be a crucial step towards more trueness and fairness in women's rights discourses of knowledge and representation.

Closure

This thesis outlines representations of Arab women with focus on Egyptian women's rights from global representational media frames and from Egyptian women leaderships' accounts. The hypothesis has been to some extent affirmed in the evidence of patterns of languages framing women which were measured and analysed in the media reportage through the key themes in quantitative and qualitative data. My critical analysis was grounded by the theoretical discussion and sought to shed light on the nuances and absence(s) of authorities embracing women's direct interventions in their rights.

Through the interview accounts, perpetuated homogeneous simplifications, victimization and violence in theory and practice were deconstructed by agencies in women's rights in Egypt. Enriching the epistemology from a dual method in addition to the researcher's own dual experience inside and outside the region formed the critical scrutinization of approach and analysis of Frames of Oppression and Double Patriarchies in representational discourses of HR. This research sought to contribute to the expansion of channels of acknowledgement and exchange in between polarized geographies. The study contributes to spaces which move beyond tolerance and inclusion to the full recognition and respect of all individual beings, and decidedly of women of the South and the deconstruction of their underlying sociocultural positionings and realities.

Ethical value and respect of women's essential dignity across territories of patri-colonial occupation directly resists western-centric and male-centric oriented compasses to be de-oriented; to cease to be considered as the other of the other and as the patri-colonial subject. Women are respected as a diversified collectivity and as whole individuals of their own selves when they are loudly present in lieu of being invariably represented. Recognitions of women's agencies and voices in the women's HR discussion offer vital enrichment to feminisms and solidarities globally, and within their local communities among women and men. This is an ongoing process of exchange as knowledge is interlinked and non-absolute in each moment, and across different standpoints and sociocultural perspectives.

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B.M. (Personal Communication (Audio) Oct. 11, 18: 2018)

D.S (Personal Communication (Face and Audio) July 12, 25:2018)

F.A. (Personal Communication (Face and Audio) Oct. 30, Nov. 5: 2018)

J.D. (Personal Communication (Face and Audio) Jan. 7, 22, Feb. 4, 2019)

N.R. (Personal Communication (Audio) Dec. 8, 10, 2018)

Acronym List

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

DP: Double Patriarchy

DPs: Double Patriarchies

FGM : Female Genital Mutilation

FoO: Frames of Oppression

HR: Human Rights

Appendix

Figure 1: International HR Instruments Ratified by Egypt (United Nations General Assembly, 2016)

The Slavery Convention, 1926 • The Protocol amending the Slavery Convention, 1926 • International Labour Organization Convention No. 29 concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour, 1930 • The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948 • The Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, 1949 • The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees • The Convention on the Political Rights of Women, 1953 • The Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, 1956 • International Labour Organization Convention No. 105 concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour, 1957 • The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1965 • The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 • The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 • The 1967 Protocol to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees • The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, 1973 • The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1980 • The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981 • The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984 • The International

Convention against Apartheid in Sports, 1985 • The Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990 • The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990 • The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990 • The outcome of the First Arab High-level Conference on Children, 1992 • The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, 2000 • The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, 2000.

Chapter Five

Figure 5.3: Author's of articles

Percentage of authors Western, non-Arab (53.6%: more than half)

1. Photographer: Colton, Irish M
2. Filipovic, American F
3. Fletcher, British F
4. Ford, British F x 2 articles
5. Harding, British M
6. Kingsley, British M x2
7. IRIN Org, F (Key people) Switzerland
8. Lamble, British F
9. Lyons, Australian F
10. Malsin, American M
11. McGee, American F
12. McVeigh, British F
13. Ratcliffe, British F

14. Rice, British M

15. Tomlin, British F

***Authors that are Arab, Non-Western
(21.4%)***

1. Dayyeh, Jordanian F

2. Hussein, Egyptian M

3. Nowaira, Egyptian F

4. Saadawi, Egyptian F

5. Tadros, Egyptian F

6. Youssef, Egyptian F

***Authors with Dual nationality
combining a country from the North
and South (British, American, French)
with other roots (Egyptian, Pakistani,
Iraqi, Algerian) (17.9 %)***

1. Alibhai, Brit born in Uganda F

2. Bastawy, Welsh-Egyptian F

3. Butt, British-Pakistani F

4. Ramdani, French-Algerian F

5. Salbi, Iraqi-American F

Total number of calculated Articles of
Data Collection: Twenty-Eight

Chapter 6

6.1 Semi-Structured Interview in Arabic and English

دعوة للمشاركة بالرأي

استبيان في اطار دراسة اكااديمية تقوم باعدادها
ياسمين لوزا، ماجيستر علوم اجتماعية، للحصول علي درجة الدكتوراه

مركز العلوم الاجتماعية جامعه كويمبرا، البرتغال

السيدة المصرية وحقوقها الانسانية

التزام بالمسئولية الاخلاقية:

انا، ياسمين لوزا، مؤهلة للتقدم للحصول علي درجة الدكتوراه، اقوم باعداد دراسة تعرض اسلوب تناول وسائل الاعلام الغربية للمرأة المصرية واوضاعها وحقوقها. وتعرض، من جانب آخر، راي وتقييم المرأة المصرية لاوضاعها وحقوقها من خلال عينة ممثلة لفئاتها العمرية والاجتماعية والتعليمية مع ايلاء اهمية خاصة لرأي الرائدات في المجتمع المصري .
الهدف من الدراسة محاولة الرد علي عدد من التساؤلات وبصفة خاصة:

هل تناول وسائل الاعلام الغربية لاوضاع المرأة المصرية يتسم بالعمق ويعكس فهما صحيحا لهذه الاوضاع، وهو ما يقود لسؤال اخر: هل ما يتم طرحه من برامج وانشطة ومشروعات تحت عنوان: دعم حقوق المرأة المصرية تستجيب لاحتياجاتها الاساسية واولوياتها؟

اتعهد بالاحترام الكامل لخصوصية كل من يبدي رأي في هذا الاستبيان وعدم الافصاح عن شخصيهم وقيامي بتسجيل ونقل اراء المشاركين بكل صدق وامانة

ارجو الاتصال بي في حالة وجود اي استفسار

ياسمين لوزا

كمشرفه اكااديمية لياسمين لوزا اشهد بصحة ماسبق



دكتورة تريزة امال كونييه

<<< بداية المقابلة/ الاستبيان >>>

- ١- ارجو ان تقومي بتقديم نفسك
- ٢- ما هو اول ما تفكرين فيه عندما يطلب منك تقديم نفسك كسيدة مصرية: تقليدية، محافظة، منفتحة، متورة...؟
- ٣- هل تعرفين نفسك ايضا كأمرأة عربية الي جانب مصرية؟ لماذا؟
- ٤- من واقع تجربتك العملية، هل هناك مساواة بين الجنسين واحترام لحقوق المرأة المصرية؟
- ٥- ماهي العوامل الرئيسية التي تؤثر علي حقوق المرأة في مصر؟
- ٦- الي اي مدي يؤثر مستوي التعليم علي نشر المعرفة والقبول بحقوق المرأة والتشجيع علي المساهمة في جهود تمكينها؟
- ٧- متي وكيف بدأ ادراكك واهتمامك بقضايا حقوق الانسان وحقوق المرأة؟
- ٨- هل تعتبرين نفسك ناشطة نسائية علي المستوي المجتمعي او حتي علي المستوي الاسري الاضيق ولماذا؟
- ٩- هل تشعرين بارتياح اوحرج لدي مناقشة حقوق الانسان/ المرأة والانتهاكات ضدهم في الاماكن العامة؟ وما هو رد الفعل الذي تتوقعينه
- ١٠- ما هو رايك في الصورة التي تنقلها تغطية وتقارير وسائل الاعلام الغربية؟ هل تنقل صورة حقيقية للرجل العربي والمرأة العربية بصفه عامة؟
- ١١- هل يوجد حواجز او اختلاف بين المرأة المصرية والمرأة من خارج المنطقة العربية؟
- ١٢- ما هي شبكة التواصل التي يمكنك الاعتماد عليها في مساندتك؟ ارجو التوضيح لماذا وكيف.
- ١٣- من وجهة نظرك، ماذا يمكن عمله للوصول لشبكات اقوى من التضامن والحوار ؟
- ١٤- ماهو رايك في الخطاب الاجنبي المطالب باحترام حقوق الانسان، خاصة حقوق المرأة المصرية؟ هل هو قريب ودقيق او منفصل وبعيد عن الواقع المصري؟
- ١٥- هل هناك اعمال فنية مصرية: اغنيات، افلام سنيمائية، كتب، برامج تلفزيونية، مقالات تعبر تعبيراً عميقاً عن التحديات التي تواجهها المرأة المصرية؟

١٦- ارجو اضافة اي توضيحات او تحفظات او نقاط اخري لها تأثير من وجهة نظرك علي مجمل الصورة التي يعكسها هذا الاستبيان.

<<< نهاية المقابلة >>>

شكرا جزيلاً علي اتاحتك الوقت وعلي مساهمتك الثمينة في هذه الدراسة والتي سيكون لها اثر ملموس في خروجها بنتائج موضوعية وصحيحة

اطيب تمنياتي
ياسمين لوزا

Invitation to Participate in Semi-structured, Personal Interview as a Woman Leadership in Egyptian Society and Women's Human Rights: Thesis Fieldwork Research Interviews conducted, translated and interpreted by Ph.D. Candidate: Yasmine Loza, Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, Portugal

Egyptian Women and Our Human Rights

Declaration of Ethical Responsibility

I, Yasmine Loza, am a Ph.D. candidate pursuing my doctoral research between Portugal and Egypt on representations of women in Egypt in Human Rights discourses. The fieldwork encompasses a) global media frames in addition to b) semi-structured interviews with women leaderships. I hereby declare full respect to participants' privacy and anonymity and full dedication to the purity of production of Egyptian women's self-expression in women's human rights. Kindly contact me should you have any hesitations or questions.

Yasmine Loza

As scientific supervisor of Yasmine Loza I declare being true the above information



Dr. Teresa Amal Cunha

<<<BEGINNING OF SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW>>>

1. Please introduce yourself.
2. Where would you place yourself on the political spectrum in Egyptian society?
3. Do you identify as an Arab? - Justify your answer please.
4. What do you think about the current state of gender equality and women's human rights in Egypt?
5. What would you say are the main factors impacting women's rights in our country?
6. Has education been a major factor to publishing knowledge, your commitment to expressions of women's rights and working in the domain of empowerment of women?
7. What has led your interest in human rights and women's human rights?
8. Do you consider (or not) yourself as feminist? Why?
9. Do you feel comfortable discussing human rights/women's rights and the violations against them in public spaces? Why?
10. What do you think about the claim of Human Rights, especially Women's Human Rights being a foreigner discourse disconnected with the Egyptian reality?
11. What is your opinion on "global" media frames' representation of the Arabs, Arab men, and Arab women, generally?
12. Are there barriers between Egyptians and women from outside the Arab region?
13. What network of solidarity do you most rely on as the best medium of support for your agency? Please explain why or how.
14. In your opinion, what needs to be done for stronger networks of solidarity and dialogue?
15. Are there Egyptian works that have been prominent to you? Favourite songs/movies/books/poems?
16. Further comments, ideas and themes for focus discussion groups

<<<END OF INTERVIEW>>>

6.2 Transcriptions of Interviews

D.S	Doctoral Graduate and Mother, Alexandria	July 12, 25, 2018	Personal Communication (Face and Audio)
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1. Please introduce yourself.

Dr. D.S. PhD 2001, Alexandria

2. In what manner/way do you identify as a woman in Egyptian society?

Masreyya w motanawerra: conservative and enlightened.

3. Do you identify as an Arab? - Justify your answer please.

No I do not identify as an Arab woman, but as an Egyptian woman, Egypt is the cradle of civilization and I take pride in that, Mediterranean, more. Repitition of Masr (Egypt)

4. What do you think about the current state of gender equality and women's human rights in Egypt?

Yes there is gender equality and respect to the Egyptian woman. Egypt from the best countries that has gender equality especially regarding to salary which is equal, and in some Western countries it is not

5. What would you say are the main factors impacting women's rights in our country?

Deep pause, thinking, in poorer, education for girls, less, prefer men it and he takes responsibility and they think girls will marry. There is lack of equality in inheritance, which affects women's rights. Takreem, her place, position, makanith-ha – regarded as tying the family together. Hafiz Ibrahim, poet: the mother is a school, in her home, if you educate and prepare her well, you will have sha3b (nation people), that have tayib el a3raki, *assl* origin – *Assl*, hard to translate, many Arabic words, noble character, enriched roots Her word matters and dignity is preserved. *Probing of two terms*:

Takreem; honourful, word has weight and has wisdom, the poem says if you want to have the country good, take care of the woman.

Makanit-ha; her position in the family, not chosen but known even from long time ago even if did not have very high level of education, the woman has wisdom,

tradition, religion, storytelling and memory, conversational, back then even my time, my mother, and her mother, they were respected even if just finished school basics sixth grade basics. Times are changing, but never felt not educated back then, and opinion matters always.

6. Has education been a major factor to publishing knowledge, your commitment to expressions of women's rights and working in the domain of empowerment of women?

Very high extent, *assasi*, fundamental, of course, now women are more highly educated, now takes minister, doctor, judge (one particular), although limited, pilot, engineer, police officer, specific areas of army and competing in sports.

7. What has led your interest in human rights and women's human rights?

From a long time ago I am concerned, *mohtama* - find it important. Since university, as a moment I can define, that was the time I started to see issues of women's rights, human rights, to see discrimination against women, we are speaking during the eighties.

8. Do you consider (or not) yourself as feminist? Why?

Yes, or on family level, both public and private but more so the closer network since have a sister and two daughters, yes, feminist in English.

9. Do you feel comfortable discussing human rights/women's rights and the violations against them in public spaces? Why?

Do not feel very comfortable, the reaction I imagine could be contradiction of opinions, as you do not know in public spaces who is listening, anyone could enter the conversation from a different thought perspective.

10. What do you think about the claim of Human Rights, especially Women's Human Rights being a foreigner discourse disconnected with the Egyptian reality?

Sometimes it is not close or not *dakeek* accurate, it is distant and they do not know, some things could be seen as violation to rights and its not to that extent a violation; for example: conversation about pads, hygiene, the idea of money do not spend money on pads, like *falaheen* do not teach their girls, we don't see it as a correct thing but they look from international concept, do not regard her situation.

11. What is your opinion on "global" media frames' representation of the Arabs, Arab men, and Arab women, generally?

They always portray Arab man as aggressive and Arab woman as a very oppressed reluctant woman, and that is not correct, man and woman are *rasshom b rass ba3d* - same level of heads, see eye to eye, no one is higher than the other, but in films they show the harem, man married to four etc. Even in Islam it is not so common that a man is married to two or more, because economic situation also does not allow.

12. Are there barriers between Egyptians and women from outside the Arab region?

I can even say there are differences between the Egyptian woman and the Arab woman, there are a lot in Arab countries who still don't allow testify in court, not to take high positions, still forbidden to drive. And between Egyptian and the foreign, yes there are differences, restrictions, some restrictions, not like un-conservative relation, the difference is of time constraints of coming home, presence in public sphere may be restricted, what would people say, people worry from what people say, the thing of reputation is not so evident abroad, a woman more liberal may go and come as she pleases, and this is not a thing of age, it is about the woman being in a dignified way, we look at it in a different way, it is sometimes protection of the woman, fear of danger of her, even in reputation, but not because there is more danger in the street, someone takes the woman home, either groups of women together, or man accompanying, not by force like in Arab countries and not have to hide or veil, but more about protection, from possible dangers, *"but in a good way" is repeated several times*. There are also not so bad differences such as gender salary difference, promoted like men and gets same salary, and in west sometimes the woman is not promoted in West or same. For example a Christmas carol they changed "baby its cold outside, stay, its cold, stay, do not go" in the West, the new version is aware in case women are upset, not to be forced to stay or of dangers outside when he was worried about her, why would he say that if she wants to leave should leave, the mentality is ruined.

13. What network of solidarity do you most rely on in as the best medium of support for your agency? Please explain why or how.

Facebook, online, audience is more used to it, not like Twitter or LinkedIn which are more limited and not so used. Facebook has likeminded known people, particular age, others its other platforms, more or less I know my audience not completely public which I consider invasive, I like that I can choose and control what to put in public and to which friends.

14. In your opinion, what needs to be done for stronger networks of solidarity and dialogue?

Conferences are important, more advertisements in the television to give awareness campaigns, an advertisement has a message. For example having so many children is bad for health, you won't be able to educate your children well audience is high which watches television, a short message for awareness, but for more educated can be conferences. For all Egyptians, places of religious worship as Egyptian society is religious one, from side of churches and mosques it is a way to reach people, people cherish what is heard from their religious institute, they know it is something right.

15. Are there Egyptian works that have been prominent to you? Favourite songs/movies/books/poems?

Yes there are many describing what women faces and about women, films talking about divorce, domestic problems and give solutions television public but anonymous so not everyone knows by someone known especially if about STD, divorce, violence to make the people willing to talk. These value privacy not for other reason stigma and exposure so much, there are songs, and there was a program in television called *hayati* (my life) the woman in the house, half is people acting the problem, second half is the host gives solutions like an agony aunt. There is a film based on novel, sorry I refuse to be divorced, talking about a law. The woman can say she can refuse the marriage of another woman and say to him to divorce her, and cannot go behind her back. Director Inas el-Degheidy produces films of taboo and on women's struggles. Hatshepsut of course from the first and

16. Further comments, ideas and themes for focus discussion groups

Initiative of Taa Marbouta is very interesting to show power of the feminine in language and translated to reality. Each society has differences in the gazes, own point of view, from what is acceptable and what is not acceptable, you can find something is very flagrant and unacceptable and in another if doesn't happen may be upset, if no one takes her home, for example paying the fatura, now it can be split, in Egypt if married and if they give the woman the cheque the man can take it offensively. And the woman can think he cannot protect her or not chivalrous but the times are changing.

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N.R.	Teacher, Alexandria	Dec. 8, 10, 2018	Personal Communication (Audio)
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1. Please introduce yourself.

N.R. Sociology Licence *adab*, iktima3i, working as teacher in childcare services non-profit organization, Alexandria

2. In what manner/way do you identify as a woman in Egyptian society?

Open-minded.

3. Do you identify as an Arab? - Justify your answer please.

Yes it is one culture, and we share the language *arabeya*. *Masreyya* Egyptian and Arab *sakafa* culture and traditions the same so yes an Arab.

4. What do you think about the current state of gender equality and women's human rights in Egypt?

Egyptian Woman got a lot of rights over time, education and work, over time the girl used to stay home, and now has the right for education and work. They would prepare for marriage – countryside and rural villages have a slower pace in this change and in the urban cities it is faster.

5. What would you say are the main factors impacting women's rights in our country?

Some organizations deny equality in promotion and leadership positions, and access to employment.

6. Has education been a major factor to publishing knowledge, your commitment to expressions of women's rights and working in the domain of empowerment of women?

To a large extent yes I would say the more the education between people the more acceptances of women's rights.

7. What has led your interest in human rights and women's human rights?

In university times I had role-models which inspired me to defend against discrimination.

8. Do you consider (or not) yourself as feminist? Why?

Feminist like activist, yes but whoever is right, not only about the gender not the woman's word for granted, I support the right opinion regardless of gender.

9. Do you feel comfortable discussing human rights/women's rights and the violations against them in public spaces? Why?

Yes it depends whom you are talking to and where you are, depends on the people and location. I am comfortable because Egyptian society admits the equality in most of its organizations.

10. What do you think about the claim of Human Rights, especially Women's Human Rights being a foreigner discourse disconnected with the Egyptian reality?

Not disconnected but social media sometimes not very accurate in the image they convey about women, the dress codes and social cultural (*Sakafa el Iktimi3aya*) seen as backwards, traditional, and woman staying at home, not the reality. The picture that is translated is not accurate.

11. What is your opinion on "global" media frames' representation of the Arabs, Arab men, and Arab women, generally?

Yes the dress code and social culture are contrasting and different even for us watching.

12. Are there barriers between Egyptians and women from outside the Arab region?

Women have our differences even in Egypt and yes of course abroad there are differences.

13. What network of solidarity do you most rely on in as the best medium of support for your agency? Please explain why or how.

Facebook, online digital activism

14. In your opinion, what needs to be done for stronger networks of solidarity and dialogue?

Equality, no need for women to be more empowered, just right balance of rights. Woman just being a woman does not suffice, should not be mistreated, against abuse but women should be treated the same not less in their mind, and same status.

15. Are there Egyptian works that have been prominent to you? Favourite songs/movies/books/poems?

There are many arts supporting women from more than sixty years, the right to access to the employment and organizations, *Mirati Modeer 3am* (My wife is a general manager) –title doesn't show gender, doesn't change even though gender usually shows in words, general, he was embarrassed and not revealing that she is his wife, she proved that she is capable, *Faten Hamama. Howa w Heya* (Him and

her) showing the challenges between them (man and woman), every day a separate show series with Souad Hosni and Ahmed Zaki, challenges, and in the end the main message is that the woman is the same as the man. Another is Girls, Girls are the best (rhyme in Arabic) and in own opinion, from my own studies at university, there was a professor that said women and men complement each other, continue each other not one is more important than the other, each have their own jobs and neither of which is more important than the other, like they key and the lock, one cannot be without the other. If women can realise that their *takwenha* (biological formation) and *shoghlitha* – worth their will not be conflict. Self esteem is important since a young age, from inside and her own potentials, since they (couple) have a little girl they need to encourage her self-esteem, her role is never less than the other.

Dra Sannaa el Khoury, she was a role model for me, teacher, and if both recognize this, and it helped me in my own life that not because I'm a woman, I need to make it go, sometimes if I used to feel inferior, lack, it helped me since I am young knowing I am a girl, like a boy without feeling a difference. (Sanaa) She is the wife of Atef Gheit, who was head of the Sociology department in the Alexandria University, very inspiring people.

16. Further comments, ideas and themes for focus discussion groups

One more, Aly Galaby, Dr. Mariam Mostafa very elegant smart lady from Alexandria University, in sociology. She would say I am against early marriage under age of twenty, she should finish her education. This is in Iskindiria – Alexandria. The girl of today is the woman of the future, from early childhood.

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J.D.	Civil Society, Cairo	Jan. 7, 22, Feb. 4,2019	Personal Communication (Face and Audio)
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1. Please introduce yourself.

J.D. I am 25, newcomer in the civil society, well-travelled Cairene, foreignly educated. I have been consultant for international organizations as IOM, UN women. I am the founder of an informational online support forum.

2. Where would you place yourself on the political spectrum in Egyptian society?

Questions the question, what do you mean in what manner? I am a woman in Egyptian society. *She clarified the question*. Center-left, quiet liberal and open-minded but respectful of my surroundings. *When I asked if have no other choice* she said no, I could not be respectful, but I choose to be sensitive to the local culture.

3. Do you identify as an Arab? - Justify your answer please.

No I don't. I only identify as an Arab when I am abroad; and people view me as an Arabic speaker. I just don't feel a strong affinity with Arabs. I feel a stronger affinity with Africa and the Mediterranean region.

4. What do you think about the current state of gender equality and women's human rights in Egypt?

I think we have a long way but there are still major issues that need to be addressed and the pace of gender equality is not the same across society, there is inequality amongst women. Some sectors of society are now advocating for more tertiary concerns such as maternity leave, equal pay and promotions, while others are still struggling for basic rights.

5. What would you say are the main factors impacting women's rights in our country?

Impacting for the worse? Hindering them? *She deconstructs the question*. I think there is an unfortunate lack of prioritization which is causing stagnation and that we may be doing better statistically but it's not translating into real improvement in many women's lives.

6. Has education been a major factor to publishing knowledge, your commitment to expressions of women's rights and working in the domain of empowerment of women?

It definitely has of course.

7. What has led your interest in human rights and women's human rights?

A sense of public spiritedness and personal belief that women in Egypt and everywhere deserve to live their lives fully and safely and have the same opportunities as their male counterparts in the workspace and otherwise.

8. Do you consider (or not) yourself as feminist? Why?

I do not know. Now feminism has taken on new connotations so I do not identify as a feminist but I do subscribe to the ideals of feminism. I believe we should all be equalists. I say equalists because we do not want there to be a struggle of women's rights versus the disconcerting men's rights movement which is countering feminist culture.

9. Do you feel comfortable discussing human rights/women's rights and the violations against them in public spaces? Why?

In Egypt? Yes. Maybe if I am speaking in English, discreetly, and with a close group of friends or acquaintances. *Importance of location and language.*

10. What do you think about the claim of Human Rights, especially Women's Human Rights being a foreigner discourse disconnected with the Egyptian reality?

I do not think it should be disconnected from Egyptian reality I think human rights should be an integral part of reality universally. There may be indicators that are not as relevant in our society but that does not mean we should not put effort into understanding how to make them applicable to our sociocultural climate.

11. What is your opinion on "global" media frames' representation of the Arabs, Arab men, and Arab women, generally?

I think there is a lot of generalization in depictions of Arabs and lack of distinction between different Arabs. It has always been quiet caricaturist but now there is a heightened atmosphere of hysteria.

12. Are there differences between Egyptians and women from outside the Arab region?

Of course there are differences all women are unique.

13. What network of solidarity do you most rely on in as the best medium of support for your agency? Please explain why or how.

Youth networks and co-workers and mentor figures that have more experience in the sector. I share knowledge gained on my online support forum and provide a space for others to do the same.

14. In your opinion, what needs to be done for stronger networks of solidarity and dialogue?

Women should have greater say in what kind of progress they would like to see in their local communities and there should be increased collaboration and understanding between women in rural and urban areas in Egypt.

15. Are there Egyptian works that have been prominent to you? Favourite songs/movies/books/poems?

I enjoy reading books by Egyptian authors but not exposed to too much of the local television and film. Important book for me to read was Leila Ahmed, a Border Passage (1999).

16. Further comments, ideas and themes for focus discussion groups

I like that the questions are open-ended and open to interpretation, I like that there is flexibility in the questions and that they invite open-ended answers and encouraged me to consider the issue in new ways.

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B.M.	Egyptian Lawyer, Cairo	Oct. 11, 18, 2018	Personal Communication (Audio)
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1. Please introduce yourself.

B.M.; *mohameyya* lawyer for family courts in Cairo

2. Where would you place yourself on the political spectrum in Egyptian society?

I am conservative and traditional.

3. Do you identify as an Arab? - Justify your answer please.

Of course Egypt is the most important country in “watan el Arabi” - Arab motherland.

4. What do you think about the current state of gender equality and women’s human rights in Egypt?

Going very well and it has improved a lot in these past few years.

5. What would you say are the main factors impacting women’s rights in our country?

The education of children is the main factor.

6. Has education been a major factor to publishing knowledge, your commitment to expressions of women’s rights and working in the domain of empowerment of women?

Yes but I also get my information not only from educational sources but also from the field. Because we have to be up-to-date with situations as they develop day by day.

7. What has led your interest in human rights and women’s human rights?

All my life I have wanted to work in this realm because my aunt was a teacher and from her example I saw that women can be just as strong and even stronger than men and do whatever they put their mind to.

8. Do you consider (or not) yourself as feminist? Why?

Yes I am because the Egyptian woman has to have her rights so can live in a fair society and move forward together on equal-footing, and we should all strive to gain these rights to make it easier for the next generation. There are new laws coming improving the status women.

9. Do you feel comfortable discussing human rights/women’s rights and the violations against them in public spaces? Why?

Yes I feel this is a topic we need to discuss and it is not as controversial as it once was.

10. What do you think about the claim of Human Rights, especially Women's Human Rights being a foreigner discourse disconnected with the Egyptian reality?

No I see that the strongest women in history were Egyptian, from the day of the pharaohs.

11. What is your opinion on "global" media frames' representation of the Arabs, Arab men, and Arab women, generally?

I see that it does not show the trueness of reality in a sufficient way and there is a lack of middle class stories and struggles on screen as there is a tendency to sensationalise the story with extremes.

12. Are there barriers between Egyptians and women from outside the Arab region?

Yes I think there are differences perhaps abroad it is easier to lobby for laws for change and here there is a lot of resistance.

13. What network of solidarity do you most rely on in as the best medium of support for your agency? Please explain why or how.

I am part of Association for Egyptian female lawyers which is a non-governmental organization which aims to activate women's political access and participation and qualified in different spheres of life to change the culture of the local community.

14. In your opinion, what needs to be done for stronger networks of solidarity and dialogue?

They should be more inclusive and not selective or elitist at all, and associational life should be introduced from an early age through after-school clubs and activities.

15. Are there Egyptian works that have been prominent to you? Favourite songs/movies/books/poems?

Oreedo 7alan - I Want A Solution (1975), showing old laws that were not fair to women and after that movie laws changed in favour of women's rights justice, and the Wife Has the Right to the Apartment (1985) comedy portraying divorce struggles for women.

16. Further comments, ideas and themes for focus discussion groups

Activism and law should be more developed and link between them.

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F.A.	Member of local council and Mother, Beni Suef	Oct. 30, Nov. 5, 2018	Personal Communication (Face and Audio)
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1. Please introduce yourself.

F.A., I am a member of local council and mother of boy and girl from Beni Suef

2. In what manner/way do you identify as a woman in Egyptian society?

Masreyya Egyptian and educated I take care of my home, children and work

3. Do you identify as an Arab? - Justify your answer please.

No I am not too concerned with being Arab. I am an Egyptian woman. Some Arabs are like us some are not. We are not all the same

4. What do you think about the current state of gender equality and women's human rights in Egypt?

The law says there is equality but when you ask me about my practical experience not everyone equates between the man and the woman and gives the woman her rights.

5. What would you say are the main factors impacting women's rights in our country?

Old, traditional ideas that people still did not change, and rigid opinions of bad leaders claiming their word truth and they oppress women. Of course the television and cinema show the woman having more rights and fighting and defending them but we do not do everything we see on television.

6. Has education been a major factor to publishing knowledge, your commitment to expressions of women's rights and working in the domain of empowerment of women?

Knowledge has a big role but what is important, is that the people in teaching positions have to be enlightened because some of them, instead of pushing people thought to advance forward, make it regress.

7. What has led your interest in human rights and women's human rights?

In my home, my childhood, I knew that my mother has *karama* (dignity) and every female in the home has *karama*, and this was not a question. My father always took care of my mother and showed consideration trying not to ever upset her. And the mother also carries a lot (of responsibility) and never complains.

8. Do you consider (or not) yourself as feminist? Why?

I do not like the word *nashita* (activist), I am a wise woman and when I see something wrong in front of me I am not silent. No one who sees *zolm* (injustice) is silent about it.

9. Do you feel comfortable discussing human rights/women's rights and the violations against them in public spaces? Why?

No I do not enter these discussions and not involved in politics but since I am in school, my home and in the council when I find something wrong I do not mute myself. I am not silent, and I am not alone, we are many (like me) and *kitafna f kitaf ba3d* (we all have our shoulders together in solidarity).

10. What do you think about the claim of Human Rights, especially Women's Human Rights being a foreigner discourse disconnected with the Egyptian reality?

Who said that? The woman has her rights everywhere and we are not waiting for people from outside to come and tell us about it. It is true that not everyone nor always respects it, but the good people always stand with *el-mazloom* (the one who suffered injustice) and God does not leave anyone behind. Do you dare to think the one who has been wronged, God will overlook them?

11. What is your opinion on "global" media frames' representation of the Arabs, Arab men, and Arab women, generally?

I do not know what they say about us, they know us from where? They should focus on themselves better. Even the people in Cairo know us from where?

12. Are there barriers between Egyptians and women from outside the Arab region?

Yes. The foreigners we find here do not dress like us, they do not behave like us and I do not enter with them in discussions.

13. What network of solidarity do you most rely on in as the best medium of support for your agency? Please explain why or how.

All the people here in the area in the school and council if they see something wrong are not quiet. And we see each other everyday.

14. In your opinion, what needs to be done for stronger networks of solidarity and dialogue? We need to be sure that all teachers in schools are aware and they know how to raise the children. And also there are also political religion that is harsh on women and girls, at their expense.

15. Are there Egyptian works that have been prominent to you? Favourite songs/movies/books/poems?

Yes there are films which when one sees them we see ourselves in them. They see the problems of the woman that her husband is oppressing her, her kids have left her, and the problems of separation, having many children, and the men who cheat and marry more than their wife, or divorce their wife and not give her rights, all this we see in cinema and television. There is Miss Fatimah (1952) about lawyer female who proves herself and Some Sort of Fear (1969) about girl in village who stands up to a domineering man.

16. Further comments, ideas and themes for focus discussion groups

Do not worry about us. Even if we do not have all our rights we are not silent, and our kids will turn out to be more aware than us. Even in the rural areas, do not think that people are ignorant, maybe she does not know how to read and write, but she is awake and she does not agree to *zolm* (injustice).

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