

Sexual Harassment in Greater Cairo: Effectiveness of Crowdsourced Data

Towards A Safer City

لو التحرش
سببه تأخر سن الجواز
أبو العيال
بيتحرش ليه؟

لو التحرش
سببه الفقر
مدير الشركة
بيتحرش ليه؟

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سببه الكبت الجنسي
اللي عنده سبع
سنين بيتحرش ليه؟

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سببه الأمية
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لو التحرش سببه
الانفلات الأمني
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بيتحرش ليه؟

لو التحرش سببه
عدم المرأة ومفاتها
حارثوا
لغال ليه؟

لو التحرش
بيختفي بالتطنيش
بعد سنين سكوت
ما اختفاش ليه؟

لو التحرش
سببه المرأة
بيحارثوا
لغال ليه؟

Towards A Safer City

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HarassMap conducted this research in collaboration with Youth and Development Consultancy Institute (Etijah). The study was supported by the International Development Research Center (IDRC). The opinions expressed here are of the authors and do not reflect the views of the study supporters.

Additional information about the research can be obtained from the link below



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لو التجرش بنبيه الكبت الجنس
اللي عنده سبيع ستين
تجرش ليه؟

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Preface

When women walk in public spaces they are often subjected to different forms of sexual harassment (ogling, verbal commentary, explicit observation, touching and occasionally assault and/or rape). Sexual harassment in public spaces is by far the most common form of sexual violence. It is a pervasive phenomenon and an everyday struggle that Egyptian women have to endure, and in many cases accept, while present in public space. It is often portrayed as a trivial matter with few or no consequences, undermining its profound impact on women's perceptions of themselves, their bodies and their role in society. Street sexual harassment is an endemic social problem that harms women both physically and psychologically and violates their basic rights to safety and mobility.

Sexual harassment is underreported all over the globe. Stigma and shame prevent many targets of sexual harassment from talking about or reporting these crimes. New technologies and social media platforms open up possibilities to overcome some of the barriers to data collection on sexual harassment. The Map, which has become one of HarassMap's methods for generating data and providing women with an alternative way to report sexual harassment, has enjoyed great success in generating debates and discussions around the issue. Moreover, it has provided a venue where both women and men can share experiences and stories as well as their reactions and positions on sexual harassment.

Finally, after two years of hard work, we are presenting the findings of our study that looks at the use of technology in addressing sexual harassment in public space. It examines the use of technologies in reporting incidents of sexual harassment and provides insights into the perceptions and experiences of Egyptian women and men on sexual harassment in Greater Cairo.

Amel Fahmy
Principle Investigator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amel Fahmy', with a stylized, sweeping line extending from the bottom right.

Executive Summary

Crowdsourcing has emerged as an exciting new method for data collection yet its efficacy remains poorly understood. As part of our mission to end the social acceptability of sexual harassment in Egypt, HarassMap has conducted a study to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of crowdsourcing as a data collection method comparing it to traditional data collection techniques, such as questionnaires, focus groups and interviews. This study took place in order to draw a clearer picture of the role crowdsourced data can play both in our work and the work of others, as well as to provide insights into how sexual harassment, which has long been an issue in Egypt, is conceptualized and understood. The research was conducted in six administrative units of Greater Cairo (Helwan, Imbaba, Masr El-gedida, Masr El-qadima, Shubra El-kheima, and Shubra Masr) covering a range of socio-economic backgrounds.

Chapter one discusses in detail the socio-political context of sexual harassment in Egypt, offers a review of the previous literature on crowdsourcing, an outline of the research methodology, challenges faced and limitations of the study, as well as ethical considerations. It also presents the qualitative and quantitative analytical methods employed. The study triangulated crowdsourced, qualitative and quantitative data to provide multiple perspectives and allow for increased confidence in both internal and external data validity. The crowdsourced data was derived from reports received via our online Map while our other data came from focus group discussions, in depth interviews and questionnaires. Our sample included reports from both men and women from across Greater Cairo.

Chapter two provides quantitative analysis of the data collected based on 450 questionnaires (300 completed by women and 150 by men) distributed evenly between six administrative units of Greater Cairo. The quantitative study was carried out in each area in partnership with a local NGO who identified participants based on the study selection criteria.

Major Findings

- A majority of respondents understood “sexual harassment” to refer to more than just rape and/or sexual assault. They further perceived other behaviours, such as ogling, comments, and facial expressions to be acts of sexual harassment. Younger and more highly educated respondents generally employed more inclusive definitions.
- Women regardless of their age group experience sexual harassment.
- 95.3% of female respondents reported having been harassed in the past, most commonly during the afternoon either on the streets (81.4%) or on public transport (14.8%).
- 17.7% of respondents reported having intervened upon witnessing sexual harassment.
- Women reported reacting in various ways to being harassed, most commonly doing nothing followed by “answering back and putting him to shame”.
- Results showed that sexual harassment has a significant psychological effect on the harassed, with 81.8% of respondents reporting feeling upset or disgusted by their experience.

- 77.3% of male respondents reported who belong to different age group having perpetrated sexual harassment.
- 63.3% of respondents attributed sexual harassment to harassers being poorly raised, 48.9% to a lack of religious awareness, 34.2% to sexual repression and 34.4% to a lack of control of the media.
- Few respondents reported filing official reports, typically due to fear of a scandal. Nearly half the sample, however, considered that police stations were the best places to report harassment.
- 83.3% of the study participants said they would not report incidents of sexual harassment using an online reporting system as they did not believe it would be able to guarantee confidentiality.
- Younger respondents were more widely aware of HarassMap.
- Results showed minimal variation in rates of sexual harassment in different geographical areas.

Chapter three provides qualitative analysis of the data collected based on 48 (30 female and 18 male) focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted. The FGDs provided an open forum for participants to discuss sexual harassment, giving the researchers insight into how they perceive the phenomenon. Thematic analysis and qualitative case-oriented open coding were employed to study the data.

Major Findings

- Many participants were comfortable using the expression “**خرش جنسي**” (sexual harassment) however the term “**معاكسة**” (flirtation) was still encountered, with many men using it to refer to “minor” forms of harassment.
- Many more women than men perceived actions such as catcalls, ogling and facial expressions as harassment while male participants generally identified sexual harassment with physical harm.
- Participants frequently attributed sexual harassment to economic and political conditions, citing reasons such as “high unemployment”, “poor religious values”, “lack of manners”, “sexual frustration”, “women’s dress”, and “a lack of security and appropriate legislation”.
- Sexual harassment has been shown to have significant physical and psychological consequences.
- Most female respondents said that they rarely respond to harassment, especially when it is verbal.
- Many female respondents were willing to discuss their experiences of harassment in the FGDs, although some stated they had not discussed the issue with family members due to fears that their mobility or style of dress would subsequently be restricted.
- Participants stated they were reluctant to report harassment to the police and had not done so in the past.
- Men were generally more accepting of the idea of reporting harassment online than women, who often highlighted concerns about safety and anonymity.
- Male participants were generally reluctant to discuss in detail incidents where they had harassed women in the past, although many did admit having done so.

- Younger and more affluent female participants generally understood sexual harassment more broadly and used more gendered language. They openly discussed dominant traditions and discourses limiting the role of women and the prevalence of masculine images that normalise harassment.
- The stigma attached to speaking about or reporting harassment was a recurring theme and seems to be one of the main reasons for low reporting levels.

Chapter four provides comparisons of the narrative accounts derived from the online Map and in-depth interviews (IDIs). Further, the Map reports were taken from our online Map, cleaned and filtered to remove non-narrative reports. Information, such as where harassment occurred and the age and sex of harassers was then extracted and compared to the data from the field questionnaire.

Major Findings

- Different types of harassment were reported more commonly depending on the approach employed with forms such as catcalls and ogling most common in the IDIs and forms such as touching, physical assault and rape more frequent in the Map reports.
- The physical locations in which harassment was reported to occur were similar in both datasets, with most incidents happening on the street followed by on public transport.
- Harassers were overwhelmingly identified as men in both datasets, although in the Map data the sex of the harasser was unclear in the majority of many cases. A majority of harassers were identified as aged 10-24 in both datasets and women aged 18-24 were shown to experience harassment most often in both datasets.
- Harassment was reported as occurring at broadly similar rates in the morning, afternoon and evening (although rarely at night) in the Map data while the vast majority of cases were reported as occurring in the afternoon or evening in the field data.
- The Map narratives exhibited a recurring four part structure characterised by 1) a set-up of the scene, 2) details of the harassment itself, 3) the response of the harassed individual, and 4) the moral. Longer narratives sometimes, but not always, included this forth element of the moral, which offered public comments on harassment in Egypt in General. This structure was not seen in the IDIs where shorter question and answer exchanges were more common than extended narratives.
- A majority of accounts in both the Map and IDI data were 1) brief and included few details of the harassment itself, 2) offered little description, 3) used a mixture of direct and indirect language, 4) tended to repeat the categories of harassment provided on the Map report form and the questionnaire.
- Explicitly sexual language was found in the Map reports than in the interviews where euphemisms and vaguer language were generally favoured.
- Details of the responses taken by the harassed were scarce in the short Map reports however in longer reports descriptions of the reaction taken were often longer than the description of the

sexual harassment event itself. In the IDIs, few details about the responses taken by the harassed were included and the harassment tended to be minimised.

- The idea that harassment is a violation of the women's rights was rarely seen in the Map data but was more common in the IDI data, although it often only emerged after probing.
- Fuller and more comprehensive reports were received via the Map than in the interviews which may suggest that people are more willing to speak about the issue online than in person. This may represent a major advantage of the Map over traditional methods. The Map offers a space where individuals can speak relatively freely and anonymously, although the Map is not a perfect method for data collection as a great deal of information was lacking in the Map data set.
- A limitation of the Map data is that it provides limited insights into differing definitions of harassment. The IDI data showed that definitions of harassment vary substantially with men broadly understanding it to refer to physical acts and women associating it more strongly with verbal harassment.
- Our findings broadly support the hypothesis that the Map is an effective tool for data collection for sensitive issues despite its limitations.

Chapter five presents study recommendations for tackling sexual harassment in Egypt, such as: the need for more qualitative research, constructing positive images around women's presence in the public space, reinforcing of the new legislation on sexual harassment, fostering collaboration between different concerned parties at the national level, promoting a more positive image of police stations as entities that provide services for all Egyptians, and reaching out to the younger population through unconventional methods, such as social media.

HarassMap: Overview



HARASSMAP: WHO ARE WE?

HarassMap is a volunteer-based social initiative founded in late 2010 with the mission of ending the social acceptability of sexual harassment in Egypt. Through the use of multiple technologies, including an online interactive Map, social media, and mobile phones. HarassMap offers individuals numerous avenues through which to report incidents of sexual harassment. HarassMap employs four main inter-linked online and offline approaches in its work to fight against sexual harassment in Egypt:

Map:

The Map utilises both geographic information system (GIS) and SMS technologies to record where incidents of harassment occur across the country, allowing all to see which areas to-date have the most reports on sexual harassment. Individuals that either experience or witness sexual harassment are able to anonymously submit reports directly through the web interface, through Facebook or Twitter, or by sending an SMS using the short code 6069. Additionally, the Map documents the scope and seriousness of the problem by publicizing actual stories of harassment that have been submitted.



In turn, those who submit their stories of harassment receive critical information on psychological and legal services. Map reports and information are displayed via an open source platform to allow Egyptians to obtain information about sexual harassment and support those who are harassed in their neighbourhoods. The Map serves multiple functions, such as: providing testimony by those who experience or witness sexual harassment as to the seriousness of the problem, serving as data for understanding how sexual harassment is evolving in Egypt, providing HarassMap with information that can be used to tailor communication campaigns and research programs, and serving as a tool for community outreach teams to motivate the public to stand up against sexual harassment. Immediately after launching the Map large numbers of reports of sexual harassment were received from people who had witnessed or experienced harassment.

Community Mobilization:



HarassMap actively engages with community members interested in making change by training them to encourage bystanders to speak up against harassment when it occurs. This involves working with shopkeepers, police, doormen, schools and others in creating safe zones and zero-tolerance areas for sexual harassment. Community outreach efforts include the creation of a HarassMap Academy to train volunteers to be leaders in the fight against sexual harassment in their communities, the creation of on-site Mobile Academies to provide additional training for community leaders and new

volunteers nationwide, and monthly outreach campaigns by community teams. When HarassMap launched in 2010, the response was immediate and hundreds of individuals from across the country

volunteered to take part in community efforts. By early 2014, HarassMap had established active, working community teams in many different governorates across Egypt. There are currently more than 1500 volunteers across 20 governorates involved in running outreach campaigns in their neighbourhoods and cities.

Marketing and Communications:

HarassMap has streamlined its message that sexual harassment is both socially unacceptable and a crime, and that it is the responsibility of everyone to speak up against sexual harassment when it occurs. HarassMap argues that, regardless of other factors, the reason sexual harassment continues to exist at these levels is that it is socially accepted. A number of campaigns have been initiated to change perceptions and encourage people to stand up against sexual harassment. The “**بيتحرش ليـه**” (“Debunking Myths”) campaign of early 2013 challenged stereotypes about harassers and the harassed, the joint “**صلاحيها في دماغك**” (“Fix It In Your Mind”) campaign of late 2013 sought to solidify definitions of different forms of sexual harassment and to end victim blaming, while the “**مشر ساكتة**” (“Do not be silent”) campaign of 2014 encouraged women to speak up against sexual harassment that happened to them or others. The campaign messages were disseminated to the public at large through diverse, online-and offline forums and were run in parallel with community outreach efforts in order to encourage those who witness or experience harassment to speak out, report what happened, and break stereotypes with the goal of making a collective stand against sexual harassment in Egypt.

Research Unit:

HarassMap’s research unit has multiple goals underpinning its work. These include generating new and continuously updated knowledge on the evolving state of sexual harassment in Egyptian society, facilitating the development of new programmatic approaches, messages and communication campaigns, and conducting monitoring and evaluation of HarassMap project work overall. Furthermore, the research unit analyses the reports received via the Map on an annual basis, and undertakes various research projects that utilise multiple data collection methods, such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups, in order to understand current social perceptions and public responses to sexual harassment. New information produced through the research unit helps to inform new community outreach techniques and online campaign messaging to end the social acceptability of sexual harassment in Egypt.



¹ This campaign is jointly implemented with Nazra, EIPR, OpAntiSH, Tahrir Bodyguard

1 Sexual Harassment Research: Theoretical Framework



This chapter discusses the socio-political context of sexual harassment in Egypt as well as a review of the existing literature on the uses and effectiveness of crowdsourcing. It then presents the research project, detailing its main objectives, hypotheses and an outline of the research methodology, including the sampling strategy and changes made following an earlier pilot study. We then discussed the challenges faced in the course of carrying out the research and ethical considerations. The chapter concludes by briefly covering the analytical methods employed for the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study.

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN EGYPT

Sexual harassment in public spaces has been a growing problem in Egypt for decades yet remains poorly understood. Few have attempted to explore why sexual harassment exists in the Egyptian context, and why Egypt is unique in the developing world for the prevalence of public sexual violence. Peoples (2008) argues that it began with the liberalization of the Egyptian economy (*infitah*) in the early 1980s, which led to a deterioration of economic conditions for many Egyptians. Economic shifts affected traditional social structures that defined men as breadwinners, husbands and fathers. According to this argument, growing unemployment has delayed the age of marriage, which prevents men (and women) from entering adult worlds. Thus, Peoples argues, a crisis of masculinity has resulted, where men are caught between historic cultural values and modern economic realities. Here, sexual harassment arose as a new way for men to demonstrate their masculinity for other men, i.e. to prove they are still men. Similarly, in her examination of the tie between masculinity and sexuality in the Middle East, Ilahi (2008) claims that the male performance of violence through acts of sexual harassment allows men to exercise dominance over women and is intimately tied to patriarchal and heterosexual normativity. Other factors that might contribute to the existence and the continuation of sexual harassment in Egypt have not been examined in the existing literature. For example, changes in urban structures, internal and external migration, existing social norms, constructed images of women in the media and law, and the interplay of all of these factors over a particular period of time are not fully explored.

In recent years, a number of events have occurred that have helped to spread awareness of the sexual

harassment problem in Egypt. The Eid al-Fitr mob harassment in 2006 was one of the major events to bring sexual harassment to the attention of the Egyptian media (Amar, 2011; Ebaid, 2013; Ilahi, 2008; Peoples, 2008). The impetus for the Eid attacks, as discussed by Rizzo et al (2012), was the selling out of a movie at a theatre in downtown Cairo. Men who were turned away from the theatre “went on a rampage, first attacking the box office and then assaulting women who happened to be there. These assaults lasted for five hours and included reports of women being grabbed, molested, attempts to rip off their clothes, and attempted rapes.” The 2008 court trial of Noha Roushdy also garnered wide media attention, offering the first legal judgment against a harasser in Egypt. Roushdy was followed and repeatedly fondled by a truck driver in public yet, according to Ilahi (2008), when she reported the incident she faced censure from police for bringing a case of harassment against the driver. Roushdy persisted and a court ultimately sentenced the driver to a fine and three years in prison (Ilahi, 2008).

The Egyptian Center for Women’s Rights (ECWR) conducted a study in 2008, based on a sample of more than 2000 respondents, split equally between men and women in three governorates, Cairo, Giza and Qalubiya, finding that 83% of Egyptian female respondents and 98% of foreign female respondents claimed to have been sexually harassed. The study highlighted seven main forms of harassment: “touching, noises..., ogling of women’s bodies, verbal harassment..., stalking or following, phone harassment, and indecent exposure” (Hassan et al., 2008:15). They found that harassment was experienced by women of all ages, regardless of form of dress and occurred most commonly on public transportation. The

study recommended that mechanisms were needed for women to report incidents of harassment, as well as to combat the prevalent victim blaming deterring women from reporting (Hassan et al., 2008).

Despite these events, it was not until the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 that discourses on sexual harassment were mainstreamed. The public became more aware of new discourses around sexual harassment, and it became less taboo. From 2011 onwards, mob assaults of female protesters became more prominent and were widely believed to be used as a tool to prevent female political participation in public space. This led to increasing discussions on the issue and a growing interest from civil society, the media and academia on public sexual violence in Egypt. New studies on sexual harassment were carried out, examining multiple aspects of the issue. Paul Amar's (2011) study of state violence looked at the state's use of sexual violence to subdue protest, arguing that the state had actively co-opted rights-based discourses to undermine

growing protest movements by linking protestors to terrorist movements. When the participation of women from diverse backgrounds in protests made it impossible to classify protestors in these terms, he argues the state attempted to scare women away from participating in politics by paying *baltigiyya* (hired thugs) to assault them. This argument finds support in pronouncements by Egypt's Shura Council in early 2013 that women protesting in Tahrir bore the responsibility of being harassed and likened female protestors to prostitutes, as reported by *Al Masry Al Youm* in February 2013. At the same time, various political parties, such as the Nour and Freedom and Justice Parties, called for women "not to stand among men during protests" (Egypt Independent, Feb 2013). The nationalist Wafd Party similarly called on women to take responsibility when deciding to attend public protests. Such arguments undermine women's open participation in public space and hold women responsible for the violence that they experience, continuing long standing practices that blame women for their harassment.



A study conducted by UN Women was released in early 2013 (El Deeb, 2013) which, like its ECWR predecessor, provided statistics on sexual harassment but from a larger sample including eight governorates in both rural and urban contexts. Their data showed that 99.3% of all women surveyed reported experiencing sexual harassment, most commonly in the form of touching, followed by whistling and verbal abuse. More than half of the respondents claimed that girls and women of all backgrounds and ages were subject to harassment, and that harassers could be of any age and profession. They identified the street and public transportation as the most common locations for sexual harassment. This study also explored how people responded when harassed with a majority of respondents reporting that they did not take action and acted as if the harassment did not happen. Most respondents indicated that sexual harassment was so common that responding was not worthwhile. The majority of study respondents reported that the solution to the problem lay in improved legal enforcement and media censorship to limit imagery that could lead to sexual harassment.

The past few years have witnessed the rise of many NGOs and independent initiatives to

combat sexual harassment. Vickie Langohr (2013) examined the emergence of new movements against sexual harassment, particularly those focused on protest harassment, such as Tahrir Bodyguards and Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment (OpAntiSH), the latter of which was comprised of individuals from various civil society and activist backgrounds, including HarassMap, Nazra for Feminist Studies, and the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR). From late 2012 and into 2013, both organizations implemented interventions during mass demonstrations in Tahrir Square to pull women out of situations of harassment and rape. Further, OpAntiSH provided a hotline to report incidents of harassment and/or assault during the demonstrations at which they were active, and offered psychological and medical support to targets*.

Despite the efforts exerted by various initiatives and some NGOs to combat sexual harassment in public space and even after the notable attention of different groups on the issue, sexual harassment is still a persistent phenomenon in Egypt. It is an everyday struggle faced by Egyptian women that endangers their safety, limits their mobility and obstructs their public participation.

BACKGROUND ON CROWDSOURCING: USES AND CHALLENGES

Referred to variously as collective intelligence, citizen science, open innovation, or volunteered geographic information, crowdsourcing emerged between 2004 and 2006 as a new web-based strategy for both collecting and analyzing data, using both specialist and non-specialist labour (Howe, 2006). Numerous definitions have been applied to crowdsourcing, including those promoting organizational, conflict-resolution and disaster-relief perspectives. Such definitions have focused on using an expanded network of individuals to generate information or solutions for various problems that can be product, research or crisis related, as well as to generate and geographically map this information quickly for timely response



(Estellés-Arolas and González-Ladrón-de-Guevara, 2012; Barbier et al., 2012; Hester et al., 2010; Kahl et al., 2012).

* We have used the word "target" to avoid using the word "victim" in some parts of the report

Key to crowdsourcing strategies is the labour of members of the general public, or lay labour which contributes to new innovations and unique solutions that specialist labour overlooks (Estellés-Arolas and González-Ladrón-de-Guevara, 2012; Lane, 2010). As an asynchronous activity, people are able to participate in crowdsourced projects at their own pace and it allows for the “aggregat[ion] of disparate flows of ideas in one stream” (Barbier et al., 2010: 2). According to Howe (2006), crowdsourcing has replaced outsourcing as a way of obtaining cheap labour, expanding the labour force, thus increasing competitive advantage. Moreover, the labour of “lead users” has become invaluable to corporations in new product development, which Lane also refers to as the democratization of production (2006: 9-10)

Crowdsourcing has been utilised for disaster and crisis relief to efficiently “promote well-being, survival and recovery during the acute phase of an emergency” (Hester et al., 2010: 1). After the 2010 Haiti earthquake, for example, the US State Department, Ushahidi, Frontline SMS, the international disaster-relief organization InSTEDD, local telecom company DigiCel, and local NGO CrowdFlowr, worked together to set up an open-sourced crisis response system. A short code was established and continuously broadcast, allowing earthquake survivors to send free text messages to identify their location and the emergency issue. Thousands of crowdsourced Creole-speaking volunteers around the world were enlisted to translate and geocode the ensuing messages. Translation and geotagging ensured the validity of the text messages and mapped the location of survivors. Despite the limitations of the approach, they contend that crowdsourcing relief efforts allowed for increased scale of assistance, which in turn allowed for greater coordination of efforts and analysis of messages received (Hester et al., 2010).

According to Kahl et al. (2012), the crowd serves two main functions in a crisis situation: to provide information (crowdsourcing) and to receive information (crowdfeeding). To highlight both roles of the crowd, the authors cite the uses of crowdsourcing for early warning and violence prevention during the Kenyan elections in 2008

and in Zimbabwe where it was used to keep up communication networks regarding human rights-based abuses (Kahl et al., 2010: 7). The authors here argue that the success of any crowdsourcing system is dependent on the collaboration of multiple stakeholders in ensuring the system works properly and efficiently. Crowdsourcing offers the potential to democratize processes of knowledge generation about critical situations, as well as to develop solutions that help to eliminate problems. This is important given that governments often lack the resources (or will) to respond to people’s immediate needs.

While crowdsourcing has become a valuable tool for corporations, governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations, it is not without its limitations. The use of lay individuals as a source of data creates difficulties, arising due to a lack of domain specific knowledge and expertise (Lukyanenko and Parsons, 2012). This is also problematic for crisis relief if crowdsourced labour does not have sufficient knowledge of a region to allow for accurate mapping, or is unable to complete the translation process. Generating representative datasets through open-source approaches is also challenging, if not possible.

Schmidt (2010) assesses crowdsourcing methods as a data collection strategy in social research, highlighting the problems of sampling bias and controlling the demographic profile of the participant pool. Both are complicated by open platforms where anyone can participate in a project. Moreover, despite its relatively wide reach, open platforms do not allow for random sampling and the generalization of results. There may not be adequate breadth of domain knowledge within the crowdsourced population for researchers to develop theories about how social systems operate. With respect to data analysis, Willet et al. also note that when datasets are made public for analysis, “motivated users can visualize, share, and discuss datasets but, as we’ve noted, few of the visualizations exhibit high-quality analytical discussion” (2012: 2). Other problems with data validity include the readability of reports and messages, the amount of information that respondents provide, and verifying whether messages are genuine. Most scholars agree that

setting minimum criteria on crowdsourced data is critical and that the triangulation of multiple datasets is essential in the verification process.

Yet, the value of crowdsourcing as a method to collect data on sensitive issues, like sexual violence, is that such online platforms may contribute to “disinhibition” and the revealing of more information (Suler, 2004). In-person interactions in the data collection process may be complicated by social and cultural norms or cues that negatively impact how much information is revealed. Online platforms may provide participants with a range of senses that disconnect them from the impact their statements may have on their everyday realities (Suler, 2004). Online platforms have the potential to provide relatively safe spaces for people to discuss topics that might not otherwise be possible in other public forums.

That the Internet is a preferred space for discussing deeply personal issues is evident in a growing body of research (Finn, 1999; White and Dorman, 2001; Subrahmanyam and Greenfield, 2008). For example, Suzuki and Calzo (2004) analysed over 200 messages from two teen online discussion forums focused on general health and sex-related issues, finding that teens used websites to discuss a wide-range of sensitive issues, including dating, sexual identity, sexual intercourse, pregnancy, and body image. Byrne-Evans (2013) analyzed the use of open-source platforms by the UK police administration to inform citizens of crimes in their area, in the hope of facilitating reporting. The authors noted the skewed nature of the dataset arguing that “... [C]ertain types of crime are still reported to the police more than others as a

result of, for example, economic and insurance incentives. Police may feel that the dominant problems in a neighbourhood are car crime and burglary, while sexual assault, domestic violence and similar crimes remain under-reported” (Byrne-Evans et al., 2013: 2).

This previous work suggests that crowdsourcing may offer a powerful new tool for social researchers but that significantly more research is needed to identify exactly where it should fit in the toolkit. This research project, then, seeks to understand how effective a tool crowdsourcing can be for obtaining information on sensitive topics, like sexual harassment, and to examine how data acquired through crowdsourcing differs from that acquired using traditional techniques. We argue that online open source platforms have the potential to elicit more detailed stories of sexual harassment than person-to-person settings, and may provide additional perspectives on sexual harassment that would otherwise be missed in traditional research. We utilise a unique triangulation method to compare the kinds of data that people are willing to reveal in person and online. What follows is a discussion of the objectives, research questions and methods, challenges, ethical considerations and analytic approaches employed in the project.



Report harassment with what happened and where

SMS 6069 or [click here](#)

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

The purpose of this research project is to examine the usefulness of crowdsourcing as a data collection strategy for sensitive issues, such as sexual harassment, in developing countries. How does the content of crowdsourced data differ from the content of data collected through traditional qualitative and quantitative methods?

Objectives

Reviewing the advantages and disadvantages of crowdsourcing in developing countries

1. Evaluating content received via crowdsourcing, as well as reporting bias against data derived from traditional methods of data collection
2. Generating and disseminating recommendations for the collection and appropriate use of crowdsourced data for development issues
3. Producing a study on sexual harassment in Egypt as an example of mixed-methods research drawing on crowdsourcing

Hypotheses

1. Crowdsourcing can be a useful form of data collection for sensitive issues in developing countries due to its low cost, logistical ease and anonymity
2. Individuals who experienced or witnessed severe sensitive incidents (such as sexual assault or large-scale corruption) will be more willing to report the occurrence of those incidents through an anonymous, crowdsourced form of data collection than they would through traditional quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques
3. Individuals who experienced or witnessed sensitive incidents (such as harassment or corruption) will be more willing to report the details of such incidents through an anonymous, crowdsourced form of data collection than they will through traditional quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques

RESEARCH METHODS

This study involved triangulating crowdsourced, qualitative and quantitative data on sexual harassment. Data triangulation is a widely supported method in the social sciences for increasing confidence in the validity of study results. Deriving from navigation and military strategies that use multiple reference points to locate an object's exact position, multiple viewpoints allow for greater accuracy. Similarly, organizational researchers can improve the accuracy of their judgments by collecting different kinds of data bearing on the same phenomenon. Triangulation is broadly defined by Denzin (1970) as the use of more than one method for gathering data on the same Phenomenon.

This study triangulated methods of data collection, including focus groups, interviews, and

questionnaires. Which were then compared to reports derived from the open-source Map, to build a richer understanding of the phenomenon of sexual harassment in Egypt, and because triangulation has the added benefit of providing four datasets on the same issue. The increased number of datasets allows for content analysis of the produced data, an examination of reporting bias, and an assessment of the potential for crowdsourcing to provide data that is difficult to obtain using traditional data collection methods (e.g. a person may be willing to provide a more detailed account of an incident of harassment through an anonymous online report than they would through a face-to-face interview or even a self-administered survey).

The methods of triangulation includes:

Crowdsourced Reports

These reports were received from several different sources:

- The HarassMap online Map at www.harassmap.org
- HarassMap's social media pages on Facebook and Twitter at <https://www.facebook.com/HarassMapEgypt>, <https://twitter.com/harassmap> and email at report@harassmap.org
- SMS messages sent to the short number 6069

The most common form of reporting was the form on HarassMap.org followed by SMS, except when HarassMap held twitter campaigns when most reports were received by tweet. HarassMap has received more than 1500 reports since its establishment in 2010. For the purpose of this comparative study we only included the following: reports on incidents of sexual harassment in Greater Cairo, reports that mentioned the place and time where the incident of harassment occurred, reports received via the above mentioned channels, and reports received from October 2010- June 2013.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

The open discussion format of this data collection technique allowed researchers to identify terminologies used, conceptual categories, and myths with regard to sexual harassment. Further, it interpreted controversial issues, examined inconsistencies and variation that exists among the participants in terms of beliefs, experiences and practices and explored the meanings of quantitative findings that cannot be statistically explained. A total of 48 focus group discussions (30 female and 18 male) were conducted in six communities. Each focus group consisted of 7-10 participants.

Sampling criteria for participation in an FGD included:

- Married and unmarried women between 18-

45 years of age

- Married and unmarried men between 18-45 years of age
- Working knowledge of computer and internet use
- Educated to secondary level or above
- Willingness to participate

In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)

This method provided exhaustive and varied knowledge about individual experiences, opinions and perceptions on sexual harassment, which could not be captured by the FGDs. A total of 72 in-depth interviews (48 female and 24 male) were conducted with men and women from each of the six areas studied. A loosely structured guide was developed, tested and used during these interviews. Sample inclusion criteria for the IDIs were the same as above.

The Questionnaires

A questionnaire with a mix of closed and open-ended questions was deployed. Participants were asked about their perceptions of sexual harassment, witnessing and experiencing harassment, and whether they had reported incidents of sexual harassment. Participants were further asked to provide detailed information on when, where and how these incidents occurred, as well as the feelings that these incidents generated and how they responded or witnessed others respond. A total of 450 questionnaires (300 to women and 150 to men) were administered in six different areas. Sample inclusion criteria for the survey were the same as those used in the FGDs.



SAMPLING STRATEGY

Since Map reports were already received prior to the start of the research project, ensuring data comparability with questionnaires, focus groups, and in-depth interviews was critical. Having the Map reports greatly influenced our sampling strategy for field data collection.

Fieldwork was conducted in the three governorates which together comprise Greater Cairo: Cairo, Giza and Qalubiya. Each governorate was further subdivided for our analysis into smaller areas, following local police administrative units (qism/aqsam), in line with the approach adopted by the Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS). Each qism was labelled “high”, “medium”, or “low”, based on the number of Map reports received from that area, divided by its total population to give an indication of the frequency of harassment in that area adjusted for population. The number of reports was calculated utilizing information contained and geocoded from the Map or within report descriptions. Two administrative units from each of the “high”, “medium” and “low” categories were chosen, giving a total of six areas in which data collection took place. The sampling strategy followed a purposive sampling approach to ensure the presence of active partner NGOs operating in all researched areas. Another consideration was that only relatively safe areas were included, with the consequence that no data was collected from Downtown areas due to the frequency of protests and violence in these areas during the period of data collection (Summer 2013).

Furthermore, we selected one predominantly affluent area and one predominantly less affluent area from each category to make the sample more representative by ensuring that respondents were from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. These decisions were made partly on the basis of an earlier pilot study as explained below. The following six aqsam were ultimately chosen: Helwan, Imbaba, Masr-El-gedida, Masr El-qadima, Shubra El-kheima, and Shubra Masr. The following criteria for selecting individual participants in the study we employed:

- Married and unmarried women between 18-45 years of age
- Married and unmarried men between 18-45 years of age
- Educated to secondary level or above
- Computer literate and regular internet users
- Residents of the researched areas or frequent visitors of the areas

These criteria were shared with partner NGOs who then identified appropriate participants for the study, mainly from amongst their service users.



² The minimum age was set to 18 for the field data due to ethical issues concerning gaining parental consent forms from minors

RECRUITMENT OF NGOS AND DATA COLLECTORS

Within each neighbourhood, we partnered with local NGOs to identify study participants. We developed specific criteria for the purposive selection of NGO partners, including being of a particular size and actively engaging with the grassroots community. For the Pilot Phase, the NGO chosen in Shubra El-kheima was “The National Center for Human Rights”, and in El-haram, “The Egyptian Democratic Institute”. In the course of the main Phase, the NGOs we partnered with included “The Egyptian Association for Family Development” in Imbaba, “Helwan Foundation for Community Development” (Bashayer) in Helwan, “Leaders for Development and Environment” (El Ra’idat) in Shubra El-kheima, “Caritas” in Shubra Masr, and “The Association for the Development and Enhancement of Women” in Masr El-qadima. Finding an NGO in Masr El-gedida working at the grassroots level was difficult and necessitated partnering with other entities, to complete the qualitative portion of the research. Before the fieldwork commenced, memoranda of understanding and contracts for working with

NGOs were developed. Contracts were signed with each NGOs, and we created a work plan for data collection. The NGOs were provided with a list of criteria for the population sample as previously mentioned.

Prior to the start of fieldwork, we organized a training course for field data collectors. Topics covered included research methodology, the survey instrument (the questionnaire), the focus group discussion guide, the in-depth interview guide, and ethical procedures. Data collector training was conducted again following the updating of research instruments after the pilot phase. Training took place over two days: the first day focused on the quantitative data collection strategy and the second day focused on the qualitative strategy. Following the training workshops, we developed a set of criteria to select the best, most qualified data collectors who demonstrated gender sensitivity to conduct main phase data collection. During the training, the data collectors provided feedback on the research instruments, which were used to make further changes.

ADJUSTMENTS BASED ON PILOT PHASE FINDINGS

A pilot study was conducted to test the study methods, research instruments and sampling strategy. The pilot phase took place in two areas, Shubra El-kheima and El-haram. Findings were analyzed and accordingly several changes with regard to study sample, size, tools were discussed and implemented. Below is a detailed discussion on these changes:

Sampling – Following the pilot phase, feedback discussions with the research advisory group and field data collectors were conducted. Based on suggestions provided in these discussions, the sample size was increased from three to six administrative units to provide a broader and more representative sample. Moreover, increasing the sample size consequently allowed for a broader socioeconomic base within the research

population, which had proven problematic in the pilot phase when it was observed that class played a significant role in shaping public perceptions of sexual harassment. Moreover, based on difficulties encountered in the pilot phase with regard to locating NGOs/CBOs working in the selected areas, random selection of administrative units was abandoned in favour of a more purposive sample.

Participants – The number of male informants was increased based on advisory group feedback following the pilot study in order to better understand the variability within sexual harassment events in Egypt and how harassment impacts more than just the female population. Similarly, the overall participant sample was increased from 300 to 450 questionnaires (300 female and 150

male surveys), 24 to 48 focus group discussions (30 female and 18 male), and 51 to 72 in-depth interviews (48 female and 24 male). This increase in sample size resulted from having an increased number of sampled areas.

The sampling criteria for participation were also adjusted based on new knowledge obtained during the pilot phase. The original sampling criteria for participants were that individuals must be between the ages of 18-45, they had to have access to and be knowledgeable about computer and internet use, and they had to have a minimum of secondary level education. Observing these criteria proved challenging for NGO partners as

most of their target groups and beneficiaries were of lower levels of education and did not know how to use the internet. Therefore, an expansion was required to include NGO employees living in the selected areas as well as their contacts who fulfill the study criteria.

Research Instruments - Research tools were amended based on pilot phase findings, as well as comments from the data collectors and advisory group. More specifically, separate surveys were developed and deployed to men and women in order to include a section on males as harassers within the male survey.



RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

It is important to highlight a number of limitations. First, it is undoubtedly likely that not all reports received from a given area were sent in by residents of that area. Despite this, however, a major assumption of this research was that the number of reports received from each area was still reflective of the frequency of harassment within each qism. Underlying this assumption was that residents were exposed to a similar level of harassment as non-residents.

Second, only the population aged 10-45 was considered when calculating the prevalence of

harassment in a given area. This age range was identified as most at risk from sexual harassment according to our Map data. We included girls as young as 10 on the basis of the 2009 Survey of Young people in Egypt (SYPE) which found that 23.7% of girls aged 10-14 had experienced sexual harassment.

Third, since reports received via our online Map are submitted using computers and the internet, it was logical to assume that poorer segments of the population with lower literacy levels would have difficulty in submitting reports in this way

and would thus be underrepresented in the Map data. Such individuals were not, however, excluded when we calculated the prevalence of sexual harassment in each qism for two significant reasons: 1) large numbers of illiterate people are elderly and thus already excluded from the age groups sampled, and 2) the number of internet users which is provided yearly by the Egyptian Ministry of Communication and Information Technology is not divided by administrative units (aqsam), therefore making it very difficult to factor into the sampling strategy.

Challenges encountered in the course of this research included working with partner NGOs in different administrative units. Often, NGO partners were hard-pressed to find research participants that met all of the sampling criteria. This resulted in numerous cancellations and rescheduling of focus groups and interviews

once more suitable participants could be located. In Masr El-gedida, locating an NGO partner to select the sample population proved difficult. A number of NGOs, and even religious entities, were approached, not all of whom could provide assistance.

Another challenge was recruiting qualified data collectors. Data collectors with the qualifications needed for the research tended to be hired by larger research centres leading to high staff turnover. Also, obtaining administrative maps for Greater Cairo in order to distribute the areas and choose the study sample proved to be a very difficult and expensive exercise so instead we relied on GIS. Lastly, the climate of protest in Egypt at the time necessitated the cancellation and rescheduling of a number of surveys, focus groups and interviews.

DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative Field Data – Data collected in the field from questionnaires were manually entered into CSPro. For verification, 10% of collected questionnaires were re-entered and consistency guidelines were developed to ensure data accuracy and minimize the percentage of error. SPSS was used to generate statistical tables and cross-tabulations of data.

Quantitative Map Data – Map data was imported into Excel where pivot tables were generated to cross-tabulate data and build statistical graphs. Quantified data includes types of sexual harassment, location (governorate and public venue), the age and sex of those who experience harassment and the approximate age of the harasser.

Qualitative Field Data – Data coding of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews was performed manually. A coding guide was generated in order to systematically assess the existence of certain facets of sexual harassment in the responses of participants. From within these codes, major themes were developed. Descriptions submitted to the Map via the online web report form, email, social media (Facebook and Twitter) as well as SMS were likewise manually coded along the same lines as the field data. Information derived from both field and Map data were then compared to assess the range of overlapping information and/or gaps in the various methods employed to collect data.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order to carry out this research HarassMap obtained the approval of Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) as well as received exempted status through AUC's Institution review board (IRB) process.

Protection of Subjects' Privacy – For qualitative data collection, field notes and interview notes were recorded electronically then encrypted to protect the information concerning informant identity and location. All focus groups and in-depth interviews were audio recorded. The recorded tapes were stored in a locked filing cabinet until transcription was completed and then erased. Only senior researchers had access to the filing cabinet.

Steps to Avoid Coercion – We informed all participants about the names and affiliations of the research team, the objectives and expected outcomes of the study, issues to be discussed, how long it would take, potential risks as a result

of participating, as well as their right to terminate their participation at any time. Potential subjects were informed that their participation was strictly voluntary and that there would be no negative consequences if they refused to participate. There were no payments or gifts for participation, thereby avoiding economic coercion.

Potential Risks – The main risk involved in this study was invasion of privacy and the possibility of experiencing psychological discomfort. To minimize these risks, interviews were conducted in private locations, such as NGO offices, notes were encrypted so that the identity of the subjects was protected, and no information from any interviews was revealed by the researchers during other interviews. Also participants were told they could not discuss responses from other subjects and that information discussed in the group would not be discussed outside of the research setting.



2 Sexual Harassment in Egypt: Facts and Figures



This chapter provides an analysis of quantitative data collected via questionnaires distributed to a sample of males and females in six administrative divisions of Greater Cairo, including, Helwan, Imbaba, Masr El-gedida, Masr El-qadima, Shubra El-kheima, and Shubra Masr. The male and female study sample was equally divided among these six areas. A total of 75 questionnaires were completed in each of the six areas (50 by females and 25 by males), bringing the total sample to 450 questionnaires (300 completed by females and 150 by males). Separate questionnaires were used for females and males, which were identical with the exception of an additional section in the male questionnaire on perpetrating sexual harassment. The following is an illustration of the sections of the two questionnaires.

Table (1) Questionnaire Sections		
No.	Female questionnaire	Male questionnaire
First	Basic characteristics of the female respondent	Basic characteristics of the male respondent
Second	Knowledge and conceptualisation of sexual harassment	Knowledge and conceptualisation of sexual harassment
Third	Witnessing sexual harassment	Witnessing sexual harassment
Forth	Experiencing sexual harassment	Experiencing sexual harassment
Fifth	Reporting sexual harassment	Perpetrating sexual harassment
Sixth	Crowdsourcing as a method of data collection	Reporting sexual harassment
Seventh		Crowdsourcing as a method of data collection

The questionnaire utilised different types of questions: it included closed-ended and open questions. The closed-ended questions, which were mainly multiple responses, required data collectors to be well-trained on probing for more information. An “other” item was added at the end of the close-ended questions to record any other answers that were not listed. All answers generated from the “other” item, as well as the open questions, were grouped and coded.

The chapter presents and discusses the following issues: the characteristics of respondents, how sexual harassment is conceptualized, the characteristics of the people who are exposed to sexual harassment, the places and times where harassment occurs, the characteristics of harassers, the reasons for the existence and perpetration of sexual harassment, and finally the attitudes of respondents reporting incidents of sexual harassment, whether they experienced or witnessed it.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Questionnaires were completed by respondents aged 18-45. This age range was divided into five groups with 47.1%, almost half of the sample, in the 18-24 age group, and 19.8 % in the 25-29 age group. The smallest group, was the 40-45 age group, which accounted for 8.2% of the sample.

All study respondents had at least completed secondary school education: 47.8% of them had completed secondary or upper intermediate level and 52.2% held a university degree or higher qualification. A majority of the study respondents

Table (2) Age Distribution of Respondents			
Age	Females	Males	Total
18-24 years	42.3%	56.7%	47.1%
25-29 years	20.7%	18.0%	19.8%
30-34 years	15.3%	12.0%	14.2%
35-39 years	12.0%	8.0%	10.7%
40-45 years	9.7%	5.3%	8.2%

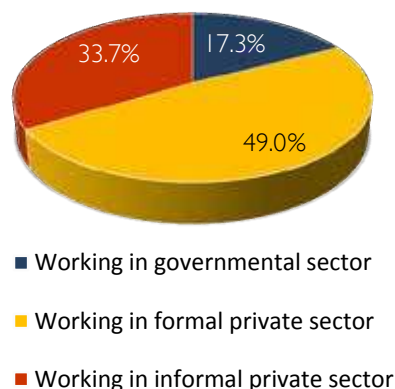
(88.7%) attended government schools while the rest of the sample (11.1%) attended private schools. Among the members of the study sample, only one respondent reported having received international education.

³ Based on the age distribution used in the (SYPE) Youth Survey, 2010.

A review of the marital status of the study participants shows that the majority (62.2%) had never been married, 35.6% were married and the remaining 2.2% were divorced or widowed.

With regard to the respondents' employment status, almost half the respondents reported they were currently employed. Figure (1) illustrates the distribution of currently employed respondents according to the sector in which they work, showing that almost half of the respondents were employed in the private sector.

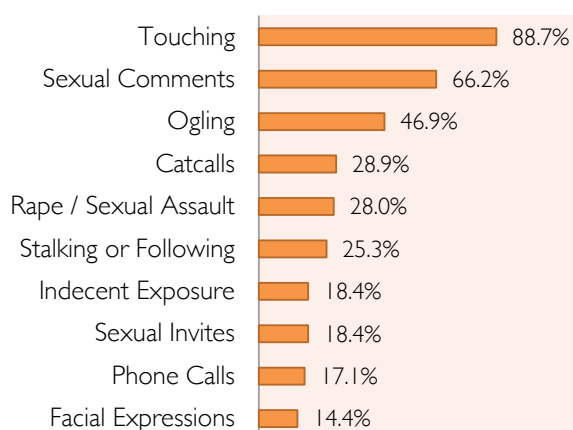
Figure (1): Respondents' occupational status by sector



DIFFERENT CONCEPTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Conceptualizations of sexual harassment, from the viewpoint of both female and male study respondents, are no longer confined to rape, touching, invitations, and sexual comments, but have come to include other forms harassment which are not necessarily of a sexual nature. The results of the study demonstrate that a large proportion of female and male respondents consider ogling and catcalling to be types of sexual harassment.

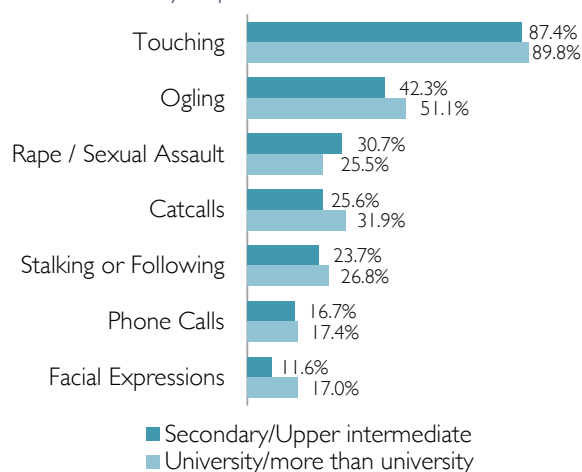
Figure (2): Concepts of respondents on sexual harassment



The study results show that the respondents in the 25-29 age group, males and females, had a broader conception of sexual harassment than respondents in the 40-45 age group. For example, 37.1% of respondents in the 25-29

age group emphasized that catcalls are a form of sexual harassment, compared to 18.9% of the respondents in the 40-45 age group.

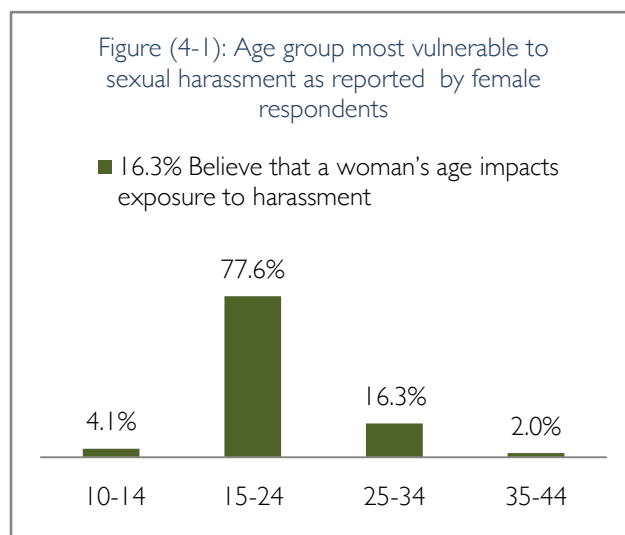
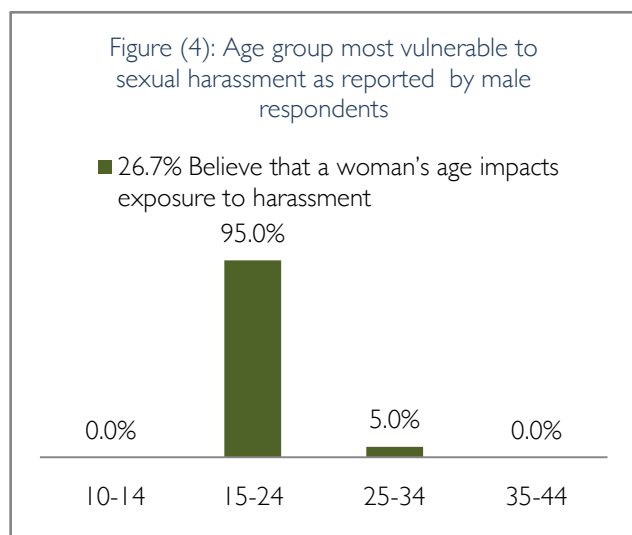
Figure (3): Different concepts of harassment by respondents' educational level



In terms of educational level, there is a clear and direct correlation between the respondents' educational level and how they conceptualize sexual harassment (as shown in Figure 3). The respondents with university education or higher were more likely to consider behaviours, such as facial expressions and ogling as forms of sexual harassment than the respondents with high school or above intermediate education.

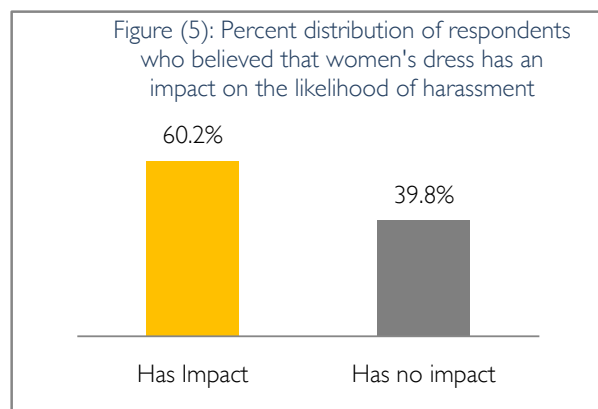
Age and the Likelihood of Exposure to Sexual Harassment

Responses to the question on whether there is a relationship between a woman's age and the degree of exposure to harassment highlight that 26.7% males and 16.3% females believe in the existence of such a relationship. Among them, a majority of both male and female respondents (95% and 77.6% respectively) identified the 15-24 age group as the most vulnerable to sexual harassment (see Figure 4 and Figure 4-I).



Women's Dress and the Likelihood of Sexual Harassment

More than half of the respondents believed that a woman's dress has an impact on the likelihood of being harassed (Figure 5), with 97.4% of male respondents believing that tight clothes increase exposure to harassment.



In order to understand more deeply the perceptions of the study participants regarding the general appearance of harassed women, the research team presented a number of pictures reflecting the diverse forms of female dress found in Egyptian society (see Table 3). The study participants were asked to arrange the pictures from the most to the least vulnerable to harassment. The results were as follows:

Among the study sample, 61.0% of respondents agreed that a woman who wears tight clothing and is non-

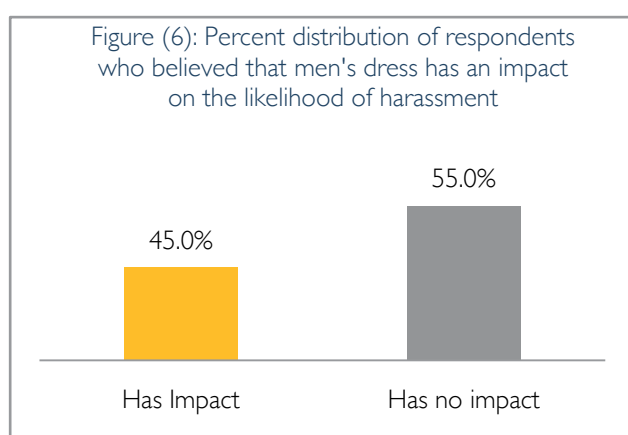
veiled (Figure A) is the most vulnerable to harassment, followed by (Figure B), a woman who wears tight-fitting clothes and a veil (41.6%). However, 52.0% indicated that women who wear sleeveless clothing (Figure C) rank third in terms of the likelihood of harassment, while 50.9% believed that a woman who wears a black cloak (Figure D), is the fourth likeliest to be exposed to harassment, followed by (Figure E), a woman who wears a skirt and a tunic (51.7%). Finally 82.2% reported (Figure F), with the woman wearing the niqab, to be the least likely to get harassed.

⁴ Some of the pictures are adapted from 2008 ECWR study

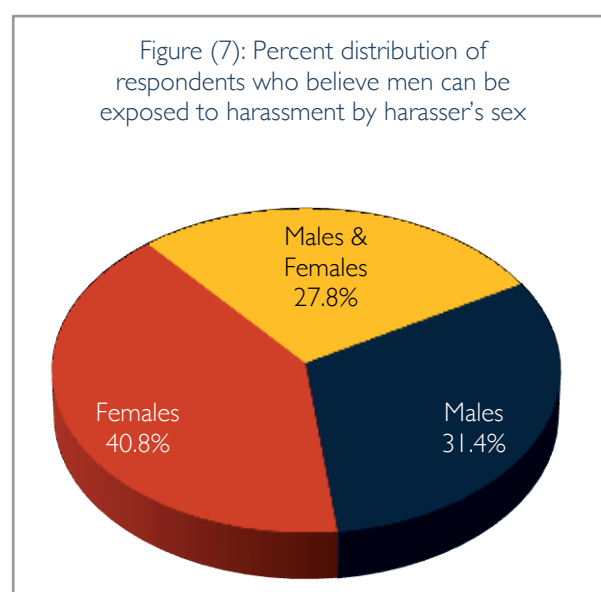
Table (3): A Woman's Appearance By Nature of Clothes/Type of Attire					
Figure A	Figure B	Figure C	Figure D	Figure E	Figure F
					

The Likelihood of Male Exposure to Sexual Harassment

The results show that the likelihood of exposure to situations of sexual harassment is not limited to females, and that the possibility of male exposure to harassment also exists. Among the study respondents, 37.6% believe that it is possible for men to be subjected to harassment. It was also reported by 45.0% of those respondents that men's dress has a significant impact on the likelihood of harassment. The most cited reasons that might increase sexual harassment were "funky clean clothes" (33.3%), followed by "clothes which do not give the impression of masculinity or respect" (32.0%), followed by a "looking handsome" (21.3%) and "tight clothes" (18.7%).



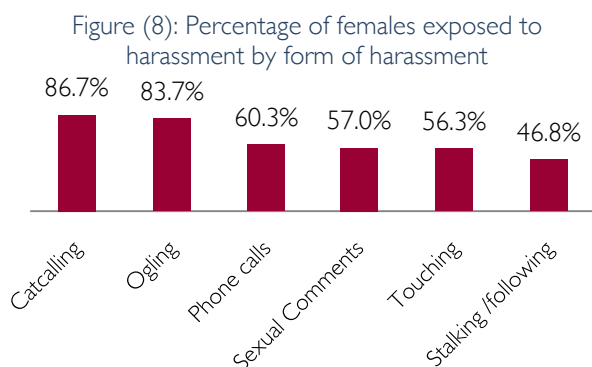
With regard to the sex of those most likely to have harassed men, 40.8% of respondents who believe that men can be harassed, indicated that the harasser might be female, while 31.4% indicated that the harasser might be of the same sex (male). However, 27.8% believed that male exposure to harassment may happen from both sexes.



EXPERIENCING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

95.3% of females have been subjected to at least one form of harassment

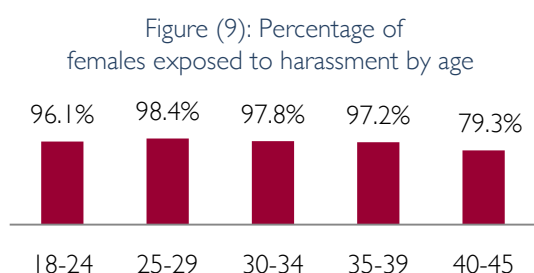
When female respondents were asked about exposure to harassment, 95.3% stated that they had been subjected to various forms of harassment. Harassment in the form of catcalling was the most cited form (86.7%), followed by ogling (83.7%), and touching was reported to be 56.3%.



Regarding repeated exposure to harassment, 41.4% of the female respondents stated that they had been subjected to harassment once or twice during the week preceding the interview, while 18.6% of female respondents said that they had experienced between 3 and 5 incidents of sexual harassment during the same period.

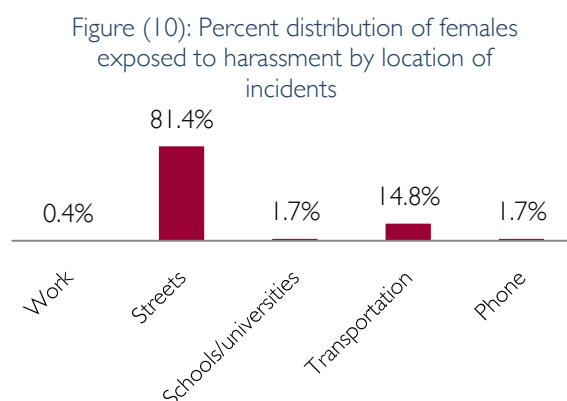
Characteristics of the Harassed

The study results show that the majority of female respondents in different age group are exposed to sexual harassment. For example, 98.4% of the female respondents who belong to the 25-29 age group had been subjected to harassment, compared to 79.3% of the female respondents who belong to the 40-45 age group.

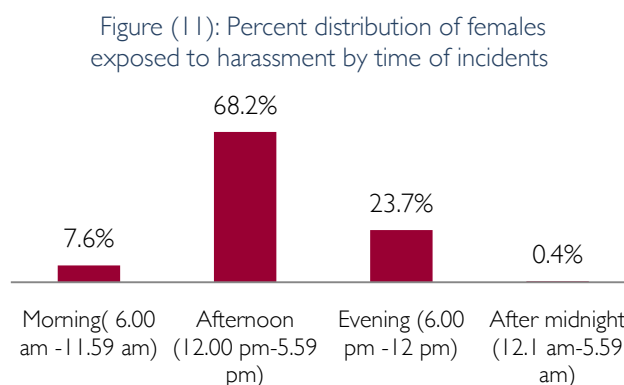


Times and Locations of Where Sexual Harassment Occurs

Generally, female respondents reported having experienced harassment most commonly on the streets (81.4%), followed by on public transportation (14.8%).



As for the time of day at which incidents occurred, more than two-thirds of the female respondents (68.2 %) said that they had been subjected to harassment in the afternoon.



Social Acceptance or Rejection of Sexual Harassment

It is important to know how people react to cases of harassment, both when it is witnessed and experienced directly, in order to identify the degree of acceptance or rejection of sexual harassment in Egyptian society. Therefore, we examined respondents' reactions in cases where

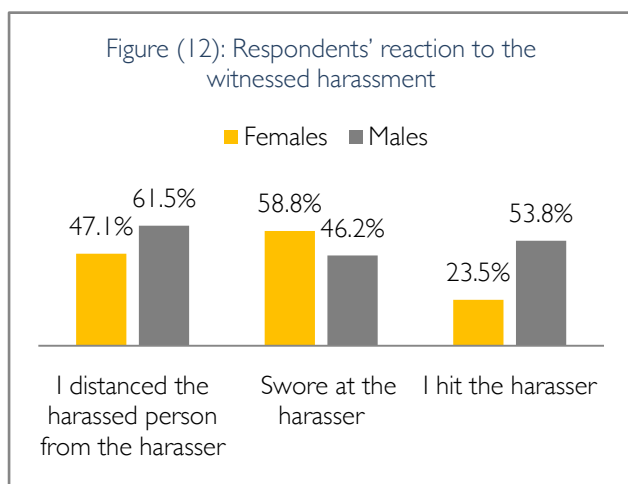
they had observed harassment, as well as the reactions of the female respondents who had been subjected to harassment.

A – Respondents’ reaction to witnessed sexual harassment incidents

In general, the results show that respondents’ only rarely intervened in cases of harassment they witnessed (17.7%). Of this percentage, male respondents were more proactive than female respondents in intervening when witnessing incidents of harassment during the month preceding the interview, with 34.2% of them reporting that they had intervened when they saw others being harassed in comparison to 10.2% of the female respondents.

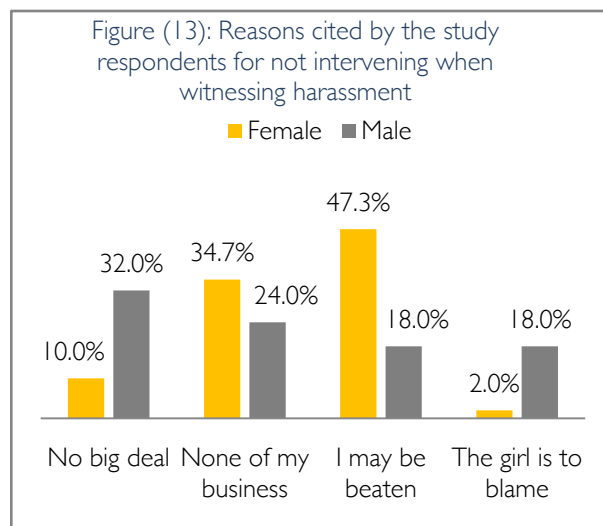
Regarding the nature of the respondents’ reactions to the harassment incidents they witnessed, the results highlight that men’s reactions were more physical than females’ reactions, which tended to be more verbal (See Figure 12).

Only a small percentage of men and women helped in filing a report of the witnessed incident to a police station (5.9% and 3.8% respectively).



The reasons cited by the female respondents for intervention are different to the reasons cited by the male respondents. The reason most commonly cited by females (47.1%) was their sense of empathy with the harassed female, while «fear of a relative’s or an acquaintance’s exposure to harassment» was the reason most commonly cited by males (61.5%).

Wide discrepancies were present in the reasons cited by the male and female respondents for non-interference in the harassment situations they had witnessed. While 47.3% of females did not intervene because of «fear of being beaten», 32.0% of the males did not intervene because, in their view, it was a minor problem “no big deal”, as they put it.



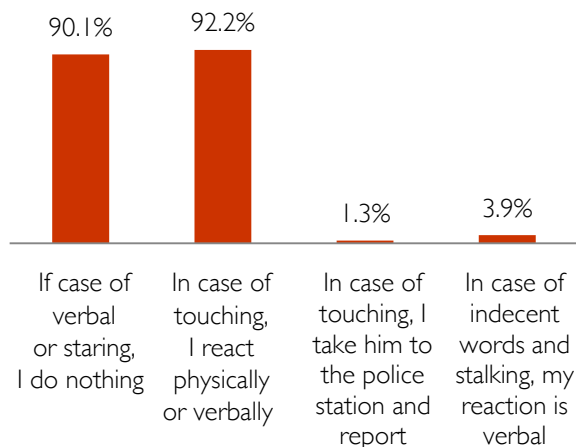
B – The harassed females’ reaction in relation to the sex and age of the harasser

For the female respondents who had been subjected to harassment, the data revealed varied reactions. More than one-third of the respondents (33.9%) indicated that their response to the harassers was verbal «I answer back and put him to shame», while 16.1% of the harassed women reported reacting physically by «beating the harasser». On the other hand, 42.8% of the respondents who had experienced harassment reported taking no action against the harasser.

Table (4): Reaction of the Harassed Females	
Type of reaction	Percentage %
I do not take any reaction	42.8%
I answer him back and put him to shame	33.9%
I walk/run away	24.6%
Hit him and run away	16.1%
I ask bystanders for help	8.1%
I hang up or change my phone SIM card	0.8%
I look at him with contempt	0.8%
I take the harasser to the police station	0.4%
I like it	0.4%

Nearly two-thirds of the female respondents (64.4%) reported that their reaction varies according to the type of harassment. In general, the majority of female respondents reported that in the case of physical harassment, a response would be taken against the harasser. However, in the case of verbal harassment, most likely, no response would be taken against the harasser. The graph below shows the different reactions according to the type of harassment.

Figure (14): Reactions of harassed females according to type of harassment



Looking at the reaction of the female respondents by the age of harassers, we find that a small percentage of the female respondents (15.7%) stated that their response varies depending on the age of the harasser. For example, 62.2% of the female respondents mentioned that the younger the harasser was, the less likely they were to react.

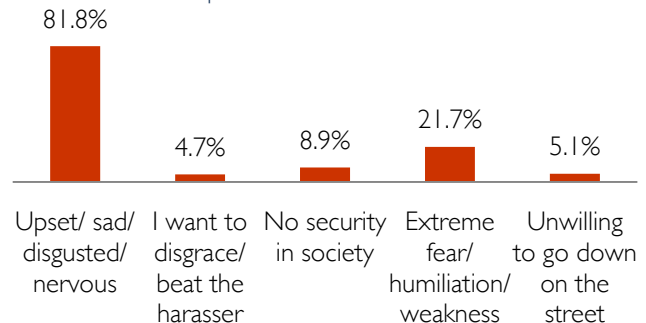
Psychological Effects of Sexual Harassment

The results showed that exposure to sexual harassment has a negative psychological impact on harassed females. The majority of the female respondents (81.8%) indicated that they were extremely upset and anxious as a result of harassment, while 21.7% of them felt extremely scared, weak and humiliated (see Figure 15).

When examining the psychological effects of sexual harassment by the type of harassment, we find that female respondents who have been touched were the most likely to experience agitation and anxiety (83.0%). While female respondents who faced sexual invites were the most averse to going out to the street (12.0%)

and had the deepest sense of insecurity (10.0%). The female respondents who were pursued and stalked had the most extreme sense of fear, weakness and humiliation (27.0%).

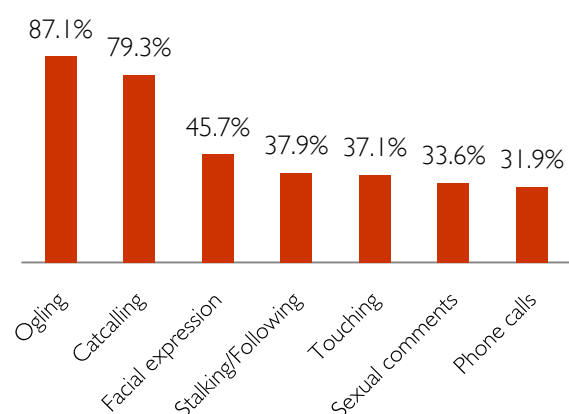
Figure (15): Psychological consequences of exposure to sexual harassment



Perpetrating of Sexual Harassment

The results indicate that 77.3% of male respondents admitted to having committed one form or another of sexual harassment. The forms of harassment that most male participants reported having perpetrated include ogling (87.1%) and catcalling (79.3%), followed by facial expressions (45.7%), stalking (37.9%), touching (37.1%), sexual comments (33.6%), and phone calls (31.9%).

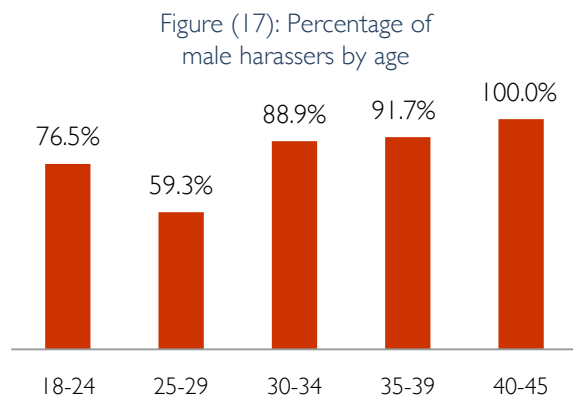
Figure (16): Percentage of male respondents by type of harassment perpetrated



Harassers' Characteristics (Age and Education Level)

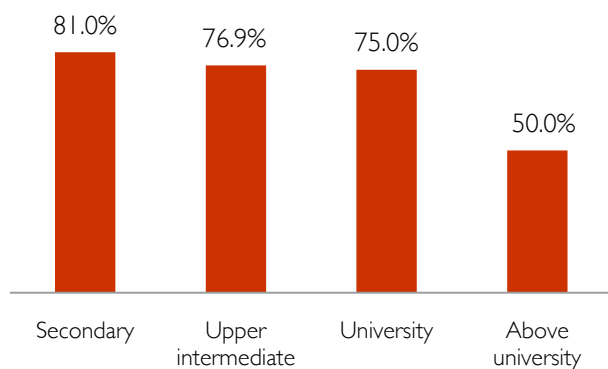
The results show that males in different age group commit sexual harassment. For example, 76.5% of male respondents in the 18-24 age group had previously perpetrated at least one type of

harassment. In addition, almost half of the female respondents who had experienced harassment (45.3%), reported that they were harassed by males in the same age group (18-24 years). Figure (17) illustrates the percentage of male harassers by their age.



Although all the male respondents had a secondary or higher level of education, the result shows that men from different educational level commit different forms of sexual harassment. However, participants with secondary education are more likely to commit sexual harassment (81.0%). In terms of marital status, the data showed no distinct difference between married and unmarried men in perpetuating harassment.

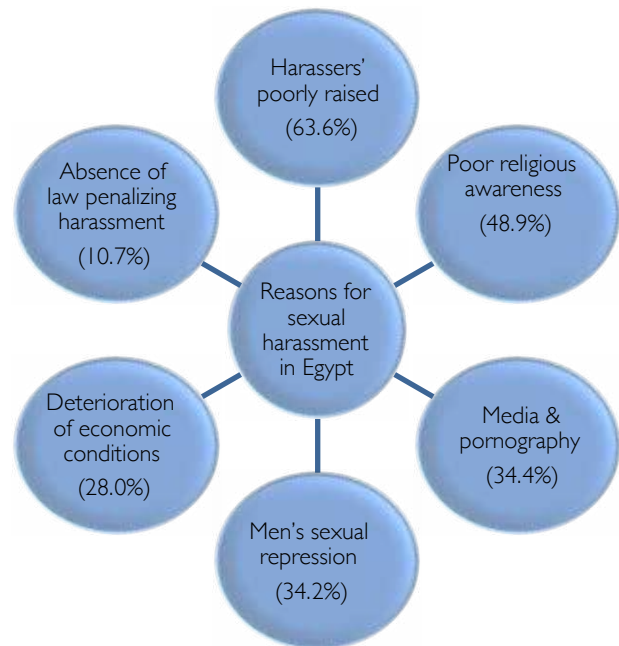
Figure (18): Percentage of male harassers by educational level



Reasons for the Existence and Perpetration of Sexual Harassment

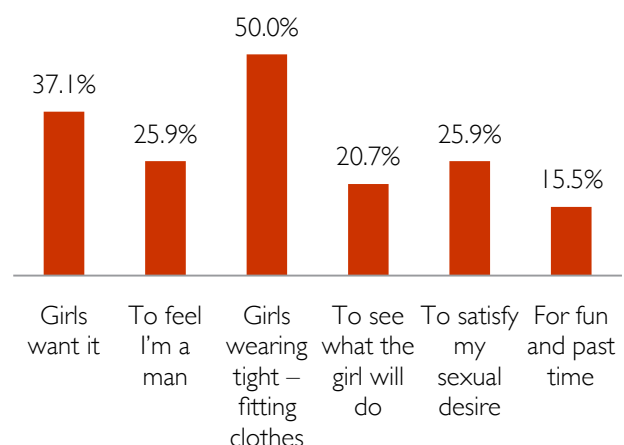
When respondents were asked about the reasons for the existence of the phenomenon of sexual harassment, more than half of the sample attributed it to harassers being poorly raised (63.6%), and a lack of religious awareness (48.9%), followed by a lack of control on the media and internet (34.4%), and sexual repression (34.2%).

Figure (19): Underlying reasons for the sexual harassment phenomenon in Egypt cited by study respondents



When asked about the reasons for males perpetrating harassment, most of the male respondents mentioned that women are mainly to be blamed for harassment. Half of the male respondents said that tight clothing worn by women is the cause of their harassment, while 37.1% of them said that women want to be harassed.

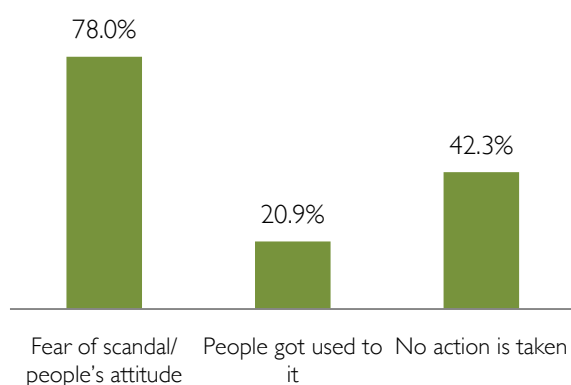
Figure (20): Percentage of male harassers by reason for harassment



REPORTING ABOUT INCIDENTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The results show that a very small percentage of the respondents (2.6%), had reported incidents of sexual harassment through various channels. 78.0% of the respondents stated that the fear of scandal is the main reason for not reporting incidents of sexual harassment, while others stated that it is useless to report and no action will be taken (42.3%).

Figure (21): Reasons for not reporting harassment incidents



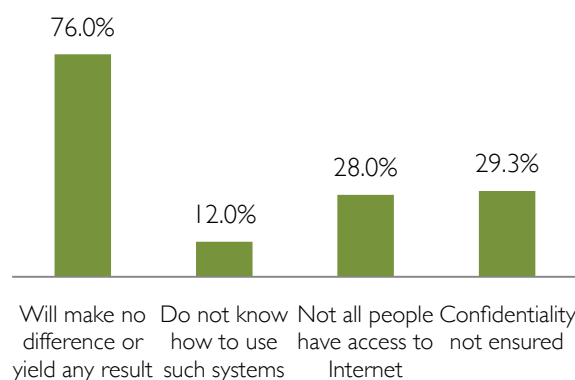
Reporting Incidents of Sexual Harassment to the Police

Nearly half the sample (44.7%) believed that a police station is the best place for reporting incidents of sexual harassment, with 56.7% of males and 38.7% of females taking this view. Nonetheless, only a very small percentage (2.0%) had actually reported sexual harassment that they had experienced or witnessed. 54.4% of study respondents believed that no serious action is taken by police officers when incidents of sexual harassment are reported, while 22.7% believed that sexual harassment "is not a big issue and is not worth reporting to the police station".

The Possibility of Using A Secure System Ensuring Data Confidentiality to Report Incidents of Sexual Harassment

When respondents were asked if they would be willing to report incidents of sexual harassment if a secure system ensuring data confidentiality and privacy was in place, 16.7% of the total sample expressed an interest, while 83.3% said that they would not use such a system for different reasons (as shown in Figure 22).

Figure (22): Reasons for abstaining from using a secure system to report sexual harassment incidents



Although many respondents had misgivings about using means other than police stations to report incidents of sexual harassment, because of the failure to ensure confidentiality, when they were asked whether they would choose to use police stations or alternative systems (via the Internet or cell phones), more than half of the respondents opted for alternative systems (59.3%).

DISCUSSIONS

Sexual Harassment: Perceptions versus Experiences

The results of the study showed that there are discrepancies between people's beliefs and perceptions of the presence and existence of sexual harassment in Egypt and their actual experiences. These beliefs continue to blame women for harassment (on the basis of women's clothing,

women's figures and the places and times they go out on the street) and to provide justification for harassers' behaviour (unemployment, inability to marry, low educational level) thus creating a tolerating and an accepting culture and masking the real reasons for the phenomenon. The following are examples from the quantitative findings that highlight these discrepancies:

- Forms of sexual harassment – The findings of the research showed that men's perception of sexual harassment differs from their actual practices and experience. Almost all the male respondents identify touching as a form of harassment, yet many of them reported that they have touched women in public space.
- Times and places sexual harassment occurred – Despite the widespread belief that sexual harassment usually happens at late hours and in dark or quiet places, the study results indicate that many of the respondents who had witnessed or experienced harassment reported that it happened in the street or on public transportation and in broad daylight during the afternoon or early evening.
- General appearance of harassed women – The most cited reason for why women are harassed is the nature of their clothing. The results reveal that although 60.2% of the study participants believed that there is a relationship between women's general appearance (the nature of their clothing) and their exposure to harassment, moreover, 50.0% of the male respondents stated that they perpetrated sexual harassment because women's clothes were tight, yet, the majority of the female respondents (95.3%) had been subjected to harassment regardless of their style of dress.
- Reasons for sexual harassment – When asked about the reasons for the existence of sexual harassment, the study respondents mentioned many of the common perceptions which have been previously reported in other studies such as: the deterioration of economic conditions/unemployment, a lack of religious consciousness, and the absence of a law criminalizing sexual harassment. However, when asked about their reason for perpetrating harassment, the male respondents did not mention any of the above reasons and only focused on reasons relating to women's performance in public space.
- Characteristics of the harasser – Anecdotally, the harasser is portrayed as: young, unmarried, uneducated and unemployed. However, the findings of the study showed that males with different social characteristics and from different educational backgrounds perpetrated sexual harassment.
- Men being harassed – Despite the common belief that sexual harassment is an act perpetrated by men against women, the findings revealed that men are also subjected to harassment from both males and females.
- Social and psychological impact of sexual harassment – The study found that 32.4% of male respondents who had witnessed cases of harassment did not interfere because they did not recognise harassment as a problem. On the other hand, the majority of female respondents reported that harassment causes feelings of extreme disturbance, anger and agitation.
- Reporting to police stations – Although many of the study respondents believed that police stations are the best place to report sexual harassment, a very small percentage of them had actually reported incidents of sexual harassment which they had been exposed to or witnessed.

Perceptions of the Sexual Harassment Phenomenon

The study results indicate that there is a change in the community's awareness of the phenomenon of sexual harassment, which may be attributed to continued anti-sexual harassment community mobilization efforts by independent initiatives and NGOs that work on women and gender related issues. Following are some of the study results that further explain this change:

- Types of sexual harassment – The quantitative findings showed that a large percentage of the study respondents did not limit sexual harassment to the acts of rape and sexual assault but expanded it to include other forms such as catcalls, ogling and phone harassment.
- Women's clothing and blaming the harassed – The results showed that 39.8% of the respondents did not believe that there is a

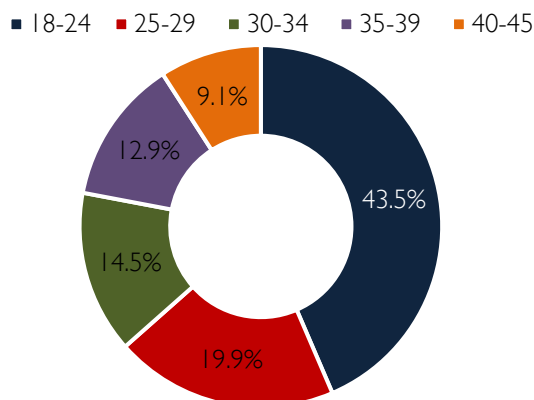
relationship between women's dress and their exposure to sexual harassment. They further stated that all women experience harassment despite their style of dress.

- Reaction of harassed females – The study findings revealed that women reject the act of sexual harassment and affirm their rejection by taking action, verbally or physically, against the harasser.

Sexual Harassment and Independent Initiatives

Independent initiatives such as HarassMap utilise social media channels and technology to present and debate the issue of sexual harassment among community members, and in particular youth groups to end social acceptability for this phenomenon. The study findings reported that respondents aged 18-24 were the most aware of the HarassMap initiative (43.5%).

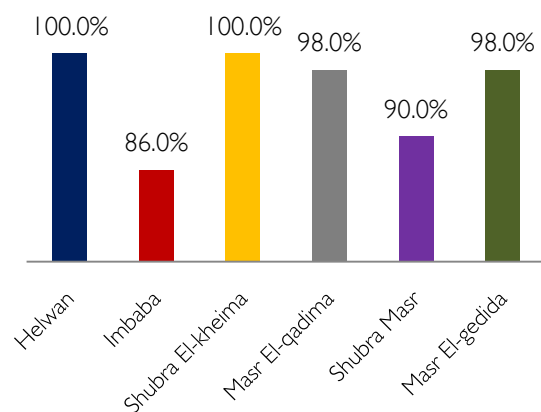
Figure (23): Knowledge about HarassMap by Age



Sexual Harassment and its Prevalence in the Different Study Areas

Previous studies stated that sexual harassment is extremely widespread, and our study confirmed this finding by reporting a total of 95.3% of female respondents being exposed to sexual harassment. Additionally, this study has concluded that there is no significant difference between the study areas with regard to witnessing or experiencing sexual harassment. Figure (24) shows that sexual harassment is uniformly common across areas in Greater Cairo, even when taking into consideration the socioeconomic differences of these locations.

Figure (24): Prevalence of harassment among female respondents by study areas



► The names mentioned in this chapter are not the real names of the study participants.

3 Sexual Harassment: Stories of Women and Men



DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents findings from the focus group discussions (FGDs) that were conducted during the study. A total of 48 FGDs (30 female and 18 male) were conducted in the six aqşam (administrative units) of Helwan, Imbaba, Masr El-gedida, Masr El-qadima, Shubra El-kheima and Shubra Masr. Our partner NGOs in each of these six aqşam were responsible for recruiting the study population following the previously discussed inclusion criteria. As already described, data collectors were intensively trained on how to conduct FGDs following ethical procedures, demonstrate gender sensitivity and elicit all necessary information. The discussions followed a loosely structured guide, which covered all research themes.

FGDs are widely utilised in qualitative research methodologies. The open-ended nature of the focus groups assisted the researchers in assessing group dynamics between the participants. As participants engaged with each other throughout the group sessions, they were able to debate, share experiences, create new definitions, and redefine old terminologies. This allowed the researchers to identify terminologies, conceptual categories, and issues as they arose in a group setting. Thematic analysis, the method of analysis chosen for this part of the study, along with qualitative case-oriented open coding, is a stepwise qualitative text reduction: starting with the entire transcription, it is then paraphrased by passage or paragraph into summary sentences, which are then paraphrased into a few keywords to develop the overall themes for analysis.

Categories are first developed for each narrative aspect of each discussion and later collated into a coherent overall category system for all of the narrative aspects in the research (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2010). For this study, data coding of focus group discussions was manual. Once the FGD transcriptions were finalised, research assistants on the team conducted a thorough data verification process by checking the transcribed data against the recordings to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions. Using the stepwise reduction method discussed above, a coding guide was generated in order to systematically assess the presence of certain facets of sexual harassment in the responses of participants. From within these codes, researchers identified major themes.

This chapter discusses six main themes that were derived from the FGDs including:

1. Conceptualisation of sexual harassment
2. Myths around sexual harassment
3. Consequences of sexual harassment
4. Reacting to sexual harassment
5. Talking about and reporting sexual harassment
6. Perpetrators of sexual harassment

The discussion in each of the six researched areas revealed that sexual harassment in public space is a common phenomenon that women are exposed to on a daily basis. Female participants stated that they are exposed to sexual harassment regardless of their age, socio-economic status and dress type. It further confirms that harassment happens at all times of the day, and most commonly takes place in the street followed by public transportation.

“... now the harasser is always looking for the place where he will be in close physical proximity to the prey he wants to harass, so public transportation gives him this proximity...” (Mahmoud, 35, Shubra Masr)

No, there really isn't a time, it could be early in the morning, could be at night. Now there's no specific time to worry about your girl going out so that she's not harassed, it's a possibility to happen to her at any time” (Doaa, 35, Helwan)

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN PUBLIC SPACE: DEFINITION AND CONCEPTUALISATION

Although the term sexual harassment is implicitly understood and used widely in social discourse, there is no specific definition that captures all its facets and nuances (Mackinnon, 1979). One reason it is difficult to reach an agreement on what constitutes sexual harassment is that it is an act which is linked to a broader social structure and cultural system, and different people therefore conceptualise it differently (Kalof et al., 2001). Many attempts at defining sexual harassment view it as, “unwanted imposition of sexual requirements” or acts that are “repetitive, unwelcomed, and inherently coercive”, “unwelcome or unsolicited, is sexual in nature and is deliberate or repeated” (Mackinnon, 1979: 1; Katz et al., 1996: 35; Barr, 1993: 461). In a broad sense, it is seen as an uninvited, unconsented, and coercive sexual act, which includes a wide range of behaviours ranging from verbal comments to rape and assault.

Throughout the report we have used the expression “sexual harassment” interchangeably with “street sexual harassment” or “sexual harassment in public space.” Macmillian et al. (2000) state that the main factors differentiating sexual harassment and street harassment are that sexual harassment is strongly tied to the setting of a work place, while street harassment occurs in public space and the harasser is generally a stranger. They further developed six categories to identify different types of harassments: sexual/

verbal comments, unsolicited and unwanted touching and physical contact, attempts to coerce an individual into complying with sexual demands, ogling, stalking and obscene phone calls (Macmillian et al., 2000: 306). Street sexual harassment is a relatively new area of research in comparison to sexual harassment in the work place. Academic and legal scholars had for a long time ignored the issue, contributing to further “disempowering injury to women (Bowman, 1993: 522). According to Bowman, street sexual harassment is characterised by the following features

1. Targets are female
2. Harassers are male
3. Harassers are not acquainted by their targets
4. The encounter is done face-face
5. Takes place in a public forum

This study explores incidents of sexual harassment that are experienced in public spaces such as streets, public transportation, parks, and malls. It follows HarassMap’s definition of sexual harassment, which states that, “any form of unwelcome words and/or actions of a sexual nature that violate a person’s body, privacy, or feelings and make[s] that person feel uncomfortable, threatened, insecure, scared, disrespected, startled, insulted, intimidated, abused, offended, or objectified” is to be considered sexual harassment in public space.



Photo: Doaa Zain El Abdeen

HarassMap further categorizes sexual harassment as follows⁵:

	Ogling:	Staring or looking inappropriately at someone's body, body parts, and/or eyes.
	Facial expressions:	Making any kind of facial expression (licking, winking, and opening the mouth) that suggest sexual intentions.
	Catcalls:	Whistling, shouting, whispering, and any kind of sexually suggestive sounds/noises.
	Comments:	Sexual remarks about someone's body or clothes or way of walking/behaving/working, telling inappropriate sexual jokes or stories, making suggestions that are sexual or offensive.
	Stalking or following:	Following someone, close or at a distance, by foot or in a car, repeatedly or just once, or waiting outside someone's work/home/car etc.
	Sexual invites:	Asking for sex, describing sexual acts or wishes, asking for phone numbers, dinner dates and other suggestions that are implicitly or explicitly sexual in nature.
	Unwanted attention:	Interfering with someone's work or activities by seeking unwelcome contact, asking to socialize, making sexual demands in exchange for work or other benefits, giving gifts that are sexually suggestive, insisting on walking/driving someone home or to work in spite of refusal from the victim.
	Sexual photos:	Showing sexual photos or pictures online or offline.
	Online:	Repeatedly or occasionally sending unwanted, abusive, or obscene messages, comments, and/or photos and videos via email, instant messaging, social media, forums, blogs, or online discussion boards.
	Phone calls:	Making unwanted phone calls or sending text messages that are sexually suggestive or threatening.
	Touching:	Unwanted touching, massaging, pinching, rubbing up against, standing too close, grabbing, groping and or any kind of sexual gesture.
	Indecent exposure:	Showing intimate body parts or masturbating in front of someone or in their presence.
	Threats:	Threatening with any form of sexual harassment and/or assault (including rape).
	Sexual assault:	Coerced and/or forced sexual acts such as kissing, undressing etc.
	Rape:	Coerced and/or forced oral, anal, or vaginal penetration using body parts or other objects.
	Mob attack:	Sexual harassment and/or sexual assault (including rape), committed by large groups of people.

⁵ <http://harassmap.org/en/resource-center/what-is-sexual-harassment/>

Sexual Harassment Versus Flirtation – Both female and male study participants frequently used the expression “**خرش جنسي**” (sexual harassment) to describe certain types of sexual harassment that take place in public space. The word was used with ease although it contains a direct reference to sex and was repeatedly used by both female and male participants from different age groups and social backgrounds. Still, it is important to note that the word “**معاكسة**” (flirtation) and the word “**خرش جنسي**” (sexual harassment) were in some cases used interchangeably. In particular, more men than women would refer to “minor” and “harmless” acts as flirtation and acts that involve physical attack and/or assault as sexual harassment.

“I think that 90% of men or young males flirt, everybody flirts, but it could be, as they say, a nice joke or paying compliments that could be heard and laughed about. But if he insisted and stalked the person that's harassment, that's what is called harassment.....” (Michael, 35, Shubra Masr)

Here Michael and many other male participants stated that flirtatious actions are widespread in the streets, and could even be considered as a compliment or joke. Ashraf added that not every action should be considered harassment “....If I am walking in the street and I say something to a woman who is dressed fashionably, or has attractive eyes, it is just a word, a passing word not harassment” (Ashraf, 25, Shukra Masr). Male participants consistently used the word “flirting” when describing verbal comments or actions they assume do not cause any harm to others, what some have described, or believed are “compliments.” Further, we can say that sexual harassment, according to them, are actions that result in physical or verbal harm, while “flirting”, such as catcalls, facial expressions or non-sexual remarks, could be regarded as jokes. The clear distinction that many male participants are trying to draw is that certain actions do not inflict any harm and only violent actions should be considered as harassment: “...if it doesn't hurt

anyone then that's not considered harassment, otherwise it's harassment” (Walid, 24, Masr El-qadima). This could reflect a lack of understanding of the psychological and emotional consequences of harassment on women and represents an attempt by men to disassociate their acts from violence. It should also be noted that some women used the word “flirtation” to describe what they perceive to be “minor” forms of sexual harassment, although less frequently than men. Kissling reported that, “many women read street remarks as a form of compliment, carefully distinguishing them from obscene or violent street harassment” (1991:452). However, we have observed that more women, especially those that are younger and well-educated, are more likely to interpret any unwanted attention in the street as sexual harassment despite the intention of the harasser. A young woman from Imbaba defines sexual harassment as any act that she considers inappropriate.

“....If he is looks at me inappropriately I consider that harassment as he violated my right...” (Eman, 20, Imbaba)

This begs the question, are there gendered differences in relation to how sexual harassment is perceived?

Gender Differences in Conceptualising Sexual Harassment – Conceptualise sexual harassment as a process that exists within a larger system of gender dynamics leads to the assumption that men and women have different judgments on what constitutes sexual harassment. This has been made clear through numerous US-based court cases of sexual harassment claims in the workplace. Rulings were based on the assumption that men and women evaluate incidents of sexual harassment differently. Additionally the standard of “a reasonable woman” was used instead of the standard of “a reasonable person” when reviewing claims of sexual harassment in the work place (Blackstone, 2012).

In the FGDs, it was obvious that sexual harassment was not perceived in the same way by male and

female study participants. Especially in the more ambiguous types of harassment, such as catcalls, ogling, and facial expressions, women were more likely to perceive these acts as sexual harassment than men. Magda, explained sexual harassment as "... any look, word or movement that I consider as harmful" (Magda, 35, Shubra Masr) or as Rahma stated, "anything that invades my privacy and makes me feel uncomfortable" (Rahma, 26, Shubra Masr), while male participants were less likely to perceive these acts as harassment. Most men described sexual harassment as harmful acts that are inflicted by men over women. The harm here is mostly defined within physical parameters.

"If you do not hit the women this is not harassment, women are used to looks, if you look and do not harm them this is not harassment" (Osama, 23, Masr El-qadima)

These differences may be attributed to women being taught from a young age to be concerned about their body safety so they act on possible intentions rather than on an assessment of the actual act itself. Meanwhile, men are regularly taught to be predators and not targets leading to different perceptions (Blackstone, 2012).

Other Factors – While there is significant debate as to the effectiveness of examining sexual harassment within a gender context, and whether gender differences are significant, many researchers have attempted to look at other factors that might be involved, such as age, social class, educational level, and ethnicity. In this study, we observed that age and social class do indeed have an impact on perceptions of sexual harassment. Younger men and women who are from a relatively high social class were more likely to identify different ambiguous actions as sexual harassment in comparison to other groups. For

example, males residing in Masr El-gedida (a high social class neighbourhood) were most likely to consider "minor" and acts not sexual in nature as sexual harassment in comparison to other males participants. They defined sexual harassment as an act that intrudes on women's private space and impedes their mobility.

“

"Sexual harassment from my perspective, does not need to be touching. I mean I do not need to touch the other person, maybe by words or any other way" (Rami, 20, Masr El-gedida)

"The word harassment, means anyone say or do anything to me which violates my boundaries or irritates me" (Shereen, 20, Masr El-gedida)

”

MYTHS AROUND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment in public places is widely defined in the literature as a daily experience of sexism (Landrine and Klonoff, 1995). It is interpreted within a broader context of gendered power and social dominance. The study participants, mostly, did not recognise sexual harassment within this context, but rather explained it in relationship to the political situation, prevailing economic conditions, media influence, individual manners, and religious discourses. These parameters within which sexual harassment in Egypt is understood and explained are broad and vague and do not provide meaningful insights into the dynamics of sexual harassment or suggest practical ways to effectively address it. The reasons cited for perpetuating sexual harassment were the same for both men and women: “lack of public security”, “media and internet”, “lack of morality and bad upbringing”, “lack of religious awareness”, “economic problems and high unemployment rates”, “sexual frustrations”, and “increased drug use”. In addition, men tended to mostly blame women, identifying their dress, looks and behaviour in public space as reasons for harassment, arguing that they “provoke men” and/or “ask for harassment”. Similar findings were also reported in the quantitative chapter and have been previously reported in similar studies in Egypt (ECWR, 2008; UN Women, 2013).

However, the focus group discussions provided an excellent medium to better understand these common answers and further explore the relationship between them and sexual harassment. Participants, male and female, were given time to question and debate their answers and were encouraged to share stories of experiencing or witnessing harassment in an attempt to further probe these explanations.

Poor Religious Values – When female participants were asked about what they meant by “poor religious values” and how they relate to sexual harassment, they mainly discussed issues around religious messages and how constructed images of women can vary according to the religious “sheikh” and/or the “sect” followed. They talked about how religious messages were tailored to

social practices and performances, how conflicting religious messages are widespread and confuse most people, and hinted that current religious messages might have contributed to social silence and in some cases to acceptance of sexual harassment.

“Look, in the past religion wasn't so widespread like nowadays, and people just lived by their natural instincts. In the past, a woman, whatever she may be wearing, if she's walking down the street, she was given her respect. Now, religion is everywhere, and every person has an opinion, and every person has their own perspective, and every sheikh says their own thing, you follow this sheikh and I follow this sheikh, my information has been messed up. So you'll find someone who says, *hasheesh* is not unlawful in the religion, so harassment is therefore such a minor thing. Someone walking flirting with a woman is not unlawful, he doesn't understand that a look, I mean lower your gaze man, he doesn't understand this matter!! You know why he doesn't understand that? Because the sheikh didn't get that information to him”
(Fatima, 37, Shubra El-kheima)

Lack of Manners – This was often cited by both men and women as one of the reasons for sexual harassment. One female participant said:

“When the father notices that his son is checking out women [he said] oh my love has grown up and he is checking women ... What does he mean by being clever and grown up? is inflicting harm associated now with adulthood?” (Nermeen, 18, Masr El-gedida)”

Nermeen’s story highlights what she sees as the causal relationship between sexual harassment and poor manners and improper familial upbringing. However, the narrative reflects the way in which certain gender performances are a means to manifest an experience of adulthood in a heterosexualized gender-order. Sexual harassment is not about individual behaviour or family values, it is rather constituted within a broad cultural system and set of power dynamics. The power relationship here is not only male power exerted over the body of the female but also male power within a male group. Here, sexual harassment is a performance of hegemonic masculinity, which includes aggression and dominance shown towards women and girls (Robinson, 2006). In this narrative, “checking out” the woman is an act to assert the boy’s position and to build masculine identity in relation to his peers – a relationship between him and other men rather than with women (Quinn, 2002). It suggests that sexual harassment is an accepted social performance that “cements gendered cultural bonds between those boys and men who take up this form of masculinity as their own, creating a sense of identity” (Robinson, 2006:20).

Unemployment – In another attempt to examine gendered stereotypes, we asked female participants to explain the relationship between unemployment and sexual harassment. The majority of female and male respondents assumed that there was a relationship between unemployment, as the main reason for delayed age of marriage, sexual frustration and the

perpetration of sexual harassment in public spaces.

“This unemployment, it leads to lots of other things, delaying of marriage, when it comes to men, they’re getting older and there’s no way for them to fulfil their instinctual desires which God placed in them... He also doesn’t have a way of releasing his extra energy, so what is he going to do...” (Walaa, 27, Imbaba)

“I think unemployment is for young men, about 35% the reason he reaches that degree, he can’t find work, can’t find a way to pay for his expenses, so there’s no marriage, therefore there is repression inside of him which wants to be let out, so he goes out and sees an attention grabbing view in front of him, makes him want to do this thing” (Ahmed, 25, Masr El-gedida)

Here, citing sexual frustration as one the main reasons for sexual harassment assumes that men cannot control their desires or resist “temptation”. If they are “tempted” by women in public space, they have no choice but to act on these temptations and harass and/or assault them verbally or physically. This assumption questions the constructed image of men as “being strong and in control” and of women as “being emotional and vulnerable”, which are the reasons widely cited in justifications of practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and early marriage. Peoples (2008) made the argument that unemployment challenges the traditional conceptualisation of masculinity where, within traditional family structures, men are the main bread-winners and women are child bearers. This has been challenged by the current economic situation that impedes men’s ability to find jobs and bring money home. Peoples further argues that, “sexual harassment is seen here as an activity that Egyptian males engage in to symbolically reclaim their masculinity in public” (2008:3).

Women's Dress – In some studies “provocative dress” has been cited as the main reason for sexual harassment (Thompson, 1994). This trend was also seen in this study where “the way women dress” was the most frequently cited reason for sexual harassment by men. Often women who are dressed in a “feminine” way, for example by wearing “high heels”, “tight or revealing clothes” or “wearing heavy makeup”, are seen as improper and consequently deserving of harassment: “they asked for it”

“The dress for sure, it should not be revealing, and even the way women walk, they should walk like a soldier ... No one will harass a woman who walks properly, it is impossible” (Emad, 36, Shubra El-Khaya)

“I think approximately 90% the main reason is the girl, the girl and to prove it it's usually according to the girl's clothing and how attention-grabbing her clothes are.” (Ibrahim, 37, Imbaba)

Emad is like many other males who attribute the problem of sexual harassment to women's behaviour, dress and activities in public space and suggests that women dressed in a “feminine” style are more likely to be harassed than women who are dressed “modestly”. However, a recent study revealed that 99.3 % of Egyptian women have experienced harassment in public places regardless of their dress style (UN Women Study,

2013). Focusing on how women dress in public as the reason for perpetuating sexual harassment helps to 1) portray sexual harassment as a women's problem, they are responsible for it and they are its primary targets, and accordingly it does not require national attention, 2) distance and free men from any blame or guilt and 3) reinforce social acceptance and tolerance towards sexual harassment. These all work to further gendered stereotypes and power relations which are dominant in Egyptian society.

Lack of Security and Appropriate Legislation – The majority of respondents from various social backgrounds also mentioned the decline in state security and the lack of harsh legal punishment for harassers as one of the main reasons for the existence and spread of sexual harassment. The participants placed the blame for the situation, as well as responsibility of eliminating it, on the state. It is interesting that they called for more state involvement and action on sexual harassment, while they repeatedly stated that law enforcement officials are the ones who largely perpetuate harassment and that both women and men are unlikely to report incidents of sexual harassment at police stations out of fear of persecution or dismissal. In the current climate of state indifference, where security forces themselves engage in blaming women for sexual harassment, an important question to be asked is how increased police presence and the issuing of legislation will improve the situation? As per Paul Amar's (2011) argument that looked at the gendered politics of the state, what people are demanding here is the expansion of an oppressive security state rather than questioning its legitimacy.

“There's no government, there's no safety to begin with, the government has washed its hands of the matter and the thugs have increased, so of course there's harassment” (Noha, 18, Masr El-qadima)

“There is no legal system now so this encourages the increase of harassment” (Omar, 38, Helwan)

“The extinguishing of public safety is the main reason, one can go now to downtown Cairo and harass a girl, in the past he wouldn't dare to do that, he would be afraid, but now it's because of a lack of public safety” (Mohamed, 30, Helwan)

CONSEQUENCES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Although many forms of sexual harassment are seen as “trivial,” “minor” that harassment can lead to significant negative consequences for women. As a result of frequent sexual harassment women feel uncomfortable and angry, which can lead to increased fear of violence and assault, and in some cases agoraphobia (Macmillan et al., 2000). Sexual harassment affects women’s psychological and emotional wellbeing, which is as important as their physical health (Turekheimer, 1997). As a way of protecting themselves from repeated harassment, women modify their public behaviour and appearances in order not to draw unwanted attention from men (Guano, 2007) and sometimes engage in protective and preventative practices and routines (Lenton et al., 1999; Esacove, 1998). The focus group discussions revealed a great deal about the negative consequences faced by women as a result of sexual harassment. Experiencing harassment in the public space has led women to change different aspects of their everyday behaviour, such as selecting different modes of transport depending to the time of the day, dressing more conservatively (wearing longer and looser clothes) and choosing what to wear according to the transportation they will use. For example one participant stated: “If now I’m going out in my car, I can wear whatever I want but if I’m walking or will take public transportation, I wear a million things and long clothes” (Marina, 21, Shubra Masr). Many women stated that they avoid using public transportation or only use transportation designated for female passengers (such as the women-only cars in the metro). They also avoid going out late, taking streets which are not well-lit or/and not highly populated, going back to the streets where they have previously experienced harassment, or even streets with boys schools in them due to fear of experiencing harassment from the students.

“If something happened to me in this place, I might not walk through it again, I’ll pass by it and say that’s where that and that happened, and not go through it, go through a street next to it” (Jihan, 18, Masr El-qadima)

Female participants provided insights on the psychological consequences of experiencing harassment, including: fear and lack of security in public spaces, lack of trust in others and in especially men, feelings of anger and frustration, and feelings of restrictions to their freedom and mobility. Additionally, they reported often blaming themselves and the way they dress for the continued aggression against them in public space.

“When it happened to me, someone reached out of a passing toktok and touched me, and went off very quickly, this happened a month ago, and until now, when a toktok passes by, I’m afraid, I walk down the streets afraid...” (Christine, 23, Shubra El-kheima)

“I left my work... Sometimes this harassment reaches a level or flirting reaches a degree that makes you hate yourself. I kept telling myself, what’s wrong with me? What’s wrong with my body? I got upset every time I went out, I actually don’t want to go out. It creates problems in dealing with others later on. There are always people who lose self-confidence due to harassment” (Maria, 23, Shubra El-kheima)

The above narratives suggest that sexual harassment in public space has a negative effect on women’s lives, impacts their perception of their safety in public space, and restricts their movement and mobility, which in turn can negatively affect their social and economic welfare.

It is interesting to note is that men demonstrated a high level of knowledge on the potential impact of sexual harassment on women's lives. They addressed the psychological and emotional impacts of harassment including, "inability to deal with others", "fear of men", and depression, especially for those women who have experienced physical harassment. However, men tended to

emphasize more the impact of "severe" types of harassment, such as touching, assault and rape. Again, this confirms the earlier assumption that male harassers may disassociate, minimize or negate the pain and harm of less severe acts in order to reduce the blame attributable to perpetrators.

REACTING TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The majority of women said that they rarely react to incidents of sexual harassment, especially if the type of harassment is seen as an everyday "inconvenience" or "irritating" behaviour (catcalls, facial expressions, and comments). They were mostly worried that responding to the harasser could escalate the situation, which could lead to a violent encounter. "I do not like to respond, he might be impolite and what will I do if he escalates things?" (Nessma, 29, Shubra Masr) However, they were more likely to take a stand against harassers, either verbally or physically, after being touched.

"There was a woman sitting at the back of the microbus beside a young man. She decided to move as she could feel that his legs were rubbing against her; the guy did not want to move. After several attempts she started to hit him, so he hit her back and the people in the microbus tried to separate between them- in the end she was physically abused as well" (Enas, 21, Imbaba)

In the cases where women took action against their harassers, either physically or verbally, they reported that the harassers tended to be afraid, not reply, deny the act, accuse the woman of being a liar, and in some cases physically assault the harassed women.

The majority of male participants stated that women rarely respond to sexual harassment which, in their opinion, could give an impression that they are enjoying or approving it and could consequently encourage the harasser to go further. They confirmed that most harassers will be "scared", will deny perpetuating harassment, or will run away if the harassed women responds and shames them. Ahmed described a harasser after a woman exposed him as "irritated, and people felt sorry for him, he was annoyed and stressed" (Ahmed, 25, Masr El-gedida). While pointing out the feelings of the harasser, Ahmed emphasized that witnesses will be more empathetic with the perpetrator of harassment as opposed to the harassed woman, which further demonstrates the gendered power dynamics at play in society.



Photo: Amgad

TALKING ABOUT AND REPORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Talking about Sexual Harassment – The focus group discussions revealed that many female participants were willing to share their experiences of sexual harassment in public space with individuals close to them (family members, friends, or colleagues). Some of them cited web forums as a place to talk about the issue and exchange experiences. Others chose not to share incidents with family members out of fear that their families would restrict their mobility, impose a certain dress code, or blame them for the harassment. Women mainly shared their stories to express their feelings of frustration and anger, and to seek advice. They often received advice such as “do not go out alone”, “do not go out late”, “ignore the harasser”, and “do not respond”.

“My husband told me, no don't verbally attack him, just get away from him and leave him alone, because he could create a big scene and insult you, or he could have others with him who could harm you. I tell you, no, of course not I shouldn't leave him alone” (Nagwa, 43, Masr El-qadima)

“I'm afraid of telling them at home, first, they won't let me go out, second, I'll look... I mean they'll restrict me in everything, my clothing, my walking. I'd be afraid to tell them” (Hayam, 22, Imbaba)

“They'll say stay home and don't go to work, or don't go to your course, and if I'll go to my course, I can't go alone, and at the same time I can't make someone from home chaperone me and take me and bring me home all the time” (Shorouk, 25, Shubra Masr)

Reporting Sexual Harassment – While most women wanted to share stories of sexual harassment with those close to them, they were reluctant to report incidents to the police or take any action. Most study participants, male and female, who had experienced or witnessed harassment, did not report the incident to a police station. Previous studies have shown that sexual harassment is a wide spread phenomenon in Egypt, yet only a very small number of cases are filed against harassers. This indicates that cases of sexual harassment are substantially underreported. Many reasons were mentioned in the focus group discussions which may contribute to the lack of disclosure of sexual harassment: 1) sexual harassment in public space is often dismissed as a trivial and common act and therefore police officers will not take them seriously or will blame the harassed, 2) fear of shame as the issue might become public and many family members will be dragged into the process, 3) bystanders who need to witness the case are often not helpful and will refuse to come to the police station, 4) feeling shy about discussing the matter with police officers and 5) fear of being harassed by police officers.

“.....I go to the police station and I say what happened to me to some men who will make fun of me and I will not gain but disgrace and humiliation” (Emmy, 22, Shubra Masr)

“We sometimes get harassed by police officers while walking down the street, what am I going to go do at a police station when they themselves harass? Sometimes you're walking down the street and you'll find the police officer harassing and saying things too” (Marwa, 26, Shubra Masr)

Another reason women cited for not reporting incidents of sexual harassment was that bystanders would not agree to be witnesses, which is needed to report a case of sexual harassment in a police station. Female participants in this study reported that bystanders rarely assist them when they are subjected to sexual harassment. Male participants also reported that bystanders, including themselves, rarely take action against harassers. Some women reported that bystanders, in their attempt to interfere, harassed them as well or started to blame them when they asked for help.

“And the responses of the people? They were clapping and whistling for them, and the kids would run and go back and do the same thing and come back” (Shaaban, 20, Masr El-qadima)

“Interfere in what, when everyone inside the bus has already blamed the girl, this is our society, whatever the girl does, she’s the one who’s wrong.” (Sanaa, 20, Masr El-qadima)

“Someone was passing by, telling me, you’re blaming him? Look at yourself, the blame isn’t on him, the blame is on whoever raised you.” (Somaya, 19, Shubra El-kheima)

“...they can already see the incident happening, if they want to do something, if they want to help you, they will help you, if not then you don’t need to tell them” (Samiha, 18, Helwan)

However, women stressed that reporting is necessary in cases of serious sexual assault or rape and especially if the harassed woman were to have enough information on the harasser or was able to physically take him to a police station, which is a requirement to file a harassment case. To successfully file a sexual harassment case report, a witness and detailed information about the harasser are both required, which further complicates the process and deters women from reporting the incidents. This could be seen as an example of how legislations and processes are shaped and performed within a broader gendered power imbalance.

Social Media and Crowdsourced Platforms – The use of the internet to discuss, share and debate issues related to sexual harassment was covered during the FGDs. A large segment of Egyptian society has access to the internet (45.9%, January 2014) and frequently makes use of different social media platforms (MCIT, 2014). Participants discussed the advantages that these mediums could provide, such as anonymity, which in turn can help in breaking the silence barrier and encourage women and men to talk more freely about the issue.

“When it is something big and you want to punish the perpetrator, or if it is major and already it is a scandal and everyone knew, so better persecute him and take revenge.....” (Hind, 38, Helwan)

“Yes of course, if there was something like that I would use it instead of going to the police station and go inside and tell a bunch of men who will make fun of me and I’ll get nothing except a scandal” (Nancy, 22, Shubra Masr)

Men were more accepting than women of the idea of using the Internet to discuss and report incidents of harassment. Women on the other hand were more resistant and concerned about safety and anonymity. In general, they were doubtful that these mediums could act as alternatives to going to the police when it comes to reporting.

They stated that online reporting systems will not lead to catching or punishing the harasser, might not be safe as the identity of the reporter could be compromised, and that a big percentage of the population, especially older individuals, still do not have access to the internet and do not know how to use these systems.



Ok so I'll report, but what will happen? I mean what's going to actually happen? What did I benefit from by reporting the situation? The harasser could be just a passenger on public transportation for example, I mean rode it once and won't ride it again." (Madeline, 21, Shubra Masr)



"...she will report without anyone knowing her name, or knowing who she is, so at that point, she could talk freely or report freely." (Wafaa, 33, Shubra El-kheima)



Some people don't feel secure. They check out the admins on the webpage, like who is receiving the messages on the hotline, how do these messages get recorded, and where, and what happens to them. And God knows where this information goes, and who it gets transferred to... I mean the person would be scared to talk about a topic like this..." (Tarek, 22, Masr El-gedida)



PERPETRATORS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

In exploring the extent of and the reasons pertaining to the male performance of sexual harassment, the FGD discussions included many questions to the male participants on harassing females in public place. Men were more reluctant to reveal incidents where they had perpetuated sexual harassment during the FGDs than in the in-depth discussions. However, many men stated that they had previously harassed women. Very few men strongly opposed sexual harassment and condemned it. During the discussions, it was obvious that sexual harassment is a tolerated practice, and there is no sense of shame among men for committing it. In general, most male participants reported that they have "flirted" with women and they talked about actions like catcalls,

ogling, or verbal harassment. These incidents took place on the street or public transportation, specifically the metro. Again most of the reported types of harassment were ones they considered as "minor," "trivial," or "nothing big." The majority stated that they commit these acts for "fun" or "praising women's beauty" and they mean no harm by their actions. The descriptions of women they have harassed varied widely across different age groups, marital statuses, and educational levels. They added that the majority of the harassed women were dressed "normally" and were not considered "provocatively" dressed (i.e. wearing tight or revealing clothes). However, during the discussions men stressed the idea that most women enjoy flirtatious actions and they usually

ask to be harassed by provoking men through their mannerisms or the way they dress or walk.

“Two girls were passing by, I said to them the most beautiful is the one in the middle, normal a joke” (Maged, 20, Shubra El-kheima)

“In the middle of last week, we were on vacation in Hurghada and all what we did was looking, we are all university graduate and we will not touch or do other physical harassment...we only look. They women are so used to that, especially that they are liberal and beautiful” (Mahmoud, 21, Shubra El-kheima)

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Research participants often described sexual harassment as an “inconvenient”, “irritating”, “painful”, “uncomfortable”, and “common” practice that women are frequently subjected to in public space. They usually defined sexual harassment using behavioural sub-categories such as: catcalls, comments, ogling, or touching and less within cultural and gendered frameworks. However, it was obvious that both women and men from younger age strata and higher socio-economic classes were more likely to describe sexual harassment within the broader framework and utilise gendered language. They talked about an “inferior look to women in the Egyptian society”, “social structures and performances which encourage devaluation of women’s worth in the Egyptian society”, and “masculine images that promote societal acceptance of sexual harassment”. They further argued that these gendered discourses and performances exist at the official level as well as the community level. The study concludes that there is a correlation between age and class and the utilisation of a gendered discourse in the perception and examination of sexual harassment. As previously mentioned, religion might be considered as a factor, but further studies are needed to elaborate on this observation.

Discussing sexual harassment within “security” and “rights” frameworks was quite frequent among female participants. They commonly described sexual harassment as an act that endangers their personal safety, violates their rights, and restricts their mobility and access to public space. They talked about participation in the economic force

and their right to utilise the street and other public spaces. Many women of all ages and socio-economic classes addressed these issues, however, again, it was clearer amongst the younger and the more privileged.

Men mainly addressed sexual harassment from the perspective of “harm” and “protection”. They mentioned that women should be safe in the streets and other public spaces and no harm should come to them. However, there was less talk about women’s right to mobility and freedom to access public space, indicating that this discourse could be missing from the male participant’s perspectives. The examination and discussion of sexual harassment within these parameters, reinforces dominant masculine discourses, where streets and public spaces are owned by men and as guardians and owners they should ensure that women are safe and protected while utilizing them. This raises the question of subjectivity of conceptualizing “harm” and what is considered harmful and what is not.

Additionally, the idea of fear and negative social stigma related to discussing and reporting incidents of sexual harassment remains essential to the discussion. One of the main reasons sexual harassment in Egypt continues to go unreported is due to the persistent fear revealed by the majority of female participants in the study. Participants told three types of stories related to fear: fear of reporting sexual harassment to the police, fear of talking to others about experiencing sexual harassment, especially family members, and fear of bystanders.

Women were less likely to report incidents of sexual harassment to the police out of fear of rejection, dismissal, or false accusations of being to blame. The shared narratives highlight the lack of confidentiality, empathy, or assistance provided to the harassed person by police officers. Many examples were given of the ways in which police officers impede harassed women and witnesses from filing harassment cases against perpetrators. The reasons behind this are not clear; police officers might be showing solidarity with the perpetrator, or simply reluctant to increase the workload for what they might deem to be “trivial” and “everyday hassle” women normally experience in the streets. Moreover, women fear the negative stigma associated with police stations in Egypt, as they are dominantly seen as places for criminals and prostitutes, and as it fails to present itself as a governmental entity that provides services to its citizens. One of the participants shared a story where a harassed woman told her “...I can be harmed and I will endure all but will not go to the police station to file a harassment report, I do not want anyone to say I entered a police station” (Assma, 40, Helwan).

In their narratives, harassed women often do not expect help from bystanders and sometimes fear their reaction. This means that they rarely ask for their assistance when experiencing harassment in public space. Female participants mentioned that bystanders usually do not help and might even blame them for the harassment, as stated by Dina “‘you are the reason’ is a phrase I always hear” (Dina, 19, Helwan). In other cases, women mentioned that they had been harassed by bystanders after asking for help. Male participants confirmed women’s perceptions and experiences, also stating that they rarely witness people assisting harassed women and that they themselves do not always intervene. Many reasons were given for being indifferent to the situation such as: fear of the harasser, perceiving harassment as not significant, or not seeing the harassed woman take action against the harasser. As stated by Ibrahim: “why

would I interfere? She [referring to the harassed woman] did not answer back, then why should I?” (Ibrahim, 27, Helwan).

Women who had experienced harassment, in most cases, were reluctant to discuss the issue with immediate family members. As discussed previously, women feared the negative consequences that might follow discussing their harassment with others, such as being blamed, having their mobility restricted, their appearances and choice of clothes monitored, having a male chaperone imposed on them when going out or other forms of control.

The social stigma placed on harassed women prevents them from discussing and sharing their stories, taking action against harassers, obstructs reporting and prevents them from receiving necessary physical and psychological assistance. During group discussions, most of the women mentioned that they rarely take action against harassers, as exposure to sexual harassment is so frequent and harassment is often “minor”. To ignore the problem or downplay the harm sexual harassment causes can be seen as a coping mechanism, as described by researchers looking at sexual harassment in the work place (Kelly and Radford, 1996). Further, women reported feelings of guilt and shame when sharing their experiences of harassment with others, which is not the case when men sarcastically tell their “funny” stories of being harassed by women. Moreover, the accumulated frustrations, anger and anxiety resulting from frequent exposure to sexual harassment can lead to physical and psychological consequences and unfortunately women might not be able to access services due to fear of shame and stigma (Ho et al., 2012; Tuerkheimer, 1997).

Sexual harassment in Egypt is perpetuated due to the existence of gendered discourses and the reproduction of current social and cultural values. In order to create safer, freer and more equal spaces for women in public spaces, it is critical that discourses and performances around

sexual harassment should be refashioned, and conceptualized as a phenomenon of gender-specific harm (Tuerkheimer, 1997). All justifications used, such as male sexual frustration, unemployment, poor upbringing, poverty, lack of media censorship and most importantly women's provocative clothing should be confronted and challenged for the inadequate excuses that the

are, with new counter narratives, rather than being allowed to continue operating in the mainstream. Both state and society bear the responsibility of fighting the problem of sexual harassment, while those who are themselves harassed or are bystanders should be actively encouraged to speak up to end the social acceptability of sexual harassment.



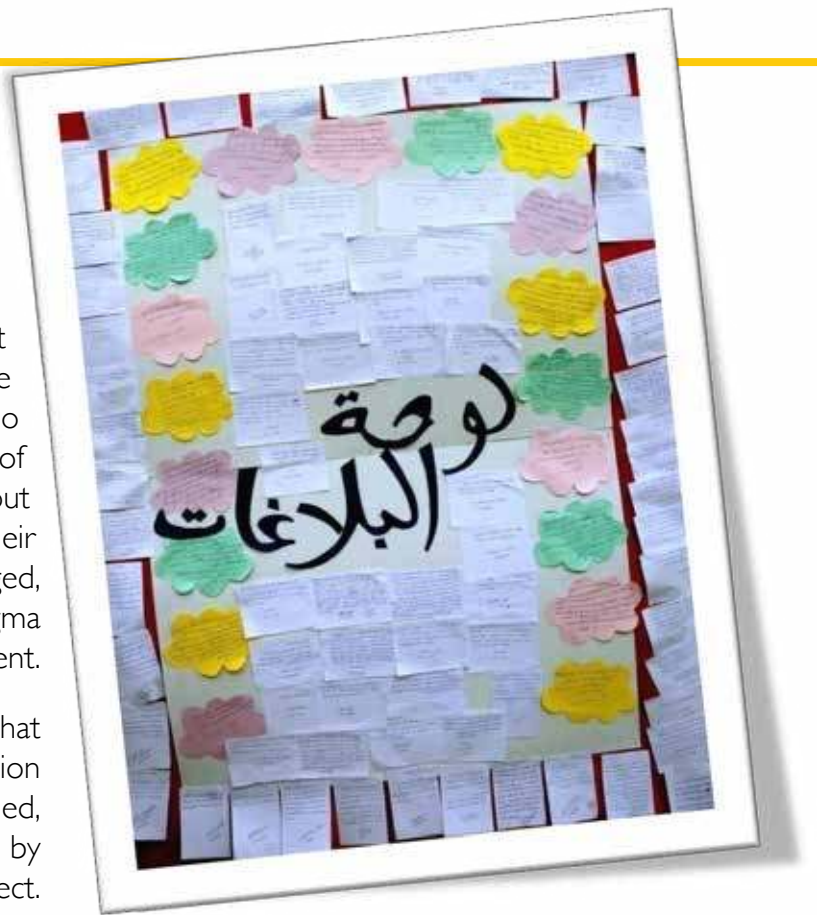
4 Sexual Harassment: Stories in the Map and IDI Data



INTRODUCTION

One of the main underlying assumptions of the research is that anonymous, on-line forums are safe spaces where people feel free to talk and share stories and experiences about personal and sensitive issues. Accordingly, the Map is considered a space where people who have witnessed or experienced any kind of harassment can report the issue and speak about it. It is also a space where people can tell their stories without fear of being identified or judged, and that insulates them from the social stigma and shame associated with sexual harassment.

This chapter discusses the types of reports that were received through the Map, the inclusion criteria employed, how the data was cleaned, coded and analysed and the challenges faced by the research team during the research project. It then discusses the similarities and differences between the quantitative data derived from the Map and field questionnaires distributed in six neighbourhoods within Greater Cairo. It further analyses and compares the stories of sexual harassment elicited from participants through structured in-depth interviews and the stories



received through the Map. In conclusion, this chapter discusses how effective crowdsourcing is as a method for generating data on sensitive issues such as sexual harassment and explores the similarities and differences between it and face-to-face collection methods.

MAP DATA

Provenance of the of Map reports

From October 2010 until June 2013 the Map received more than 1500 reports of sexual harassment. Reports to the Map derive from one of five sources: 1) the web report form on the HarassMap website, 2) SMS, 3) Facebook, 4) Twitter, and 5) email. Reports received through social media channels, are manually entered into the Map by HarassMap staff members using the web reporting form. In earlier phases of HarassMap's work, news stories of harassment cases and reports collected through the OpAntiSH initiative were also manually entered. For this research project, inclusion criteria were established to ensure the comparability of the Map dataset and data collected through in-depth interviews and field questionnaires. Only Map

reports that were received via one of our main reporting channels and that occurred in Greater Cairo in the period of October 2010 until June 2013 were included in the study

Data Cleaning

Given the established criteria for this research, filtering the reports became critical in order to remove reports that were not received through one of the five main channels detailed above. Therefore, news stories and OpAntiSH reports were removed from the dataset. In some cases, individuals used the Map as a space to detail their personal perspectives on sexual harassment in Egypt or to provide accounts of sexual harassment incidents that occurred prior to the launch of HarassMap. Such stories fall outside of

the established criteria set by this research, and were similarly removed from the overall dataset to be analysed.

Quantifying the Map data

Once the Map dataset was cleaned and only reports meeting the established criteria remained, each Map narrative was read in detail to verify and extract certain kinds of information. Such information included the governorate in which the sexual harassment occurred, the sex and age of the harassed and harassers, the reaction of the harassed, bystanders, and the police. Information was also collected on the physical location, month, and time of day of harassment, as well as the reporting channel through which the report was received. These served as major categories used by research staff to evaluate the reports. This necessitated two rounds of readings by two different staff members in order to verify that each report was categorized accurately. Once this was complete, there was a second round of data filtering to ensure that data from outside of Greater Cairo was not included. Following this second round of filtering, report numbers were

reduced to a total sample size of 797 reports. Using Excel, counts and percentages were then derived for each category and analysed, as discussed below.

Challenges

Numerous challenges were encountered during the process of cleaning and quantifying the Map data, the largest of which derived from the nature of the questions included in the web report form. A majority of these questions were optional and most of the people who reported to the Map chose to skip them and go directly to the section where they write a description of the incident. This meant that many reports had information missing for many of the categories that the questions sought to capture, which then necessitated more detailed readings and discussions of the Map narratives to extract this information. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of reports in the final dataset were no more than two sentences long. In most cases, they were less than this in length and even long reports provided limited insight into many of the categories analysed.



COMPARISON BETWEEN MAP DATA AND FIELD DATA

Relevance of Sexual Harassment – By looking at incidents of sexual harassment in specific areas, we found that the reports received through the Map might underestimate the prevalence of sexual harassment in certain areas. This is most evident when we look at the very small percentage of reports received via the Map from Qalubiya governorate (Figure 25-1). Taken by itself, this might give the impression that sexual harassment is significantly less common in Qalubiya than in Cairo or Giza, yet when we look at the field data this appears not to be the case. This suggests that the low level of reporting from this area is more likely to be attributable to other factors, such as a lower level of computer access or a lower level of awareness of the Map itself, than to harassment actually being less frequent there. As was discussed in the literature review, this represents a significant limitation to crowdsourced data as it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to ensure that the data collected constitutes a representative sample in the way that is possible with traditional techniques. This factor alone suggests that while crowdsourcing data may bring significant advantages, discussed below and elsewhere in this report, the seemingly inherent problems it engenders suggests it is likely not to be the most effective tool for gathering representative quantitative data.

Alternatively, the data suggests that Map reporting requires greater publicity than has so far been achieved. However, it is critical to note while a broader sample may be obtained through increased advertising of the Map, a truly representative sample covering all population strata is still highly unlikely.

Figure (25): Percent distribution of reported Sexual Harassment incident that happened to Female respondents by Governorate (Field)

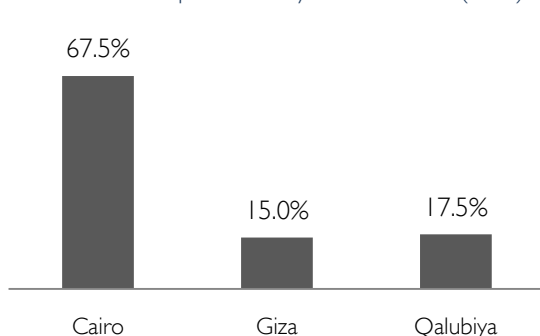
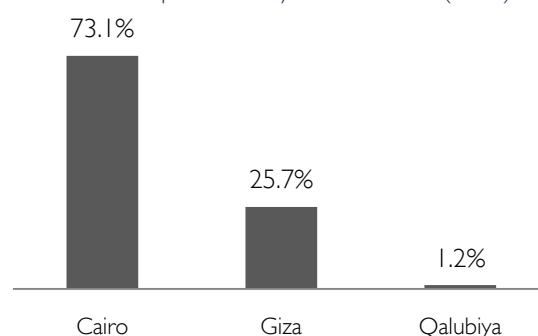


Figure (25): Percent distribution of reported Sexual Harassment incident that happened to Female respondents by Governorate (MAP)



Types of Sexual Harassment – Another difference observed is related to the types of sexual harassment reported via the Map and in the field data (Figure 26 & Figure 26-1). While we might have expected broadly similar patterns of harassment, in terms of type of harassment, to be reported in each dataset, we actually found quite different patterns. For example, the types of harassment most commonly reported by female respondents in the field data were “catcalls” (86.7%) and “ogling” (83.7%) while in the Map data “touching” (46.3%) followed by “comments” (40.7%) were reported most frequently. Further, more violent categories, such as “rape/sexual assault” and “mob attacks” were reported in 6.2% and 1.2%, respectively of the Map reports, and no cases were reported by the field data. This suggests the following:

- Patterns of reporting of sexual harassment differ significantly depending on the data collection method employed.
- People reporting via the Map are doing so based on their own initiative rather than in response to a specific request (unlike the respondents of a questionnaire), and therefore are less willing to

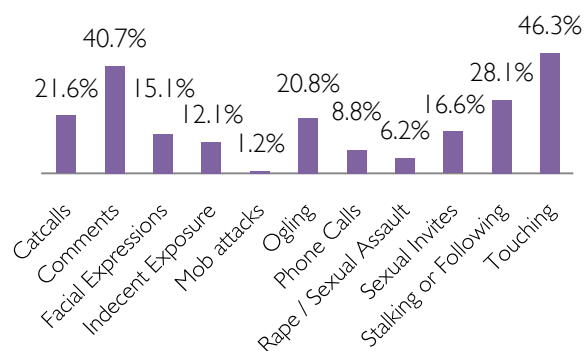
make the effort to report in the event of what may be perceived as more every day or “minor” forms of sexual harassment such as ogling or catcalls.

- The Map, as an anonymous method of reporting, most likely encourages people to report the most severe forms of sexual harassment such as rape and assault. The fact that these types of incidents were only reported via the Map seems to lend credence to the idea that online reporting methods contribute to a disinhibition effect and potentially make respondents more willing to discuss very sensitive issues.
- It is less likely for people to report cases of rape and/or sexual assault using face-to-face methods. While it is of course possible that none of the individuals interviewed had experienced either sexual assault or rape, it also seems possible that some of them had experienced sexual assault or rape but were uncomfortable with reporting it in interviews.

Figure (26): Type of Sexual Harassment for Female Respondents (Field)



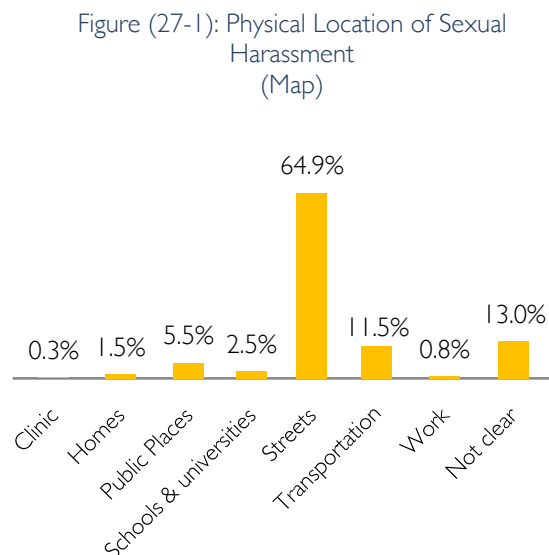
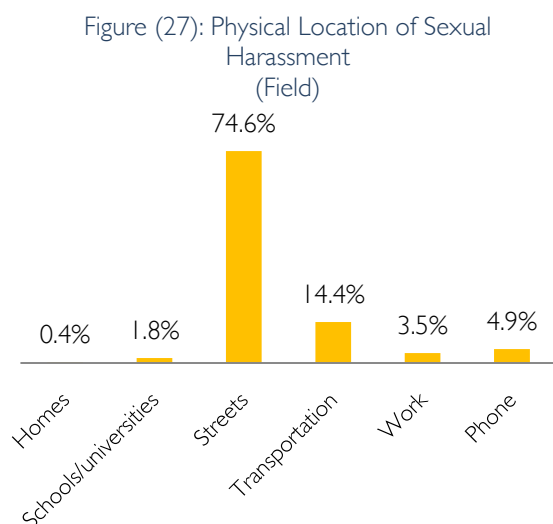
Figure (26-1): Type of Sexual Harassment for Female Respondents (Map)



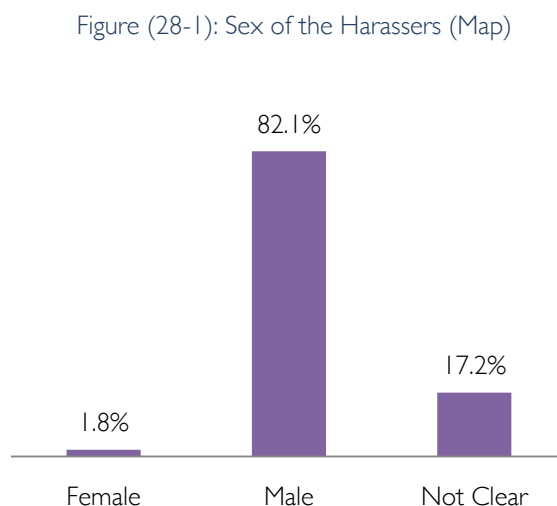
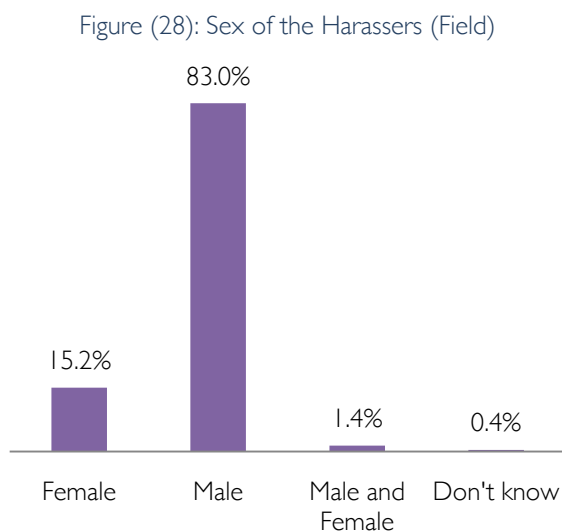
Distribution of the Sex of the Harassed – A third interesting difference between the two datasets can be seen in the sex distribution of the harassed. The field data indicated that 37.6% of the sample believed that men could be target of harassment and a considerable percentage of men from the field data reported that they had been subjected to harassment. Yet only 2.4% of Map reports were related to cases of male harassment. It is clear from comparing the two sets of data that the 2.4% figure derived from the Map data significantly under represents the prevalence of harassment against men.

Three quite different explanations seem possible. Although, the percentage is quite low, the Map could still be seen as a valuable resource for men to report incidents of harassment without revealing their sex, and thus avoiding the shame that might be seen as deriving from publically admitting to having been the targets of sexual harassment. Second, it seems possible that the Map is failing to encourage men to report and that the very low proportion of 2.4% is a reflection of that. This can be largely attributed to the fact that sexual harassment is widely seen as an issue that affects women rather than men and therefore any venues of reporting are seen and promoted as being “for women”. Third, the data suggests that male perceptions of what constitutes sexual harassment differs from that of females (Uggen and Blackstone, 2012). For example, actions such as catcalls, comments, and phone harassment, while perceived by women as forms of sexual harassment that can be reported, are not perceived as such by men. Therefore, men tend to not speak of or report harassment as frequently as women.

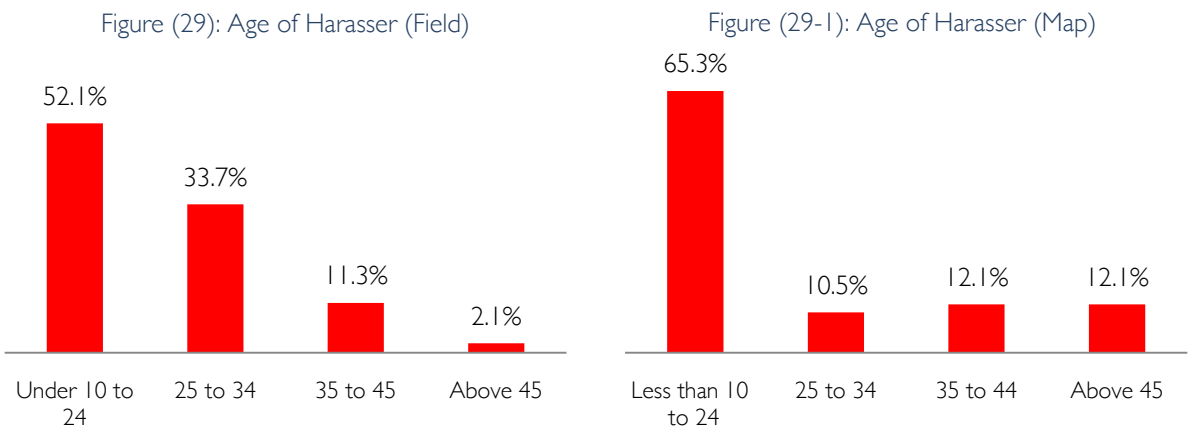
Physical Location – The datasets derived from both the Map and field collection strategies regarding the physical locations where harassment occurred were quite similar. In both datasets, the overwhelming majority of cases were reported as occurring in the streets, followed by on public transportation (if we disregard the relatively small proportion of reports received via the Map where the location in which the harassment occurred was unclear)(Figure 27 & Figure 27-1). This observation suggests that the data collection method employed has little impact on the willingness of respondents to report where incident occur.



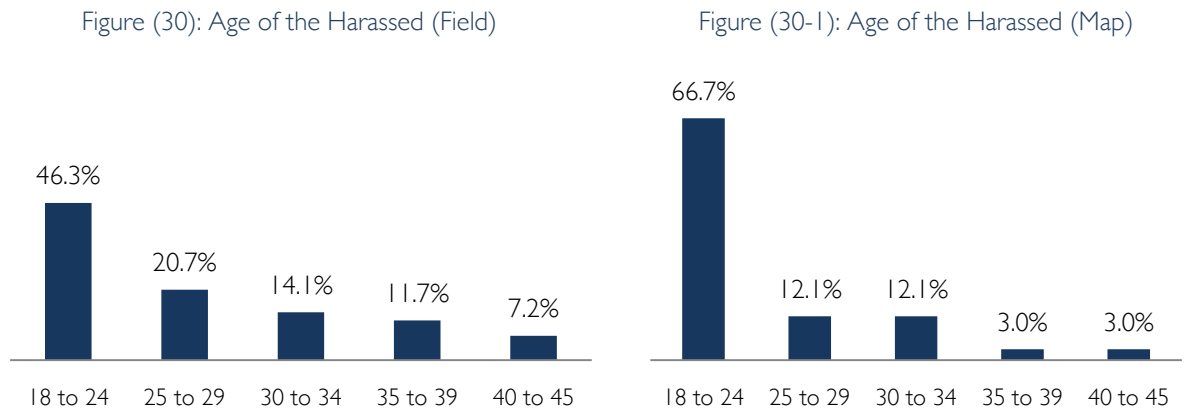
Sex of The Harasser – Another area in which very similar results were received was with regard to the sex of the harasser. According to both the field and Map data, harassers were reported to be male in a very similar proportion of cases (83% and 81.1% respectively) (see Figure 28 & Figure 28-1). The remainder of harassers, however, were reported to be female in 15.2% of cases in the field data and only 1.8% of cases in the Map data. However, the proportion of harassers identified as female in the field data and the proportion of harassers where no information on sex was available in the Map data, are roughly similar. A question here then, is whether the harassers were predominantly female in the 17.2% of cases where the sex of the harasser was unclear in the Map data. However, given many of the issues that have already been highlighted with respect to crowdsourcing, it would be difficult to draw any conclusions about the unclear Map data. Ultimately, where the data was clear, is that men overwhelmingly represent the majority of harassers in both datasets.



Age of Harasser – Both the field and the Map data demonstrate interesting similarities and differences in the distribution of the age of the harasser. Visible in the Figures below, people aged under 24 were responsible for more harassment than any other group. This age group included school-children, teenagers, and young adults. In the field data, the prevalence of perpetrating sexual harassment was generally inversely proportional to age, becoming less common as people got older and among older individuals, those above 45, the percentage is fairly low. Yet the Map data shows slightly more variability in the age distributions, with low but almost equal numbers among age groups above 24. It is important to note that the Map graph does not include the full suite of reports that were included in this analysis. Most Map reports did not include information on the age, or approximate age, of the harasser. Therefore, the actual distributions are largely unclear in the Map and the real distribution may be more closely approximate that of the data derived from the field. However, it is also possible to assume from the reports where age information is available, that there is the potential for wider age variability among older age groups.

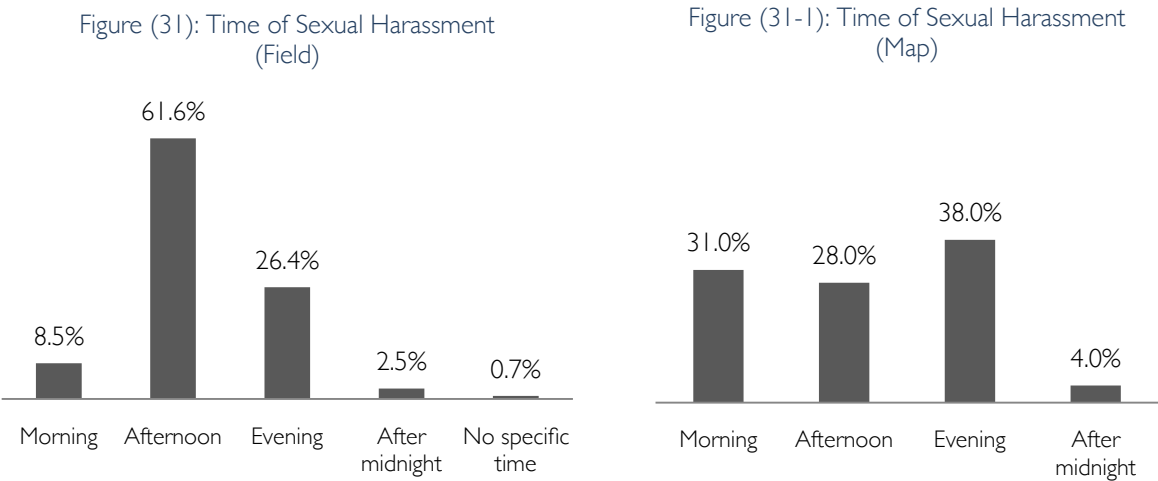


Age of the Harassed – With respect to the age of the harassed, the field and Map data also present strong similarities. The field data derived from responses of participants who claimed to be harassed, while the Map data included those reports where the age of the harassed was clear. In both cases, the majority of the harassed were 18-24 years of age – almost half the sample for the field data at 46.3% and more than half the sample from the Map at 66.7%. As with the age of the harasser, there is also a declining trajectory in the age of the harassed as they get older. The older an individual gets, the less they report being sexually harassed.



Time of Sexual Harassment – Additionally, the time of day that people experienced sexual harassment was elicited from participants in the field questionnaire and was a category analysed in Map reports. As has already been mentioned for the Map, the below graph does not represent the full number of reports that were submitted since this information was not always a feature of the narrative people provided. Where the information was available, it showed striking variability and some similarities to

the field data. Participants in the field data collection overwhelmingly identified the afternoon as the time of day when sexual harassment most often happened to them, whereas the numbers show more equal distribution across the morning, afternoon and evening from the Map reports. In the Map data, it is clear that harassment occurs throughout the day with very similar frequency. However, caution with the Map reports is warranted given that not all reports were included in the below charts. Even for the field data, sexual harassment is shown to happen throughout the day. Both graphs critically demonstrate that most sexual harassment incidents occur during the day, and very rarely in the late evenings when many women are likely to not be out of their homes.



COMPARISON BETWEEN MAP REPORTS AND IN DEPTH NARRATIVES

Analytic Method

Text-based analysis served as the primary analytic method for the Map narratives and in-depth interview data. This approach required detailed readings of stories and coding for the descriptive nature of both the sexual harassment incident and the responses to harassment. In order to understand the descriptive quality of individual reports, analysis involved identifying the physical nature of the harassment and the use of direct or indirect language to discuss it. Accordingly, this included highlighting the sexual nature of utilised terms and the use of profanity, euphemisms, and vagueness to talk around a sexual harassment event. Identifying the use of rights and security-based terminologies was also a feature of the analysis in order to assess if people conveyed a sense of understanding their rights, or what is obstructing their rights in public space. Additionally, examining the differences between male and female accounts of sexual harassment events was critical. The narrative structure of reports was analysed, including the degree of space people devoted to describing the sexual harassment

incident, their response, and their sentiments about the overall situation of sexual harassment in Egypt. All terms and ideas relevant to the above approach were highlighted and coded, from which major themes in the Map and in-depth interviews reports were derived.

General description of Map Report and In-depth Interview Narratives

From the total 797 Map reports only 165 were included in this analysis. The remaining 632 reports were short and did not include any informative data. From the in-depth interviews, 138 stories were elicited from 72 total interviews (24 with males and 48 with females). Sexual harassment narratives related in the in-depth interviews varied in length and establishing a clear narrative structure was difficult given the nature of the interview setting. Overall, the narratives obtained from the in-depth interviews are lengthier than the majority of reports obtained through the Map. However, heavy amounts of probing were required in the interviews to elicit details on sexual harassment events, as the interviewees,

and especially male interviewees, were generally reluctant to provide adequate information.

Structure of Map Reports and In-Depth Interviews Narratives

Map Reports – In his discussion of narrative syntax of personal accounts in interview situations, Labov (1972) describes the linear flow of storytelling, where events tend to be temporally ordered in the sequence of their occurrence. Patrick (2000) further states that personal narratives in particular are not like other stories, they are often told simply and seriously. Given the self-elicited nature of reporting through the Map, individuals had no guidelines for recounting their stories of sexual harassment. Those that provided detailed information of their case tended to do so in a very succinct, linear fashion in the following format:

The Set-Up – Usually the first few lines of each report included contextual details leading up to the sexual harassment incident. Physical location, regardless of how vague, was a critical factor in the set-up of almost all stories. Time was sometimes, but not always, a factor in setting up the context. Most often, the set-up included details of when an individual first noticed someone or something that was not right. This recounting would usually provide details of what a harasser did to get closer to the harassed prior to the actual sexual harassment or assault.

The Harassment Act – The actual event of being harassed or witnessing sexual harassment most often was described quickly and succinctly. Usually, description of the act was not lengthy with the exception of a) Tahrir mob attacks, b) some cases where the event persisted over a longer period of time and the harassed individual discussed both the harassment incident and their response as they tried to evade their harasser.

The Response – A much larger portion of report narratives focused on the response of the person harassed, often making up at least half of the narrative. Responses took two forms, physical and emotional. Most reports incorporated a mixture of both, though some highlighted one or the other. Report narratives overwhelmingly demonstrated very acute or extreme physical or emotional responses to the sexual harassment incident.

The Moral – In some of the long narratives, individuals would end their reports with their sentiments regarding the state of sexual harassment in Egypt in general. When given, these statements reflected on social deterioration in Egypt, patriarchal masculinity, or the lack of police and legal enforcements against sexual harassment. Such sentiments were often provided in angry or sarcastic tones, reflecting frustration with the state of the country.

Table (5): Example of Map Report Received July 1, 2012

It was probably a month or two ago now, I was in the train station Ramsis, had just bought a ticket to go see my family outside of Cairo. While I was sitting on a bench, listening to music on my iPod and waiting for my train to arrive, a group of men sat down next to me and started trying to talk to me. After a while of not really answering, I went to pick up my stuff and leave to wait somewhere else – away from them. They suddenly surrounded me and “apologized” and one of the filthy bastards managed to touch my boob in the chaos of it all.

I was shocked, but I managed to get somewhat angry, and obviously some of the other guys that were there with him didn’t think it was funny/cool either, but no one of them liked it when I tried as bravely as I could to yell at them in both Arabic and in my native language.

How dare they grab some unknown out in public like that. “I7taram nefsak” (behave yourself) is all I have to say.

SET-UP

HARASSMENT

RESPONSE

MORAL

In-Depth Interviews – Sexual harassment stories did not follow the same structure in the in-depth interviews. The narrative syntax was interrupted and mediated by the interviewer who was constantly forced to probe for more information and details. The interview context and the nature

of the subject matter itself shifted the storytelling dynamic. Below is an example that highlights the degree to which interviewees provided very brief descriptions, and where interviewers had to both infer and attempt to elicit additional details from the interviewee (Table 6).

Table (6): Example of Sexual Harassment Incident Elicited from In-Depth Interview	
Interviewee	(There was a time I was walking in our street and it was summer so I was wearing a blouse with half sleeves and he did something to me)
Interviewer	(You mean he touched you?)
Interviewee	(Yes - [Interviewer note: he touched her arm])
Interviewer	(How old did he look?)
Interviewee	(Like a normal young guy)
Interviewer	(Maybe in his twenties, you mean?)
Interviewee	(Approximately, yes)
Interviewer	(Did he look alright, dress well, or what?)
Interviewee	(No)
Interviewer	(Okay, what was your response when he did this to you?)
Interviewee	(I cursed at him)
Interviewer	(Did anyone in the street intervene?)
Interviewee	(No, and another time he did this again [Interviewer Note – he touched her] and I cursed him and he continued normally and grabbed my hand)
Interviewer	(This was the same man?)
Interviewee	(Yes, and I screamed and everyone thought he stole my bag so I had to tell them he didn't steal my bag)
Interviewer	(And he ran?)
Interviewee	(yes)

Characteristics of Sexual Harassment Stories – The sexual harassment stories from both the Map reports and in-depth interviews share a number of important qualities. Whether submitted anonymously or directly in a face-to-face setting, all of the stories included the following discursive features:

Brief – A common feature of all accounts of sexual harassment is that they are described with little detail. For example, most stories generically indicated that a person was “catcalled”, “verbally harassed”, received “comments”, or had been “touched”. Most individuals did not recount the comments received or provide details of touching. Often the body part that was touched was critical to support the claim of sexual harassment, but the nature of the touching was not. In the flow of these narratives, these added details are unimportant.

Minimal Use of Adjectives – The descriptive quality of most narratives is limited. There is minimal use of adjectives to describe the sexual harassment

act, with the exception of comments. In this case, individuals sometimes state the comments might be “nasty”, “vulgar”, or “demeaning”. These descriptive terms are briefly provided to distinguish the unwelcome nature of certain comments from benign comments that might otherwise be heard.

Direct and Indirect Phrasing – The use of less sexual terminology and euphemism was the most common way of discussing the sexual harassment incident. Map reports included phrases such as “he played with himself” and “he opened his pants zipper”, to reference public masturbation. Other phrases included “lower front parts”, “private areas”, and “sensitive areas”, most likely to refer to either the vagina, buttocks or breasts. This was also visible in the in-depth interviews, with phrases such as “specific area of her body”, “from behind”, and “he put his hands below”. Similarly, it was common for participants to reference body parts in less explicit ways, by talking about their “chest”, or “rear”, instead of their “boobs” or “butt”.

Reuse of HarassMap Categories – People usually referenced the sexual harassment that they experienced or witnessed by generically restating the category of harassment as seen on the Map report form and field guide. Most often, people

simply indicated that they had been “catcalled”, “touched”, “followed”, received “comments”, etc. Frequently, people more generally stated they had been verbally or physically harassed, without much detail of the actual act itself.

Table (7): Examples of Indirect Language	
From the In-depth Interviews	From the Map
(Someone was riding behind me and put his hands below...)	“Play with himself”
(I was sitting next to someone and found him raising my skirt and he put his hand from under)	“Lower front part”
(When he passed by me he did what he did and turned tail and ran and I didn't see him)	“Open his pants zipper”
(He continued to walk behind her until he came and grabbed her from a specific place in her body)	“Put his finger in my trousers”
(He was sitting behind her and put his hands between them)	“Felt something in my side; saw the boy's hand”
(He was doing something to me, I felt a movement that wasn't normal next to me, I can't say more than that)	“Gesturing to his groin”

With regard to the differences, it is important to note that Map reports included some sexual and explicative terminology. Individuals felt freer to use terms such as “ass”, “bastard” and “shit” as well as more overtly sexual terms such as “breast”, “penis”, “fingering”, and “masturbation”. Such terms for referencing parts of the body and forms of sexual assault are missing in the interviews. Although, it is still more common in the Map reports and interviews for people to use euphemistic terms, the Map does provide slightly more direct and sexualized rhetoric.

Other features of the in-depth interviews that were not as present in the Map narratives include the use of vague language. Interviewees often made statements that “something happened” and that a harasser “did something”, but without divulging the details of the incident. People tended to talk around the sexual harassment act, which often had to be inferred in the stories. For example, in one story a participant in the field interviews recounted sitting on a bus, when a young man entered, sat on the floor in front of her and used her legs as a backrest. She indicated to him that

this was not appropriate, to which the young man began to insult her. In this situation, the story initially appears like a dubious case of sexual harassment, as there is no overt mention of the sexual nature of the unwanted interaction. However, given local cultural norms that prohibit intimate touching between non-married individuals, not to mention the inappropriateness of a strange man touching a woman unknown to him, the participant counted this as an experience of sexual harassment. In a story recounted by another interview participant, the girl reported walking in Helwan with a group of friends when a man came up and hit a young girl in the street in front of them. This young girl did not respond to being hit, which is what led this participant to assume the situation was more than a simple case of physical abuse. In this case, the participant did not provide any further detail and while it is unclear precisely why she considered this a case of sexual harassment, she viewed it as such nonetheless.

There was also a greater tendency for people to play down and minimize their experiences of sexual harassment in interviews. When asked

to provide details of sexual harassment, people would often state (all are normal flirtatious actions), (verbal yes, but touching no), (something light not extreme). Moreover, male interviewees did not report experiencing sexual harassment and instead, were always witnesses. This differed somewhat from the Map reports where a small portion of narratives were from men claiming to have been sexually harassed, mostly by female harassers.

Characteristics of the Harassed Response

Short Map reports usually did not contain a response, only a fairly uninformative statement of the kind of sexual harassment that occurred. When responses were described in the long reports they received more detail and length than the actual sexual harassment event. Responses were often extreme regardless of the type of encounter. The table below provides examples of the types of responses received in the Map reports:

Table (8): Response Examples from the Map
"We seriously thought we were gonna get killed and as the two motherf****rs in the car blasted their music and said their flirty words, which we could barely focus on because of the terrorizing fear, they left and no one on the street reacted as if this was perfectly normal"
"The number of comments and ogling I get everyday makes me hate my life and makes me unable to work...I go home after work and bury myself in bed and I almost never go out."
(Sometimes I want to walk in the street with a gun to get rid of all these gays [referring to the harassers]....[harassment] keeps me from going to anywhere, to go out, or even work and I was asked to have an affair with the owner of the work)
(To the extent that I am afraid to go out , I hate my clothes, my body to the extent that I decided to wear long clothes but there's no point. In the beginning I was scared to talk to anyone about it and felt ashamed of people looking at me although I am the victim, so I kept silent and endured which led to, psychological problems and I was afraid to go out into the street. I refuse to work far from my home as I am so scared of sexual harassment)
"I went from zero to crazy in 2 seconds and realized I was chasing him down the road...if I had caught him, I swear to God, he would have lost him arm – or his head"

The intensified nature of the responses shared above suggest that the main purpose of reporting to the Map is not to report incidents of sexual harassment, but rather to share emotions and anger about the act. This assumption is backed by the lack of information on the act of harassment itself and the rather long descriptions of the response. Here, the lengthier descriptions of responses suggest that the Map serves as a critical space for individuals to release various emotions, such as frustration, anger and fear. In general, characteristics of the responses in the long stories tended to express the following:

Physical Action – These included actions that were self-protective and allowed the harassed to assert themselves and not be victimized. Such actions included chasing after harassers on foot or in a car; slapping, hitting or “bumping” harassers; and more frequently screaming, yelling or cursing at harassers.

Emotional Toll – More frequently, reports described the emotional, mental or psychological impact of constant sexual harassment. Individuals claimed they were too afraid to leave their home, were terrified of people on the streets and were unable to get out of bed or go to work. Often, extreme emotional responses were accompanied by physical reactions, such as crying, running, locking themselves at home, or the harassed trying to separate themselves from the harasser and the incident.

Extreme Anger – Many reports also highlighted a sense of disbelief, anger, and frustration with being sexually harassed. People were often angry with the harasser directly, referring to them as “sickos” or “perverts”. Anger was often directed at other entities for contributing to the existence of harassment in the streets. Many expressed their disgust with the passivity and apathy of the Egyptian people or with the state for the lack of laws or legal enforcements to protect women.

Exposure of Harassers – The name, address, phone number, profile name on social media, etc., of the harasser was provided in some reports. A woman described in one narrative a visit to a doctor, who “ran additional fat slimy fingers along my body, fingering me as he ‘checked,’ coming over my breast and almost down to the other extremities”. The harassed woman provided the doctor’s name, medical specialty, phone number, address and a landmark near his clinic. In other such cases, the harassed tended to provide more detail than is typical about the nature of the harassment, adding justification for exposing a harasser.

In the in-depth interviews, few details were provided regarding the response of the harassed, where sexual harassment tended to be minimized.

Interviews contained both physical and emotional responses, but in less extreme forms. Reactions included screaming, hitting, talking directly with the harasser, and even attempting to go to the police. Emotionally, individuals would cry or feel anger but the description of such responses was controlled. Individuals did not allow themselves to be overcome by particular emotions and had to be prompted to describe their reaction. It is possible that distance from a remembered sexual harassment incident resulted in a reduction of the strength of their emotions. This contrasts with the Map where individuals may often report immediately after an incident occurs. Below are examples of the types of response received through interviews:

Table (9): Reponse Examples from the Interviews
(With my folder, I waved it in his face and I ran after him "you xyz, you xyz" stop and show me if you are a man "you xyz you xyz". I went and cursed him with words I have never used in my life and ran after him)
(I got up, turned and slapped him and said if you don't stop I will stop the bus, take you off the bus and show you what I'll do)
(She went down and took off her shoes and hit him)
(I got up and told him please move away from next to me. I found him acting like 'why, I didn't do anything'. I told him move away from next to me so I don't hurt you. He said you are not polite. I had in my hand my bag and beat him with it.)
(Sometimes I am shocked and I can't figure out what to do)
(I was disgusted – I felt disgusted because he was a young child)

It is critical to note that it was also common to find male interviewees responding by blaming the harassed women for the occurrence of sexual harassment. The below statement provides a typical example:

(No, there are girls that want it, and there are girls that enjoy it so they are silent. And if you intervene at this time she'll still stay silent and he will say what business is it of yours anyway? Did I get near you so you could speak? If it happened to me maybe I wouldn't be silent).

This contrasts sharply with the Map reports where harassed women were not blamed by male or female witnesses. Male witnesses often simply recounted what they saw without judgment in an attempt to be useful, sometimes offering to

provide more details of the event and assistance if contacted.

Concepts of Human Rights

One important area of discussion concerns whether individuals have a concept of their rights and the way in which sexual harassment impacts those rights. In the Map reports and in the sexual harassment narratives that were analysed from the in-depth interviews, there was very little reference to rights and little indication that people conceived their rights were in some way impinged upon by being sexually harassed. In the Map reports, there are a few statements where individuals claimed they felt their personal space to have been “violated”, or they had been “demeaned”, or were angry that harassers felt they had the right to harass them. However, such

statements were highly limited and found in only a small handful of reports. The Map data does not allow for greater understanding of how people conceive of their rights in public space.

In the in-depth interviews, looking beyond the narratives of sexual harassment that people provided, there was much more extensive use of terminologies that demonstrated individuals had a clear understanding of what their rights are in public space. Such discussions, though, were elicited through direct probing along these lines:

- a. When people were asked about their conceptions of sexual harassment
- b. When people were asked about the forms of sexual harassment
- c. When people were asked about reporting sexual harassment
- d. When people were asked about the age of harassers
- e. When people were asked how clothes affect sexual harassment,
- f. When people were asked if they would intervene against sexual harassment
- g. When people were asked about the causes of sexual harassment.

Terms such as “rights”, “violation”, “harm”, “pain” and “freedom” were commonly used in response to the above questions. Many understood sexual harassment to include actions committed by people who have no right to commit such acts, including making comments, following and touching. Similarly, people viewed violating personal space, even if it did not involve actual touching, as a form of sexual harassment. Many individuals also argued that women have the right to report harassment to the police, but qualified this by stating that often they do not do this because the treatment by police can be worse, than by strangers in the street. Where there seemed to be some dissonance was in discussions about clothing, with some individuals insistent that females were free to dress as they wanted, while others disagreed, arguing that certain situations required specific forms of dress and that people are not free to dress how they want. While far from representative, these interviews hint at a very wide discussion that is occurring in Egyptian society about the rights of women in public spaces.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Accounts of sexual harassment reported on the Map provide a much more striking picture of the problem than those derived from in-depth interviews. Map reports are bolder, with individuals providing more information about their experience of sexual harassment than would otherwise be the case. With regard to language, sexualized words and phrases that might cause discomfort in a face-to-face interview setting with an unknown interviewer were much more prominent in the Map data. In this case, the interview setting may inhibit the interviewee such that the information elicited will be minimized or downplayed. In his examination of the problems with the interview method of data collection, Nunkoosin discusses various challenges including interplays of power between the interviewer and interviewee, and argues that the interview situation is a form

of narrative collaboration. Interviewers are interested in hearing certain stories while interviewees are interested in providing certain stories and that “People do not want to, and do not have to, reveal everything about themselves” (2005:701). In a setting such as Egypt, where formal interactions between individuals are also marked by deference and politeness, the ability to elicit truly detailed information on a sensitive and potentially embarrassing or distressing topic, such as sexual harassment in an interview setting, is questionable.

The Map offers individuals a space where they can speak relatively freely. Reporting directly through the Map and via SMS, individuals are anonymous. As suggested by Suler (2004), this anonymity may contribute to a greater disinhibition and the freedom to express stories and ideas that might be more difficult in person. Having said this however, the Map stories still leave much to be questioned and inferred regarding incidents of sexual harassment. As with interviews, sexual harassment acts are mentioned quickly and succinctly. Despite the fact that they include more detail than the interviews, they are still not very descriptive in that much is left unsaid. This suggests that despite the increase in the use of sexualized terms and profanity, as well as more direct details of assault, the larger purpose of reporting through the Map is not singularly to report the sexual harassment incident itself. Labov argues that speakers make use of various devices to convey the purpose of why they are telling a particular narrative. He argues that in much textual analysis the evaluative purpose of storytelling has been overlooked – the “so what” factor for a speaker in telling a story (1972:366). This research suggests that the purpose of reporting through the Map is also to show the response of the harassed individual, either the way they reacted against their harasser or the impact sexual harassment had on them.

The Map provides a vital space for individuals to express their sentiments regarding their experience of sexual harassment. Critical with understanding the intense nature of the responses in the report narratives is the timing of report submission. For many stories, the time gap between the sexual harassment incident and report submission may be fairly short as individuals tended to report within a few days of an incident, if not the same day. Similarly, numerous stories were told of continuous forms of sexual harassment in particular areas or along particular pathways to work or school. In



such cases, individuals often recall the details of the sexual harassment event with even more clarity. Moreover, it is possible that they tend to report when feeling particularly exhausted and upset by continued harassment. This differs from interviews where individuals are asked in a controlled setting, characterised by power imbalances, to recall an event that either they do not want to talk about or that occurred far enough into the past that any extreme emotional or physical response would be forgotten and/or minimized.

One area, however, where the Map currently does not provide very clear data is on an individual's conception of what actually constitutes sexual harassment. While it may be possible through content analysis to extract some sense of what people may consider sexual harassment to be in general, and which acts should be considered as sexual harassment, it is not possible to derive a full understanding of how individuals perceive sexual harassment and whether they perceive it differently based on sex, age, or other factors. With in-depth interviews, participants provided varying responses, however imperfect or incomplete, of what they considered sexual harassment to be, through much probing by the interviewer. Narratives from the in-depth interviews show that men are most likely to equate sexual harassment with the physical act and less with the non-physical act: "what I know is that sexual harassment is someone is trying to rape a woman". While women tend to define sexual harassment as any verbal or nonverbal act that violates their personal space and causes them harm: "harassment is when you are walking in the street minding your own business and you hear unwanted words, attention or looks". Unfortunately, the self-elicited nature of Map reporting does not allow for probing or discussion. Relying on the Map only, in this case, may provide an incomplete understanding of sexual harassment, unless the web report form can be restructured to guide people to speak about specific issues regarding sexual harassment in ways that provide richer information

The Map was a critical tool for reporting narratives of mob assaults and attacks that occurred in Tahrir Square during revolutionary protests. Such reports represent a total of 17 of the 165 long reports that were received through the Map. The descriptive nature and quality of these reports differs markedly from the rest of the reports visible on the Map. In terms of length, most of the Tahrir reports were from half a page to four pages long. Harassment events in Tahrir were often lengthy and those submitting their stories provided details of the constant attack they experienced until they either got away or were rescued. Here, the attacks themselves were almost always violent assault or rape, with some exceptions. Unique with these reports is that they often included the paraphrasing of specific comments heard, which is rarely seen in other Map reports. The language used to describe the experiences of these individuals was often similar to that used in the rest of the reports on the Map: they often did not include many adjectives and were often simply stated. They were, however, sexual in nature and repeated attacks over a period of time were recounted. Here, the attack itself takes up a good portion of these reports, as opposed to the response. As with the rest of the reports, the larger purpose of the narrative is to expose the harassment event itself and to document the lack of security, state violence and the challenges encountered by women during their participation in the political space.

These findings offer support for the hypothesis that the Map may be effective as a data collection method for sensitive issues. Furthermore, it is a critical space for reporting and documenting cases of sexual harassment during critical times such as demonstrations. Having said this, valuable information required to answer particular research questions might be lacking in these reports, as detailed in the Map analysis. It is possible that the Map only offers limited data collection abilities though further testing is required to determine exactly what additional details can be obtained through this method. Furthermore, any research agenda would likely require a communications campaign to advertise exactly what forms of information are needed in reporting.

5

What We Learnt and the Way Forward



MAJOR FINDINGS

Sexual harassment in Egypt is a widespread phenomenon that restricts women's access to public spaces and is associated with a range of negative physical and psychological consequences. Women, regardless of their age, dress, marital status, or socioeconomic class, are subjected daily to various forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is perpetrated in the streets, on public transportation and in gardens, malls and other public spaces at all times of day.

Although conceptualized and portrayed in different ways, sexual harassment in Egypt is a display of gendered power and the result of underlying sexist, patriarchal social and cultural discourses and performances. Our field and Map data suggest that these are the key reasons for the existence and continuation of sexual harassment in Egypt. The patriarchal social and cultural context facilitates the occurrence and normalization of sexual harassment and researchers have found that sexual harassment is more likely to occur in places where the "situational norm" is tolerant or accepting of this practice and less likely to occur where "situational norms" are not supportive (Wessellmann and Kelly, 2010: 451). Evidence of this tolerance, and in some cases supportive context, is clear through the passive attitudes of bystanders towards harassed women, the prevalence of victim blaming, the lack of empathy, police officers' failure to provide assistance to harassed women, the long and complicated legal procedures necessary to prosecute and convict harassers, powerful myths justifying harassment and the social stigma surrounding discussing and reporting sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is conceptualized, experienced and narrated differently by men and women. The majority of women tend to define a broad range of actions as sexual harassment including catcalls, comments, looks, noises, gestures. Many men on the other hand perceive these acts as fun, innocent teasing or compliments. At the same time, they both agree that sexual assault and rape are types of sexual harassment. Our findings also suggest that perceptions of harassment are not only influenced by gender, but that age and social class are also important determinants. However, further studies are needed to better assess the impact of these

factors, along with religion, in influencing different understandings of sexual harassment. Women talk about incidents of sexual harassment differently than men, with women speaking about feelings of fear, guilt, irritation, disgust, and frustration and men describing their exposure to sexual harassment as amusing, entertaining, funny, flattering and trivial.

Men and women are aware of the short and long-term consequences of sexual harassment. They spoke about fear, guilt, sexual dysfunction, depression and physical stress related reactions such as headaches and disturbed sleep. Women are concerned about having to make lifestyle changes as a result of frequent exposure to sexual harassment by taking actions such as changing their style of dress or avoiding certain streets or modes of transport. They strongly expressed fear of violence and physical assault and voiced concerns about their psychological well-being as they are constantly consumed with feeling of guilt, shame and anxiety. On the other hand, men were more concerned with consequences that might threaten intimate women-men relations, suggesting in focus groups and interviews that "women might become suspicious of men's intentions", "women might restrict their encounters with men", "women might not trust men" or "women might not want to have sex with their husband in the future as result of their exposure to sexual harassment".

It is well established in the literature that incidents of sexual violence are under reported. Both male and female participants in this study stated that they rarely report cases of sexual harassment. Many reasons were cited such as fear of blame and stigma, reluctance to deal with police stations, lack of witnesses and difficult legal procedures, as well as others discussed elsewhere in this report. However it is important to note that under reporting is one of the main reasons for the continued social acceptance of sexual harassment in Egypt. People are not aware of the extent to which this practice is becoming endemic and mainstreamed and its grave impact on women's lives. Furthermore, reports on sexual harassment should not be dismissed, silenced or played down on the assumption that public forms of sexual harassment are usually "trivial", "minor" or "benign". All forms of sexual

violence are interlinked and one type of violence reinforces the other; we should rather ask how these forms of sexual harassment are experienced and understood by women and how they affect their lives (Kelly, 1987).

Incidents of sexual assault and/or rape are less likely to be narrated in face-to-face interviews or group discussions. While it is of course possible that none of the individuals interviewed had experienced sexual assault or rape, it is also possible that some of them

had been either raped or sexually assaulted but were uncomfortable discussing their experiences in such settings. On the other hand, the Map has received quite a large number of reports of assault and rapes, showing that anonymity may encourage people to report the most severe forms of sexual harassment. This seems to lend credence to the idea that online reporting methods contribute to a disinhibition effect and potentially make respondents more willing to discuss sensitive issues and painful experiences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Further qualitative and ethnographic research should be encouraged to better understand how different factors, such as religion, age, and social class, affect how women and men understand and conceptualize sexual harassment. In particular, the effect of religious discourses and messages on constructing certain stereotypical gender images.
- The new sexual harassment law should be operationalised and the process of filing reports against harassers should be simplified
- A more positive role of police stations should be constructed and they should be promoted as entities that provide services for all Egyptian citizens
- Positive images of women should be promoted and the importance of their participation in public space highlighted through mass media channels
- Collaboration between state institutions and organizations and initiative or NGOs working on sexual harassment should be fostered
- Sensitisation of government officials, media personnel, members of the general public to the shocking extent of sexual harassment in Egypt is needed
- Community interventions and programmes encouraging both women and men to stand up and speak against sexual harassment, and to intervene to help the harassed should be encouraged in order to break the silence and eliminate the stigma around the issue.
- Greater efforts should be made to reach out to younger people through unconventional methods such as social media platforms to further encourage a debate about sexual harassment and the constructed images of women and their role in the society that leads to positive behaviour change.
- More on-line platforms should be created for people, male and female, to discuss their experiences and perceptions and tell their stories about sexual harassment.



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