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A Study of Revolutionary Street Art in Egypt

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THE SOCIAL LIFE OF URBAN IMAGES

A STUDY OF REVOLUTIONARY STREET ART IN EGYPT

BY
SARAH H. AWAD

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED 2018

AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF URBAN IMAGES

A STUDY OF REVOLUTIONARY STREET ART IN EGYPT

by

Sarah H. Awad

AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

Dissertation submitted

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. Candidate in Cultural Psychology **2015 - 2018**
Aalborg University
Thesis: *The social life of urban images: A study of revolutionary street art in Egypt*

MSc Social and Cultural Psychology **2013 - 2014**
London School of Economics and Political Science, UK
Thesis: *The identity process in times of ruptures*
Overall Classification: Distinction

BA Mass Communication
University of St. Thomas, MN, USA **2004 - 2005**
The American University in Cairo, Egypt **2001 - 2004**
Specialization: Integrated Marketing Communication
Minor: Psychology and Business Administration
GPA: 3.5 / 4.0

WORK EXPERIENCE

PhD Fellow **02/2015 – 01/2018**
Aalborg University, Denmark

- Working on several research topics relating to street art, collective memory, urban psychology, social movements, media communication, imagination and visual methodology.
- Publishing and editing volumes on these topics.
- Teaching social psychology first year students and cultural psychology master level students.
- Supervising undergraduate and master-level student projects.

Communication and Community Outreach Manager **02/2013 – 09/2013**
Tahrir Academy, Nabadat Foundation, Egypt

- Planned and led the communication and outreach plan for the foundation's non-profit online collaborative learning platform that aims to build the biggest Arabic video library to provide educational content to 13 – 18 year old Egyptian youth.

Social Psychology Research Assistant (Part-time) **06/2011 – 03/2013**
Stanford University, USA

- Implemented several research projects, among them an in-person negotiation experiment examining ways to humanize one's adversary in a situation of disagreement and thus reduce conflict and feelings of animosity, a large-scale mobile device intervention study examining well-being, and a cross-cultural study of intergroup conflict and reconciliation with participants in several countries.

Education Promotion Advisor **10/2008 – 07/2010**
British Council, Saudi Arabia

- Designed and executed the promotion program for UK Education in line with the regional market action plan, which involved delivering different marketing activities, presentations to targeted students, one-to-one advising sessions, and organizing EDUKEX 2009 the biggest UK education exhibition in KSA.

Communication for Development Project Coordinator **08/2006 – 07/2008**
United Nations Development Program Project at National Council for Childhood, Egypt

- Coordinate the production of child rights awareness campaigns, which included documentaries, print and outdoor PSAs, and TV and radio ads in accordance with the strategies of the national council, UNDP, and the Italian Cooperation.

HR Assistant/ Web Administrator **07/2005 – 07/2006**
BP Egypt

- Responsible for HR related communication through designing and implementing an internal HR website. In addition to implementing employees' induction and benefits programs.

Corporate and Foundation Relations Assistant (part-time) **09/2004 – 05/2005**
University of St. Thomas, USA

- Prepared funding proposals to contributing organizations and communicated with potential sponsors

Graphic Designer (part-time) **09/2004 – 05/2005**
Yearbook Staff, University of St. Thomas, USA

- Created collaboratively the design and layout of 2004-2005 university yearbook

EXTRA CURRICULAR EXPERIENCE

Volunteer, Amnesty International, Aalborg, Denmark **05/2015 - Current**

Volunteer, International Forum, Aalborg, Denmark **05/2015 - Current**

Translator, Rapid Response Team **08/2015 - Current**
Translators Without Borders TWB

- On demand English/Arabic translator responding to TWB translation services to non-profits that aim to close the language gaps that hinder critical humanitarian efforts worldwide.

Art Facilitator (Part-Time) **04/2007 – 07/2007**
British Council - Rivers of the World Project, Egypt

- Developed the creative direction of the Nile river art project, mentoring school-based workshops for students to produce artwork aimed at environmental awareness. Designed the final artwork for display at the Thames Festival in London.

Publications & Public Relations Chair **09/2004 – 05/2005**
Globally Minded Student Association, University of St. Thomas, USA

- Planned and implemented different on campus activities that celebrate the university's ethnic and cultural diversity.

Tutor **09/2004 – 12/2004**
Mentor Program, University of St. Thomas, USA

- Mentored fourth grade school students at an after-school program at St. Philips Church. Addressed their educational needs and general knowledge skills and worked with them on overcoming barriers to learning.

Multi Media Committee Member **01/2003 – 05/2003**
Model United Nation at AUC, Egypt

- Designed and implemented the conference media material including a website and a documentary.

LANGUAGES AND IT KNOWLEDGE

- Arabic: Native Speaker
- English: Fluent
- Basic knowledge of Danish (level 3.3)
- Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, Power Point, Front Page, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Indesign, Dreamweaver, Quark XPress, Final Cut Pro, and SPSS

PUBLICATIONS

Books and Special Issues

Wagoner, B., Awad, S. H., & Bresco, I. (Eds) (under contract, expected 2018). *Remembering as a cultural process*. New York: Springer.

Awad, S. H., Wagoner, B. (Eds) (2017). *Street Art of Resistance*. Palgrave publishing.

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de Saint-Laurent, C., Bresco, I., Awad, S. H., Wagoner, B. (Eds) (2017). Special Issue: Collective Memory. *Culture and Psychology*, 23(2), 147-305.

Journal Articles

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Wagoner, B. & Awad, S. H. (in press). Constructing symbols of inequality. Commentary on "The Deprivation - Protest Paradox" by Séamus A. Power. *Current Anthropology*

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de Saint-Laurent, C., Bresco, I. Awad, S. H. & Wagoner, B. (2017). Collective memory and social sciences in the post-truth era. *Culture & Psychology*, 147-155.

Awad, S. H. (2016). The Identity Process in Times of Ruptures: Narratives from the Egyptian Revolution. Special Issue: Prefigurative Politics. *Social and Political Psychology*. 4, 128-141.

Tillinghast, D. S., Sanchez, D., Gerring, M., & Hassan Awad, S. (2013). Egyptian Demonstrators Use of Twitter: Tactics, Mobilization, and Safety. *Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*. Vol. 3 – Issue: 1.

Book Chapters

Awad, S. & Wagoner, B. (2018). Image Politics of the Arab Uprisings. In Wagoner, B., Moghaddam, F. & Valsiner, J. (Eds). *The Psychology of Radical Social Change: From Rage to Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Awad, S. H., & Wagoner, B. (2018). Introducing the street art of resistance. In S. H. Awad and B. Wagoner (Eds.), *Street Art of Resistance*. London: Palgrave.

Wagoner, B. Awad, S. H., Bresco, I. (2018). The Politics of Representing the Past: Symbolic spaces of positioning and irony. In Valsiner, J. & Rosa, A. (Eds.) *Cambridge Handbook of Sociocultural Psychology (2nd Edition)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Maarek, E. & Awad, S. (2018). Creating alternative futures: Co-operative initiatives in Egypt. de Saint-Laurent, C., Obradovic, S., & Carriere, K. (Eds.) *Imagining Collective Futures: Perspectives from Social, Cultural and Political Psychology*. Palgrave Publishing.

Awad, S. H. (in press). From a Social Psychology of obedience and conformity to that of agency and social change. In Miller, R. R. (Ed) Society for Teaching of Psychology's e-book series.

Awad, S. (in press). Political caricatures in colonial Egypt: Visual representations of the people and the nation. Gorman, A. & Irving, S. (eds). *Cultures of Diversity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Wagoner, B., Bresco, I. & Awad, S.H. (in press). Culture and Memory: A Constructive Approach. In M. Gelfand, C.Y. Chiu, Y.Y. Hong (eds.), *Advances in Culture and Psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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Awad, S., & Wagoner, B. (2015). Agency and Creativity in the Midst of Social Change. In Gruber, C. W., Clark, M. G., Klempe, S. H., & Valsiner, J. (Eds.). (2014). *Constraints of Agency: Explorations of Theory in Everyday Life* (Vol. 12). New York: Springer.

Teaching

Fall 2016/2017. Crowd Psychology and Social Change Lectures. Undergraduate Social Psychology course, Aalborg University, Denmark.

Fall 2016/2017. Social Psychology and Social Theory Seminars. Undergraduate Social Psychology course, Aalborg University, Denmark.

October 2017. Visual Methodology: Using photo-elicitation in qualitative interviews. Visual Methods Workshop. Methods for Change, Qualia Analytics. Dana Research Centre and Library, London, UK.

Fall 2016/2017. Visual Representation of Refugees: Images as vital symbols. Master level Elective Course, Aalborg University, Denmark.

Spring 2017, Street Art in Aalborg: Transforming Urban Spaces. Global Studies, Aalborg University, Denmark.

Spring 2017. Psychology of Images. Master level course in Cultural Psychology, Aalborg University, Denmark.

Fall 2016. Street Art of Resistance. Master level seminar in Cultural Psychology, Aalborg University, Denmark.

Summer 2016. Life Course Ruptures & Reconstructions. PhD Summer School, Aalborg University, Denmark.

May 2016. Collective Memory and Urban Space. The Cultural Context of Memory and Imagination Course at Universidade Federal de Pernambuco in Recife, Brazil.

Fall 2015. Semiotics in Calligraphy: The letter and its symbolic visual meaning, in Psychology of Imagination elective course, Aalborg University, Denmark.

Fall 2015. Aesthetic experience in the urban environment. Aesthetics Interactions PhD Course, Aalborg University, Denmark.

Conference Presentations

Awad, S. H. (November, 2017). Revolution street art & the female image. The Cultural Psychology of beauty in everyday lives Seminar. Kerala University, Thiruvananthapuram, India.

Wagoner, B. & Awad, S. H. (October, 2017). The Embodied and Affective Relation with the Historical Past. Studying Collective Memory and Public Grief in Memorial Sites. The place of memory and memory of place international conference. London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research and Interdisciplinary Research Foundation. Cambridge, UK.

Awad, S. H. & Wagoner, B. (August, 2017). Image Politics of the Arab Uprisings. The 17th Biennial Conference of The International Society of Theoretical Psychology. Tokyo, Japan.

Awad, S. H. (July, 2017). From a Social Psychology of obedience and conformity to that of agency and social change. The Sixth Annual Psychology One Conference. Stanford University, California, USA.

Awad, S. H. (September, 2016). Cairo Urban Space: Collective memory in the making. The Tenth Nordic Conference on Middle Eastern Studies Centre for Contemporary Middle East Studies. University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark.

Awad, S. H. (September, 2016). Dialogical Walls: the social life of images in Urban Space. Ninth International Conference on the Dialogical Self. Lublin, Poland

Awad, S. H. (June, 2016). Documenting a Contentious Memory: Symbols in the changing city space of Cairo. International Social for Cultural-Historical and Activity Research ISCAR. Cultural-Historical Sociocultural Research at Times of the Contemporary Crises Conference. Crete, Greece.

Awad, S. H. (May, 2016). The Social Life of Images: Imagining the Past, constructing the Future. International Cultural Psychology Seminar. Gaibu, Brazil.

Awad, S. H. (Dec 2015). The art of Caricatures in colonial Egypt: Political resistance, representation, and identity. Cultures of Diversity: Arts and Cultural

Life in Arab Societies before Independence. Centre for the Advanced Study of the Arab World. University of Edinburgh, UK.

Awad, S. H. (June, 2015). Art of Resistance. Resistance and Renewal: 16th Biennial Conference of the International Society of Theoretical Psychology, Coventry, UK.

Awad, S. H. (June, 2015). Contentious narratives of the past. Imagining the Future of Collective Memory Seminar, Neuchâtel University, Switzerland.

Awad, S. H. (March, 2015). Revolutionary Graffiti in Egypt: The Use of Imagination to Reconfigure Barriers and Create Meaningful Space. Presented at the European Doctoral Network in Sociocultural Psychology Workshop, Lausanne, Switzerland.

Awad, S. H. (March, 2015). The Identity Process in Times of Rupture: Narratives from the Egyptian Revolution. Pre-figurative Politics Seminar. London School of Economics and Political Science LSE. UK.

Public Talks

Awad, S. H. (Oct 2017). "The City that lives inside of us: how the cities we live in influence our everyday lives and how art mediates our urban experience." At the opening ceremony of the *The interior of Ines* Tower by artist Thomas Poulsen, Vesterfjord Park, Aalborg, Denmark

Awad, S. H. (Nov 2015). Photo exhibition and talk: Revolution street art in Egypt. At the Art and Resistance Festival, Platform 4, Aalborg, Denmark.

Awad, S. H. (Nov 2015) "Street art as an Aesthetic form of resistance" talk. At the Art and Resistance Festival, Aarhus, Denmark.

Reviewer

Culture & Psychology

Journal of Social and Political Psychology

Europe's Journal of Psychology

ENGLISH SUMMARY

The social life of urban images: A study of revolutionary street art in Egypt

This thesis looks at visual images as psychological and political tools for social action. Social actors produce images to represent and propagate particular versions of social reality. These images are in turn interpreted, transformed, reconstructed, and destroyed by other social actors in a continuous process of negotiating social reality and the power of representing it in the public space.

Sociocultural psychology theoretical framework is used to look at how images are used as tools of action and how they form symbols in the urban environment. The focus will be on four key psychological and political uses of images: creating visibility, mobilizing, positioning, and commemorating. First, images are communicative tools that make visible an object, a subject, or an idea, this potential to represent and create visibility gives images the capacity to produce spaces that embody the group who made them. Second, images can shape emotions and in so doing motivate action; through them we enter into a common stream of feelings that mobilize us towards a common cause. Third, images are condensed symbols that make arguments vis-à-vis other alternative positions within society; as such they position actors as upholding or violating rights and duties. Fourth, images simplify events into symbolic icons that become resources for the community's collective memory and their affective reconstructions of the past.

The methodological approach builds on the idea of following the social life of certain images as they are transformed by different social actors through time in a certain public space. The empirical data draws on the case of revolution street art in Egypt since 2011. The street art of the Egyptian uprising provides an illustrative example of the political dynamics of images and the power struggle over presence and visibility. The revolution street art was one of the tools used by protestors to proclaim city space and represent the revolution narrative. The authority on the other hand, actively erased those revolution urban images and produced other visuals in the form of posters, billboards, and monuments to represent the official post-revolution narrative. The data is focused on the five years since the 2011 uprising and the context of Cairo's city space as a field for this visual dialogue. Data includes visual documentation, qualitative interviews with revolution street artists and pedestrians, and official news and social media stories relating to the circulation of certain images.

The thesis aims at providing (1) a theoretical understanding of how we act using images and how images in turn act upon us; (2) a methodological tool for investigating the social life of images; and (3) a perspective on the concrete processes by which images and art can trigger dialogue and social change within a society.

DANSK RESUME

Billeders sociale liv i urbane miljøer: en undersøgelse af revolutionær gadekunst i Ægypten

Den forhåndenværende afhandling undersøger visuelle billeder som psykologiske og politiske redskaber for social handlen. Sociale aktører skaber billeder for at repræsentere og sprede en særlig fortolkning af den sociale virkelighed. Disse billeder bliver efterfølgende fortolket, transformeret, rekonstrueret og i nogle tilfælde destrueret af andre sociale aktører i en kontinuerlig forhandling af den sociale virkeligheds beskaffenhed og magten til at definere den i det offentlige rum.

Afhandlingens teoretiske referenceramme udgøres af socio-kultural psykologisk teori, der bruges til at undersøge, hvordan billeder fungerer som redskaber for handlen, og hvordan de skaber symboler i det urbane miljø. Fokusset er på fire centrale psykologiske og politiske måder at bruge billeder på: til at skabe synlighed, til mobilisering, til positionering, til at dokumentere og mindes. Billeder er for det første et kommunikativt redskab, der synliggør et objekt, subjekt eller en ide. Denne mulighed for at repræsentere og skabe synlighed muliggøre samtidig skabelsen af et særligt rum, der fremstiller den aktørgruppe, der har skabt billederne. For det andet kan billeder forme følelser og herigennem motivere social handlen. Gennem billeder føres vi ind i en fælles strøm af følelser, der mobiliserer os til at arbejde mod et fælles mål. Billeder er, for det tredje, kondenserede symboler, der fungere som argumenter for eller imod alternative holdninger i samfundet. De positionerer således aktører som rettighedsbeskyttende og pligtopfyldende eller rettighedskrænkende og uansvarlige. For det fjerde kan billeder simplificere og omdanne begivenheder til symbolske ikoner, der kan blive en ressource for fællesskabets kollektive hukommelse og deres affektive rekonstruktion af fortiden.

Afhandlingens metodiske tilgang bygger på ideen om at følge udvalgte billeders sociale liv, når de forandres af forskellige sociale aktører over tid i et særligt offentligt rum. Afhandlingens empiriske data udgøres af revolutionær gadekunst i Ægypten siden 2011. Gadekunsten under den Ægyptiske opstand tilvejebringer et illustrativt eksempel på billeders politiske dynamik og magtkampene omhandlende synlighed og tilstedeværelse. Den revolutionære gadekunst var en af de redskaber, der blev brugt af de revolutionære til at erhverve sig byrummet og repræsenterer den revolutionære fortælling. Myndighederne søgte, på den anden side, aktivt at slette disse revolutionære urbane billeder, og repræsenterede gennem andre visuelle midler, såsom plakater, billboards og monumenter, den officielle post-revolutions fortælling. Afhandlingens data udgøres af visuel dokumentation, kvalitative interviews med revolutionære gadekunstnere, samt fodgængere indsamlet i Kairo i perioden fra 2011-2016. Herudover inddrages officielle nyhedsprogrammer og historier på de sociale medier, der relaterer sig til cirkulationen af særlige billeder.

Afhandlingen sigter mod at levere (1) en teoretisk forståelse af hvordan vi handler gennem billeder, og hvordan billeder på den anden side handler på os: (2) et metodisk redskab til undersøgelse af billeders sociale liv: og (3) et perspektiv på en konkret process, hvori billeder og kunst kan udløse dialog og social forandring i et samfund.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you my MSc supervisor Caroline, for introducing me to my PhD supervisor Brady, who became a mentor, a friend, and a continuous great support, I owe my academic growth and enjoyment of my PhD experience to him.

Thank you *long distance*, for reaffirming love is a lifetime journey. Thank you Adam for continuing to teach me what love is. Thank you my family, I am well aware I would not be where I am today if it was not for your lifetime of hard work, dedication, and honesty.

Thank you *procrastination,* for connecting me with amazing office mates, we collectively procrastinated our challenging tasks through doing planks and push-up challenges and office pranks. Thank you Maria, Steffen, and David: I couldn't have hoped for a more fun, supportive, and safe working environment. Thank you Paula, Oscar, Inga, Sanna, Lærke, Lilith, Rasmus, Morten, and the *Secret* Society of PhDs for inspiring office chats.

Thank you *Danish weather*, for making me feel the warmth and hospitality of dear friends Berwine, Jeanette, Hammam, Mixo, Mostafa, and Søren.

Thank you *endless long seminars,* for the kind colleagues who generously and modestly shared their knowledge and support. Thank you Nacho, Constance, Vlad, Jaan, Bob, Marianne, Luca, Mogens, Pina, and all k-seminar group.

Thank you *fjord cold walks*, for connecting me with Marta, our walks really shaped my experience of Aalborg and my wellbeing throughout the three years.

Thank you *failed funding applications*, for meeting Ivan, who through his relaxed spirit to life as well as critical views made my last months of PhD writing peaceful and inspiring.

Thank you *illegal graffiti and street art*; you made me experience cities like never before, hear stories from every wall, and walk through the traces of people I never met.

Thank you *dictators*, for bringing forth the rebels who sat with me, with trust and open heart talking about their hopes as well as despairs. You're the stranger at home and the traveller with no place to settle. You talk about pink elephants, shiny unicorns, and fairies. You ask the questions with no answers. You are the voice that demands recognition.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCATION

> *"... it gives me hope. Every time I see a revolution image on the wall it reassures me that someone still remembers and does not believe what the media is saying, someone still resists.. not all the voices are silenced.. I am not alone" – participant, Cairo pedestrian*

What significance can an unofficial mark on a city wall make? A street art image is often unnoticed and perceived as being just one among many bombarding experiences of the city. Yet street artists often feel a need to put a mark on the wall, even if it has no impact, affirming their presence in public space, a presence that demands recognition even if it does not receive one.

The continuity and insistence of those images make them influential, yet they are often unnoticeable in everyday city life. Certain urban images come to shape how we experience the city. They trigger an active participation in our everyday experience. They turn spaces into places; personalize places that call for affective presence. Places that make us feel home or foreign, included or excluded. Each urban image calls for a personal interpretation of it, an interpretation that often tells more about us than it tells about the image, one that is affected by our current identifications with the place, future relation to it, as well as memory of all our past experiences in it.

This visual urban experience comes to the fore in times of turbulence and social change, when political struggle is about visibility and presence in urban space, and opposition strive to challenge the authority's monopoly over visual culture. The visual production of opposition and social movements comes in to assert the right to self-representation and active presence in public space.

It was during the Egyptian uprising in 2011 that revolutionary street art took over the grey walls of Cairo, proclaiming urban space and replacing the Mubarak dominated urban images with images of the people and the revolution. It emerged in the protest squares and as the police built barrack walls to contain the protest areas, these were also quickly turned into new canvases for the movement's street art production. The different images of the revolution street art actively reconstructed the image of authority and the people, mobilizing emotions and solidarity with the protestors.

Revolutionary street art in Egypt was an emergent creative group process of expression and resistance (Awad & Wagoner, 2015). It was mostly anonymous, temporary, and called for a democratic dialogue. Pedestrians saw it, interpreted it, reacted to it, reproduced it, and erased it. The phenomenon was new and unique to

the streets of Egypt. It was a victory mark declaring the proclaimed protest areas for the public in the early days of the revolution.

However, that was only the beginning of the story, the one that caught much of the local and international attention. The rest of the story is of a longer visual dialogue that the revolutionary street art images initiated. This longer story is traced through the social lives of those images, as they were reproduced in different mediums, as they travelled, as they endured and as they were creatively destructed by counter-images.

The visual production of the 2011 revolution interrupted a very homogenous public space where the image of the authority continuously watched over citizens as they passively consumed space. This proclaiming was quickly retaliated with subsequent powers that exerted significant efforts to take back the control over visual culture, not only by erasing the traces of the street art images but also by actively producing their own urban images to communicate the new homogenous official discourse.

The example of revolution street art images in Egypt speaks to an essential aspect of the visual production of social movements. It speaks of a common struggle for presence in public space and representation in visual culture, which is monopolized by those who have the political and economic power. It informs an understanding of the politics of images and their potential double-edged power, providing an approach to look at images theoretically and methodologically as a form of social action.

It also uniquely shows the process of visual social dialogue in a context of abrupt social change and rapid transitions of political powers. It shows new ideas' production, reconstruction of social representations, and collective memory in the making. The case thus helps us look at social change in society at large through the analysis of specific images and symbols through time.

1.1. SCOPE OF DISSERTATION

This dissertation looks broadly at the social life of images in public space. It provides a theoretical and methodological approach to looking at images as signs and communicative tools used by individuals to perform different social actions. Different social actors produce, transform, appropriate, and destroy images to act in society. Through this social life of images they become embodied with different meanings and gain symbolic power. This dissertation thus provides a sociocultural psychology approach to images: how individuals act using images and how in turn images act back upon individuals. This process is explored through the transformative social life of images.

Empirically, the dissertation analyses the politics of images in urban space using the case of the revolution street art in Egypt since 2011. Revolution street art in Egypt constituted a major part of the cultural production of the uprising and its impact on visual culture endured beyond the uprising and beyond its disappearance from the streets. Data follows the visual dialogue taking place in the city of Cairo since the uprising with the different power dynamics over public space and the contested changing political atmosphere. From one side the visuals created by the revolutionaries is looked at in the form of street art, graffiti, and street installations, and from the other side authority public space interventions after 2011 are looked at in the form of posters and billboards, monuments, and city structural changes.

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The broad research question is:

> How do individuals act using images and how in turn do images act back upon individuals?

This question is investigated through the different chapters presented in this dissertation. Chapter two explains the theoretical and methodological approach to look at those questions. While the articles address more specific questions:

> How do images embody representations of the people and the nation, and how do they travel and transform over time? (Chapter 3)

> How is revolution street art used as a tool of resistance, and what kind of political dynamics and dialogues does it create in urban space? (Chapter 4)

> How are images in urban space intentionally produced and modified to communicate a certain narrative and regulate a community's collective memory? (Chapter 5)

> What are the different potentials of image use in political struggles in terms of visibility, mobilization, positioning and commemoration? (Chapter 6)

1.3. BACKGROUND

To contextualize the revolution's street art images I will present below the events and social movements leading up to the uprising in 2011, the progression of subsequent events, and the different political power transitions and how these events formed the background of the politics of images I discuss in this thesis. The

background section is not a political analysis of the events nor does it attempt to unfold the complexities of the political change and power transitions in Egypt, it rather looks at the revolution in a broad sense as a cultural phenomena (Valsiner, 2014). Such perspective will help lay the ground to see how individuals experience such events, take part in these, and use specific tools –in this case images- to act within this context.

1.3.1. THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION

> *Revolutions break our heart whether they fail or succeed. To study revolution is to study how the masses awaken from their slumber and thrust themselves onto the centre stage of their own history only to watch their aspirations either usurped or repressed. In the very best of cases, outcomes fall way below expectations. But as disheartening as studying revolutions may be, these rare and enigmatic episodes draw scholars like a magnet. The heroism of everyday life is simply too hard to resist (Kandil, 2012, p. 1)*

Events leading up to the fall of Mubarak regime in 2011 are complex and this complexity poses several questions about how to conceptualize it. Throughout the dissertation I use the words protests, uprising, and revolution depending on the episode and angle I am referring to. These terms imply different levels and kinds of social ruptures and value orientations; they also hold implicit affective valuation (Valsiner, 2018), which makes labelling a challenging task. As will be discussed below, events escalated quickly from protests against a specific police brutality incident, to a snowballing uprising to bring down the regime, to a revolutionary cause of bread, freedom, and social justice, to a counter-revolution.

In hindsight, what happened was not a revolution in the sense of a fundamental structural shift in system of governance and social relations. The revolution resulted in a turmoil and transition from one form of dictatorship to another with no progression towards actualized democracy (Moghaddam, 2018). However, activists rallied for what they saw as a revolutionary cause and the protests had a revolutionary intent. Large demonstrations were turned into a revolutionary episode with the growing belief from activists that this was a historic moment to change the fate of their country, and the fall of Mubarak regime reaffirmed this revolutionary episode (Gunning & Baron, 2014). The Egyptian uprising events can also be seen as revolutionary in terms of how they changed people's attitudes towards political debate and public protest. The events impacted especially the youth who took part in it, that in spite of later disappointments, being part of the uprising had an inevitable effect on their life trajectories and perceived position in the society (Awad, 2016).

The Egyptian revolution was not a sudden or isolated event, but one that connected back to local social movements, growing anger in the preceding years and waves of dissent in the neighbouring Arab countries. Looking at the decade preceding the

2011 events, show as many continuities as there are ruptures and that the revolution had both planned and spontaneous factors regarding how it escalated (Gunning & Baron, 2014). The revolution is one of several episodes of political and social struggle (Kandil, 2012). Even though the authoritarian regime was able to suppress much of the organized movements and silence collective resistance, this does not mean that it stifled the entire society; there were growing micro forms of resistance in the mass of ordinary citizens in their daily lives (Bayat, 2013). Citizens always have space for developing alternative ideas even in totalitarian regimes; they do not simply absorb the authority's official narrative but rather learn to keep their opinion private to avoid the consequences (Moghaddam, 2013).

Mubarak created a strong police state that protected those in power against the Egyptian people. Even though Mubarak's regime was a continuation of the post-monarchy and post-colonial army backed regimes of Nasser and Sadat, it slowly transitioned Egypt from a military to a police state (Kandil, 2012). This is symbolically expressed in how during Mubarak's regime the police slogan was changed from "The police in the service of people" to "The police and the people are in service of the nation" (Awad, 2017). Mubarak's relatively stable thirty years of government had its escalating challenges in the years preceding 2011; neo-liberal reforms that worked only in the favour of the emerging capitalist class, indiscriminate police violence that was gaining more visibility through technology and online media, debate surrounding Mubarak's preparation for his son Gamal to succeed presidency after him, sharp decline in living standards, high levels of unemployment, and growing densely populated informal areas. Though these factors alone do not necessarily lay ground for a revolution, they contributed to the building up of opposition movements (Gunning & Baron, 2014).

In response to those and other factors, there was a growing momentum of opposition movements since 2000. To mention a few, from 2000 to 2004 there were growing pro-Palestine and anti-Iraq war protests especially in universities asking the government to have a stronger position against Israel and the United States. In 2004 Kefaya movement was established; Kefaya in Arabic means 'enough.' Kefaya was the first movement to explicitly say 'enough' to Mubarak's rule; they organized protests against Mubarak and called out the fraud taking place in presidential elections in 2005. Between 2006 and 2011 there was also growing industrial strikes, Muslim Brotherhood protests, and bread (economic) riots. It was through those movements and protests in addition to humanitarian organizations that protest culture was growing and gaining visibility and momentum among active citizens across different occupational, humanitarian, and political networks; however, before January 2011 the general Egyptian masses had remained largely un-mobilized (Gunning & Baron, 2014).

It was in 2010, that a series of subsequent events created a momentum that brought many new people to activism and to the 2011 protests. First, ElBaradei, Nobel

Laureate and former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, announced that he would run for president in 2011. He formed the National Association for Change which attracted many pro-democracy independent groups such as April 6 Youth Movement. Second, in mid 2010 Khaled Said, a young middle-class man, was brutally beaten to death by two policemen in broad daylight in his neighbourhood in Alexandria. The image of Khaled's face before and after the incident mobilized emotions especially on social media and gave visibility to police brutality. The familiarity of the face of Khaled among middle class youth gave a strong message of the predicament of all Egyptians. A facebook page, which later played a key role in mobilizing for the 25 January protests, was created under the name "*We are all Khaled Said."* Third, few weeks before the revolution, a church in Alexandria was bombed by terrorist. The bombing came at a time of increasing sectarian tensions in the region and led to days of protests and eventually mobilised more Christians to join on 25 January 2011. Lastly, the peak of emotional mobilization and hope for change came early 2011, with the Tunisian revolution succeeding and president Ben Ali fleeing Tunisia on 14 January 2011; the question was "could Egypt be next?" (Gunning & Baron, 2014). Images from the Tunisia uprising were a visual signal of empowerment to Egypt and the region (Khatib, 2013).

The call to go to the street was advocated on social media especially by the "*we are all Khaled Said*" facebook page where Said had become a symbol of police violations of justice. The choice for 25 January as the protest day was a strategic one (Ghonim, 2012). Marked after an incident of Egyptian police forces fighting British troops occupying Suez Canal city of Ismailia in 1952, 25 January had become the annual police day, honouring the heroic role of police in defending the city. The selection of 25 January to revolt against police brutality thus highlighted the disparity between the heroic police of the past and the brutal one of today (Kandil 2012).

Different platforms on social media encouraged people to join the protest using images from Tunisia's uprising, and images of police brutality and human suffering to foster emotions and solidarity with the cause. However, the social media impact was limited, according to the International Telecommunications Union, around 31% of the Egyptian population had access to internet in 2010, while 72% had mobile phone in 2009 (Ghannam, 2011). Therefore, street mobilization, social and political networks, and mobile phones had a much wider reach. As people started going to the street on January 25th, the protests grew in size and waves of people multiplied to a level beyond what the security forces were prepared to face. Social media continued however to be used strategically to spread news about where and how to meet and tactics to outmanoeuvre the police (Tillinghast, Sanchez, Gerring, & Awad, 2013).

In the few days following 25 January 2011, numbers and hopes of people multiplied. There was a collective sense of agency and power, coupled with a realization that

this was a historical moment that people would take pride in being part of. As the situation escalated with police clashes, there was also a sense that there is no way back; if people leave the square then the moment is gone and they will face more suppression and imprisonment. But also with more lives lost in the clashes, the emotional attachment and sense of solidarity brought people together under a higher cause; it would be a 'treason' now to give up the cause that numerous lives had been lost for already (Awad, 2016). It was in those initial days of the revolution that protests brought together seculars, Islamists, and the different opposition groups together as one force for a common goal of bringing down the regime.

After 18 days of protest, the protests succeeded in overthrowing Mubarak. The stepping down of Mubarak was announced and supported by the Army who came in as responding to the people's demand and standing for protection of the protestors. This was a moment of extreme hope and realization of the power of the people. For the people taking part in the revolt, it was the chance for change towards democracy and social justice in Egypt. For the army, it was possibly the opportunity for retribution to its status and power pre-Mubarak (Kandil, 2012).

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) took charge of the transition period until the presidential elections mid 2012. Candidates from secular political parties, old Mubarak regime, and Islamist groups ran for presidency. Morsi, from the Muslim Brotherhood group, was elected. Morsi's presidency was short lived. After one year in office, public dissatisfaction against him grew for several reasons, among them: a deteriorating post-revolution economy, fear of Islamic radical movement, and Morsi's decisions to give himself unprecedented presidential power.

The army intervened once again, supporting the protestors against Morsi, and demanding him to step down. After no response from Morsi's side, the army led by El Sisi took control, arrested Morsi, and assigned an interim president. This move was followed by nationwide arrest of Muslim Brotherhood members declaring them as a terrorist group and violently dispersing their pro-Morsi protests.

Presidential elections took place again in mid 2014. After El Sisi has initially declared he will not run for presidency, he declared his resignation from his position as Defence Minister and ran for presidency in response to the "people demands" as he expressed it. Only one other candidate ran for the presidency against Sisi; independent socialist candidate Hamdeen Sabahy. The election was boycotted by many activists who saw it as a coup rather than a democratic election and Muslim Brotherhood members and supporters who insisted that Morsi was the only legitimate leader.

President El Sisi continues as the current president of Egypt, promising stability and economic growth after the revolution's unrest. He also exercises tight security control against any opposition and supresses freedom of expression, especially from

revolution activists. Those security measures are communicated on national media as essential in a time of emergency and security risk from the growing Islamic State threat. In terms of visual culture, the Egyptian government was back again to control a uniform narrative of national belonging through visual representations in public space.

The above-mentioned power transitions had its impact on the society at large, creating polarized groups each with a different narrative of the revolution events. Young activists who took part in 2011 protests saw their chance for change and empowerment taken over by politicians, army, and the Muslim Brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood saw their group as the only successful one at gaining legitimacy through democratic elections, and this legitimacy taken away by a military coup. While the army, maintains that it is the national representative and protector of the people in the "two revolutions" against Mubarak and Morsi. Each of these groups attempted to document and advocate for their narrative, the army having the most control over city space and media, while activists and Muslim Brotherhood supporters have the street and online media, but face prosecution.

1.3.2. THE SQUARE

> *"Consequently, Tahrir poses a particularly difficult problem to understand in that, what it was, it is no longer, but it represents what could be and what many of the protesters still seek." (Gunning and Baron, 2014, p.272).*

The rapid transition of power and counter-revolution military state could be seen in a sense as ending the revolutionary episode. The revolution could be seen by many as a missed opportunity. The 'opportunity bubble' after the dictatorship's collapse left a window for potential change towards an open society and a change of systems (Moghaddam, 2018) but this opportunity was quickly taken over by counter-revolutionary powers. However, the spaces produced in 2011, the life trajectories affected by it (Awad, 2016) and the visual production of the movement lives beyond the dispersing of Tahrir Square and the counter revolution (See chapter 3, 4, & 5).

Of importance to this project is the physical space that brought protestors and authorities together, the battleground, but also the creative ground through which the visual production of the revolution became possible. As well as the further spaces, such as online medium, that carried this visual production beyond the square.

Tahrir square was the symbolic epicentre of the revolution, a political space that became re-inscribed with new meanings and practices. The political space that was created in Cairo's Tahrir square and its environs was an idealized version of what the Egyptian state ought to be (Gunning & Baron, 2014). The socio-spatial features of the Cairo's urban centre have shaped much of the protest dynamics (Bayat, 2013) and will be closely investigated in chapter 5 (Awad, 2017).

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1.3.3. VISUAL PRODUCTION OF THE UPRISING

The very act of proclaiming public space by protest is a visual political act that creates visibility to a conflict and gives symbolic power to the people; thus social movements can be approached as visual phenomena (Doerr, Mattoni, & Teune, 2014). In the authoritarian controlled public space of Egypt, having a physically active presence in public spaces, where you are only allowed to be present passively, is in itself a visual and political act (Bayat, 2013). The visual production of the Egyptian uprising in 2011 contributed to the national and international exposure of the uprising and its eventual success in bringing down Mubarak regime. Every person in the square was an image creator and broadcaster of a political message (Khatib, 2013). The political success depended on the cultural power created through powerful visual symbols and social performances taking place in protest squares. This created an extraordinary cultural upheaval in Egyptian society and its symbolic power lives on beyond the disperse of the protests and the erasing of the street art from the squares (Alexander, 2011). Those performances emerged organically as people gathered in squares, in a contagious group creativity process that eventually turned Tahrir square into a visual theatre of the revolution (Awad & Wagoner, 2015).

The revolution street art was just one of the many different political art expressions of the revolution. The use of political art to resist authority could be seen along Egyptian history in political caricature that started as early as 1877 (See chapter 3; Awad, in review), in poems and songs of resistance (Mossallam, 2012), and in visual arts, paintings, and sculptures. This heritage was appropriated and reproduced in the political art production of the 2011 protests. Poems of Salah Jaheen (whose lyrics formed the collective consciousness of the 1952 revolution/coup), songs of Sheikh Imam the blind singer associated with Marxist ideology, and songs of Ahmed Fouad Negm (who was an active opposition voice in the 1960s and underwent political detention and silencing during Mubarak's rule) all were part of the revolution live performances in the square (El Hamamsy & Soliman, 2013). The revolution resistance art combined two seemingly separate eras of Egyptian history and made their own appropriation of Jaheen's revolutionary ideological lyrics, and Imam's mobilizing words for the marginalized, as well as Negm's more contemporary opposition words. This legacy was directly carried out with singers performing in the square in the 2011 protest such as Ahmed Haddad, the grandson of Salah Jaheen, singing poems of his grandfather (El Hamamsy & Soliman, 2013).

1.3.4. WHAT IS REVOLUTIONARY STREET ART

Street art, in a broad sense, could be seen as any intervention done in the street with an artistic intention from the producer or one that is perceived as art from viewers.

This can include murals, graffiti spraying and stencilling, posters, wall tagging, installations, and street performances. For the purpose of this research, I look at images produced in the street in the form of murals or graffiti spraying and stencils or posters that tackle any issues relating to the 2011 revolution. In this sense, the topic of the image is the one that would be the selection criteria for documentation in the research rather than whether it is 'art' per se or not. Street art is thus defined here as a subjective reality, a voice in a dialogue, and an act of resistance. Many of the 'street artist' participants did not like to identify as such, and preferred to be called activists who do interventions in the street because they do not, in their opinion, have the artistic skill or artistic intention but rather have the tools to print a stencil and spray it on a wall as a political action.

As will be seen in chapter five, the investigation of the images in the city relating to the revolution expanded to look at other images vis-a-vis the revolution street art. These included for example government billboards, posters, and monuments.

The lens to the Egyptian revolution in this project will hereafter be through the visual images relating to the revolution. These images inform how the revolution is represented by the activists, as well as how it is perceived locally and internationally. A revolution sees itself in the images it creates, and its visual productivity informs how a revolution is understood (Khatib, 2013). In following those images, we see everyday processes of struggle over power and the diffused politics of the everyday; we also acknowledge a change in the way politics is perceived and practiced in the Arab region and globally (Khatib, 2013).

1.4. TRAJECTORY OF THE PHD

My work on the research for this thesis has developed and taken different turns throughout the three years of my work as a PhD fellow.

Luckily, however, I have started working on the topic before I officially started my PhD work, through a research paper written for a creativity class during my Masters degree. Later, together with Brady Wagoner we developed and co-authored it for publication: *Agency and creativity in the midst of social change* (Awad & Wagoner, 2015). This first work shows my initial interest and entry point to the topic of revolution street art as processes of group creativity that emerged in a time of heightened sense of agency during the early days of the uprising in 2011.

The focus in this initial work was on the agency of the producers of those images (graffiti artists/activists) and the creativity and agency expressed in the images themselves. This focus was taken forward in my first co-authored publication during my phd placed in **chapter four** of this thesis: *The (street) art of resistance* (Awad, Wagoner, & Glaveanu, 2017). The chapter looks at what interaction occurs once those street art images are in city space. It highlights the different social actors

involved: artists, pedestrians, and authority, the visual dialogue and tension that occurs through the walls between those actors, and how it could be generative of social change.

This approach was taken further to look at those revolutionary images vis-a-vis other images in urban space produced by authorities, and how those images, together with other urban symbols such as structures, negotiated the contested memory of the 2011 uprising. The argument moved forward to look at images as signs that embody meanings, narratives and collective memories, thus becoming living symbols in city spaces. Here the focus was on one specific political use of images and symbols in relation to collective memory in urban space, and an analytical focus on the perception side—that is, how pedestrians perceive the stories the street art images tell versus other narratives in the urban space and how those narratives form and compete over the collective memory. In this work the timeframe was also different: while previous work focused on street art in the initial stage of the uprising, this article traced the transformation and change over the five years following 2011. This publication is placed in **chapter five** of this thesis: *Documenting a Contested Memory: Symbols in the changing city space of Cairo* (Awad, 2017).

Those previously mentioned publications led to going back to the broader question of what are the different uses of images in political struggles and how can we investigate that question through the social lives of images. This led to the chapter: *Image Politics of the Arab Uprisings* (Awad & Wagoner, 2018) placed in **chapter six** of this thesis. The chapter elaborates on four specific uses and impacts of images within a political context: to create visibility, to mobilize, to position, and to commemorate.

Alongside working on the case of revolutionary street art in Egypt, I took a historical perspective, looking at images in a different medium and period. The chapter *Political caricatures in colonial Egypt: Visual representations of the people and the nation* placed in **chapter three** of this thesis (Awad, in press) takes a historical look at political caricature art in Egypt and how it constructed visuals of the nationhood that will reappear later in the images produced by opposition as well as by government in the aftermath of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. This chapter highlights the reconstruction process of images over time and how they travel and transform meanings long after they have disappeared in archives. It also contrasts the caricature images with the street art images of 2011 showing how the latter create a unique and new discourse in relation to representing the people and their agency.

The exploration of street art as a tool of resistance in different social and political contexts was taken further by co-editing the book *Street Art of Resistance* (Awad & Wagoner, 2017) bringing together a multi-disciplinary approach to the topic from case studies from Africa, Europe, Canada, North and South America. Also specific

aspects and tools used in politics of revolutionary images such as positioning and irony were explored in *The Politics of Representing the Past: Symbolic spaces of positioning and irony* (Wagoner, Awad, & Bresco, 2018) and urban space and memory in *Culture and Memory: A Constructive Approach* (Wagoner, Bresco, & Awad, in press).

The knowledge developed through my phd trajectory in relation to different theoretical conceptions of memory, culture, and imagination and the support I had from supervision and peers also gave me the opportunity to explore these conceptions further through different editing and co-authored publications: *The Psychology of Imagination: History, theory and new research horizons* (Wagoner, Brescó, & Awad, 2017) and *Collective memory and social sciences in the post-truth era* (de Saint-Laurent, Bresco, Awad, & Wagoner, 2017).

Other works that were more focused on the Egyptian uprising and how it was experienced by activists developed my context specific knowledge and refined my arguments in relation to the political and social change in Egypt as it is experienced from the lived experience of activists, their life trajectories, ruptures, and attempts at influencing social change. These were explored through *The Identity Process in Times of Ruptures: Narratives from the Egyptian Revolution* (Awad, 2016), *"We are not free, admit it… but we cling onto tomorrow": Imagination as a Tool for Coping in Disempowering Situations* (Awad, 2017), and *Creating alternative futures: Co-operative initiatives in Egypt* (Maarek & Awad, 2018).

Overall, the lens of focus of the thesis has developed over the three years from an explorative interest in the phenomenon of revolutionary street art in Egypt to theoretical interest in the specific dynamics and politics of images in urban space. The timeframe has also started from an interest in the revolutionary episode of 2011 and the street art produced as part of those events, to an interest in the social lives of those images as events progressed in the five years to follow and how those images were refuted, reconstructed, and replaced by government images.

The trajectory of my PhD shows different turns and interest that elaborated into what it is today, but it also shows how it was a collaborative effort that involved a lot of support from research colleagues who have definitely enriched my perspective on the topic and provided me with much more than supervision and co-authored publications.

1.5. STRUCTURE OF DISSERTATION

The thesis is structured in seven chapters that address different angles of the research work over the period of my PhD. The present chapter is the general introduction to the research topic, research questions and background information.

Chapter two will then layout the main methodological and theoretical approach to the thesis. It will also present the methods, data set, and explanations of the empirical decisions taken within the dynamic and changing environment of fieldwork.

Chapter three, four, five, and six provide the four main articles of the thesis as elaborated in the previous section:

> Awad, S. (in press). Political caricatures in colonial Egypt: Visual representations of the people and the nation. Gorman, A. & Irving, S. (eds), *Cultures of Diversity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
>
> Awad, S. H., Wagoner, B., & Glaveanu, V. (2017). The (street) art of resistance. In N. Chaudhary, P. Hviid, G. Marsico, & J. Villadsen (Eds.), *Resistance in everyday life: Constructing cultural experiences*. New York: Springer
>
> Awad, S. (2017). Documenting a Contested Memory: Symbols in the changing city space of Cairo. Special Issue: Collective Memory. *Culture and Psychology*, 23, 234-254.
>
> Awad, S. & Wagoner, B. (2018). Image Politics of the Arab Uprisings. In Wagoner, B., Moghaddam, F. & Valsiner, J. (Eds), *The Psychology of Radical Social Change: From Rage to Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapter seven will then end with some concluding thoughts and reflections.

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

2.1. SOCIAL LIFE OF IMAGES IN URBAN SPACE: A SOCIOCULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY APPROACH TO IMAGES

This section presents a theoretical and methodological approach to understanding images in public space. It addresses the question of how individuals act in society using images and how images act back on individuals and society. The chapter follows the metaphor of an image's 'social life.' It starts by identifying images and why they matter within sociocultural psychology, and then conceptualizes their social lives, symbolic power, and the spaces they occupy. Finally, it considers the social actors influencing their lives and the different stages in an image's trajectory, leading to a discussion of the politics of images in public space.

2.1.1. WHAT IS AN IMAGE?

We are continuously surrounded by images in our everyday life. Together with language they form our social knowledge and meaning making processes. We form perceptions about different groups and concepts through visual images. We get a sense of place and emotionally relate to certain spaces through images. We affectively inhabit our environment and our environment inhabits us through visual culture.

There is a broad understanding of imagery and what constitutes an image in comparison to a text. Visual analysts in art history and visual media analysis commonly recognize images in visual objects such as photographs, posters, or visual material found in the different media forms. While other analysts in the fields of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis have a broader definition that incorporates mentally constructed images that are expressed in different discursive forms (Doerr & Milman, 2014). Therefore, an interest in imagery could deal with notions relating to picturing, imagining, and perceiving and could identify images as graphic (pictures, statues, designs), optical (mirrors, projections), perceptual (sense data, appearances), mental (dreams, memories, ideas), and verbal (metaphors, descriptions) (Mitchell, 1984; 1986). Using Mitchell's conceptual definitions and carrying on with his inquiry of what images do, and what images want (Mitchell, 2005), this chapter focuses specifically on the graphic image and its dynamics within the urban environment. I look at graphic images that can be seen in the form of graffiti paintings and street art on different surfaces in a city.

The approach is to look at images as a constructed and transformative representations of ourselves, our environment, and our relationships—in other words, they are not passive or neutral impressions of the world. I therefore look at the social life of graphic images: contrary to seeing images as a constant static object, I look at them as objects that travel, transform, and constantly change meaning and shape over space and time. Ascribing a social life to images does not assume that they are actors in themselves; but rather emphasizes the dynamic process images go through in reaction to different social actors' production, perception, transformation, and destruction processes. It is to look at image's social life as a manifestation of the dialogue between different social actors in society. This will be elaborated later in the concept of social life of images and social actors.

2.1.2. A SOCIOCULTURAL APPROACH TO IMAGES

Sociocultural psychology studies the interrelation between a person and their environment. Looking specifically at how objects surrounding us mediate our psychological functioning, our actions, and development through our life course (Cole, 1996; Valsiner & Rosa, 2007). Those objects in the form of artifacts and tools mediate our relation to the world and to others (Vygotsky, 1997), while we continuously modify and transform those objects for our goal-oriented actions (Cole, 1996). This makes images, as cultural artifacts and tools for action, of central significance to the study of sociocultural psychology.

Through looking at images as communicative tools in a certain time and space, a researcher can have access to the individual level of image production and interpretation, the interactional level of dialogues within society and how ideas are negotiated and refuted through the appropriation, reconstruction, and destruction of images, and the societal level of broader social change as images become an integral part of a community's collective memory and social representations.

Traditionally psychology research has relied mostly on spoken and written text to look at such processes, with less attention to images as a source of data. It is thus important to shed light on images and develop methodologies within psychology to analyse them. There has been a growing interest in visual methodologies within psychology that use and interpret images for qualitative inquiry with methods such as photo-elicitation and photo documentation (see Reavey, 2012). The approach suggested in this chapter is to take images beyond their roles as illustrative data to being a source in themselves of social knowledge and social processes. This approach uses sociocultural psychology but it is also closely interrelated with relevant fields of studies such as visual anthropology, visual sociology, visual culture studies, and visual ethnography, where images are used not only as a practical device to produce knowledge but also as a way of knowing and learning in the world (Pink, 2013).

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2.1.3. IMAGES AS SYMBOLS

We are meaning-making beings. We develop by making sense of our environment while also actively responding to it and transforming our realities. From one side cultural tools and signs such as language and images mediate our higher psychological functions, and from the other side we create tools and signs to symbolically act in our environment (Vygotsky,1997). Looking at images as part of this sign creation and mediation process helps explain how individuals use images to symbolically act on the world, others, and themselves and how images surrounding us shape our mind, emotions and memories.

Furthermore, an image is a special kind of sign that does not communicate a single meaning but is embodied through its producers and perceivers in multiple and changeable meanings. Images live on, travel, and take on a transformative social life, and thus become living symbols. By symbols here, I refer to signs that potentially embody multiple meanings: they communicate a face value as well as an underlying sentiment that makes them effective (Bartlett, 1924; Wagoner, 2017a). With those symbols in our environment we are in a constant process of mutually changing our environment and being changed by it (Valsiner, 2014).

2.1.4. SOCIAL LIFE OF IMAGES

With this understanding of images as meaning-embodied symbols, it is important to methodologically approach their analysis as non-static objects. Attention needs to be paid to the different moments in the cycle of their production, circulation, and consumption. It is in these moments that meanings accumulate and transform. Thus, it is essential to analyse photos without separating them from social processes and contexts within which they become meaningful (Lister & Wells, 2000).

The idea of images having a social life borrows from Bakhtin's social life of discourse that moves us away from the idea of a 'private craftsmanship' of the artist or producer of the image (Bakhtin, 1992, p. 269). It also borrows from Benjamin's (1936/2008) ideas of the reproduction and 'afterlife' of artwork, where even in perfect replication of an image through mechanical reproduction it takes on a new 'presence' and 'unique existence' in time and space. The new production is 'reactivated' with every new perceiver. It also further applies ideas from *The Social life of things,* which highlights the importance of understanding the social life of commodities and material artefacts in order to understand culture and person-object relations (Appadurai, 1986).

Bakhtin dialogic theory, for example, explains how "every utterance must be regarded as primarily a response to preceding utterances (…). Each utterance

refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies upon the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account" (Bakhtin, 1989, p.91). Every act of speech or creative work is a co-production with varying degrees of "otherness" and "our-own-ness" (Bakhtin, 1989, p.89), It becomes our own only when we populate it and adapt it with our own intentions. Before this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral impersonal language, but rather in other's own voices, contexts, and intentions (Bakhtin, 1992).

Even though Bakhtin's theory primarily concerns language, it could be applied to images (Wagoner, Awad, & Bresco, forthcoming). The dialogic conceptualization of an image liberates it from a sole owner that has a unilateral meaning for it and emphasizes its continuous life of reconstruction and interpretation. The image takes upon different meanings in its social life, as it is used, put up, destroyed, and changed, opening possibilities for different voices and dialogues in public space. Any image no matter how original carries a history, borrowing in its creation from a previous one, reaffirming or refuting a previously constructed meaning. The perceiver then further carries the life of the image through appropriation into a new future oriented meaning.

Chapter three provides an example of how images of political caricature from Egypt in the 1930s constructed certain representations of the nation and the Egyptian citizen's agency at the time. Those representations with their concrete symbols were carried on to contemporary Egypt's political caricatures and government billboards shown in chapters five and six. Those representations were also refuted and reconstructed in street art images discussed in chapter four, five, and six.

This conceptualization of images' social life informs how they can be analyzed methodologically through the different stages and social actors within this social life as will be discussed later.

2.1.5. SYMBOLIC POWER OF IMAGES

To talk about the power of images, we need to consider their *material* form, *intentionality*, and their *affordances*.

Images themselves do not have powers –or lives for that matter–, but rather exercise agency and symbolic power through the environment they occupy and the social actors who appropriate them. Symbolic power is defined here as "the capacity to intervene in the course of events and influence the actions of others by means of the production and transmission of symbolic forms" (Thompson, 2005).

From a Foucauldian conceptualization of power as omnipresent, flowing, dispersing, and with no single source, material objects become part of this dispersion of power. This does not mean that they possess power in themselves but rather exercise power

through distinctive forms of intentionality and affordances as a consequence of different social actors. These affordances are also continuously disrupted and transformed through other social actors as well as objects (Joyce & Bennett, 2013).

Images could be seen as material artifacts mediating our psychological functioning, as we inhabit an "intentional world" made up of "intentional things" (Shweder, 1990, p. 2). An artifact, from a sociocultural psychology orientation, is an object of the material world that is continuously modified by actors through time into goal oriented human action (Cole, 1996). The intentionality of an artifact or its *affordance* lies in its physical properties as well as the intentions of its producer and users/perceivers (Glăveanu, 2016). Image affordances may therefore invite and promote certain interpretations and actions, while inhibiting others.

The affordances of an image in terms of action are mutually dependent on the properties of its object, agency of its actors, and the cultural context. Culture not only sets up the norms by which individuals use and interpret different artifacts, but also restricts certain uses and interpretations (Glăveanu, 2016). Culture also develops our expectations of certain artefacts, and shapes our own intentionality in relation to them. Affordances and symbolic power are thus continuously developed and constructed in the cultural and historical context rather than predetermined, and are therefore referred to as 'potential' rather than 'given.' Creativity –in the use of images as powerful tools– lies in "the process of perceiving, exploiting, and generating novel affordances during socially and materially situated activities" (Glăveanu, 2012).

This conceptualization of images positions them as potential political weapons that act and activate, as agents –through social actors- in their dynamic social lives. In this way, they are not merely objects of human production, but in some sense living historical agents affecting human affairs and politics (Mitchell, 2006).

Thus, the material power of images comes from the agency of its social actors and how they shape its social life as well the environment they occupy. Affordances put the power not solely on the material image in itself, nor on the social actors solely, but rather the relation between the image, the social actors, and the cultural context and environment. We thus discuss in the following two sections the space where the images live and the social actors influencing their lives and meanings.

2.1.6. THE PUBLIC SPACES IMAGES OCCUPY

Similar to all human behaviour, images cannot be understood in isolation of place and time; their meaning and power come within certain social, cultural, historical, and political dynamics (Chapter 6). The spatial aspect of images emphasizes how we

inhabit and constantly remake our visual culture (Rogoff, 1998) and how images can reconstruct discourse in the public sphere (Bakhtin, 1992).

The focus in this thesis is mainly on images in the urban environment, with the understanding that by looking at images in city space, we are only focusing on a certain span in the lives of those images. Before the images appear in a city space, their lives extend back to other spheres where they were borrowed from (such as art exhibitions, images from news, online media, and literature) and extend forward as those images travel from urban spaces to other geographical spaces, online, or the news media.

Urban space is approached not as a static material place that we inhabit, but a social product that is mutually and continuously produced by its inhibitors (Lefebvre, 1991). In the urban environment, images produce spaces and form the politics of place (Chapter 5). The arena of the city becomes a 'theatre of social action' (Mumford, 2002, p. 94). The mere existence of the image in urban space opens up its exposure, transferring it from private to public. The street forms the dynamic stage between the individual and the society, the place of departure from private to public shared space (Valsiner, 2006). When images are introduced into the urban space they become part of the public sphere and social dialogue. It takes on a life of its own and lives on through the actions of different social actors. It becomes part of the everyday life and contributes to everyday forms of dialogue, resistance, tension, and possibly social change.

The symbolic power and politics of images in urban space thus lies in their use as resistance tools to reclaim space from dominating powers (See chapter 4, 5, & 6). Resistance here is understood as an intentional social act (Scott, 1990), that articulates continuity and change, and one that is oriented towards an imagined future, aimed at opposing dominant representations and affirming one's position on social reality (Chapter 4). The understanding of resistance used here is based upon Foucault's notion of power as omnipresent and distributed everywhere, not as centralized or localized in a specific sphere (Foucault, 1974). This understanding acknowledges the power and agency of the ordinary people in everyday acts of resistance; however, it is important to add to this understanding that it does not underestimate state power, especially in the context of the case study. "Although power circulates, it does so unevenly -in some places it is far weightier, more concentrated, and 'thicker,' so to speak, than in others" (Bayat, 2013).

Beyond the urban space, images form part of the discourse of the public sphere more generally as they travel between urban space, news, and online media. The intervention in the street as a physical public space opens up the possibility to negotiate issues in the public sphere (Agustin, 2017). Images, along side verbal discourse, then form the inter-subjective deliberative political dialogue of the public sphere. The public sphere is a realm of social life where public opinion is formed, a

sphere that mediates between society and state (Habermas, 1974). In an ideal form, this would require a reasoning public a rational consensus-oriented debate, and space for the public to freely express and publish different opinions. Habermas (1974) address written and verbal discourse in newspapers, radio, and television as the media of the public sphere. The concept of public sphere could be elaborated to also address visual images as part of the political dialogue. This would require incorporating urban images in the form of street art, posters, graffiti, as well as online and social media that is saturated with news photos, memes, and comics about matters of general interest and debate. Though as mentioned before these different spaces do not provide equal spaces for freedom of expression nor does it have equal power dynamics, take for example official news media channels in Egypt where only pro-government opinions are tolerated in comparison to online media where opposition find more space for debate. The debate in those spheres are also far from the ideal form of Habermas's liberal model of the public sphere as being reasoned, rational, and consensus-oriented, and one where information is accessible to the public.

Focusing on the visual dimension of public discourse reconceptualise Habermas' (2001) discursive theory of the public sphere in contemporary society beyond the verbal or text-based linguistic approach to include non-verbal visual discourses (Doerr, 2017). However, since images do not follow the same linear schema of argumentation as "speech acts" or the same rational deliberation in the Habermasian sense (Habermas, 2001), there is a need for innovative visual methods to capture the visual channels through which change occurs in the public sphere (Doerr 2010).

2.1.7. THE SOCIAL ACTORS AND LIVES OF IMAGES

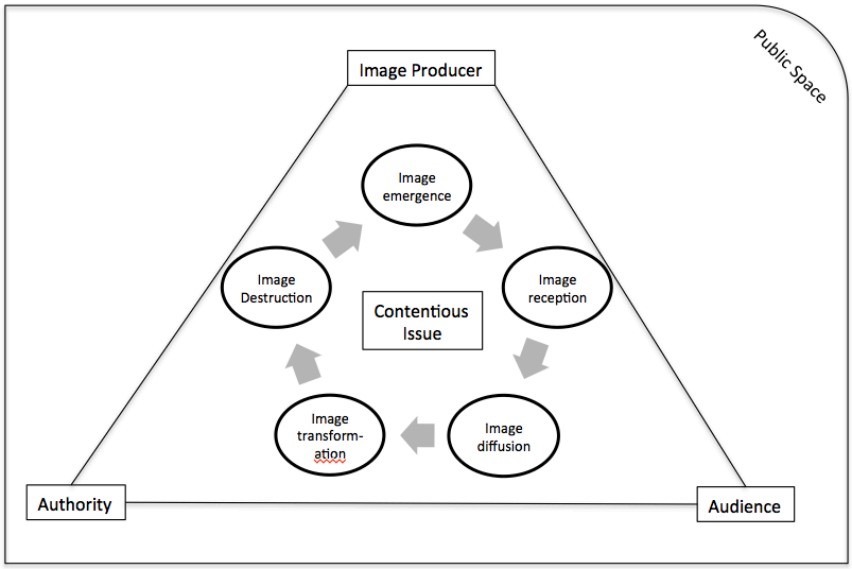

Figure 2-1 The Social Life of Images

Social Actors

The graph above presents the use of images in public space as a 'social act'. A social act is an action that cannot be completed by a single person in isolation, but requires interaction from other actors (Mead, 1934). It also builds on an epistemological triad of person-alter-object as a basic unit of social psychological analysis (Markova, 2003) and how it could be applied to a contentious issue in a public space (Cornish, 2012).

Once images emerge in the public space they become interdependent between the agency of producers, audience, and authority. Image producers could be any social actor who makes an image emerge in a certain time and space, she could be an artist creating a new image or an activist printing an older poster to put on a street wall, or a government launching a new campaign. The audience could be the general public seeing the image, for example the pedestrians in the street for a graffiti image. The social actor of 'audience' for an image is not limited to the targeted audience of the producer but could extend between urban space, news media, and online media. In modern communication an image is produced for an indefinite range of potential recipients (Thompson, 2005). While the authority could be any individuals or

institutions playing the role of gatekeepers to what images are allowed in a specific public space and time, this could be for example the government censoring an image, a pedestrian scratching an image off the wall, or an urban owner whitewashing an image from their building. The position of the social actors is not static but varies in the process of the image life. For example, a government campaign could be taking an older image and creatively destructing it by appropriating it into a new meaning and reintroducing it into the city space; in this case the government represents the authority destructing an old image as well as the image producer of the modified one. The illustration in figure one is meant to highlight the interactive dialogue and the interdependence of the social life of the image on the triadic actors as they negotiate in the public space a specific contentious issue. This dialogue takes place through visual as well as verbal discourses, it is also temporal, dynamic, and presupposes change of meanings rather than stability. It further shows the de-centralized symbolic power of images as it is distributed among the social actors and the different voices they present (Chapter 4; Awad & Wagoner, 2017).

To illustrate this triadic relationship and relate it further to the social life processes discussed below, I will use an example from my fieldwork in relation to street art images produced since the Egyptian revolution in 2011 and after. Figure 2 is an image produced by graffiti artist Zeft and placed in a very specific urban place; Mohamed Mahmoud street in Tahrir Square. This street holds a unique meaning to the revolution activists: it is one of the first areas proclaimed by protestors in 2011 and became the birth place of the revolutionary street art. It is also the street that witnessed many of the clashes between protestors and the police, and it therefore became a place of commemoration for the lost lives of the revolution.

Here we talk of a social actor exercising agency through an intentional act of image production. In an interview with Zeft in late 2014 he expresses his motive behind that image:

> "…I wanted to recognize women as part of the revolution; their presence, the physical harassments they face, their marginalization… And putting this painting in Mohamed Mahmoud (street) which is in a way a very masculine street with all what happened in it of violence, it was a street of war, and in war –I don't mean to segregate- there is no woman presence. So putting her there is a reaffirmation of her presence and the big role women played in the revolution."

Figure 2-2 Street Art image captured at Mohamed Mahmoud Street in Tahrir Square, 2011.

Photo Credit: Zeft

Stages in an image's social life

What the different social actors do to an image shape the image's social life from emergence, reception, diffusion, transformation, to destruction.

1. Image emergence: Creation, reproduction, and placement

Image emergence refers to the beginning of the social life of an image as it emerges in a certain time and space by the social actor of 'image producer.' This does not mean that this image did not exist before its emergence; on the contrary, whether the image is an original creation of an artist, or an identical reproduction of a pervious image, it has a past life. The past life could include the history of the symbols used in it, the medium and spaces those symbols travelled through, and the previous images this 'new' production is responding to.

Taking the Nefertiti image, graffiti artist Zeft could be seen here as the image producer. He made the composition, stenciled the image and sprayed it onto a specific location in Tahrir Square. Using the analogy of Bakhtin's dialogic theory mentioned earlier, the image is not a novel creation that never existed before in other

forms but an 'utterance' in a chain of communication. El Zeft appropriated an ancient Egyptian queen image, relied on the symbols and identification with a historical Egyptian civilization and identity, and supplemented this image with a very contemporary symbol of the protestor's gas mask, a symbol shared by an international subculture of opposition and street protest. The final form of the image only became El Zeft's own creation by the act of populating this composition with his voice and message and placing it in the very spot he chose in the urban space contributing to its meaning. El Zeft is a 24-year-old engineer who prefers not be called a graffiti artist; he is rather an activist, who composes images through computer software to use them as tools in his resistance.

2. Image Reception: perception and interpretation

Image reception refers to the process that takes place once the image is placed in a certain context to an audience. Its meaning no longer becomes that which was ascribed by the producer, but is open to the diverse ways an audience perceives it, interprets it, and appropriates its meaning. Images -even the most saturated and banal such as an image of a flag (see chapter 6)- are not stable, static, or permanent: they are perceived in multiple ways and continuously exposed to multisensory apprehension and interpretation (Mitchell, 1986).

Image reception, perception, and interpretation competencies are connected with image production in a cycle. The cycle unfolds its dynamic within a social, political and cultural context that is shaped by the image producer, audience, and situational factors (Müller, 2008).

The interpretation of an image is also an act of positioning and argumentation. This will be elaborated further below in the use of images as tools for positioning. The audience do not just respond to 'what the image says,' but to the arguments they imagine the image to be saying. So their reception of an image is the position they take to this argument (Davis & Harré, 1990). This dialogical social process of interpretation involves sign reconstruction of the image, where signs in an image are constituted and become signs for new meanings in a cognitive and affective process giving new values to what the image mean, who the audience is, and arguments and counter-arguments produced (Lonchuk & Rosa, 2011).

The reception of the Nefertiti image tells more of the personal, sociocultural background of the audience as well as their political position in the protest and women within protest more generally. The image quickly became a popular and symbolic image for activists representing the role of women in the Egyptian revolution. While for those against the revolution, it was a symbol of the vulnerable and violent position female protestors put themselves in to be part of the revolution. In both groups it was an iconic image that triggered different versions of the revolution's collective memory (Chapter 4).

3. Image diffusion: circulation and distribution

The diffusion of an image is closely related to the audience, what they want to see, and what is tolerated within a community. Using the evolutionary metaphor, we can think of what makes an image 'the fittest to survive,' and which ones have short social lives and quickly disappear from the public space. Also what criteria makes an image 'viral' or makes it in social media terms 'troll' and become a 'meme.' Dawkins (1976) was actually the author who coined the term 'meme' in his book The Selfish Gene, it was used to make sense of why some widespread human behaviours, from an evolutionary perspective, make no sense in terms of gene survival. For him the meme was the cultural equivalent to a gene, and used the term to explain cultural transmission of certain ideas and behaviours. The term has been appropriated by online media to refer to viral images that gets imitated and deliberately altered by different users.

Different authors looking at visuals have tackled similar concepts relating to transformative urban images, sometimes referring to them as "floating images" with enduring power that make them travel through multiple virtual and physical spaces producing different meanings (Khatib, 2013, p. 35), or as images producing "repeated repertoires" unfolding continuous dramaturgical performance in the urban space (Abaza, 2013).

In recent media photos there are examples of certain images that got widely circulated till they became iconic representations of certain issues or events. For example, the photograph of the Syrian boy Alan Kurdi's dead body on a beach shore became iconic of the Syrian refugees crises in Europe. There were several photographs taken of Alan on the beach, alone and of rescuers carrying his body, but a specific one went the most viral: the child alone, with his back to the camera, face to the ground, and with the sea horizon landscape. There were certain aesthetic and inter-iconic qualities, supplementing visuals in public sphere, and interpretative openness for diverse ideological and geographical context that made this specific photo diffuse widely in comparison to other refugee crises photos (Olesen, 2017).

Other images' life cycles are cut short, in spite of being powerful. Their circulation is inhibited and eventually community-censored. One example is of images of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre. While the buildings with the mushroom cloud became the iconic visual for the collective memory of the event, there were other photos that were deemed inappropriate to represent or commemorate the event and were cut from circulation. These were of the 'about-to-die' moment of desperate office workers jumping from the buildings just before their collapse. After those images appeared briefly on TV and in press, they were pulled from media and deemed inappropriate by editors and viewers'. The short-life of those images highlight the negotiation process in relation to which images get to be circulated and get to represent and commemorate certain events (Zelizer, 2004).

The audience for the Nefertiti image was not limited to the pedestrians passing by Mohamed Mahmoud Street. The Nefertiti image was one that attracted international attention, responding to topics international media and international organizations are usually interested in in relation to revolution, women, and the Middle East. This affected the diffusion of the image, its circulation locally and internationally, and its wide distribution from its place in the city to news media and online media. In contrast, its diffusion was limited in official government media in Egypt because of its promotion of the protest and opposition. Its diffusion was also limited in traditional Islamic oriented media where there would be a different representation of woman other than the ancient Egyptian identity and a different expectation of the place and role of woman other than with a gas mask in a street protest.

4. Transformation: reconstruction and reproduction

The transformation of an image is closely related to its diffusion. Bartlett's (1932) method of serial reproduction could be used to explain how symbols and meanings of images transform as they are reproduced and appropriated from one social actor to another. Similar to Bartletian serial reproduction experiments (Wagoner, 2017b), following the social life of images shows how they are transformed in transmission; their meanings are elaborated and/or simplified, certain symbols are kept in an image while others are omitted in response to the change of medium, time, or context of the newly reproduced image (See chapter five).

One form of reproduction is the repetition of an image without modification, travelling from one medium to another. This could be seen in photos taken of the Nefertiti image and posted online and in the news media. This could be also seen in the same stencil of the image being sprayed on other walls in the city. Even in the act of repetition, the image is still transformed as it becomes autonomous, breaking away from its initial production (Benjamin, 1936) and takes on new meanings by new producers, mediums, and contexts.

Reconstruction is another form of intentional transformation, where social actors take on an image, change some symbols in it, add parts, or omit parts and then reintroduce it in public space. The reconstruction of the Nefertiti image took many forms. In figure 2-3 the image producer, Zeft, made a poster image out of the original graffiti image and added the text: "the voice of women is a revolution." This statement is an appropriation of a religious common statement that says, "the voice of women is *awra."* Awra refers to the intimate parts of the body that should be covered according to Islam. Adding the voice of woman to this term is meant as a discouragement of female's voice in public speeches. In Bakhtinian terms, Zeft used 'double-voicedness' by ironically using a common religious statement in order to contradict it and adapt it to his own meanings and intentions (Brescó, 2016; Wagoner, Awad, & Brescó, in press).

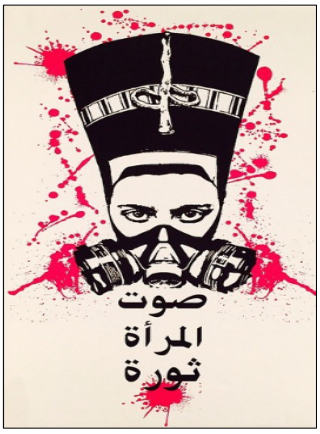

Figure 2-3 *Figure 2-4*

A further reconstruction was done by "The Uprising of the Women in the Arab World" which is a social movement aimed at showing support and solidarity with women in their day to day rights as equal citizens in the Arab world. The movement appropriated the image, the name of the campaign was added to the face of Nefertiti and used in some of the movement's protests and online campaigns. Also another organization that appropriated the image was Amnesty International in its campaign against sexual violence; the image colour was changed into yellow to match Amnesty's brand and the image was made into a wearable mask that was used in a protest in August 2013 in Berlin Germany to raise awareness of sexual violence against women (See Figure 2-4).

Here we can see through the transformation how the contentious issue and image meaning elaborated in a serial reproduction chain: from the producer's original meaning of the presence of women in the revolution, to the voice of women in public space, then elaborated to include all Arab women rights, and travelling to an international cause of violence against women.

5. Destruction: Censorship and creative destruction

Images' lives are very seductive at times, tempting those who do not agree with them to censor or destroy them. Destruction shows the different dynamics of what is tolerated in a certain community, what is deemed appropriate, representable, or offensive.

Destruction can take different forms. One form is the simple act of erasing or whitewashing an image from a city wall. A local authority could decide to do this to images they do not agree with or a pedestrian could spray an image or scratch out a poster they do not accept in their neighbourhood. In the case of Egypt, there has

been a systematic and selective action towards whitewashing revolution graffiti, targeting specifically graffiti against the army while leaving the ones against Muslim Brotherhood (See chapter four).

Another form of destruction is by censorship of certain images within certain mediums. It could be also by police issuing legal orders to ban the distribution of certain images. Censorship in controlled media such as newspapers could be done directly by authority and news editors, while it is harder for authorities to censor images in less controlled spaces such as the street, and would instead go after the producer by arresting them in the street while painting (See chapter four).

A third especially effective form is creative destruction, when images are destroyed by counter images. This could be done by creative manipulation of the original image to turn it into an opposite voice. During presidential campaign of El Sisi, stencils insulting him were turned into campaigns for him by the destruction of only one part of the stencil (See chapter four). Another way is by creating opposing images such as the Egyptian government campaign creating images with opposing meaning to the revolution graffiti (See chapter five). "The desire to get rid of any image can be realized only through a new image-the image of a critique of the image" (Groys, 2008, p.9).

The Nefertiti image of 2011 was erased from Mohamed Mahmoud Street together with other revolution graffiti in that street as part of the government's whitewashing of the revolution traces (See chapter five). A further destruction to the image was in 2017, when a new Nefertiti showed up on the same street, on the wall of a privately managed building. The walls of this building have witnessed several changes since 2011, in 2015 most of the revolution street art images were whitewashed in preparation for a 'street art festival' co-funded by Swedish and Danish institutions, where a group of artists were invited to draw new paintings with the theme of "unchaining women rights." The event was quiet controversial, seen by many activists as commodifying street art and the revolution's symbolic street, as part of a "western" project "empowering" women with all the moral authority intrinsic to this approach (Eickhof, 2015). Later, in November 2017 the walls of the building were erased yet again; this time a new large image of Nefertiti was drawn sponsored by a paint-company (Figure 2-5). This time she is a posh Nefertiti with red lipstick and sunglasses. Pictures of the new image were taken by many pedestrians and shared on social media, putting it side by side with Zeft's rebellious Nefertiti with the gas mask. Reactions on social media from activists emphasized the re-appropriation of the iconic protest street and the revolutionary street art by those in power. Many questioned the aesthetics of the new image as a sponsored meaningless art when compared to the other Nefertiti that represented the protestors in that same street. The two images symbolize the changes since 2011; from a rebellious Nefertiti battling with her gas mask, to a chic seemingly apathetic and apolitical upper class Nefertiti.

The destruction of revolutionary street art by the Egyptian government has been commonly seen from the scope of oppression versus resistance. But in this case when it is removed and replaced by other "empowerment" projects, then by a private owner to re-brand a building, it brings into question what are the appropriate images for this street with all its memories, what is revolutionary, and what is commercial, and who gets to decide. It is a manifestation of power through visual production and meaning making (Eickhof, 2015).

Figure 2-5 Mohamed Mahmoud Street, captured in December 2017

Photo credit: Mostafa Hanafy

2.1.8. WHAT DO IMAGES DO?

Now that we have followed the social life of images, different actors influencing their transformative life and the space and context images live in, we now move forward to ask what do images –as tools for social action- do, in a specific public space such as an urban area, within a certain political atmosphere. This question responds back to the initial question of the chapter of how do individuals act in society using images and how do images act back on individuals and society. This question also emphasizes the political aspect of these social processes explained throughout the chapter. "Production, circulation, and interpretation of images is part of the collective elaboration of meaning and thus an intrinsically political process" (Rogoff, 1998). The analysis of those psychological and political uses of images rely on an understanding of politics as the contestation over the representation of society, who is included/excluded from this representation, and who has the access to represent it (Ranciere, 2004). The use of images and aesthetic practices can be

therefore ways of intervening in the distribution of the sensible and have the potential power to reconfigure it by allowing for new ways of saying, doing, thinking, and seeing (Agustin, 2017). Looking at the politics of images in public space, we see how images have the potential to create visibility, mobilize emotions and action, position different social actors, and commemorate (See chapter six).

1. Creating visibility

The basic communicative use of an image is to represent an absent object, subject, or an idea and make it visible. Image production in public space thus creates visibility to its content and the group that produced it, producing spaces of inclusion/exclusion. This gives the images a potential to intervene in social knowledge, as they become 'figurative nuclei' of social representations of a community (Moscovici, 1984). Authorities use urban images of the leader to create dominance and control of urban space, while misrepresented groups would seek visual presence to proclaim public space and produce spaces of solidarity.

2. Shaping emotions and mobilizing action

Images trigger an immediate appeal to human emotions. They embody affective symbols that move the perceiver to engagement and possibly self-transformation (Dewey, 1934/2005). They have the capacity to absorb human emotions and reflect them back as a demand for reflection (Mitchell, 2005). In wars, soldiers rally behind a symbol of a nation such as a flag or an ideology such as a cross. In revolutions, images ignite anger and mobilize masses of people behind certain goals.

3. Positioning social actors and creating arguments

Similar to language, images in their own unique ways, make arguments in response to different arguments within the public sphere. Through images, individuals position themselves as well as others in response to different social issues, ascribing rights and duties to those different positions (Harré and Langenhove, 1998; Harré & Moghaddam, 2008). Images thus create visual dialogues and argumentation that provokes perceptual, emotional, and representational tension (Markova, 2003).

4. Commemorating and shaping collective memory

Images are effective carriers of collective memory, in that they represent the affective relationship communities have with their past (Halbwachs, 1950). They also simplify events into icons that trigger certain reconstructions of memories (Bartlett, 1932). Through image production, diffusion, and censorship, those in power regulate which events of the past are glorified and which ones are concealed and forcibly forgotten.

2.1.9. CONCLUSION

It is commonsense that images are not living creatures with independent lives, agency, power, or action, but this approach is meant to help analyse the agency of social actors, the unequally distributed power among them, and the change processes that become possible through what people do with images.

Of importance is the interrelation between the different sections discussed above in understanding images and visual culture, the space an image occupy, its social life, its social actors, and its potential actions are interdependent with each other. For example it is only when an image is achieving visibility that its destruction becomes urgent, but also destruction in itself can trigger mobilization (some images only become popular and effective after they are censored). And finally how the social life is a continuous cycle in a way, because transformation or destruction lead to the creation of new images and thus are the end and at the same time a beginning of a cycle.

Following the Nefertiti image's social life shows different social processes of dialogue, negotiation, contestation, and social and political changes. These processes are not necessarily discussed discursively in public space but could be seen through the transformation of the image and the reaction it triggered in each stage.

Using this framework in urban environments opens up ways to explore how urban spaces get transformed through different visuals, and the critical implications of these transformations. It addresses questions of how do certain images turn places into spaces of inclusion or exclusion, promoting certain representations, narratives, and memories, while concealing others.

2.2. FIELDWORK

Throughout the duration of the study various ethnographic qualitative data was collected to inform the analysis of the Egyptian revolutionary street art and to eventually reach the research focus of the thesis. Fieldwork was done in Cairo in four intervals spread over the first two years of the PhD. The time spent in total was around 3 months, in addition to four months preceding my PhD start date when the first set of interviews was collected.

Informed by the theoretical and methodological approach mentioned above, the data collection aimed to follow the triad of social actors of 1- graffiti artists, 2- pedestrians, and 3- authority, in addition to: 4- the social lives of images.

2.2.1. GRAFFITI ARTISTS INTERVIEWS

Qualitative narrative interviews were conducted with 11 graffiti artists in Cairo, Egypt. All initial interviews were conducted in the period from September 2014 to January 2015. Informal follow-up to these interviews were done through email and in person meetings throughout 2015 and 2016. Also, artists' further work and publicly shared opinions were followed through their social media profiles till the end of 2017.

In 2014 there was already a growing security threat to 2011 revolution activists, which made reaching out and meeting activists challenging. Three artists were reached through my social network in Egypt, four were contacted directly through their social media pages, and four were contacted through referrals from previously interviewed artists which facilitated trust and comfort in meeting.

Interviews were conducted in the places the participants chose, most of which where in coffee shops. They were audio recorded and consent was obtained to use data for the purpose of the research. Most of the artist had no problem with their graffiti name being used, however, when quoting their opinions a pseudonym was used as a precaution since for many their graffiti signatures could easily reveal their real names.

The interview topic guide was semi-structured and framed to mediate a narrative life story form (Robson, 2011). Questions tackled the artist's motives and reasons for doing graffiti and street art, their anonymity, idea generation process, implementation strategies, the collective nature of graffiti, perception by authority and pedestrians, city space, vandalism, and their imagination of the future. Interview time ranged from 45 minutes to 2 hours (See Appendix A for interview guide).

The interviews also included a photo elicitation method (Harper, 2002), using pictures of the artist's own work to facilitate expression of their memories and

feeling doing those different pieces and also open up the discussion about their idea generation process and the reactions they received for their images.

All interviews were conducted in Arabic except for one English interview done with a foreign street artist living in Egypt. All Arabic interviews were translated and transcribed in English.

2.2.2. PEDESTRIAN INTERVIEWS

The next social actor to explore their side of the story was that of pedestrians as they perceived street art images in the streets, but also experienced the whitewashing of those images and the changes in the city space after 2011. This data is further presented and analysed in chapter five.

The pedestrians' interviews were mainly focused on the reception of the street art images and government images, with a special focus on how the revolution is remembered through images, and the influence of those images on collective memory (See Appendix B for interview guide).

In January 2015, 25 interviews were conducted, the only prerequisite for recruiting participants was for them to be living in Cairo. Interview durations were 45 minutes on average and changed in structure from go-along interviews (Kusenbach, 2003) in certain key areas to meeting participants in public coffee shops and using photo-elicitations of certain images of those key areas for discussion. Further details about the process will be mentioned in chapter five.

2.2.3. AUTHORITY

The third social actor of authority is the one that has the upper hand in regulating urban space, and the one that has principally responded to and censored the street art and in some instances arrested the artists. Other than two participants in the pedestrian interviews who used to serve in the army, it was challenging to get access to government or army officials to hear their perspective. Instead, this social actor was followed through official news releases, official statements announcing city changes (such as street renaming, new monuments, and destruction decisions), new laws (such as drafting a new law targeting graffiti criminalization) and official campaigns in the form of posters on public buses and billboards.

2.2.4. SOCIAL LIFE OF IMAGES AS A SOURCE OF DATA

Other than qualitatively hearing the perspectives of the three actors through language whether expressed in an interview or in an official statement, the social dialogue was also looked at through the transformation of images.

This was done through photo documentation and city walks in several neighbourhoods of Cairo from 2014 to 2017, amounting to more than 800 photos. Photo documentation focused mostly on Cairo's main Tahrir Square in addition to other popular protest squares, following the changes over the same images and the same walls over time.

Documenting the development of images in revolution street art, government billboard campaigns, as well as newly erected monuments and destructed structures was also further followed through images on social media. The images provided more reach than what I as a researcher have access too, and it also provided feedback and interaction of social media users as they commented on different new images and sympathized with the destruction of old ones. Social media has been the main outlet where visual production of the revolution street art travelled and took on multiple lives.

Through following those images in city walks and social media, I was able to have wider access to the three actors and how they negotiated different issues through the images. I could see more street art images than the ones relating to my street artist participants. I could see more reactions from pedestrians through people taking photos and posting them online exposing them to feedback from online viewers. And I could see more local government officials reactions through whitewashing images in the street and producing counter-images.

2.3. DATA ANALYSIS

For the interviews mentioned above, they were mostly conducted in Arabic, then transcribed and translated into English. The software NVIVO was used for the organization of data and analysis. Thematic network analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001) was used as a method of analysis that relies on data-driven codes. This was helpful given the exploratory nature of the interviews and their narrative semi-structured form. Analyses identified overarching themes and reoccurring ideas and informed the different research questions of chapters four, five, and six.

Image analysis on the other hand looked mainly at the transformation of the images once they were introduced into the city space and the changes in their objects and symbols. The image analysis was concerned with looking at what actions social actors did with images rather than an in depth semiotic or iconological analysis of each image. This was different however for chapter three with the historical look at caricature images, which will be discussed further in that chapter.

2.4. DYNAMICS OF FIELDWORK, ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS, AND RESEARCHER REFLIXIVITY

The environment of the fieldwork imposed many changes along the way in the data collection process. Throughout the data collection period from 2013 the security situation has been getting more severe and less open to researchers tackling any topics that could be potentially criticizing the government. The public discourse has been that the country is in an emergency situation fighting terrorism and it is not the right time to tackle issues such as human rights, freedom of expression, or the revolution narrative in general. This public discourse has also affected how people look at researchers and their openness to participation, associating being involved in critical research with being a non-loyal citizen and doing negative publicity of the country internationally. In some cases researchers are labelled as spies and conspiracy theories are constructed as to why they are interested in researching the different topics they do.

The surveillance state after the revolution has also paid close attention to making sure the dissent of 2011 does not re-occur and is not propagated for within academia. This has been seen in the travel ban of several academics who write critically of the government, new procedures for national academics to take permission before travelling to present their research in conferences, the arrest, questioning, and in extreme cases torture of researchers who are accused of spying (For example see the murder case of Giulio Regeni; a Cambridge PhD student doing fieldwork in Egypt).

In the specific case of street art this is also seen in the banning of the "Walls of Freedom" book, which is the most comprehensive documentation of the revolutionary street art (Hamdy & Karl, 2014). It was outlawed and copies of the book were confiscated for 'instigating revolt.'

The above factors caused caution from my side as a researcher and also from the participant's side. Those factors also required paying extra attention to ethical considerations. It was easier in many cases to reach participants through snowballing and word of mouth to have mutual trust and openness to exchanging conversations without suspicion. Participants were informed ahead of time in the consent of who I am, what research I was doing, and the political nature of the interview. They were informed that their identity will remain anonymous and they can withdraw from the interview at any time or refuse to answer any questions. The consent included also the outlets through which this research will potentially appear.

This also affected the structure of interviews; the go-along interview method was stopped as most participant were uncomfortable walking around critical areas that are closely watched by police and army officials. Photo documentation was also constrained for the same reasons as walking around with a recording device or a

camera could potentially cause stopping and questioning. The method of recording interviews was also changed to taking notes instead for the comfort of participants. And finally recruiting participants for the pedestrian interviews attracted more pro-revolution participants than pro-government ones; the latter had less interest in helping in research that could be in their opinion useless or harmful to the government's image.

Other than the security constraint, there was an opportunity in my role as a researcher who is also Egyptian. My local knowledge gave me access to participants through social networks and gave familiarity in the interview situation. Also my visits to Egypt made me an urban dweller of the city myself as well experiencing the changes over time. I perceive my position in the interviews as an internal-external one. From one side most interviewees expressed comfort in sharing stories to a person who is a local insider in a sense being Egyptian, but also from another side there was a perceived distance as an Egyptian living abroad and having not personally lived through the events since 2011.

Finally, I experienced a continuous involvement and distancing from the topic of research. Having the sense of loss of the revolution and its high hopes of change myself made the research topic one that was in many times a source of pain in itself, while in many others I took a distance to be able to be reflective and critical of my own perspective on the topic. This involvement has also caused me to continuously question the value of the research and its significance in a context where many innocent lives were lost, many imprisoned, and many had major life changing events because of the economic, social, and political changes. I also questioned the value of the research and if it is worth the risk I might be putting my participants or myself in. The questioning is still on going, but I see this research as using one lens, that of images, to better understand a complex situation and give voices to different actors, and this in itself is of a certain value in a context that silences opposing opinions, and for this also it would be worth having a voice than self-censoring one's own voice and internalizing the authority's propagated fear and surveillance.

CHAPTER 3. POLITICAL CARICATURES IN COLONIAL EGYPT: VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE NATION

Awad, S. H. (in review). Political caricatures in colonial Egypt: Visual representations of the people and the nation. Gorman, A. & Irving, S. (eds). Cultures of Diversity: Arts and Cultural Life in Arab Societies before Independence. University of Edinburgh

Abstract

Images represent in one form or another the perceived reality of a time. The image projects this perception into the world where receiving audiences are invited to reflect upon it and react to it. This paper looks at images of political caricatures published between the years of 1926 and 1931 in two Egyptian newspapers: *Al-Kashkūl* and *Al-Siyāsa al-Usbu'iyya.* This marks a unique time in Egyptian national discourse, as it was then on the road towards securing complete political independence from British occupation.

The visual analysis of the 322 caricatures aims to interpret the meanings embodied in those images in relation to the newly defined nation. The lens of social and cultural psychology is used to understand the politics of those images in visually constructing national identity, positioning different social actors in the social and political context, and feeding into an enduring national discourse about the agency of the people and the nation. Themes of analysis will reflect on concepts of visibility, national identity, agency, and the representation of the nation as a woman.

Keywords: Political caricature, Cartoons, Colonial Egypt, National discourse, national identity, agency, nation as woman

"Images are not just a particular kind of sign, but something like an actor on the historical stage, a presence or character endowed with legendary status, a history that parallels and participates in the stories we tell ourselves." [1]

In issue number 347 of *Al-Kashkūl* journal published in Egypt in January 1928, a caricature image (figure 1) depicts the government official '*pasha*' to the right, in a suit and a fez, excessively overweight and persistently arguing with the police sergeant '*shawīsh.'* To the back, there is a British official with sharp features, standing confidently while smoking a cigar, looking firmly at the pasha demanding: "we have to protect her and not let anyone come her way." The *shawīsh* stand in defense of "her" keeping the *pasha* away by his hand gesture, "you both stay away from her, you are after her jewelry," he says. The woman in the western green dress, with attractive and delicate features, wearing heavy accessories resembling her richness, stand in the back in a seductive posture while overhearing the conversation. She waits passively in the back for her destined fate after the negotiation. The woman in the green dress is Egypt.

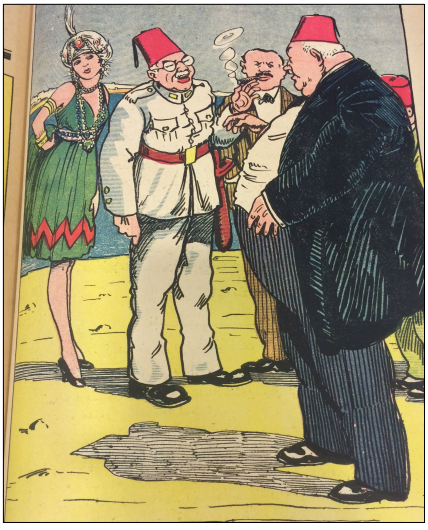

Figure 1 Caricature from Al-Kashkūl, issue 347, 6 January 1928

This political caricature is typical of numerous others published in this journal and *Al-Siyāsa al-Usbu'iyya* during this time. The image positions each actor from the

[1] Mitchell, William JT. "What is an Image?." New Literary History 15, no. 3 (1984): 503-537.

political scene at the time, the European powers targeting corrupt government officials to benefit from Egypt, the corrupt pashas in turn are after their own gains from Egypt, and the *shawīsh* is the voice of the local efforts –and possibly the voice of the caricaturist- to defend Egypt and the Egyptians from those two transgressors. Egypt, however the subject of the negotiation, is overlooking the situation passively.

Political caricatures are a special form of images that visually present social commentary, communicate opinions and attitudes, and subjectively summarize events. They are specific in that they depend on the reader's recognition of the characters, subjects, and events depicted, the caricature is thus used to aid identification, with occasional use of exaggerated features and stereotypes.[2] Political caricatures can use humor, satire, or irony to position what happened from what ought to happen according to the producers' view. Thus caricatures could be seen as the outcome of a dialectical struggle between the ideal and the real.[3] The images analyzed from both newspapers could be classified as political opinion cartoons using the technique of caricaturing.[4]

3.1. WHY IMAGES MATTER?

We use images as tools for social action, and in turn, images we see around us act back upon us. They constitute signs in our shared environment that are endowed with symbolic power, having a privileged influence over our human mind. They objectify ideas and modes of meaning making into tangible forms that are open to perception and analysis. This gives images the potential for different powerful political functions[5]. First, they create visibility, as they are capable of making absent objects present, of giving shape to abstract entities, and of creating characters that embody generalizations[6]. They can provide the figurative nuclei of social

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[2] Kemnitz, Thomas Milton. "The cartoon as a historical source." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 4, 1 (1973): 81-93.

[3] Coupe, William A. Observations on a Theory of Political Caricature. Comparative Studies in Society and History 11 (1969), pp. 79-95.

[4] Kemnitz, *The Cartoon*

[5] Awad, Sarah & Brady Wagoner. Image Politics of the Arab Uprisings. In Wagoner, B., Moghaddam, F. & Valsiner, J. (Eds). *The Psychology of Radical Social Change: From Rage to Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (In press).

[6] Lonchuk, Marcela & Alberto Rosa. Voices of graphic art images. In Märtsin et al. (Eds). *Dialogicality in focus: Challenges to theory, method and application,* New York, NY: Nova Science Publishers (2011).

representations[7], where they borrow from existing common knowledge, reinstating some, while also reconstructing some. Second, they are affective symbols that could shape emotions, motivate action, and mobilize people around a common goal or idea. Third, they position their producers and perceivers in relation to different social issues, ascribing various rights and duties to different social actors.[8] They can then suggest and convey arguments by representing the existing social realities of the time, while simultaneously communicating something new that violates those realities[9]. And forth, they commemorate: images surrounding us constitute our collective memory and have the capability of reinforcing certain memories while concealing others. Thus the political power of images lies in their privileged potential to create visibility, to mobilize, to position, and to commemorate.[10]

Researching images can provide a lens into human subjectivity. We see through them certain dialogues happening within a community in a tangible form and tensions within these dialogues. Political caricatures in this paper are used as a historical data source to look at the visualization of national debates and the production of meanings in relation to the Egyptian people and the Egyptian nation. The interpretation will look into the multiple meanings embodied in the images within the political and social context of the time. Looking at the images, not as static representations from the past, but ones endowed with a social life and enduring effect, and carrying condensed symbols of a national discourse.

In the next section, I will present some context in relation to nationalist discourse in Egypt at the time, the art of political caricature in Egypt, and the two journals used for data analysis. I will then elaborate on the *social life* of those images; looking at the social actors involved, as well as the process the images lived through from production, to circulation, reception, and censorship.[11]

Based on these I will then present the image analysis through four main themes: visibility, national identity, agency, and the representation of the nation as a woman. Leading to a discussion of the potential of images in the construction of meaning in

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[7] Moscovici, Serge. The phenomenon of social representations. In R. M. Farr & S. Moscovici (Eds.), *Social representations* (pp. 3-68). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press (1984).

[8] Harré, Rom, and Luk Van Langenhove, (Eds). *Positioning theory: Moral contexts of international action*. Wiley-Blackwell (1998).

[9] Marková, Ivana. *Dialogicality and social representations: The dynamics of mind*. Cambridge University Press (2003).

[10] Awad, Sarah H. & Brady Wagoner. *Image Politics*

[11] Ibid.

relation to the nation, their political function in social reform to affirm or deny a sense of agency for the people and the nation after independence, and the endurance of some of the image symbols in contemporary Egypt.

3.2. EGYPT AND THE NATIONALIST DISCOURSE 1800S TO 1950S

To discuss the visual representation of the nation in caricatures, I will first look back at how the perception of the Egyptian nationhood has developed over time and the different milestones in the process of the construction of the national identity.

Throughout the 19th century the Egyptian collective national identity was tightly associated with the Ottoman Empire. The empire promoted itself as the representative and protector of the Muslim world, through rallying around it, the Middle East can defend itself from European forces threating to control the region.[12]

This identity association was negotiated during the 1860-1870s, by a growing nationalist movement led by different Egyptian elites and intellectuals. They challenged the position of the Ottoman ruling as well as the European influence in Egypt. Egyptian thinker Rifa'a Rafi' al Tahtawi was perhaps the first modern Egyptian writer to formulate an embryonic theory of an Egyptian national character that extends from ancient Egyptian civilization rather than the Ottoman empire.[13]

Still the Egyptian pro-Ottoman nationalism persisted in early 1880s with the *'Urabi* movement. The *'Urabi* movement and its famous slogan 'Egypt for the Egyptians' was promoting national activism that is Islamic inclined and in solidarity with the Ottomans against the British. After the defeat of the *'Urabi* movement and the British occupation in 1882, the Ottoman orientation was reinforced for many Egyptians, as loyalty to the Ottaman rule was one of the few possible avenues of resistance to the British domination.[14]

The discussion of nationalism surfaced again in early 20th century as intellectuals in Egypt negotiated their political allegiance in the face of internal and external political changes. Internally, there was rising anti-British sentiment and the initiation

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[12] Gershoni, Israel & James P. Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900-1930,* New York: Oxford University Press (1986).

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

of political parties opened up the venue for public nationalist political expression. Externally, there was the constitutional revolution in the Ottoman Empire in 1908, international crisis threating its power, and an emerging Arab nationalist current in Western Asia.[15]

Egyptian nationalist thinking in that period was mostly influenced by Mustafa Kamil and his party *al-Hizb al-Watani* and Ahmad Lutfi Al Sayyid and his party *al-Umma*. Mostafa kamil and his journal *al-Liwa'* advocated Egyptian territorial nationalism and did not support the renewal of ottoman political authority over Egypt. Ahmed Lutfi al-Sayyid and his journal *al-Jarida* also rejected the continuing political bond with Ottoman Empire and saw religious based solidarity as contradictory to territorial and secular nationalism of 'Egypt for Egyptians.' He also expanded the idea of a 'homogenous' Egyptian identity extending back in to Ancient Egypt. Following in his footsteps was his disciple Muhammad Husayn Haykal (the editor of one of the two journals this paper is investigating).[16]

It was not until 1919 that the leaders of the 1919 revolution and *El Wafd* party publically promoted an exclusive territorial nationalist orientation that is secular and completely separate from the Ottoman-Islamic orientation, calling for a complete independence and self-determination of the Egyptian nation.[17] However, these nationalist movements were by no means homogeneous or representative of all different groups in Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood group for example, and its rising religious movement initiating in 1928 saw that national independence could only be achieved through moral reform and strict adherence to Islam[18]. Also one significant later shift in the national discourse was that of president Nasser's pan-Arabism after 1956. Nasser advocated for a national self-sufficient identity that is anti-capitalism and pan-Arabism.

The timeframe of the caricatures to be discussed in this paper (1926-1931) is of certain significance. First, internationally they fall in the time period between WWI and WWII with all the power shifts. Second, they follow the national movement of 1919 that aimed to mobilize a bottom-up national anti-colonial consciousness, that draws from an 'indigenous' Egyptian identity, independent from Arab, Ottoman, or British influence. Third, they follow the nominal independence of Egypt from British occupation in 1922, which further developed the national identity movement.

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Kandil, Hazem. *Soldiers, Spies, and Statesmen: Egypt's Road to Revolt*. London: Verso (2012).

Caricatures were critically used by editors not as gap fillers or funny pictures but rather to play an active role in the propaganda of this nationalistic period.[19] This period could be seen as a time of reconstructing what it is to be an independent Egyptian state and what it means for Egyptians to take charge of their own matters.

3.3. POLITICAL CARICATURE IN EGYPT FROM 1870 TO 1930

The press was introduced in Egypt in 1828 by Mohammad Ali. The beginning of political graphic caricature in Egypt is commonly accredited to Yaʿqūb Sannūʿ's *Abū Naddāra* satirical journal first published in 1877. Sannūʿ was an Egyptian Jew of Italian parentage, who studied in Italy and was inspired by European press. His caricatures were critical of the prime minister, British and French Controllers, the Khedive and Sultan of Egypt and were meant to be visually elaborate so that they would reach a wide audience including illiterate ones. The common theme of his caricatures was that Egyptians are victims not only of the European bankers but also of their own corrupt government; his images communicated ideals of independence, freedom, and national self-government. After initially being encouraged by Khedive Ismail, when the Khedive realized the satire was aimed at him, he forced Sannūʿ into exile in 1878[20]. Sannūʿ continued to publish the journal from France until 1911; his journals were smuggled into Egypt and continued its circulation secretly. [21]

Later in 1907, in an atmosphere of nationalist anti-colonial politics, Egypt witnessed the founding of political parties and alongside the launching of several new satirical journals that used visuals, among which was Cairo Punch – *Al-Siyāsa al-musawwara, al-Arghul,* and *Khayal al-zill – HaHaHa*.[22] Cairo Punch's editor Abd al-Hamīd Zakī set the purpose of his political colored caricatured journal as to insist on remembrance of events people have forgotten, to culturally reclaim visual art as an Eastern art, and to serve 'the sons of the East.'[23] It is argued however that there was a relative press silence between 1880 to 1920 and few political caricatures journals found due to still relative novelty of this art form of political commentary and due to the overall censorship of nationalist press by British occupation that had

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19 ʿAbd an-Naʿīm, Ahmad. *Hikāyāt fī al-fukāha wa al-kārikātīr.* Cairo: Dār al-ʿUlūm (2009).

20 Marsot, Afaf. "The Cartoon in Egypt," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13:1 (1971): 2-15.

21 Gendzier, Irene L. "James Sanua and Egyptian Naitonalism," *Middle East Journal* 15 (1961): 25.

22 Booth, Marilyn. "What's in a Name? Branding *Punch* in Cairo, 1908." In Harder & Mittler (Eds.) *Asian Punches.* pp. 271-303. Berlin: Springer-Verlag (2013).

23 Ibid.

forced many of the nationalist leaders into exile for their part in the *'Urabi* revolution.[24]

The nationalist press was revived again a decade later with well known figures such as Ali Yusuf, Mustafa Kamil, Abdallah Nadim and Ruz al-Yusuf.[25] By 1938, there were nearly 200 Arabic newspapers and periodicals in Egypt, while the literacy rate was only around thirty percent for males and ten percent for females.[26] This literary revival reintroduced political caricature and it continued to flourish whether in official journals or opposition ones. Political caricatures continued not only with similar targets of criticism, but also similar censorship, imprisonment, and exile. The common themes of caricatures were against the government, the European powers, the British occupation, and the military. They also showed a common representation of the Egyptian citizen as helpless and exploited by everyone in the hierarchy above him, and wishing to do the same to everyone below him in the fight for survival against his deadly enemies.[27] It is during this time period that the two journals *Al-Kashkūl* and *Al-Siyāsa al-Usbu'iyya* were run, and they will be the focus of investigation thereafter.

3.4. THE TWO JOURNALS: *AL-KASHKŪL* (1927-1931) & *AL-SIYĀSA AL-USBU'IYYA* (1926-1930)

Al-Kashkūl (scrapbook) was a weekly journal first published in May 1921 by journalist Sylayman Fawzi. The newspaper was among a wave of revival of political journalism that started after the Great War.[28] Each journal included four full-page color caricatures images, the subject of which targeted the government and *al-Wafd* party, criticizing their weakness in face of the British and condemning their corruption.[29] Fawzy presents the newspaper as "an independent journal that freely

[24] Marsot, "Cartoon."

[25] Ibid

[26] *Progress of Literacy in Various Countries: A preliminary Statistical Study of available census data since 1900*. Published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. Paris: Firmin-Didot (1953). (Online access: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0000/000028/002898EB.pdf

[27] Marsot, "Cartoon."

[28] Ibid.

[29] Baron, Beth. Nationalist Iconography: Egypt as a Woman. In James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni (Eds) *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*. New York: Columbia University Press (1997).

expresses its opinions for the sake of serving Egypt and promoting its complete independence. Not in favor of any political party or person (…) hated by 'backward thinkers' (…) financially independent refusing any generous offers that would affect its neutrality" (issue of 27 May, 1927), also explicitly states its political opposition stance as: "the newspaper is in opposition to the government in general, *al-Wafd* party, and in specific Mustafa Nahas Pasha" (issue of 18 may, 1928) (Translations by author). The newspaper was short lived and its last issue was in 1934.

Al-Siyāsa al-Usbu'iyya was founded in 1926 by the *el-Ahrar el-Destoureyeen* (Liberal Constitutionalist) party. Mohamed Hussein Haykal was the editor in chief. The journal included editorial pieces by Haykal and other writers, commentary on local and international news, advertisements, and colored as well as black and white caricatures. The newspaper stopped its publication between 1931 and 1937. Upon its re-launch in 1937, Haykal wrote an editorial, reinstating the journal's aim to "advocate for freedom of expression and to form knowledge sharing between East and West and spread the Eastern, Arabic, and Islamic Culture in a new scientific way" (issue of January 16, 1937)(Translations by author).

Haykal was an Egyptian writer, journalist, and politician. He had an upper class background, from a landowning family of Upper Egypt. He studied law in Cairo and then acquired his doctoral law degree from Sorbonne University in Paris in 1912. As a politician, he was part of the committee writing the 1923 constitution, and later assigned as minister of education in 1938. He was also assigned as deputy president of the liberal constitutionalist party on 1941 and became its president in 1943 until 1952 when the Egyptian revolution/coup prohibited party formation. Haykal was among the most influential intellectuals in formulating the national orientation in the 1920s. He also had many disciple intellectuals carrying forward his ideals and thereby influencing the Egyptian public opinion through what they chose and did not choose to publish.[30] His writings developed an Egyptian territorial nationalism that links national identity to the environment of Egypt.

3.5. SOCIAL ACTORS

To analyze the caricatures in the two journals, consideration will be given first to the different social actors involved in the production, reception, and censorship of the images.

[30] Gershoni, Israel & James P. Jankowski, *Egypt*, p. 89

3.5.1. PRODUCTION: THE CARICATURE ARTIST

Some of the journals' caricatures were signed, while many were not. However, in the data set there is one artist's signature that was common in both journals, which suggests that many of the caricatures in both journals were drawn by the same artist. This also explains the similar style and representations, and may suggest a common genre between the two journals, which makes analyzing them together as part of one data set meaningful.

Whether the caricatures were signed or not it was challenging to know who the artist was as their name was not written anywhere in the journal, which is a common trait of journals in this time period. It is fair to argue however that the caricatures were largely influenced by their editor's ideology and used to promote the journal political opinion.

In a source however, it is mentioned that the caricatures in this newspaper were drawn by Juan Sintes. Sintes was a Spaniard teacher at the new Royal School of Arts, he had a unique influence on Egyptian caricatures being (together with Sarukhan and Rifqi) among the foreign fathers who taught many of the famous modern Egyptian caricaturists such as Rakha, Abd as-Sami, Salah Jahin, and George Bahgouri[31] (Ettmuller, 2012).

In a source however, it is mentioned that the caricatures in *al-Kashkul* newspaper were drawn by Juan Sintes. Sintes was a Spaniard teacher at the new Royal School of Arts, he had strong influence on Egyptian caricatures being (together with Sarukhan and Rifqi) among the foreign fathers who taught many of the famous modern Egyptian caricaturists such as Rakha, Abd as-Sami, Salah Jahin, and George Bahgouri.[32]

3.5.2. RECEPTION: JOURNAL AUDIENCE

It was challenging to acquire distribution rates of both journals. However one record states that between 1927-1928 *al-Kashkul* had a circulation estimated at ten thousand[33]. This was considered sizable at a time of high illiteracy rates, with 76%

[31] Ettmüller, Eliane. "Caricature and Egypt's Revolution of 25 January 2011." *Studies in Contemporary Hisotry,* 9 (1), pp. 138-148 (2012)

[32] Ettmüller, Eliane. "Caricature"

[33] Great Britain, Public Record Office, Foreign Office (FO) 371/13880/8570, Annual Report for 1927-1928, Cairo, 26 August 1929; Ayalon, *Press*, 149.

illiteracy percentage for males and 95% for female. Also the journal's relative high cost could have limited its mass distribution.[34]

This does not mean however that illiterates did not have access to the caricatures. The caricatures used familiar themes and well-known figures and the captions were written in colloquial Arabic, which made them comprehensible to many Egyptians and could have been read aloud to the illiterate. It was a common practice for journals to be passed from one hand to another and for illiterates to gather around newspaper readers to hear sections of the paper.[35] This suggests a much wider distribution, with the visual offering a mode of reception other than reading.

Different from Sannūʿ's *Abū Naddāra* and Cairo Punch where English and French languages were used, *al-Kashkūl* and *al-Siyāsa al-Usbuʿiyya* were entirely in Arabic, which frames their target audience as local Egyptians. A look at the journals' articles' content, style of writing, as well as the placed advertisements of the journal would also suggest a more specific Egyptian elite male target audience.

3.5.3. CENSORSHIP: NEWSPAPER EDITORS AND GOVERNMENT

The process by which caricatures were created and decisions about what images are used were taken at the editorial level to communicate the journals' main messages. The political content of the two journals may have triggered government censorship, and this may be the reason for the short life of *al-Kashkūl* and the stopping of *al-Siyāsa al-Usbuʿiyya* between 1931 and 1937 though no evidence was found for the actual reasons of stopping publication. There is one record however of *al-Kashkūl*'s editor's arrest for insulting public officials. The arrest came after the publishing of a caricature showing the then Prime Minister, Sa'd Zaghlul, as an organ-grinder.[36]

3.6. THE DATA AND VISUAL ANALYSIS METHOD

The data set for this research constituted all the caricature images produced in *Al-Kashkūl*'s issues from 1927 to 1931 and of *Al-Siyāsa al-Usbuʿiyya*'s issues from 1926 to 1930. The data from both journals sum up to 322 caricature images. The hard copies of those issues were obtained through the library archive of the American University in Cairo and the one year difference in the timeframe of the two journals is due to archive availability.

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[34] Baron, Beth. *Nationalist*

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

The visual analysis method was carried out in three steps: First, image content analysis[37] was used to classify and provide a general quantifiable understanding of the main manifest contents of the images and the frequency of their occurrence to check for their significance in numbers in relation to the total number of images under study. This provided the data's essential character and will be discussed in the first theme of analysis. Second step moved from the denotative visual elements of the picture to the connotative social and historical meanings embodied in the symbols of the visual image.[38] Lastly, the third step was to come up with main themes that sum up the different patterns emerging from the whole data set relating to the topics of national identity, agency of the people, and the image of the nation as a woman, these will be discussed in themes two, three, and four.

3.6.1. VISIBILITY: REPRESENTING WHOM AND HOW

Content analysis of the data set aimed to give an overview of who is represented in the images, how frequent are they presented, and how are they presented. Images' were coded for the actors involved in each image, how they are portrayed (ex. body shape, dress, posture, explicit traits), and the setting and ambiance of the image (ex. village, government office, capital city). The text of the caricatures was used to supplement the understanding and the analysis of the visual content and to identify the different characters and their voices.

The explicit overall message of the majority of the caricatures in both journals is political opposition to authority, resisting foreign presences, taxes, and government corruption. The majority of the caricatures explicitly showed the corrupt government as the main reason for Egyptians' sufferings, with a significant higher depiction of Pashas in government than British or foreign officials. This is further emphasized in one caricature where a Pasha official is represented as more corrupt than the British[39], and in another a Pasha official is seen as unfit to join the newly established Society of the Muslim Brothers because he lacks honesty.[40]

Out of the 322 caricatures, 122 depicted government officials. Mostly they were drawn in suits wearing a fez, which was typical of government bureaucrat at the time. In 114 out of these 122 images, the official is portrayed visually as corrupt and greedy using exaggeratedly overweight bodies (Figure 2). Their facial features were

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[37] Bell, Philip. "Content analysis of visual images." In T. van Leeuwen & C. Jewitt (Eds.), *Handbook of visual analysis* (pp. 10-34). London, United Kingdom: Sage (2001).

[38] Barthes, Roland. *Image, Music, Text* (Essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath ed.). London: Fontana (1977).

[39] *Al-Kashkūl,* issue 547, 6 November 1931, p. 1

[40] *Al-Kashkūl,* issue 550, 27 November 1931, p. 11

also depicted as evil looking, typically conspiring in the backdoors with each other or with British officials against each other and against the general Egyptian public. Only in 8 images out of the 122 are brave national Pashas depicted, portraying them as resisting the British presence and working for Egyptians.

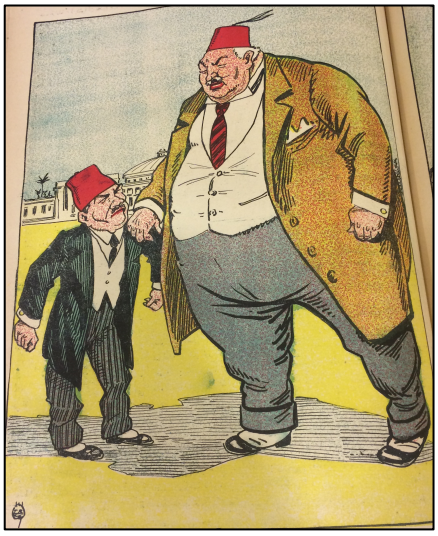

Figure 2 *From Al-Kashkūl issue 358, 23 March 1928*

The second most represented figure is that of the Egyptian citizen, in most instances as a peasant in the village or an urban worker. 49 images have one or several citizens, in 43 of which, they are represented as helpless and passive through facial features, posture, and dress (Figure 3). Only 6 images out of the 49 depicts informed citizens with decent outfits and postures stating their opinions and discussing politics. The portrayal of the Egyptian citizen always used male characters except in 12 images showing female peasants or female upper class woman in Cairo streets with western dresses.

Figure 3 *From Al-Kashkūl issue 538, 4 September 1931*

The British officials still assigned in Egypt were the third most represented in images. They were presented in 24 images with evil looking features, mostly dressed in suits, and inside offices (Figure 4). They were portrayed visually and in text as 'heavy guests,' conspiring against the interest of Egyptians' public. With the exception of 1 image out of these 24, they were presented as relatively less corrupt than Egyptian pashas and ministers in government who are harming their own people.

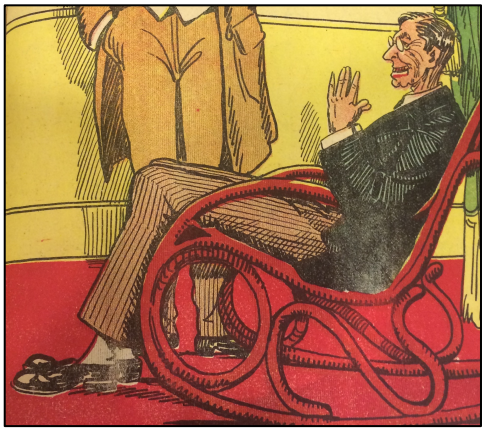

Figure 4 *From Al-Kashkūl issue 344, 16 December 1927*

Other characters that appeared in the caricatures with less than 10 times frequency were Sheikhs, Priests, Police, Military, Actresses, members of the Society of the Muslim Brothers, and Arab and Sudanese citizens. Other than those few

occurrences, the diversity of the Egyptian society in terms of gender or class was not explored beyond the two categories described above of the disempowered citizen – mostly a peasant- and the corrupt government official.

3.6.2. VISUALLY CONSTRUCTING NATIONAL IDENTITY

Looking at the images, with the historical background of discourses around national identity at the time, the focus was on what are those caricatures saying in relation to this identity negotiation. The explicit visual message that was reoccurring throughout the caricatures was a search for a national identity that is distinct from Western or Ottoman influences. Figure 5 is a clear example that used a full page to layout the different outfits one finds in Egypt, explicitly asking: "The chaos of fashion customs in Egypt, where is the national custom then?"

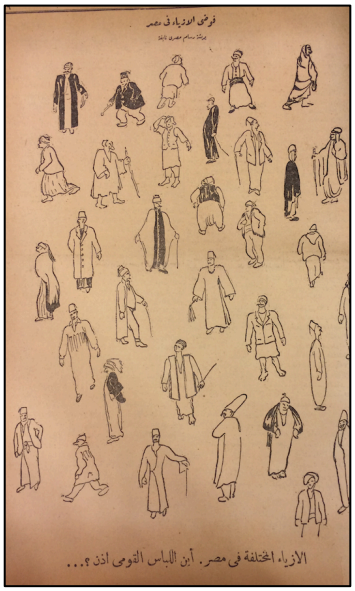

Figure 5 From Al-Siyāsa al-Usbu'iyya, issue 22, 4 December 1926

Resorting to the past for a distinct Egyptian identity was clear in the use of icons from Ancient Egyptian civilization to refer to the glorified past in contrast to the disempowered situation of the present. For example, using faces of Ancient Egyptian kings or the sphinx looking shamefully at current state of Egyptians, with the backdrop of the pyramids. While there was no significance of a national identity that is attached to its Arab neighbors, there was only one mention of the neighboring Arab nations, in the context of the need to connect with 'our Arab brothers' to support an independent Egyptian entity.

There was a prevailing contradiction however in terms of the search for an independent national identity. From one side, the previous mentioned images looked for a unique independent national character and referred to ancient Egypt as the source to go back to for a glorified nation. From another side, this message was contradicted by a different kind of images on the same pages of the journals, that of advertising and fashion articles. While the caricatures distanced the journals' orientation from all that is foreign, the advertisement images reflected a yearning for an upper class western lifestyle, in fashion as well as in eating and drinking habits (Figure 6).

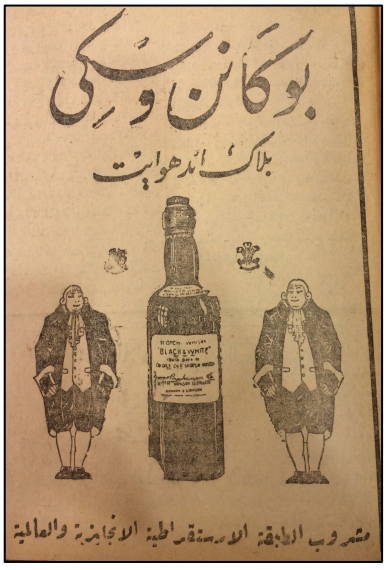

Figure 6 Ad from Al-Siyāsa al-Usbu'iyya, issue 226, 5 July 1930
Text: Black and White Whiskey: The drink of the British and International Aristocratic class

From one side advertisements in those journals could be seen as a reflection and an understanding from the advertisers as what the journal audience (in this case mostly upper class) are looking for in terms of lifestyle and identity associations. But advertisements could be also endeavoring to create such a yearning to sell their foreign products. It is hard to find evidence to put more weight on one assumption over the other, and it is probably an interplay between both: a need from educated upper class to associate with the 'modern' world standards in dress and lifestyles, as well as an advertising strategy to associate the product with a distinct and high status for its consumers.

3.6.3. AGENCY OF THE EGYPTIAN CITIZEN

In spite of the references presented in the images for a distinct national identity, and in spite of the two journal's mission for a strong independent nation, the representation of the Egyptian citizen in the majority of the caricatures communicated a different message. The image of the Egyptian citizen was far from being an independent dignified agent. The average Egyptian was mostly represented as a helpless peasant, with faceless features, poor outfit, and a bent forward posture, passively waiting for his destiny (Figure 7A). The masses of people were portrayed in the background of several caricatures, shown as immature children in size and features in comparison to government officials (Figure 7B). The reoccurring pattern of the citizen in 43 out of 49 images was that of one who is exploited, ignorant, passive, lazy, lacks political engagement and unqualified to take a government position, drained by poverty and debts, following orders blindly for lack of agency, and commonly accompanied by a donkey. Only in six instances, they were represented as 'actors': Twice in memory of 1919, and four times as actively discussing politics in the field, voicing opinions, and being politically aware. Opposite to faces of government officials and aristocrats, imagery of peasants were in most instances lacking any facial features, drawn as anonymous shaded faces, positioned in the background of the photo, in many instances with their backs to the main action of the image.

Figure 7

A. Left: Al-Kashkūl issue 524, 29 May 1931

B. Right: Al-Siyāsa al-Usbu'iyya issue 228, 19 July 1930

This denied sense of agency was in imagery as well as text. Examples of passive voice accompanying those images included statements such as "they will leave us to

the British to abuse us," "who will dress us, feed us, and fix our lives?" "they should tell us what shall we do with our cotton farms this year," "I am afraid they will make us sell our own cloth."

It is apparent that the two journals did not develop a distinct visual of the "average" Egyptian citizen whether a city worker or a peasant. Unlike other journals such as *Ruz al- Yusuf* founded in 1925 whose caricatures created *al-Masri Efendi* (Mr. Average Egyptian), a short middle class citizen, wearing a fiz and glasses, a character known for his sense of humor and intelligent sarcasm and not by the arrogance of the aristocratic class.[41] As well as later caricaturist such as Mohamed Rakha in 1941 who decided that *al-Masri Efendi* no longer represents the Egyptian character as it limited it to the lowest class of government officials, and decided instead to develop the character of *ibn al-balad* (the son of the people) who is a more independent and emancipated personality and one which really represented Egypt according to artist.[42]

This lack of a distinct visual character in the caricatures and the disempowering anonymous representation of citizens could be explained through understanding the ideology of Haykal, the editor of *Al-Siyāsa al-Usbu'iyya.* For Haykal the natural environment of the Nile Valley with its remarkable stability formed the national character of Egyptians. He portrayed the countrymen's behavior as one inclined towards acceptance, submissiveness, and stability. He describes the Egyptian people as immortalizing the past, having no wish for change or progress, prioritizing the continuity between generations, submitting blindly to customs and habits. Having the patience to wait passively for change to happen, with an apathy and un-involvement in politics. Never thinking they have a share in any regime or obligation in political struggles.[43] This portrayal of the Egyptian character contradicts his own modernist and social reform ideas, as according to his own argument there was little that could be done about it.[44] Even though he assumed the role of an activist and social reformer, his views (and caricatures) contradicted with the national mission of providing his nation with a new and 'more correct' collective self-image.

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[41] Rizkallah, Sara. *The Visualization and Representation of Gender in Egyptian Comics, What is the Fuss All About?* Thesis submitted at School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the American Univeristy in Cairo (2015).

[42] Baron, Beth. *Nationalist*

[43] Gershoni, Israel & James P. Jankowski, *Egypt*, p. 89

[44] Ibid.

3.6.4. THE WOMAN IN GREEN

As mentioned above, female depiction in the caricatures was minimal. Only 12 images out of 322 caricatures showed female Egyptian citizens. Eight of those twelve showed helpless female peasants similar to the representation of the citizen mentioned above, mostly the female characters were part of the background image, rather than the main characters. While the remaining 4 of those 12 were depicting female upper class woman in Cairo streets with western dresses, and cinema actresses such as Ruz al-Yusuf and feminists such as Nabawiyya Musa.

However, of interest is a reoccurring female character that is different from those 12 images mentioned above. She wears a green dress, sometimes decorated with a white crescent and three white stars, resembling the Egyptian flag back then. Sometimes she is a girl, sometimes she is a woman in contemporary western style dress and heals, and sometimes she is a woman in a peasant clothing (Figures 8 a-d & 9). In all eight instances of her occurrence she symbolized Egypt as a nation.

Figure *8a- From Al-Kashkūl issue 321, 8 July 1927*

8b- From Al-Kashkūl issue 345, 23 December 1927

8c- From Al-Kashkūl issue 526, 12 June 1931

8d- From Al-Kashkūl issue 317, 10 June 1927

In *Al-Kashkūl* she appears seven times. The visual is not fixed, in instances, she is an elegant woman in a green western dress with high heels and a black head scarf (Figure 1 and Figure 8 a), in both instances being the object of negotiation in the caricatures, waiting in the background for the political actors arguing over her ownership. In other instances, she is a young girl wearing bows, appearing small and naïve in comparison to other actors in the caricatures such as politicians holding her by the arm (figure 8 b), or serving her on a tray as a gift object to European officials (figure 8 c) or standing small in front of other European countries also represented as women (See figure 8 d). The common meaning whether she is an attractive woman or a prone girl is that of passiveness and powerlessness, and lack of self-ownership; she is always controlled and occupied by others whether Egyptian government officials or foreign powers.

Al-Siyāsa al-Usbu'iyya represented a different visual in this case however. There is only one occurrence of the nation as a woman in the journal (figure 9) and it is that of a peasant conservatively covered. Standing firmly and unlike *Al-Kashkūl* character that has no voice, this woman is the only voice narrated in the caricature, standing with the background of the pyramids and sphinx in defiance to the government official giving her his back and the British official sitting oblivious to her. The police officer to the left is ready to do his job though the Egyptian and British official seem to object to his role. She is complaining about chaos breaking out in Egypt; "police is trying to control the chaos, while government officials are causing more chaos, and British government with its ships hindering my efforts… who will be responsible then for the consequences of this chaos on my children." In this visual the nation as the woman is given quiet a different significance than in the rest of the visuals of *Al-Kashkūl,* she is endowed with the status of the Ancient civilization behind her back, the rootedness of the peasant character through her dress, and power of her posture and voice in defiance of the other actors as she represents the 'mother nation' protecting her 'children.' The choice of the nation as a peasant could be understood as the territorial nationalist perception of peasants as 'culturally authentic,' having an indigenous concrete tie to the land as opposed to the foreign or elite class.[45]

[45] Baron, Beth. *Nationalist*

Figure 9: ***Al-Siyāsa al-Usbu'iyya*** *issue 229, 26 July 1930*

The image of Egypt as a woman in green dress is not unique to those two journals. The representation of the nation as an abstract concept in concrete visual icons is a common practice used to reaffirm the unity of the nation creating a strong icon for collective identity. Looking at the selection and attributes of the chosen icon is useful in understanding meanings relating to the particular nationalism sentiments and in this case also illuminating gender roles. Also, the idea of the nation as a woman is not unique to the case of Egypt; it is derived from European examples, such as that of the French "Marianne." [46]

In a study of the visual representation of the Egyptian nation from 1870s through the 1930s,[47] it is observed that since Sannū caricatures (1877) Egypt was represented as a woman. The image of the woman changed over time differing in age, size, and attributes. From the 1920s and early 1930s the nation was represented more and more in contemporary European dress, moving away from using face veil or headscarf, in a process that coincided with the unveiling of Egyptian women. Thus the perception of Egyptian womanhood and the nation of Egypt as a woman were tied together.[48]

Images of women representing the nation multiplied in the 1920s as Egypt gained quasi-independence. This trend can be particularly attributed to the proliferation of

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

one specific image: Mahmud Mukhtar's sculpture *Nahdet Misr*, this work was of the sphinx rising and a peasant woman unveiling. Both the sphinx and the woman represent Egypt: one the ancient civilization, the other the modern nation with the peasant woman lifting her veil symbolizing liberation.[49]

The portrayal of Egypt as a woman could be seen as part of the construction of the new nation state, mobilizing through this woman the entire population. The portrayal fits with the 1890s domestic ideology of women's role as 'mothers of the nation' whose job was to teach their children patriotism.[50] Also, the representation of the nation as a woman could be meant to touch upon notions of honor and instill the viewers with a sense of duty to protect her,[51] as seen in the prone images of *Al-Kashkūl* (figure 8 b,c,d), maybe also generating a romantic attachment to the nation as a precious woman (figure 1 and 8 a).

3.7. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

3.7.1. POTENTIAL OF VISUAL IMAGES

The influence of the caricatures as visuals on the collective is not undermined by the low literacy rates of the time, because the visual aspect of the caricatures had higher dissemination potential than text. Political caricatures may be less effective than printed word for communicating reasoned criticism and detailed argument of an idea, but they have a significantly more important role in the dissemination of images.[52]

While it is arguable how the audience comprehended the political commentary of the caricatures and whether the illiterate had the visual literacy to interact with them,[53] the visual icons in the images gave visibility and positioned different actors in the society: the powerful corrupt government elite, the interfering foreign powers, and the passive actors of the citizen and the nation as an entity.

The effect of the caricature images goes beyond the direct audience of these two journals. As discussed earlier, the art of political caricaturing in Egypt was revived

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Baron, Beth. "The Construction of National Honour in Egypt," *Gender and History* 5:2 (1993): 246-247

[52] Kemnitz, *The Cartoon*

[53] Baron, Beth. *Nationalist*

in the 1920-30s, and it is fair to assume that the images in these two journals along with others provided the reference and visual clues for later caricaturists in journals that had much wider distribution. Some reproducing similar representations of the social actors, and some reconstructing a more distinct and empowered vision of the 'average' Egyptian such as the caricaturist Rakha in 1940s mentioned earlier. Thus the social life of those images lived on as visual resources for later artists as well as visual evidence in archives representing the image of the nation and the people at one point in time.

This highlights the transformative social life of images and their effect on a community. Images of the caricatures can objectify an 'imagined community,'[54] give shape to the developing meaning of the newly independent nation, and feed into the collective memory[55] of the community. Thus it is argued that the images analyzed contributed to a helpless and passive image of the people, reaffirming a denied sense of agency in taking control of their own matters and forming an independent bottom-up empowered nation.

3.7.2. POLITICAL USE OF VISUAL IMAGES

The two editors communicated a vision of Egypt as an independent nation moving towards modernization and development. They positioned their journal as an opposition one defending the Egyptian interest, promoting an Egyptian independent identity, and advocating for the development of the society. However, the caricature images' portrayal of the people and the nation show little in support of the journal's stated social role.

One explanation could be that the visuals were meant as mere descriptive tool to present the reality from the editors and caricaturists' eyes: the people and the nation are disempowered and have little agency to change their destiny. Using those portrayals to highlight their social critique of the power (or lack of power) of the people vis-a-vis the elite and foreign powers. Thus the images were a descriptive tool of the present image rather than playing a role in reconstructing this present image to orient a different future.

Another explanation could be that the editors' vision for the autonomous independent identity of the nation was a top-down one that had little faith in the potential of the people especially the peasants in this independence stage. This can be further seen in Haykal's ideas about the static and passive nature of the Egyptian character, especially the peasant. This 'elitist' approach to political engagement and

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[54] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined communities*. London: Verso (1983).

[55] Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory* (trans. F. J. Ditter Jr., & V. Y. Ditter). New York: Harper and Row (1950/1980).

distrust of 'politics from below' is not unique to those journals but a common belief among many of the intellectual class of the 1930s Egypt, seeing social change as only possible from top down or from foreign modernization.[56]

The style of the newspaper articles, language use, and advertisements show that the targeted audience of the newspaper was the elite literate narrow percentage of society. So according to the second explanation, the images could have been part of this elite-to-elite dialogue, talking *about* rather than *to* the 'average' citizen. It is unlikely that the images were meant at disempowering the people by such reformists; it is rather that it was talking to the narrow elite audience, oblivious to the fact that those disempowered images are also seen by the masses. Still, however, the representation reflects an upper-class aristocratic mentality that -just like the government- sees the masses of Egyptians as illiterate and unfit to manage their own matters, let alone lead the reform of the nation.

The visual representation did not only contradict with the journals' claimed reformist aims but also with the aspiration of what the peasant character and women mean in the Egyptian culture. The disempowered portrayal of the peasant contrasts with the celebration of the Egyptian peasants that began in the 1890s seen as the soul of Egypt representing all that was virtuous and noble in the Egyptian nation.[57] Also, the lack of representation of the female citizen contrasted with the reformist ideas of the editors and the fact that the nation entity was portrayed as a woman. Ironically, even though the nation is represented as a woman, the Egyptian women citizens were rarely represented in the caricatures or in the political life, they were kept to the perimeters of public stage with minimal roles as citizens.[58]

A further contradiction in the political aim of the journals and the images within could be seen in the advertisements. The journals claimed an Egyptian identity that is independent and indigenous moving away from British, Ottoman, and foreign influences, yet looking at the advertisements on the same page as the caricatures counter this claim. The advertisements were aimed at an elite class who aspires for a European lifestyle.

In a critical time of intellectuals negotiating the national discourse to reconstruct the nation and the Egyptian people's independent identity, images would have had the political and social potential of giving visibility to the new nation, representing and positioning its key social actors for reform, and mobilizing the people around a

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[56] Bayat, Asef. *Life as Politics: how ordinary people change the Middle East*. Stanford, CA: Stanford university press (2013).

[57] Gershoni, Israel & James P. Jankowski, *Egypt*, p. 205.

[58] Baron, Beth. *Nationalist,* p. 121-122.

nationalist future vision. Political caricatures specifically could have created a reflexive platform for reconstruction of meaning. However, the caricature images provided a minimal negotiation of a national identity. The visual representation of the people and the nation -even if in part communicated a reality- failed to reflect on this reality or reconstruct it in a way to orient the imagined future the journals claimed to aspire for. It fed into the already existing dominant discourse of helplessness and conforming to the feeling of powerlessness.

3.7.3. AN ENDURING DISCOURSE

Those images are not an isolated or unique example but they are part of a larger national discourse that extend to other mediums (press articles, political speeches, and television) and persisted through time. The discourse of the authority as the guardian of the people, the leader as the father and protector of the nation, and the masses who lack the agency to manage their own matters or to have an informed voice in politics.

The images political power in positioning the Egyptian citizen as helpless and incapable of change has its own ethical and practical consequences. The denied sense of agency repeated in the images may have its effect on perceivers' learned helplessness. Learned helplessness explains how when people over time are shown that they are incapable and lack control over their environment, they conclude that they are helpless and suspend further efforts or motivation to reach their potential even when they have the capacity needed. Individuals learn to attribute national failures to foreign powers and conspiracy theories because they learned they have no control over their own society.

Looking at Egypt today, we see this discourse still prevalent, propagated by the media, and met with popularity and belief. Certain meanings and aspects of the symbols in the caricatures still endure in the public discourse today. For example, how the general Egyptian public is still portrayed in similar light by the upper elite class. Also, how the current regime in Egypt is using images to communicate a patriarchal protective role of Egyptians: one example is a widespread image on many billboard and buses that portrays an officer, symbolizing the army, holding a small baby that symbolizes the Egyptian people. The text reads, "The army and the people are one hand." [59] In an even closer parallel, the below caricature published in *al-Akhbar* newspaper in 2016, represents again Egypt as the woman in a green dress cuddled helplessly into the embrace of her savior the 'super hero,' president El-Sisi. This rhetoric was briefly over shadowed by the 2011 revolution introducing counter-images of empowered youth as the actors of change leading the way. Revolution street art and caricatures portrayed protestors, especially women, as the heroes of

[59] Awad, Sarah H. "Documenting a contested memory: Symbols in the changing city space of Cairo." *Culture & Psychology* 23, no. 2 (2017): 234-254.

their time (See Zeft's Nefertiti with the gas mask[60] and El Tenin's portrayal of the woman with the blue bra[61]). Following the military take over, those images were reverted yet again by counter-revolution pro-stability rhetoric as in the example below. The caricature below communicates again the visual of the nation –and the people- as passive and helpless actors waiting for a savior and protector. The caricature text reads: "do not be surprised, this is not an American movie, this is 'El-Sisi-man' rescuing Egypt before its fall."

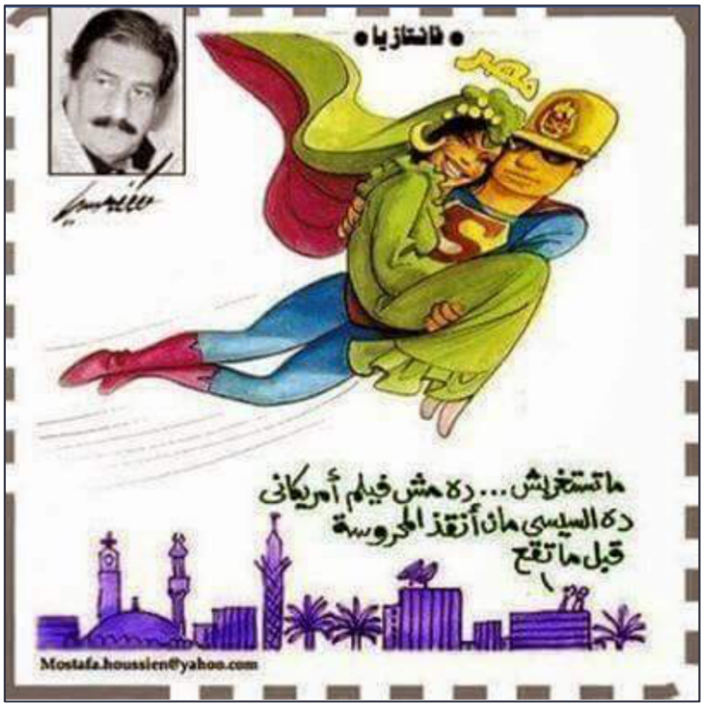

Figure 10: ***al-Akhbar*** *newspaper issue of 10 October 2013*

[60] Awad, Sarah H., Brady Wagoner & Vlad Glaveanu. The (street) art of resistance. In N. Chaudhary, P. Hviid, G. Marsico, & J. Villadsen (Eds.), *Resistance in everyday life: Constructing cultural experiences*. New York: Springer (2017).

[61] Awad, Sarah. "Documenting."

CHAPTER 4. THE STREET ART OF RESISTANCE

Awad, S. H., Wagoner, B., & Glaveanu, V. (2017). The (street) art of resistance. In N. Chaudhary, P. Hviid, G. Marsico, & J. Villadsen (Eds.), *Resistance in everyday life: Constructing cultural experiences*. New York: Springer

Abstract

This chapter focuses on the interrelation between resistance, novelty and social change. We will consider resistance as both a social and individual phe- nomenon, as a constructive process that articulates continuity and change and as an act oriented towards an imagined future of different communities. In this account, resistance is thus a creative act having its own dynamic and, most of all, aesthetic dimension. In fact, it is one such visibly artistic form of resistance that will be considered here, the case of street art as a tool of social protest and revolution in Egypt. Street art is commonly defined in sharp contrast with high or fine art because of its collective nature, anonymity, its different kind of aesthetics and most of all its disruptive, "anti-social" outcomes. With the use of illustrations, we will argue here that street art is prototypical of a creative form of resistance, situated between revolutionary "artists" and their audiences, which includes both authorities and society at large. Furthermore, strategies of resistance will be shown to develop through time, as opposing social actors respond to one another's tactics. This tension between actors is generative of new actions and strategies of resistance.

Keywords

Street art，Graffiti, Resistance, Revolution, Social change, Egypt

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses resistance as an act of opposing dominant representations and affirming one's perspective on social reality in their place. We start from the premise that resistance is (1) a social and individual phenomenon; (2) a constructive process that articulates continuity and change; and (3) an act oriented towards an imagined future of different communities. We will use the case study of an artistic form of resistance that took place over the past years in Egypt since the revolution started in 2011. We will follow how revolutionary graffiti has emerged and evolved within the sociopolitical context in Egypt, and the responses it triggered from the government and the general public. This form of resistance is seen as a tool that graffiti painters used to exercise their agency and reaffirm their presence within Egyptian society. It is one among many other forms of artistic expression of resistance in the past years in Egypt, including live street performances, underground music, and online comics. These different forms share a common goal of resisting certain social or political issues. "It is our act of self-defence, proclaiming our denied agency", as Radwa Ashour, an Egyptian novelist and activist, describes it (Ashour, 2013).

Although when talking about revolutionary graffiti in Egypt we tend to think of politics, the rupture of the revolution and the art produced during it describe a more general form of resistance that is not only against authority but also against dominant ideas and practices. This includes issues such as gender roles, the role of religion in social life and ideas of citizenship. The art of resistance represented by the graffiti in Egypt is one that involves different actors and captures the unique temporal dialogue taking place between graffiti painters, authorities and pedestrians. Each has its own action and reaction in response to the other and in response to the changing sociopolitical situation in Egypt. The painters' actions will be viewed as a social act, which requires several actors' contributions to be completed (Mead, 1934). In this sense, the meaning of one's actions is forged in relation to the meanings attributed by others and the way these meanings are understood by the actor himself or herself. More concretely, understanding graffiti as a social act involves not only being sensitive to the perspective of the painter but also the way in which the painter takes the perspective of others, like the authorities or the general public, and responds to them through his/her art. This approach builds on Marková's (2003) epistemological triad of person-alter-object as well as Cornish's (2012) application of it to the context of protest, to explore the interdependence of graffiti painters, audience and contentious issues, highlighting the social change that can result from the tension between them. A schematic conceptual model relating key actors and the contentious issue is included in Fig. 1.

In what follows, we will introduce the context of graffiti in Egypt's 2011 revolution and its aftermath and unpack the notion of "resistance graffiti", our focus in this chapter. Information concerning data collection and analysis, including par-

ticipants in the study reported here, is presented next. The discussion of this fieldwork includes two parts. First, we focus on the "structural" aspects of the framework depicted in Fig. 1 in turn. Second, we offer a more dynamic interpretation of the relations between these elements by including a temporal dimension to our analysis as expressed in the dialogue between key actors and the relation between continuity and transformation in the practice of graffiti. We conclude with reflections on resistance as a fundamentally situated, constructive and future-oriented act.

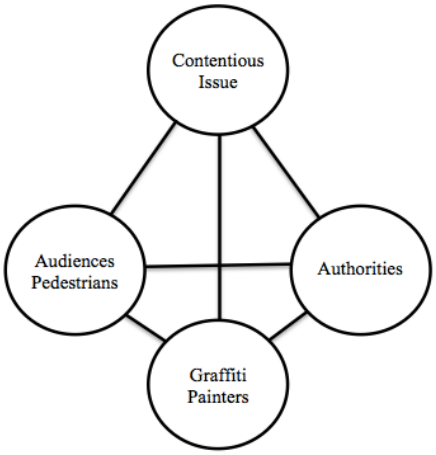

Figure X-1 A schematic conceptual model relating key actors and the contentious issue

4.2. BACKGROUND

From 1956 to 2011, Egypt was ruled by three presidents, each coming from the army: Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak. Mubarak had been in power for 30 years when he was ousted in 2011. Following a growing momentum of social movement in the preceding decade and the Tunisian revolution (Gunning & Baron, 2014), several groups organized for a protest on 25 January 2011. This event rapidly turned into a call for the "downfall of the regime" after masses of people who had seemed apolitical and largely apathetic, found their voice and joined in the protests (Alexander, 2011, p. 23). Crowds grew in number and stayed in multiple major squares in Egypt, in spite of the authority's use of violence against them. After 18 days, on 11 February 2011, Mubarak was forced to step down, having lost the military's support. Because the military abandoned Mubarak, the Egyptian revolution did not turn into the bloody civil war seen in Libya and Syria (Kandil, 2012).

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) took over for a transitional stage which lasted over a year, during which SCAF seemed to be keen to consolidate their

grip on power through media propaganda and the delay of the handover of power (Teti & Gervasio, 2012). Later, in 2012, presidential elections took place; 13 candidates were qualified including secular, old regime and Islamist candidates. Mohamed Morsi from the previously banned Muslim Brotherhood group was elected. Over the following year, public dissatisfaction against Morsi grew for many reasons among which a deteriorating economy, fear of Egypt's Islamic identity turning radical and Morsi's move to give himself unprecedented presidential power. In April 2013, an initiative called "tamarod" (rebel) was formed calling on people to sign a petition to withdraw confidence from Morsi's government. A year after Morsi had become president, on 30 June 2013, he faced widespread protests demanding his resignation.

Unlike the 2011 protest, however, these protests were supported from the beginning by the army and the ministry of interior. The army was likely unhappy with Morsi's poor governing and saw their moment to get back in the leading position of power. On July 2013, the army warned Morsi to step down or else they will intervene. With no response from Morsi, they arrested him, kept him in military custody and announced Adly Mansour as the interim president. This was followed by hundreds of arrests and violently dispersing the pro-Morsi sit-ins, the most famous of which was the Rabaa Massacre on 14 August 2013. Elections occurred again in May 2014, this time with only two candidates, former Defence Minister El Sisi, who just resigned from the military, and independent socialist candidate Hamdeen Sabahy. El Sisi won while many groups boycotted the elections questioning its legitimacy; those groups were mostly activists against army rule and Muslim Brotherhood supporters.

President El Sisi gained much support from the older generation promising stability and economic growth after the unrest of the past four years. By 2015, the Muslim Brotherhood group were declared a terrorist group, a new protest law became in action which limits the freedom of protesting, and the government drafted a law to ban "abusive" graffiti where defendants could go to jail for up to four years or pay 100,000 EGP (over 12,000 dollars) in fines (Rahimi & Shadi, 2013). Those security measures are supported by media and portrayed as legitimate and essential to save Egypt from terrorism, especially as the ISIS militant group is growing in neighbouring countries.

Having outlined the dramatic events and changes in Egypt since the revolution, we are now in a position to explore graffiti as an artistic response to them. Our aim is to show how history, culture and contemporary circumstances contribute to the triadic model introduced before. Though the events are presented in a linear form, they present in fact dynamic "waves" of social change. Through the four years following the uprising in 2011, the different acts of public resistance have known several such waves. The main object of resistance as well has shifted over time between the old regime, the Muslim brotherhood and the military. This rapid change in power and

ideology of the authorities has also had its impact on the general public's opinions and the public's varying degrees of support for activist movements and resistance to authority.

4.3. RESISTANCE GRAFFITI

The graffiti is presented here as "the object" in the triadic model (Marková, 2003) presenting the issue of contestation (Cornish, 2012). To examine graffiti, we shall first define which form of graffiti we are looking at and what distinguishes resistance graffiti from other uses of street art. Resistance graffiti presents an artistic form of opposition that is unique in its form from other graffiti and tagging behaviour. It has a unique temporal context relating to a certain contested issue and oriented towards an imagined future. Examples of this form can be seen in the graffiti drawn on the west side of Berlin Wall in the 1960s–1980s (Stein, 1989) and the current Israel-West Bank barrier wall (Hanauer, 2011). Resistance graffiti, as Elias (2014, p. 89) describes it, has the unique ability to fuse aesthetics and politics, offering a new form of democratic participation in public space and fosters the emergence of a powerful revolutionary culture. Artists, as he argues, use playful and self-reflective sets of semiotic strategies to engage their audience.

Before the revolution, graffiti was not a significant part of Egypt's growing subculture. The elite private institutions of art in Egypt controlled the Egyptian art scene (Hamdy, 2014, p. 146). Rana Jarbou (2014, pp. 9–12) started a unique initiative of documenting street art in the Arab world from 2007 in search of a counter-narrative for the Arab identity. She documented various types of graffiti from pre-revolution Egypt. Topics ranged from personal expressions of love, to pilgrimage greetings, religious preaching and support for football teams. The more artistic-driven graffiti were mainly from young artists who were experimenting in the street, yet few had a political message. It is therefore argued that resistance graffiti in Egypt only gained momentum after the 2011 revolution.

Inspired by the Egyptian revolution, there was a wave of spontaneous novel artistic ways of resistance that used urban space in an innovative manner (Abaza, 2014). Graffiti was painted in main squares, especially the epicentre of protest Tahrir Square, where it was used as a tool to communicate revolution goals and to mobilize people (Awad & Wagoner, 2015). At this time, it was facilitated by a dynamic social movement and grabbed much attention from local and international media. As the political and security situation changed over the course of the four years following the revolution, fewer artists continued to do graffiti, and new forms and strategies emerged tackling more topics of contestation. The authorities also adapted to this new form of expression using different forms of resistance to it, as will be shown. Likewise, the audience showed diverse reactions to graffiti and in some instances had their own interventions, another issue discussed as follows.

4.4. FIELDWORK

To help understand this form of graffiti and the background and motives of its actors, narrative interviews were conducted with eleven graffiti painters in Egypt. The interviews were conducted in the period from September 2014 to January 2015. Four artists were contacted directly through their online graffiti pages and agreed to meet the researcher and three were reached through social networks and common friends of the first author, while the remaining four were reached through referrals from the previously interviewed artists. The second and third forms of contact facilitated the meetings and provided a common ground of trust for the artists to agree to meet, given the heightened security situation as well as their saturation with interviews from media and researchers given the growing popularity of the topic of revolutionary graffiti.

Interviews were conducted in public areas such as coffee shops and gardens. They were recorded after the permission of the interviewees. Participants were informed of the anonymous nature of the research. All participants had no issue with their graffiti name being used. However, as a precaution, the participants will be referred to using symbols (EZ, HY, HD...), as their real identity could easily be discovered from their graffiti names.

The interviews ranged in time from 45 min to 2 h. They were semi-structured and allowed for the participant to narrate their own story in a natural flow (Robson, 2011, p. 285). The interview also included photo elicitation of some of their graffiti pieces discussing their process of idea generation and how others perceived their graffiti. The topics discussed involved artist's motives, anonymity, idea generation, imple- mentation strategies, collective nature of graffiti, perception by authority and pedestrians, city space, vandalism and their imagination of the future. All interviews were conducted in Arabic except for one English interview done with a foreign artist living in Egypt. They were then translated into English and transcribed.

The data was further supplemented by fieldwork in May and December 2015 starting conversations with the two other actors in the triadic relation: pedestrians and the authorities. Ten go-along interviews (Kusenbach, 2003) were conducted with pedestrians from the general public in areas where graffiti is still present in the street, in addition to two interviews done with ex-military officials. The research is still predominantly presented from the artist's perspective, yet those exploratory interviews, though few, added new angles of looking at the reception of this form of resistance. More details about participants from this group will be discussed in the authorities and pedestrians sections below.

The interviews were coded with the help of NVIVO and analysed using thematic network analysis. For the purpose of this chapter, the analysis was focused on codes relating to resistance and the different actors involved. In the first section of the

analysis, we will follow Marková (2003) and Cornish's (2012) triadic relation model to consider how graffiti artists perceived the different social actors (viz. themselves, the authorities and the public) as well as the continuous issues they struggled with (see above). The second section will then highlight some of the factors involved in the interaction of these actors through time.

4.5. ACTORS OF RESISTANCE

For Marková (2003), the person-alter-object triad, going back to social psychologist Mead (1934; see also Gillespie, 2005), is the basic unit of social psychological analysis. The idea is that social action can only be done by two or more actors—for example, the act of purchasing needs both a buyer and a seller. The tension between these different parts in the whole is what leads to the social change. Social representations theory, for example, understands social change as a communicative between differently positioned social actors around an issue of mutual interest. The general triadic model can be filled in with different social actors and issues, generating a variety of social forms of relation. More recently, Cornish (2012) applied the model to the context of protest action, analysing not only crowd members but also authorities as the targets of collective action. She found that in addition to protesting, social movements often use other forms of action, such as persuading and exchanging favours, as means of gaining influence. In the present analysis, we will describe the social act of graffiti painting from the position of different social actors involved and the contentious issues at stake, mainly as understood from the position of the graffiti painters.

4.5.1. THE GRAFFITI PAINTERS

Participants interviewed come from different social and educational backgrounds, and four of the eleven had no art practice before starting graffiti and would rather be called activists rather than artists. All participants did graffiti beside their main career except for KZ who quit his advertising career after 2011 and became a full-time graffiti painter. Their fields of work vary from engineering to fashion design to multidisciplinary art. Among the eleven participants, there are three females and eight males and their age ranging from 23 to 36.

The participants were triggered by the uprising to start this form of expression: nine out of the eleven participants only started using art for activism after the start of the revolution in 2011.

> It all started right after the revolution (...) Just before the revolution I have seen how Banksy went to West Bank and drew on the Israeli-West Bank barrier. It was very iconic. At this time I didn't understand what graffiti is. But for me I was astonished how a person can go put what's in his head on a wall and impose it on all people (...) So it became a new

> way of objection for me. A new way of triggering authorities. Nothing more, just playing with the government. (EZ, a 24-year-old male engineer)

Even though their actions tend to initiate dialogue between different actors, where the "co-authors" dispute and negotiate certain ideas (Marková, 2003), when asked about their intentions the responses emphasized more the personal benefit they felt from this kind of expression rather than the impact intended on the other actors:

> I do want to deliver a message to people. But it is not my first motive to paint, it is an end result, but my first reason to draw is very personal. I get the feeling that I want to go down to the street, stand in front of a wall and feel like I am doing something (HY, a 26-year-old male Architect).

Their act of resistance is represented as one of many other forms that were used in the uprising "the square didn't only have people fighting and killing, it had people drawing, singing and playing guitar. I don't know how to throw rocks or raise my voice and I don't have a weapon so I go to draw" (HY, a 26-year-old male Architect). The heightened feeling of agency that came with the revolution inspired many to take part and express their views (Awad & Wagoner, 2015): "I started graffiti during a sit-in in Tahrir (...) Like many others after the revolution I felt like I can say my opinion too (...) I feel I do action with graffiti instead of just objecting in front of TV or social media" (HD, a 33-year-old fashion designer and a mother).

Even though for most participants the revolution initiated their involvement on the political level, three participants were already involved in other forms of regime resistance through joining groups such as "6th of April" and "Kefaya" movements or taking part in protests: "Since 2008 I used to go to protests. At that time Fine Arts graduates were not really involved at all as activists and my colleagues used to wonder why I join protests and strikes. Later on this image changed. Everyone now is a revolutionary" (IB, a 25-year-old female freelance artist).

The artistic skill of drawing did not seem to be a barrier in performing the act of graffiti as four of the participants had no artistic background and utilized computer software to do their designs and then used spray cans to implement the printed stencils on the walls:

> I never painted, I don't know how to draw. For me I used computer designs to do graffiti (...) If I knew how to write I would have wrote. You have different ways to express yourself (...) we're in it for activism. It's an agreed upon rule. So go and write what you want. Be obscene. Draw things that would shock people (...) You shake people. You get them out of their boxes (NR, a 25-year-old male director in a media company).

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4.5.2. THE AUTHORITIES

In this section, we look at the response of the second actor, the authority, to the object created by the first actor, graffiti painters. The authority here is not seen as a passive recipient of an action but as an actor influencing the atmosphere and the contentious issue of the object. In many instances, the reaction of the authority unintentionally helped reinforce the power of the graffiti messages (Tripp, 2013, pp. 256–308). The authorities' presence in the street and reaction to graffiti varied greatly from 2011 to 2015. In the beginning of the revolution, many squares were occupied by protestors and graffiti was a way to personalize the "proclaimed space". Later on, artists found little constraint in drawing during the Muslim Brotherhood rule due to the weak presence of security or army forces in the streets. Since the election of president Sisi, the presence of authorities in the streets has been rapidly increasing, especially with the continuous terror threats. The government has also drafted new laws to combat graffiti after the outset of Morsi as mentioned earlier. Also, many government efforts have been directed at erasing graffiti and repainting, especially in main squares and around army buildings.

> The Muslim Brotherhood time was the time we felt most free (laughs). Really! The police was probably not cooperative with Morsi so they left us to do whatever we want. It is all about their interest and agenda. Later on it became really tough. The time we are in now is really scary (IB, a 25-year-old female freelance artist).

The authority response was not limited to passively erasing the graffiti signs and preventing new ones, but they also created their own signs. In Fig. 2, a government building wall close to Rab'aa square was repainted and over the new paint they put the statement: "Your opinion doesn't belong on the wall".

Figure X-2 "Your opinion doesn't belong on the wall" (captured by author, August 2014)

This effort to erase is seen as indicative of something more than just cleaning a wall: "everything is being repainted from Mogama'a [government building on Tahrir square] and all around. This is very symbolic for what the government has been doing with people's consciousness and memory" (EM, a 30-year-old female European artist living in Egypt). This argument is supported by how the erasing is selective rather than random, depending on the message of the graffiti. MK, a 25-year-old male multidisciplinary artist, explains that all the graffiti he did against the current regime has been erased in contrast to his graffiti against Muslim Brotherhood that is still present in Tahrir Square. Also, HY, a 26-year-old male architect, argues that "Authorities erase for political reasons. Not for cleanliness. If it was for cleanliness they would paint over it nicely but they just erase it with spray too (...) they just erase statements that frustrate them".

An example of selective erasing is shown in Fig. 3. This stencil graffiti was spread around Tahrir Square area during El Sisi election time. It shows an illus- tration of El Sisi with the text "vote for (curse word)". The curse word was erased with a spray can, possibly by authorities or pedestrians, turning the meaning of the graffiti into a call to vote for El Sisi.

Figure X-3 "Vote for" (Captured by author, June 2014)

Judging by the drafting of the new law, the authorities are against this form of expression and see it as vandalism, as well as an insult to authorities. One participant narrates the authorities' view that he experienced when arrested: "I got arrested while drawing (...) they said 'you are part of the graffiti people vandalizing the country, if we see you here again, you will not get away with this' (...) they told me what I am doing is political and against the government" (KZ, a male full-time graffiti artist, refused to disclose his age). Interestingly, another participant rhetorically turns the situation around and accuses the authorities of doing vandalism: "Real vandalism is coming from the corrupted state. If the political power in the country was cleaner, you wouldn't find people writing Sisi is a killer or a traitor. So authority can't come now and say that those people expressing their opinion are vandalizing the city space" (HY, a 26-year-old male Architect).

The concept of power becomes of interest in this dialogue between graffiti artists and authorities. The power relations are perceived differently by participants. For some, they acknowledge that they are the weaker side of this dialogue: "The government is afraid I don't know why, maybe because we reach people. Even though we are weaker than what they might imagine" (IB, a 25-year-old female freelance artist). On the other hand, some describe their actions as more powerful than that of the government: "Of course they fear graffiti, because if they didn't findit powerful they would have left it. It makes me proud that a whole government is nervous about my work" (KZ, a male full-time graffiti artist, refused to disclose his age). Some graffiti pieces also express this power relation. Figure 4 illustrates this attitude in its portrayal of a woman and the statement "Government, fear us."

Figure X-4 "Government, fear us!!" (Photo Credit: Graffiti Artist Keizer)

It was challenging to get access to authority figures to understand this actor's perspective. To get closer access, an interview was done with a 65-year-old retired military official. For him, graffiti represented chaos and obscene language with no real purpose. He saw aesthetic value in few of the pieces and thought the best solution is to neatly erase graffiti and set specific areas where artists can draw in an organized manner. For him, the graffiti artists focus on few cases and insult the government based on them while ignoring the bigger challenges the authority is facing. Another interview was done with a 24-year-old accountant who served his compulsory military year in Tahrir Square area. Even though he was involved in the revolution in 2011, he was very understanding regarding the authorities' response. He explains how the context has changed much since 2011, and the military has much to resist with the current threats especially in a strategic area such as Tahrir Square.

The previous overview of the two actors of graffiti painters and authorities shows much tension in relation to issues such as power, vandalism and freedom of expression. This tension explains the contradicting ways by which the contentious issues expressed in graffiti are perceived by them as well as by the general public, as will be shown below.

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4.5.3. THE AUDIENCE: PEDESTRIANS

The pedestrians in the city space are the natural audience of graffiti. The painters interviewed seemed to be more concerned with their message reaching and impacting the pedestrians rather than the authorities. The artists' intended impact on pedestrians varied; sometimes, it was an act of support "maybe my paintings can give light to a person who is devastated by what's happening, maybe this can help people continue their fight or it could help show them the path" (EZ, a 24-year-old male engineer). There was also a hope to have an impact on the way a passer-by thinks: "I see that if I do a strong mural with nice colours, I would definitely affect the psychology of the person passing by it" (HD, a 33-year-old fashion designer and a mother). And, therefore, to mobilize more people to join the cause "I wish for people who see my work to join us and leave the couch party. I want them to admit that there are mistakes, there are people who died..." (IB, a 25-year-old female freelance artist).

The existence of this dialogue in the street opened up new ways to reach citizens that are left out by other means of communication. The visual nature of the object as well as the presence of the artist in the street allowed a dialogue that transcended the illiteracy barrier. "It gave me the ability to talk to very ordinary people, illiterate, poor, and homeless people. You can't talk to them through exhibitions in the Opera House" (IB, a 25-year-old female freelance artist). Most artists agreed that doing graffiti connected them more with the street and opened up conversations, except for three artists who prefer to go to the street late at night when it is empty, and prefer their part of the dialogue to be limited to creating the object (graffiti). They see the object as initiating the conversation within the community.

Pedestrians' reactions as recipients of the object and responses as actors varied greatly to the graffiti as the context changed. The reactions, whether positive or negative, still served the intention of the artists to be heard and to confirm their presence. There was a general agreement among the painters interviewed that support and acceptance from the public have been declining over the four years reflecting the decline in the uprising popularity. "You get a cocktail of reactions. But lately the conspiracy theory has been all around. People are paranoid now" (MK, a 25-year-old male multidisciplinary artist). This paranoia has led pedestrians in many cases to take the role of authority, and they become concerned members of the public acting on behalf of the military, which is a structure of interpersonal censorship and surveillance that emerged post Mubarak (Elias, 2014, pp. 89–91).

The significance of the role of pedestrians as actors is not only in their reaction and response to the graffiti, but also in their power over what gets drawn in their area. In some instances, they provided protection for artists to draw, while in others they erased what they did not like. The dynamics of the Egyptian streets are complex, and

there are politics involved in who controls each part of the street from doormen to street vendors and others occupying the street space. One artist explains:

> I enter the area, I usually go for a very old man, because I know he would have street credibility. Then I ask him to introduce me to an influential person in the area 'shab el mante'a'. They then become very supportive, offering protection, and showing how they control the area. It is all about street lingo and street code (KZ, a male full time graffiti artist).

Ten walk-along interviews were done with general public about how they see graffiti as pedestrians, as well as numerous discussions during field work. Participants' opinion towards graffiti seemed to be impacted mostly by their position towards the government, as well as by their definition of freedom of expression and vandalism. One participant, who is 34 years old, works in social development, and is a mother of two, supports this form of expression unconditionally: "Let them draw, spray, or even vandalize, at least they are finding an outlet to express themselves. It reassures me that someone still remembers and doesn't buy what the media is saying about the past".

Meanwhile, another participant, who is 54 years old, works as a production manager, and is a mother of two, sees graffiti artists as anarchists who are destroying what El Sisi is trying to build. She doubts the graffiti has any impact and does not see it as a dialogue since the message is not understood except by a few: "So when they draw this (referring to a portrait of a prisoner with no text), how do I know whether this person is in prison or a martyr or just a painting of a beautiful lady, only they know this person, they are not reaching the wider audience". This highlights the significance of the object and how it communicates the issue it tackles, from one hand "the piece of art must provoke, it must cause tension or attention, and it must create a challenge for the viewers. On the other hand if the problem is incomprehensible and if the artists distance themselves too much from accepted norms, then the viewers will not understand the painting and will reject it" (Marková, 2003, p. 155).

4.6. THE CONTENTIOUS ISSUES AND THE OBJECT OF GRAFFITI

Issues tackled in graffiti paintings and the way of implementing them varied over time. In the beginning of the revolution, graffiti targeted the specific goals of the revolution and was usually people scribbling free-hand messages or spraying small stencils calling for people to go to the streets rather than doing big paintings and murals. Later on, as protesters claimed certain areas, murals and large paintings became common, especially those done in honour of protestors who died at the hands of the security forces (see Fig. 5).

Figure X-5 "Remember them, don't forget the cause they died for"

As graffiti became widespread and more artists joined, the topics varied and started to tackle diverse issues, from challenging current social representations and traditional views to developing new representations of Egypt's identity and future. Social representations of authority as powerful and the people as silent followers were challenged for instance. Traditional views of sheikhs as pure and pious were criticized as well by graffiti portraying how some Islamic figures used their religious authority for political gains, especially during Muslim Brotherhood ruling. Also, gender became a salient issue and the representation of women as important actors in the revolution was emphasized:

> There was the Nefertiti one with the gas mask (see Fig. 6). I wanted to recognize women as part of the revolution; their presence, the physical harassments they face, their marginal- ization... And putting this painting in Mohamed Mahmoud which is in a way a very masculine street with all what happened in it of violence, it was a street of war, and in war – I don't mean to segregate- there is no woman presence. So putting her there is a confir- mation of her presence and the big role women played in the revolution. When I joined some of the clashes I was surprised to see brave girls beside me in the front line facing the forces (EZ, a 24-year-old male engineer).

Figure X-6 Photo Credit: Ranya Habib, October 2012

Lately, under the current security situation, a lot of graffiti expresses frustration with the brutality of security forces in protests, universities and football stadiums. It also deals with lack of freedom of speech and calls for activist prisoners to be released. For example, during the feast in October 2014, photos of activists were spread on billboards to remind pedestrians that those activists "are spending their feast in prison". The use of posters instead of painting was an adaptation that guaranteed faster application and better chance of not getting caught. All the posters were removed a few days later (see Fig. 7).

Figure X-7 "Their feast is in prison" (Captured by Author, October 2014)

One consistent message that continued to be reaffirmed by graffiti is that of the presence and continuation of the revolutionary cause, which is a contested issue that causes tension with the current regime as well as with the general public who is no longer in support of the draining loop the revolution has caused economically and socially. Graffiti remains as one of the few visual manifestations of the uprising in the city space. This is changing, however, as graffiti is gradually disappearing and as many painters have stopped drawing anything new, out of fear for their safety or a general feeling of disappointment and ambivalence with how events have unfolded in contrast to their hopes and expectations.

4.7. THE DYNAMIC OF RESISTANCE

4.7.1. ACTORS IN DIALOGUE

As was shown above, each actor had his own tools of intervention in the street; graffiti painters, authorities and pedestrians. Out of this situation, different forms of dialogue emerged. First, there was direct conversation between artists and people in the street; "It created a dialogue. People stop and ask us while drawing 'what do you mean by this' and a dialogue starts. And this is more important than the painting itself" (NR, a 25-year-old male director in a media company).

Second, the content of the image on the wall communicates. The graffiti in Fig. 8 is a good example of dialogue through the wall. One of the graffiti painters explained what he meant by it:

> There were clashes on both sides of the wall: from the smiley face side, there were protesters, and from the other side, there were interior ministry forces. Stones and gas exchange from both sides and I am standing by the wall in the middle drawing a smiley face! (...) For me it meant, "you kill, we smile" We will not vanish and if the best you can do is to resist me by a bullet, then this smiley face is to tell you "show me the best you have got" (EZ, a 24-year-old male engineer).

Figure X-8 Barricade Wall (Photo Credit: Amru Salahuddien)

Third, dialogue emerged from different actors changing the object on the wall. From one side the graffiti artists paint, then local authorities erase, and then painters paint again on the wall adding sarcastic statements such as "Congratulations on the new paint" or "Erase again and I will paint again". Pedestrians also had their additions to graffiti, adding their own signs in the graffiti pieces and erasing what they did not agree with. For example, the message of the graffiti in Fig. 9 changed over time as the artist initially wrote: "I am among those who died a year ago and the killer was never prosecuted". A year later the word "a year ago" was replaced by "two years ago", then it was altered further by a pedestrian to "three years ago" expressing the continuity of the lack of justice.

Figure 9 "I am among those who died a year ago and the killer was never prosecuted" (Photo Credit: Graffiti Artist Nazeer)

In spite of the tension of this dialogue and its temporality, some artists seem keen on keeping this form of dialogue seeing it as a democratic process giving agency to each of the actors and creating social change:

> ...but people living in the neighbourhood sometimes erase too (...) who knows why. But I really like it when people take off my pieces. It is a very democratic process. I am doing it in the area where you live and you have the freedom to erase it just like I had the freedom to put it. It means I moved something in them so badly that they decided to erase it. I touched upon that anger. Maybe it made them think. It is a tool of dialogue between the artist and the masses in the most democratic form since the observer has the right to erase it. Which in reality is the first step in change since this will only happen through visual conversation, friction and provoking ideas, challenging stereotypes and a leap into the grey area (KZ, a male full time graffiti artist).

4.7.2. CONTINUITY AND TRANSFORMATION

Revolution graffiti in Egypt, though constrained by the government's increased control and resistance, continues in different forms. Groups of graffiti painters have been flexible and creative in finding ways to reach the public through the streets. This can be seen in the use of quick ready-made stencils to spray onto the walls and

posters, instead of larger time-consuming paintings, that would increase their chances in getting caught by security forces.

Different projects have also emerged from graffiti. As MR explains, political messages are harder to communicate under the tightened security situation; so he decided with his group to do paintings for street vendors in Tahrir Square area that he hopes will build connection with the public there and change their views about graffiti into something useful that serves the people. Also, NR initiated "walls of corruption" project which uses only colours on certain walls to draw attention to the corruption behind them, such as walls hiding prison areas: "The idea of 'colouring through corruption' is to only do colouring with no text. Colour corrupted places. It is not an explicit message, because if it is direct and explicit they will stop us, but when we only colour police come and stand with us".

This continuity is giving all actors time to strategize and adapt to new ways of resistance:

> Security forces were following the revolution and learning from it just like we were. So we both built expertise. So they know if they arrest me, for example, I will get support from other artists and get drawn. We were stronger than them. There was a limit they couldn't transcend. But now we are weaker and lost control. So now when we draw, they will see us and arrest us. In the beginning I would have an idea I would go do it right away whether alone or with a group. Now we could spend days thinking of how to implement something so fast that we don't get caught (MR, a 23-year-old male programmer).

4.8. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The use of graffiti in the context of the Egyptian revolution offered us an ideal case study for unpacking the structures and dynamics of resistance. In so doing, we proposed a general framework that considers resistance as a situated act bringing together various social actors—in our case graffiti painters, authorities and the general public—related through their engagement with a series of contentious issues. Importantly, we wanted to underline the dynamic character of this model and consider the temporal unfolding of the dialogues between actors as reflected in the graffiti produced by both sides and its evolution across time. The fieldwork presented above sheds light on these processes, and it allows us to return to and qualify our initial description of resistance as (1) a social and individual phenomenon; (2) a constructive process that articulates continuity and change; and (3) an act oriented towards an imagined future of different communities.

First and foremost, resistance appears in our study as both a deeply personal act and one that requires and works with the means of the collective. Moreover, individual

and group acts of resistance cannot be separated from the larger, his- torical picture of social movements within a given society. In our case, resistance graffiti is rendered intelligible by the different stages of the uprising in Egypt. Its development resonates with what happened during the 2011 revolution and the state of despair following an initial outburst of social activism. Activists and artists went from the spotlight into occupying the position of a persecuted minority. The sur- vival of this minority may well depend on its capacity to be consistent and to make continuous efforts aimed at challenging hegemonic representations and practices within society (see Moscovici, 1976). They must also prove to be flexible and sensitive to changing social circumstances. The ways in which graffiti painters adapted to changing realities are worth contemplating.

Second, the production and reception of resistance graffiti expresses constructive and generative processes within society. The art of resistance we discuss here is not only seen in graffiti in Egypt; just like the revolution got people into the street, it transformed a significant portion of society: from art galleries to the walls of the city, from gated clubs to running groups and live street performances proclaiming streets of Egypt, in addition to creative forms of expression on social media such as political satire, comics and prisoners' letters and poems. In all these forms of expression there is resistance, resisting political power, social practices, capitalism, or class and gender divisions.

This observation leads us to the third conclusion, pointing to the deep connection between resistance acts and future-making. It might be premature to talk about the outcome of the Egyptian revolution at this point in time; however, we can confi- dently say that its artistic forms of resistance coming from different groups within the Egyptian society did play a major role in the cultural dynamics of the society. The comments and reflections of graffiti painters presented here are permeated by dreams of and for the future, even when they appear to us sarcastic or hopeless. There is an underlying altruistic dimension inherent to acts of resistance, and this dimension relates to the resistants' orientation towards a collective future.

As a final note, the Egyptian uprising is commonly considered to be facilitated by social media. Social media facilitated the creation of new social identities that challenged the social order (McGarty et al., 2013) and facilitated the mobilization of youth in protests (Tillinghast et al., 2012). On the ground, other forms of resistance also transformed the revolutionary goals from activists connected online to the general public. In all these, street art played a key role. However, to point out social media or street art as major factors in the resistance in Egypt and its uprising would undermine the real struggle and aspirations of those calling for change and those who lost their lives in the streets. Graffiti, like social media, are tools in the hand of people who oppose dominant representations, practices and institutions; in order to fully understand their role, we need to consider how and what they are meant to

accomplish—in other words, the kinds of change they inspire, facilitate and ultimately bring forth.

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CHAPTER 5. DOCUMENTING A CONTESTED MEMORY: SYMBOLS IN THE CHANGING CITY SPACE OF CAIRO

Awad, S. (2017). Documenting a Contested Memory: Symbols in the changing city space of Cairo. Special Issue: Collective Memory. *Culture and Psychology, 23*, 234-254.

Abstract

This article looks at how symbols in the urban environment are intentionally produced and modified to regulate a community's collective memory. Our urban environment is filled with symbols in the form of images, text, and structures that embody certain narratives about the past. Once those symbols are introduced into the city space they take a life span of their own in a continuous process of reproduction and reconstruction by different social actors. In the context of the city space of Cairo in the five years following the 2011 Egyptian revolution, I will look on the one side at efforts of activists to preserve the memory of the revolution through graffiti murals and the utilization of public space, and from the other, the authority's efforts to replace those initiatives with its own official narrative. Building on the concept of collective memory, as well as Bartlett's studies of serial reproductions and theorization of reconstructive remembering, I will follow the reproduction of different symbols in the city and how they were perceived and remembered by pedestrians.

Keywords

Collective memory, reconstructive remembering, urban space, street art, Egypt, revolution

City spaces are filled with symbols that communicate certain stories about a community's past. Symbols are understood here as signs embodying multiple meanings, carrying a face and an underlying sentimental value that gives the symbol its stability and effectiveness (Bartlett, 1924; Wagoner, 2017a). Symbols could be seen in monuments, historical buildings, politicians' billboards, graffiti and street art, or ruins of destructed structures. They are all symbols that shape the public space by preserving certain memories while intentionally concealing others.

Since 2011, the city space of Cairo has been through several transformations in parallel to the political and social changes. The revolution in January 2011 succeeded in overthrowing Mubarak and in bringing different opposition groups together with the support of the army against the old regime. However, this short-lived harmony was disrupted shortly after the deposition of Mubarak and the assignment of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces for a transitional stage. The army started to use its power against protestors, and the different opposition groups were divided by their different ideologies and visions for the future. Mid 2012, presidential elections occurred and Morsi from the Muslim Brotherhood group won. During his one year of presidency public dissatisfaction grew against his policies, which led to widespread protests mid 2013 demanding his resignation. The army took a leading position again by arresting Morsi, declaring Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist group and assigning Mansour as the interim president. Mid 2014, presidential elections occurred again and El Sisi—Former Defense minister and the one who carried out the removal of Morsi—won while many groups—mainly activists and Muslim Brotherhood supporters—boycotted the election questioning its legitimacy.

These quick transformations in less than four years created a rupture for the city and its people. The young activists who took part in 2011 revolution, for example, went from the spotlight as the youth who fueled the revolution to a prosecuted group in 2013 facing political imprisonment. The Muslim Brotherhood also experi- enced the privilege of being the group in power in 2012 only to later suffer the consequences of being declared a terrorist group in 2013, facing imprisonment and death sentences. These shifts triggered a change in how each group reconstructed what happened in recent history and created a need to document and advocate for certain narratives.

Narratives of the past varied between—and within—the army, activists, and Muslim Brotherhood, among other groups. The current research followed three narratives: (1) For the army—and now official—narrative: the army is the trusted guardian who saved Egyptians in the ''two'' revolutions—the one against Mubarak and the one against Muslim Brotherhood—and the protector of Egyptians against terrorism. (2) For the activists: they made all the sacrifices for the aspired change but were then betrayed by the politicians, the army, and the Muslim Brotherhood. (3) For the

Muslim Brotherhood: they are the only legitimate group who won in the democratic elections after the revolution, and were betrayed by the coup.

Upon this contentious political background, I will attempt in this article to look at those three narratives through the dynamics of city space. I will start by dis- cussing key terms relating to the research, namely: urban space, collective memory, and reconstructive remembering. Then will discuss some of the changes in the city space of Cairo post revolution, followed by identifying the social actors involved and the data gathering process. I will then present specific examples of images, text, and structures from fieldwork and how participants perceived them. The article ends with some concluding remarks about the pedestrian experience and the poten- tial effects of those urban transformations.

5.1. URBAN SPACE AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY

Urban space is approached in this research as an arena through which we can understand wider social dialogues and tensions. Urban space is understood as a social product, dominantly produced by a centralized power, but also influenced by reproductions from different social actors in resistance to this power (Lefebvre, 1991). The buildings, street names, monuments, and street art all produce meaningful symbolic spaces that tell a story; a spatial narrative (Connerton, 2009). Studies in urban psychology explore how meaningful places emerge as an outcome of how individuals experience space. Individuals' perception of space is diverse and is based upon their future relation to it as well as their memory of all past experiences in it (Kharlamov, 2011). Thus, to adequately understand the urban environment is to capture the physical as well as the mental representations of the space (Foucault, 2008), to explore it as a ''fully lived space, real and imagined, actual and virtual, a place for individual and collective experience and agency,'' what Soja (2000) refers to as third space.

This space is created and mediated by different social actors through the use of signs. Cultural psychology looks at how individuals as well as groups within a society construct and use signs to transform their present settings through a parallel closeness to and distancing from their current situations (Valsiner, 2007). This research looks at material signs, physical and concrete entities either in the form of painted images, written words, or built structures. It is these concrete signs in the city space that gain symbolic value as they embody dynamic meanings and representations that communicate different narratives. These symbolic entities get constructed and reconstructed by different social actors in the society each producing a space that is representative of their group. As such, there are as many ways of representing space as there are social groups (Halbwachs, 1950).

The narratives represented in the symbols then become cultural tools for mem- bers of a collective as they recount the past, feeding into their collective memory.

Collective memory is a ‘‘representation for the past shared by members of a group such as a generation or nation-state’’ (Wertsch, 2008). This representation is not a static account of the past, but rather a fluid reconstruction that feeds into current needs as well as future imagination.

It is in these dynamics that urban space and collective memory become closely interrelated, where every collective memory unfolds within a spatial framework, representing the affective relationship that a community has with its past (Halbwachs, 1950). It is for this significance of the urban environment in representing our past that deliberately transforming this environment through symbols becomes a powerful tool for authorities as well as other social groups to preserve certain memories and conceal others.

This brings us to how individuals in society perceive their city space and con- struct memories relating to material symbols, as many of our acts of remembering are site-specific, triggered by objects and places in our environment. From a socio- cultural perspective, memory is understood as social, embodied and dynamic. Remembering, from a Bartlettian perspective, is not a literal recall from a stored collection of mental images, but rather a creative process of reconstruction. When we recall a certain memory we engage in a continuous process of reconstructing past experiences based on the demands of the present time and influenced by the current social context. This sets our remembering as affective and emotional—not only cognitive—involving a process of self-reflexivity. One important aspect in this understanding of memory is that it is both a personal and social act, influenced by the possibilities and constraints of the environment around us, and open to reinterpretation and adaptation to fit our present concerns and circumstances (Wagoner, 2017a).

Events in Egypt being relatively recent and subjected to many changes, this case study deals with collective memory in the making. While narratives about the past always change and get reconstructed, those reconstructions are accelerated at a societal level in the period following a major social transformation. This will be the focus of the first research question: how are symbols in public space intentionally produced and modified to communicate a certain narrative and regulate a community’s collective memory? The second research question will focus on how are those symbols perceived and remembered by pedestrians.

5.2. TRANSFORMATIONS OF CAIRO’S CITY SPACE

Cairo is a busy city space, where chaos and harmony co-exist. It is a city in continuous motion with a dynamic public space that is experienced differently by its varied dwellers. The politics of public space ownership is exercised mostly by police and security officers, bawabeen (buildings’ guards), soyas (self-appointed car keepers), and street vendors, while the average pedestrian has a minimum owner-

ship in this dynamic. This relationship however experienced a temporary shift during the beginning of the revolution, when protestors did not only claim public space but also produced political spaces with new symbols and practices that challenged the existing representations of space (Gunning & Baron, 2014).

Since 2011, Cairo experienced unprecedented fluidity in how public space was proclaimed and re-inscribed with new practices and meanings. There was the proclaiming of space by protestors' sit-ins and the creative use of street art in mobilization, remembering, and reconfiguration of spatial barriers (Abaza, 2014; Awad & Wagoner, 2015). There were structured neighborhood watchers who locally organized themselves to guard their own neighborhoods during the withdrawal of interior ministry forces. There were also those who made use of the chaos to build illegal structures and occupy empty spaces (Nagati & Stryker, 2013; Sims, 2012).

Tahrir square was a central space for this transformation. It is the center of the capital and the home of the state's key institutions. Since its establishment in the late 19th century it has been the most symbolic space for the citizens as well as the different governments. It has been the stage for official national celebrations and the meeting point for protestors against the monarchy, the British occupation, and all succeeding governments (Meital, 2007). In 2011, it hosted the protestors' idea- lized state and witnessed the subsequent street battles, barricades, and checkpoints. When looking at Tahrir Square in January 2016 in contrast to January 2011, we see a space once proclaimed by the public to a heavily militarized zone guarded closely with security forces everywhere. We also see several renovation projects that date back to the government's plan ''Cairo 2050'' initiated in 2008 and put on hold during 2011 (Rabie, 2015). As order was steadily restored, renovations continued but with an adapted vision. The current changes could be interpreted as renovation or as destruction of any signs of the 2011 revolution. There are fresh coats of paint covering revolution graffiti, new structures, newly installed CCTV cameras, gradual relocation of government offices and removal of street vendors, and gentrification of old buildings—buying them from their local residents and owners and turning them into businesses. Stakeholders taking part in these renovations include the governorate, national insurance companies, and private sector with no public involvement in the plan or what to expect of the new space. The governorate officials express a cultural vision in the area to restore the cultural front of Khedive Cairo as a historical area, while Al-Ismaelia company—a consortium of Egyptian and Saudi Arabian investors—has a more modern and practical vision for downtown centered on cultural gentrification and the reclaiming of its place among major cities of the world (Berger, 2014; Rabie, 2015).

Historically, this re-representation of Tahrir Square has been a common act of each regime to conceal the memory of its precedent. Khedive Ismail established the area with a representation of the modern state, naming the square Ismailia after himself and demolishing the British barracks in a sign of independence. After the Coup d'e´

tat of 1952—also known as the July revolution—the Free Officers pro- moted a new discourse of nationalism, changed the Egyptian flag, officially renamed the square to Tahrir (liberation) and replaced royal family street names by names such as Aljumhuriyya (the Republic) and Algeish (the Army) imposing a sense of alienation and negativity on the monarchical past, while celebrating the nationalist present (Meital, 2007).

A major part of this research was to observe the transformation of the city space since 2011 embedded within its historical, political, and social context. Tahrir square was chosen as a critical area to follow, but other significant symbols were also followed in other areas of Cairo, mostly those that communicated a narrative about the recent past.

5.3. SOCIAL ACTORS

In the context of the urban space, graffiti artists, authorities, and pedestrians are viewed as different social actors in dialogue who actively produce, reproduce, and interpret symbols (Awad, Wagoner, & Glaveanu, 2017). The focus in this paper will be on the pedestrian experience, however, the research will also build on field- work between 2013 and 2016 that includes city walks and photo documentation in different cities in Egypt, interviews with graffiti artists, and material from news and social media.

For the pedestrians' experience, 25 interviews were conducted with participants. The only prerequisite for participation was to be a Cairo resident. Interviews lasted for an average of 45 minutes and constituted three main parts; first, a discussion of participants' relationship with different parts of the city, their memories of those spaces, and where they felt included/excluded the most. Second, they were asked about their memories in relation to Tahrir Square and to recall any changes they have noticed in the square over the past five years. Third, they were shown a series of 20 to 30 photos of different symbols from authority and graffiti interventions and asked for each symbol if they remember seeing it in the street, where they saw it, who do they think put it there, and what memory or perception did it trigger for them when they saw it, whether in the street or in the interview. The methodology in the photo elicitation was in part inspired by Bartlett's experiments on remembering, using his qualitative and ideographic analysis (Wagoner, 2017a). I looked at the variety of interpretations participants came up with, how they reconstructed their memory of the stories that the symbols triggered, and how this reconstruction was affected by the participants' own political views and social positions.

However, this was the final structure of the interview; the methodology was a learning process with an exploratory nature. The first five interviews used the go-along ethnographic method to capture the spatial practices and discuss the symbols as they come along (Kusenbach, 2003). Due to security measures around key areas

and the erasing of several graffiti images, the method was changed to photo elicitation while meeting participants in coffee shops in different areas around the city. Another adaptation was changing the interviews from recorded to unrecorded after the tenth interview, as these allowed participants to talk more easily and to comfortably choose what goes off record. Also, suspicion of any research activity relating to politics made reaching out to participants challenging, this led participation to be limited to snowballing. Participants belonged to the upper-middle class and their experience of the city was mostly from their cars. This limitation has affected how representative the data is of the wider public, since class is an important regulator of how individuals experience the city. The sample was purposefully diverse in terms of age and political views: 7 participants identified themselves as supporters of current government, 13 were against it, and 5 were neutral towards politics and preferred not to be involved. Their ages ranged from 25 to 71, with an average age of 36. For anonymity, names used below for data excerpts do not correspond to the real names of participants.

5.4. SYMBOLS IN THE CITY SPACE AND THEIR SOCIAL LIFE

Broader transformations in the city space can be inscribed on specific symbols, as we follow those symbols, we can see small-scale representations of what is happening in the wider scale of the city space (Nagati & Stryker, 2013). Symbols once created have a social life of their own; they get transformed, re-understood, and changed by different social actors in a continuous dialogue. As will be seen below, many symbols were produced to respond to or to resist other symbols in a competition over the narrative that gets exposure in public space.

I will present below different examples of symbols that were used in the photo elicitation in the interviews. I have categorized the symbols into three different categories of graphic images, verbal symbols, and structures. In this section, I will discuss the evolution of the symbols as a kind of Bartlettian serial reproduction, especially in examples of graffiti images, how they were transformed in transmission, elaborated, simplified, keeping certain aspects of the original while omitting parts and transforming others to respond to the changing context (Wagoner, 2017a). Also how the changes implemented by different social actors reflected a process of reproducing repertoires, unfolding a continuous performance in the city space that visually narrates the multiple forms of remembering the revolution (Abaza, 2013).

5.4.1. GRAPHIC IMAGES

‘‘Images are not just a particular kind of sign, but something like an actor on the historical stage,’’ they are endowed with a unique status that feeds into the stories we tell ourselves (Mitchell, 1984, p. 504). Photographs, arrangement of colors (flags), and paintings all tell us something about where we are, hint at the power dynamics, and make us feel foreign or at home. Images are not just objects, but

communicative devices in a narrative. They give figurative shape to abstract meanings and give substance to stereotypes and social representations (Lonchuk & Rosa, 2011).

The revolution graffiti created and re-constructed certain images that fed into the representation of the revolution. An example of a widely diffused and contro- versial image is that of army soldiers stripping a protestor while hitting her during protest dispersal (Figure 1). Graffiti artist El Tenin re-constructed the image of the woman as a symbolic hero of the revolution changing her posture from that of humiliation and weakness to that of heroism and determination (Figure 2, text reads: continuing). The blue bra (Figure 3), a private object now on public walls, quickly became a symbol of army violations, sexual harassments, and more gen- erally the revolution. Using Bartlett's (1932) terms, the symbol was here ''sim- plified'' into a blue bra, while simultaneously ''elaborating'' its meaning to signify the larger cause. Moreover, it effectively circulated not only on many walls in Egypt, but was also appropriated by Lebanese graffiti artists in solidarity with the cause and in opposition to authority (Figure 3 captured in Jisr El-Cola, Beirut, text reads: against the regime).

When the image of the blue bra (Figure 3) was shown to participants in the pedestrian interviews, 12 participants identified seeing it before in the street, and 19 out of the 25 participants related it to the incident in Figure 1. It was clear that the image became an iconic symbol of a famous incident, but of interest was the variation in how the memory of the incident was reconstructed when triggered by the image.

Soha, who took part in the 2011 protests immediately recalled the incident saying: ''yes this is for set el banat (the most honorable of girls),'' using the label activists commonly used in reference to the girl in Figure 1 who preferred to stay anonymous. While Gihan who is against the revolution said: ''yes this is the girl who was dragged and her clothes ripped off in the square,'' a passive sentence with no mention of an actor, when asked who dragged her, she said: ''the army, but they apologized.'' While Lara who does not have a strong interest in politics said the photo reminded her of belly dancing costumes sold at Khan Elkhalili market and recalled that she might have seen similar signs in that market. These answers high- lighted how each of the participants interpreted the meaning of the symbol and recalled its story based on their present political and social position.

Figure 1 A protester beaten by army soldiers during clashes in Cairo's Tahrir Square in December 2011. Photo Credit: Stringer/Reuters/Landov.

Figure 2 Graffiti by El Tenin.

Figure 3 Photo credit: Rana Jarbou.

In contrast to the above example, the army had another narrative to present in city space: the army as the protector of the revolution and Egyptians. The army since 2011 has been very active in introducing their own images into the city space, more so since they removed Morsi and El Sisi took office. They not only use the walls of army and official buildings, but also publicize their images and slogans on public busses and billboards all over Egypt. The most famous of their campaigns is the image in Figure 4. It was the only image that was seen by all interview parti- cipants all around the city. The image triggered much sarcasm in the interviews for the discrepancy between the image and the text underneath it, while the text reads: ''the army and the people are one hand,'' the image represented the people as a toddler carried by the army man.

One interviewee was critical of the naivety of the campaign, even though he supports the government and its campaigns, when asked if this is effect promotion of the government, he said ''Not for me or you, this is silly PR [public relations], but it works with the general public, they need to feel protected by the army now.'' For another participant who identified herself as apolitical, this image was of significance as it triggered her re-interpretation of it over time. When Lobna saw the image in 2011, she was touched by it and felt it was a true representation of how when the army tanks went to Tahrir Square everyone was celebrating their support and gave them their children to take pictures with them. As events unfolded, she felt this image is not as idealistic as she had thought and now when she comes across the image it reminds her of the disappointment she experienced as those same tanks started killing protestors. The image's subjective meaning for the viewer here changed as the context changed, triggering reflexivity and a dialogical process in interpretation.

This image was later reproduced by Egyptian graffiti painter Ammar using the same composition to communicate a counter meaning in Fusion Festival in Germany

(Figure 5). This, as well as the critical views from the interviews, high- lights how once an image is introduced into the city space, it takes a social life span of its own, out of the control and original meaning of the creator. The sarcasm and reproduction of this image highlights Bartlett's argument about political propa- ganda (1940): the public do not simply perceive and believe whatever the regime presents to them, but transform the messages according to their own ideas.

Figure 4 Photo by author.

Figure 5 Photo credit: Don Stone.

Part of the social life of images is their destruction; in many instances the reproduction of a graffiti image was triggered by authorities erasing of a previous one. The fresh coat of paint presented a new canvas and also an opportunity for dialogue and sarcasm, with artists spraying statements such as ''congratulations on the new coat of paint.'' The erasing in itself gives significance to the image and a sense of power to the graffiti, as graffiti artist Keizer expressed in a previous inter- view. While graffiti artist the Mozza sees ''this effort to erase as indicative of something more than just cleaning a wall (. . .) this is very symbolic for what the government is doing with people's consciousness and memory.'' Erasing also is as much a symbol as introducing one; this is manifested most in the selective erasing by different social actors. Erasing one part of an image may turn a message from a curse of the authority to a campaign for it (see El Sisi stencil in Awad et al., 2017). This erasing could be seen as a ''creative destruction, in which a secondary image of defacement or annihilation is created at the same moment that the target image is attacked'' (Mitchell, 2005, p. 18).

When looking at the city space in 2016, without the knowledge of the history of the images and their erasing, one sees it predominantly occupied by official images. Most of the revolution graffiti was short lived because of the continuous erasing as well as the declining effort of some graffiti artists interviewed who felt they would

rather stay away from the political scene for a while due to the tightened security situation as well as their disappointment in how the revolution has developed. The social life of images, however, does not stop there, but images of graffiti paintings continue to circulate and get reconstructed on the Internet and new graffiti paintings emerge in other parts of the city.

5.4.2. VERBAL SYMBOLS

Historically, slogans have been used to hint at power relations in city space. For example, as a mark of symbolic power, King Farouk in 1944 changed the army emblem from ‘‘god, country, and king’’ to ‘‘god, king, and country’’ (Kandil, 2012), and during Mubarak’s regime the police slogan was changed from ‘‘The police in the service of people’’ to ‘‘The police and the people are in service of the nation,’’ reflecting how the police was the main arm of the regime securing it against the people.

Similarly, after 2011 different statements have been appropriated and spread by different groups. Previously common nationalistic statements have been used in El Sisi government campaigning, so that statements such as tahiya masr (viva Egypt) or fi hob masr (in the love of Egypt) became synonymous with pro-government sentiments. In pedestrian interviews, when participants were shown signs with such statements, all participants readily identified them as created by the government, army, or their supporters, even when the image did not have any explicit indication of this.

The revolutionary graffiti also repeated certain iconic statements from the revolution, such as ‘‘people demand the fall of the regime’’ and ‘‘the revolution continues.’’ Those statements also went through serial reproduction in response to the changing powers; for example, ‘‘down with the regime’’ was reproduced to ‘‘down with the Army’’ and then ‘‘down with the Muslim Brotherhood’’ and finally ‘‘Down with all who betrayed; military, old regime, and Muslim Brotherhood.’’

Muslim brotherhood supporters also had their own repeated statements in the street that emerged after the violent dispersal of their protest in Rab’a square and other areas following the coup. It is distinguished by a much wider distribution than all other graffiti, and involves mainly spraying a consistent message all over the country that includes, ‘‘Sisi is a killer,’’ ‘‘Sisi is a traitor,’’ ‘‘against the coup,’’ and ‘‘Morsi is my president.’’ Unlike other graffiti that is centered around main squares and streets, this spraying can be found in countless small streets in different cities, which made it harder for authority to erase. These statements were also coupled with an iconic image of a hand gesture of number four, in reference to Rab’a square, which was used to express solidarity with those killed in the square during dispersal. Twenty-one out of the 25 participants identified seeing the spray- ing before in the street. While none of the participants belonged to the Muslim Brotherhood group,

three participants sympathized with the spraying seeing it as the only outlet for a prosecuted group to express themselves. Most of the other participants criticized the lack of aesthetics in their expression in comparison to revolution graffiti and the images seemed to trigger their negative opinions about the group.

Under the category of text, I also look at the change of the names of certain streets, metro stations and squares. Place names are more than markers of space; they are powerful reminders of certain incidents—as in the earlier mentioned exam- ple of the renaming of Tahrir Square area after the fall of the monarchy. Place names act as the mnemonics of a moral geography, where the mere mention of a place name triggers the memory of a certain narrative (Connerton, 2009). For example, graffiti painters have created signs in Mohamed Mahmoud Street to rename it to ‘‘Eyes of freedom’’ in honor of the protestors who lost their eyes by security’s intentional targeting in 2012. However, the street’s official name remains unchanged. Name changes by authorities are more permanent. For example, Rab’a square has been renamed after ‘‘Prosecutor General Hesham Barakat’’ after he lost his life in a terrorist attack in 2015. This name change created a strong shift for the memory of the place; from a space of grieving and solidarity with the Muslim Brotherhood, to a space honoring the general prosecutor who was behind many of the death sentences given to the group’s members. In this instance, the place name conceals part of the history of that place, in which the authorities’ narrative of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist group who killed the prosecutor is remembered, and the people who lost their lives in the square during the crackdown are for- gotten. Since the name change was recent, most participants were not aware of the change, and some suggested the old name will remain to be the one used in spite of the official change. Overall, the name change as well as other renovations in this square was perceived by three participants as a cover up by authority of their crackdown on protestors.

5.4.3. STRUCTURES

In this category, I look at the symbolic meaning of monuments, statues, and buildings, as well as the destruction of these structures. The connection between space and memory is powerfully manifested in monuments as they are intentionally constructed to stimulate people to remember. ‘‘Conversely, their destruction trans- forms a group’s relation to the past, and has often been deliberately used to reconstruct a group’s history’’ (Wagoner, 2015).

The center of Tahrir Square witnessed an experimentation with the question of what memorial can represent the revolution and who should decide. By the end of 2013, after the removal of Morsi, the interim government inaugurated a memorial base to be dedicated to demonstrators who lost their lives in the revolution. On that same night protestors vandalized the base, rejecting the right of the authorities to honor the dead, as they were also their killers. Protestors set a mock coffin on top of the destructed base and sprayed ‘‘Down with all who betrayed; Military, old regime,

and Muslim Brotherhood.'' By the beginning of 2015, in the same spot a huge pole was inaugurated with the Egyptian flag (Figure 6). A symbol that may represent a unifying nationalistic vision for the future as participants who support the government perceived it, or as an appropriation of the national flag as the symbol of the new regime, so whoever dares to destroy it would be destroying the nation's biggest symbol, as perceived by most participants who are against the government. Participants who perceived it negatively saw that it represents the new nationalistic meanings of the flag that they do not agree with. According to one participant, the lengthy unreachable pole reminded him of one of the government statements: ''Egypt is above all,'' which he interprets as the entity of Egypt in abstract terms is more important than the lives and freedoms of its citizens.

Figure X-6 Photo by author, May 2015

In Rab'a square, a new monument was also inaugurated in October 2013 only three months after the crack down on the Muslim Brotherhood protestors there. The monument structure (Figure 7) is of two hands representing the military and police, enclosing a white orb representing the people (Gribbon, 2014). Interestingly, 12 of the participants interviewed did not notice the monument at all, even though 5 of them lived in the same neighborhood of the monument. Only one participant knew its meaning from a newspaper. When participants were asked what it might mean, six participants mentioned concepts of protection and guardianship. While two participants related it to meanings in their own lives, like a mother who interpreted it as two kids playing with a ball, and a scientist who interpreted it as a planet rotating around its axis. Three participants saw it as part of the ''cover up'' after the brutal dispersal of the Muslim Brotherhood sit-in. From a political point of view this monument also has another meaning in relation to power dynamics, where the hand of the army is an upper hand over the arm of the police. This monument symbolizes the military taking back its position of upper power, the position they had since

1950s but was disrupted by Mubarak's transition of the country from a military state to a police state (Kandil, 2012).

Figure X-7 Photo by author, October 2015

The last example I will use here is that of destruction of structures. Mid 2015, the government decided to demolish the building that hosted Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP). The location of this building holds a strong history of power successions. Its land was used to house Egyptian Army troops but during colonization it was used for British troops' barracks. Upon the troops departure, King Farouk ordered the demolition of the structure in a move to prove his anti-occupation position. Then after 1952 revolution, the land was used to construct a government building to be the symbol of the new Egypt, hosting Nasser's socialist union. Later during Mubarak's time, part of the building hosted his National Democratic Party and the rest of the building hosted other government offices and councils (Cairo Observer, 2011). During the protests in 2011, fire was set to the building—it is not known who set the fire—and the burned structure became a symbol of the revolution's victory over the regime.

Visually the aesthetic value of the building (Figure 8) became as controversial as graffiti. It is a burned building, but to some interview participants who were part of the revolution ''it was the only physical icon remaining of the revolution, the only monument representing how the revolts won over authority.'' While supporters of government saw its destruction as a progressive move to get rid of an ugly building to build something more useful. The destruction signifies how certain structures can be powerful objectifications of particular events, which must be destroyed if one wants to change their meaning in the present (Wagoner, 2015). As I conducted interviews in January 2016, the building was all on the ground, yet 12 of the

participants did not notice it was gone even though they mentioned visiting the downtown area frequently.

Figure X-8 Photo by author, May 2015 before destruction

5.5. DISCUSSION

Looking back at the research questions of how are symbols in public space intentionally produced and modified to communicate a certain narrative and regulate a community's collective memory, and how are those symbols perceived and remembered by pedestrians. I would like to focus here on four main points for discussion: *exposure, social life of symbols, perception*, and the overall effect on *pedestrian experience*.

In terms of exposure, army posters had the most visibility overall; all participants have seen at least one of the army symbols compared to only 11 out of the 25 participants who have previously seen at least one of the graffiti symbols in the street. The expected power discrepancy between one narrative over the other was evident, the authority's narratives are communicated through wide- spread billboards, material monuments, and official place name changes, while the alternative narratives' traces remain in small side street walls and erased murals. The authority's intentional erasing and destruction in parallel to production of a coherent dominant narrative was clear from fieldwork as well as from interviews. Generally, the control of authority over the production and consumption of the narrative of the past is unmatched by any other collective (Wertsch, 2008). How effective this control is in shaping collective memory depends however on an understanding of the particular audience and how they perceive the symbols, as well as on other mediums they are exposed to such as online outlets.

The serial reproduction of symbols highlighted the agency of all social actors and the dynamic social life of symbols in public sphere. In contrast to Bartlett's experiments when participants serially reproduced foreign images that they had no access to, transforming them into something familiar (Wagoner, 2017b), in the current case, transformation was not about forgetting the original symbol or making a foreign object familiar, but about social actors actively appropriating symbols to represent the past the way they make sense of it (see transformation of Figure 1 to Figure 2 then Figure 3, and Figure 4 to Figure 5).

The perception of symbols was analyzed in terms of what participants remembered as well as how they remembered. Both the government and graffiti symbols were effective triggers for remembering certain recent incidents (e.g., Figure 3 triggered the attack and Figure 4 triggered the army's intervention in 2011). However, how participants remembered those incidents challenged the potential of those symbols in changing people's relationship to the collective past. This puts the pedestrians as agentic recipients of symbols: they perceive them, reconstruct their meaning, and create their own counter symbols in response (Awad et al., 2017). Examples from data highlighted how participants negotiated their interpretations and assigned meanings to the symbols (e.g., the different ways the attack was narrated from the blue bra image). These findings support Bartlett's (1932) social approach to remembering, highlighting how individuals' remembering is influenced by their present social context, feelings, interests, and social group membership.

However, this limitation in the symbols' potential for reflexivity could be attributed to the fact that the memories are still recent and the political atmosphere is still very polarized in the aftermath of the revolution. There is higher potential for a symbol to trigger perspective taking or change of view for those who are more distant from politics (such as Lobna's reinterpretation of the army photo) or for coming generations who have not witnessed the events themselves.

The pedestrian experience analyzed from the interviews showed that even though participants were not attentive to changes in their surroundings, they had a strong overall feel of certain places after the change. It is interesting how even though the research deals with very recent events, some participants were already not noticing the disappearance of the building in Figure 8 or the new monument in Figure 7, in spite of these being in areas they recorded passing by frequently. Participants' responses trigger one to ask how many of the changes in our surroundings do we notice, and how does the continuous transformation in modern cities generate what Connerton (2009) refers to as cultural amnesia. In spite of the lack of attentiveness of most participants, they shared strong opinions as to what they would like to see in their city. As one would expect, the participants who were attached to the graffiti and the remains of the revolution were keen on the symbols remaining. ''It is the remaining trace of resistance'' (Mostafa) and a source of ''reassurance that someone still remembers and does not believe what the media is saying'' (Eman). While other

participants who were neutral or supportive to current regime saw the revolution as a rupture that they need to move on from and preferred the clean new look of Cairo, something that represents ‘‘opening a new page’’ (Ahmed) and ‘‘working on a new Egypt’’ (Noha). Furthermore, they shared an overall feeling of certain places due to the changes. Among participants who are against the government, feelings of exclusion were associated with the nationalist campaigns’ billboards and the flag in Figure 6, and feelings of domination and power were associated with the numerous army posters on highways and bridges, ‘‘signs confirming that everything now is owned and controlled by them’’ (Ehab). Also, with regards to Tahrir and Rab’a squares’ renovations, while many of the details of the changes were not noticed, an overall feeling of those places varied depending on participants’ orientation, for supporters it was a ‘‘clean up,’’ while for opposition it was a ‘‘cover up.’’

These findings put the agency of the perceiver and the deliberate transformation of the city space as two forces influencing what is remembered and transferred in the society. These two forces are mediated by the social and dialogical nature of memory, where as one’s memory is triggered by a certain symbol, an interpretation is re-constructed, borrowing from certain chosen narratives that were authored collaboratively in society such as the label set el banat that was used in one of the participants’ recall of the story behind Figure 1.

5.6. CONCLUSION

The discussion of memory and city space in this article is as much about the past as it is about the present and the future. The transformations of symbols as well as the transformations in people’s perceptions and memories are all indexes of changing times.

It is too early to predict the effect of the authority’s deliberate use of symbols to regulate the community’s collective memory. The government’s reconstruction of the past to build a ‘‘new stable Egypt’’ is distorting the most significant nationalistic moment for the millions who went to the streets in 2011. The effect of this exclusion goes beyond pedestrians’ experience in the public space to their overall distancing from their role as agents for change in their country, as it is not only concealing their past but also the future the revolutionaries have imagined (Figure 9).

Figure X-9 "Do you remember the tomorrow that never came?" Graffiti and Photo by Keizer

This paper has attempted to analyze the competing narratives of recent history as they unfold in public space, highlighting the power of a symbol in the form of an image, a statement, or a structure in shaping representations of the past. Even though we are agents to a great extent to what and how we remember, the urban environment around us enforce certain memories and promote the forgetting of others. This urban space manifests unequal power dynamics between the different social actors, where the authorities have the upper hand on what narratives get to stay in the public space. These dominant narratives have their limitations how- ever: historically every regime has attempted to overwrite history, but alternative narratives have endured through art, storytelling, and different forms of documentation. In current times, this can be seen in activists' resistance to forgetting by finding other outlets in social media and through creating online archives of the revolution such as ''Wiki-thawra''—the slogan of which is ''so we don't forget.'' Also, the temporary interventions of graffiti will continue to establish a presence in public space that demands recognition and the more vigorously the authorities try to erase it, the clearer it becomes that they have not yet succeeded in establishing the official narrative (Tripp, 2013).

Everyday practices in public space will also continue to open dialogue between the different narratives presented in this paper. Ordinary practices of walking around the city and exchanging stories of ''here used to be. . .,'' these acts express everyday forms of resistance, attributing different meanings to the public space than those enforced upon the society by the existing order, and providing the infrastructure for dialogue about the past, promoting heterogeneous interpretations of it (De Certeau, 1984). Through street interventions, online resources, and everyday practices, the less powerful narratives may continue as a rupture that disturbs the taken for granted dominant narratives, triggering questioning and reflection.

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CHAPTER 6. IMAGE POLITICS OF THE ARAB UPRISINGS

Awad, S. & Wagoner, B. (2018). Image Politics of the Arab Uprisings. In Wagoner, B., Moghaddam, F. & Valsiner, J. (Eds). *The Psychology of Radical Social Change: From Rage to Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Contemporary social upheavals involve the production of images by various social groups to propagate particular versions of social reality, which are in turn interpreted, challenged, rejected, accepted in part or in entirety, and used by individuals and groups on the ground. Images are tools used to create meaningful signs in the environment. Through them we act and position ourselves, and in turn they act back upon us. The Arab uprisings that commenced in 2011 across the Middle East and North Africa provide an illustrative example of these dynamics of images in revolutions. Images depicting the brutality of the authorities and the "martyrs" of the revolutions were commonplace and transmitted globally. Tahrir square in Cairo itself became a kind of visual theater, with news cameras looking down on it from the heights of buildings around the square. Thus, revolutions such as this are not only visually productive, but are in themselves visual to a great extent.

Political conflicts in today's visual culture become power struggles over presence and visibility. Authoritarian regimes assert their political dominance by controlling visual production, while the opposition seeks the right to be visually present in the city space and beyond. The right to place images in public space becomes significant beyond the meaning of the images; it becomes important also because an image in public space represents the power of the group that has placed the image and successfully defended the public space in which the image is seen. This chapter aims to unpack the politics of images by analyzing examples from revolutionary street art and government images in Egypt. The focus will be on four key functions of images in politics: to create visibility, to mobilize, to position, and to commemorate. These functions are exemplified by analyzing the transformation of urban images in four case studies: the authority figure, the flag, the tank and bullets. The methodological framework draws on the social life of images and the social actors involved. Images have social lives that include their emergence, reception, diffusion, transformation, and destruction. By following images' continuous transformation in the urban space, this chapter analyzes the potential use of images for bringing about social change within shifting power dynamics.

6.1. IMAGES AS POLITICS

Politics involves power struggles over presence, visibility, and recognition within an established order. The politics of visual culture concerns the contestation over the representation of society and who is permitted to represent it (Ranciere, 2004). Authoritarian regimes assert their political dominance by having control over visual production and consumption, while the opposition seeks democratic representation in visible spaces; political agency constitutes possessing the ability to be seen and the right of presence and ownership of public space (Khatib, 2013). Power in that sense is in ownership over visual representation in public sphere. Images in this context are thus an integral part of the everyday politics. Consider the power images have had in representing what is happening in the Middle East today, from those

driving compassion toward children in Syria's war, through those used to trigger fear of the refugees, to those produced by the so-called Islamic State Daesh propagating terror.

Likewise, visual images have constructed much of the local as well as global perception of the Arab uprisings since 2011. They have shaped what we remember of the events as well as how we remember them, such as the masses of protestors filling city squares and street art expressing their sentiment. These images communicated across language barriers, portraying events as they unfolded in such a way that people around the world could both witness these historic moments and stand in solidarity with, or in opposition to, millions of people. Images of masses in the streets and squares inspired more protestors to join the movement. This happened not only locally but also globally, for different causes that nonetheless shared the guiding idea of "power to the people." This slogan encompassed opposition to multiple systems of injustice, such as freedom from authoritarian regimes, social and economic inequality of the 1 percent versus the 99 percent, and humanitarian appeals against violence and torture.

The very act of taking to the streets makes a conflict visible (Doerr, Mattoni, and Teune, 2014), and marking a wall with political graffiti is a call for recognition and resistance to the monopoly the authority holds on public space (Awad, Wagoner, and Glaveanu, 2017; Awad, 2017). Protestors do not just proclaim space, but also produce spaces with new symbols that challenge existing representations (Lefebvre, 1991). Having a physically active presence in public spaces that people are only permitted by the state to use passively becomes a visual, political act (Bayat, 2013).

It was images that first ignited the anger and solidarity that led to the Arab uprisings. From early 2011, images of Mohamed Bouazizi from Tunisia, Khaled Said from Egypt, and Hamza al-Khatib from Syria were catalysts for local movements as well as global attention as they became symbols of state injustice. Bouazizi set himself on fire in protest of police harassment and humiliation, while Said was beaten to death in broad daylight by police for exposing corruption (more on this below), and al-Khatib was killed under torture by security forces after he wrote "the people demand the fall of the regime" (a common phrase during the uprisings) on a public wall. Their images transformed police violence from a state-controlled act into visual evidence in the hands of protestors (Khatib, 2013).

In modern media-saturated societies, images become a field of knowledge in their own right. The production, circulation, and interpretation of images are part of the collective elaboration of meaning and thus intrinsically political (Rogoff, 1998). Revolution street art and graffiti in the Middle East created influential images of the Arab uprisings. Activists' use of these aesthetic means of protest, transformed art from being class-based capital tied to amusement and wealth (Bourdieu, 1984), to a tool of resistance alongside gas masks in the midst of protests and clashes. The

messages communicated on the wall were used to assert a counternarrative of events, mobilize and unite people around revolutionary goals, reconstruct representations of the authority figures challenging their power, and socially document and remember events as were seen and felt in the street (Awad, 2017; Awad and Wagoner, 2015; Awad, Wagoner, and Glaveneau, 2017). Images from the Arab uprisings are of protestors taking ownership of representing themselves and constructing a social reality to present to the world, as well as responding to other actors' narratives.

Revolution can thus be seen as a dramatized performance using powerful symbols to win over audiences that are both national and international. The first day of protest during the 2011 Egyptian revolution was carefully choreographed to take place on "national police day," which commemorated how the police stood up to the British occupation. In so doing, it put in stark relief the arbitrary and brutal police of contemporary Egypt that would attempt to squash the protest with the heroic role they played in the past. The strategy of the protest was to meet at peripheral spaces of the city – thereby dividing police attention – and moving toward the central point of the city, Tahrir square (which appropriately means "liberation" in Arabic). Tahrir square was of key importance precisely because of its visibility. During the protests that followed over the eighteen days until Mubarak was removed and beyond, Tahrir became a kind of political theater in which the revolutionaries could effectively spread various images of the government's attempts to break up the movement. These were taken by cellular phones and increasingly by news channels perched in the buildings surrounding the square. Standing in the middle of the square one could see innumerable cameras looking down. News channels the protestors disagreed with got an endless barrage of laser pointers directed up at them to break their image, as part of the protest.

6.2. VISUAL CULTURE: THINKING THROUGH IMAGES

Images create affective symbols as they circulate, embodying multiple meanings. A symbol is a sign which carries multiple meanings and significance: one meaning is indicated being the obvious "face value" of the symbol (i.e., what it denotes), and another is the "hidden value" (i.e., its connotations) which produces a largely affective response without being definitely or purposively attended to (Bartlett, 1924; Wagoner, 2017). For example, the image of Khalid Said's mutilated face after he was beaten by police in Egypt took on the hidden value of fighting police corruption and injustice more generally. It became a rally point around which a group could organize itself and expand its membership. Police brutality was nothing new, but was normally directed at the poor and was now made visible. Said's case was special in that he was from the middle class and was killed in front of others in broad daylight. Thus, he could more easily serve as a symbol uniting all Egyptians against the police.

The image of Khaled Said as well as many other revolution images traveled to different contexts creating symbols of solidarity among different countries. Figure 11.1 shows the portrait of Khaled Said painted on a fragment of the historical Berlin Wall, symbolically merging two separate contexts of struggle together, as part of the Freedom Park Project. The photo was painted by Andreas von Chrzanowski (Case), and the Arabic calligraphy at the bottom was written by Mohamed Gaber (Gue3bara), reading "We are all Khaled Said," which was the name of the Facebook page made in his honor and used to call for and organize the protests of January 25, 2011. The image of Said's mutilated face fulfills the four functions of images we highlight, namely, to create visibility, mobilize, position and commemorate. We will briefly outline each function here in turn and later further elaborate them in relation to case studies of different kinds of images created during the Arab uprisings.

Figure 11.1

Khaled Said's image on a piece of the Berlin Wall.

6.2.1. CREATE VISIBILITY

To represent in politics means to stand in for a group of people in negotiations with other groups (i.e., as a representative), while in psychology its meaning concerns a symbolic depiction of some object. The two meanings of "represent" convergence in the politics of images. For example, images of Khaled Said represents the concrete person killed by police on the one hand, but also the revolutionaries and their demands for "life, freedom and social justice." This public representation of an image can bring visibility to a social movement's cause. Whether a photo or a piece of art, images are communicative devices that make visible to an object, a subject, or an idea, and the group that produced it. Images are different from text in the

immediacy by which they make absent objects present, their capacity to make abstract entities concrete, and to create fictional characters that embody generalizations and stereotypes (Lonchuk and Rosa, 2011). Moscovici (1984) has argued that they give a "figurative nuclei" to social representations, working to naturalize our everyday knowledge and give shared reference points for a group to communicate and organize itself.

Images borrow from currents of ideas and values already existing within a society, but can also negotiate them, reconstruct them and create new ones. This power to represent and make visible gives images the capacity to produce spaces that embody the group who made them. Who is allowed, and what is allowed, to be visible creates spaces of power, inclusion, and exclusion. Images tell us something about where we are, hint at the power dynamics, and make us feel foreign or at home (Lonchuk and Rosa, 2011). Misrepresented groups often strive with the use of images to create visibility, proclaim city space, and create an atmosphere of solidarity to re-affirm their denied recognition. Regimes, especially authoritarian ones, monopolize visual culture in order to control how society is represented. This is done by producing images that communicate power and indicate who belongs and who does not.

6.2.2. MOBILIZE: SHAPING EMOTIONS AND MOTIVATING ACTION

Two modes of thought that govern human psychology are conceptual reason and ideational images. While the former creates a more distant and evidence-based relation to reality, the latter is vivid, emotional and directly suggests action (like an idea implanted by a hypnotist) (see also Wagoner, Chapter 5). Le Bon (1895/2002) argued that the statesmen should govern the masses by appealing to the latter mode of thought through evoking powerful images, rather than by providing them with reasoned arguments. Although we can criticize his one-sided view of the public, he was clearly on to something with regards to the power of images to move masses. Thus, beyond representation and recognition an image can easily be embodied as an affective symbol that mobilizes us to actions by appealing to our emotions. The perceiver of an image may be moved to engagement and self-transformation by appropriating a powerful image in a work of art (Dewey, 1934/2005), or to collective action through various symbols expressing outrage, and calling us to action.

The power of the image over the human mind resides in its silence, impassiveness, and insistence on repeating the same message, in its capacity for absorbing human emotions and projecting them back as a demand for reflection (Mitchell, 2005). In revolutions, images ignite emotions and rally people in the streets. As already mentioned, it was images of Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia and Khaled Said in Egypt that sparked revolutions in each country. In the immediate aftermath of Mubarak's being pushed out of the presidency, cities of Egypt were filled with

empowerment and solidarity street art, including national flags, fists clenched in the air and the Christian cross and Islamic crescent placed together. Moreover, through circulation of images on television and the Internet, mobilization transcended geographic distance to spread revolutionary euphoria from one country to another.

6.2.3. POSITION

Images also function as condensed symbols that make arguments vis-à-vis other alternative positions within a society. Through these arguments people position themselves and others in relation to different social issues, ascribing various rights and duties to different social actors (Harré and Langenhove, 1998). The actors are also positioned as upholding or violating those rights and duties. In the online page calling for the Egyptian uprising, the photo of Khaled Said was placed beside his mutilated face after the attack, with the slogan "we are all Khaled Said." His young familiar look and the slogan explicitly positioned the perceiver as sharing the vulnerability to the police's arbitrary aggression. The visual expressed outrage at the violation of people's rights to justice and safety, and the duty to stand in solidarity against the injustice. Furthermore, it positioned the authority as having failed in its duty to protect its people.

In this context, the putting forward of arguments takes the form of a dialogue between social actors. As will be illustrated in the "tank" example further below, an effective visual image not only asserts the producer's argument, but also provokes its audience to position themselves within the argument. It creates both attention and tension, posing a challenge to the viewer. If the image is too familiar the viewer will only see it as a cliché, and if it is too unfamiliar the viewer will reject it outright. To create perceptual, emotional, and representational tension for the viewer the image needs to balance between the known and unknown, old and new. It involves representing the existing social reality, while simultaneously communicating something new that violates that reality (Marková, 2003). Thus, by following images as they respond to one another we can track how different positions evolve within an ongoing social dialogue.

6.2.4. COMMEMORATE

Images also simplify events into symbolic icons that become part of our collective memory, as has happened with Khalid Said's image becoming an iconic visual to commemorate the injustice leading to 2011 uprising in Egypt. Our spatial framework is filled with images that trigger selective events of the past and certain ways of remembering them. Those images become symbolic actors on the historical stage; feeding into the stories we tell ourselves (Mitchell, 1984) and representing the affective relationship a community has with its past (Halbwachs, 1950). Images of the past are continuously reproduced and reconstructed to feed into the demands of the present and the desired future of different social actors. These images can then

be used as analogies to understand a host of current events and concerns. As the psychologist Frederic Bartlett (1932, p. 219) explained "By the aid of the image … a man can take out of its setting something that happened a year ago, reinstate it with much if not all of its individuality unimpaired, combine it with something that happened yesterday, and use them both to help him to solve a problem with which he is confronted to-day." In this account there is a dynamic relationship between past and present; the past is used to serve current needs and is reconstructed on that basis. Thus those having the power of image production and circulation have the power over stabilizing certain narratives of the past, thereby shaping the imagined future. Power determines which aspects of the past are circulated as visual representations (Rogoff, 1998).

6.3. STUDYING THE TRANSFORMATIVE NATURE OF IMAGES

To research these different functions of images, we need to not only look at the production and perception of image, but also at the process the image goes through in the public sphere, its social life. Images are not static objects finding a place in a single context; they have social lives that include how they are produced, received, diffused, transformed and destroyed. By following the images' continuous reconstruction, we highlight processes of dialogue between different social actors and concomitant social changes in society. Following image's transformation is also informative as to the intertwining of different public and private spheres, as well as the online and physical spaces through which an image travels. Many of the protest images were carried from squares to news and online media, while images and caricatures from social media where used in revolution graffiti and street art. This highlights the enduring power of images that travel, comment on each other, and continuously respond to the dialogues ongoing in society. Images are also understood as situated within particular sociocultural contexts through association with a complex stock of cultural knowledge and identifications, which affects how they are interpreted and re-appropriated by different social actors (Mitchell, 1994).

Images as tools for social and political action, involve different social actors, who take up the different roles of image producer, receiver, transformer and destroyer, depending on the context (Awad, Wagoner, and Glaveneau, 2017). For example, during the uprising every protestor in a sense was an image producer, broadcasting to a local and global audience through social media. Also, a revolution mural in the street has the artist as its producer, and pedestrians and the government as its audience and potential censors. While for a political campaign poster the producer could be the authority for which pedestrians are the audience. The audience in each case could change the image, reproduce it, transfer it to another medium, or destroy it. The destruction or censorship of images is indicative of the political atmosphere and what is tolerated by the government or the general public. Revolution graffiti in Egypt was not only whitewashed by local government officials but also often sprayed over or scratched out by pedestrians who disagreed with the content

displayed in what they identified as "their" neighborhood area. Government censorship is different, however, in that it not only destroys images in the streets and censors their reproduction, but also goes after image producers and circulators through arrest and issuing laws criminalizing their actions (Awad, 2017).

This framework offers one way of looking at image politics, analyzing: How do images emerge through actors' production efforts? How are they received according to each social actor's position and background? How then are images diffused and circulated within a context? What transformations do they go through in this process? Why do some images gain visibility and go viral while others have shorter life spans? What images catch people's attention?

Having highlighted our focus of the four functions and the methodological focus on the transformative process of images, we illustrate the above with four case examples, each representing one of the functions mentioned above: the authority figure, the flag, the tank and the bullets. The data presented below builds on a more elaborate ethnographic data set collected from Egypt over the period from 2014 to 2017 that includes; interviews with street artists and pedestrians, city walks, photo documentation and visual analysis, as well as archived material from news and social media (See Awad, Wagoner, and Glaveneau, 2017; Awad, 2017).

6.3.1. THE AUTHORITY FIGURE: IMAGES AS THEY CREATE VISIBILITY AND PRODUCE SPACES

Images of authority, especially in authoritarian regimes who have monopoly over the visual culture, create spaces with homogenous clear messages about power. In these contexts, as Foucault (1977) points out, the citizen is continuously the object of the gaze of the state, whether physically through surveillance, or symbolically through the watchful eye of the leader's image in public and private space. Here the image of the authority figure represents not only his person and leadership but also the state and what it stands for. Through the distribution and circulation of those images in city space they create strong visibility, displaying power and control. It is not surprising that the visible presence of the ruler, whether king, emperor or statesmen, has been a common motif throughout world history.

In the Middle East, the face of the president or king is a prominent feature in public space (in many homes as well, the intrusion of the state is such that people feel obliged to show images of the leader). This personification of politics is common because it is easier to understand a man than a political program; leaders take on the role of associating politics with their personas, displaying charismatic nationalistic attributes that appeal to their supporters (Khatib, 2013). Producers of such images are normally governmental institutions, placing the image of the leader in numerous strategic spots beginning from primary school classes in public schools socializing young citizen early on to the "father" of the nation. The role of production is not

only top down however; the authority image's social life extends to being reproduced and circulated by "loyal" citizens, displaying them in their businesses and homes. It is an act of support and alliance but also in many cases protection from the system. Khatib (2013) further explains that people post authority's images not because they love them, but because the system is self-enforcing and people are accustomed to it; they have internalized its control.

Of interest here is the transformation this image underwent during the political unrest and the alternative spaces that were created. During the uprisings, the image of authority could be seen as what Mitchell (1986) refers to as a site of special power that must be destroyed or exploited to reverse its idolism. The "divine" attributes of the authority images were contested and destroyed to bring about the questioning of their power and the possibility of toppling their regimes. This could be seen during protests in caricature images of leaders mocking them and revolution street art visually putting the power of those leaders in confrontation with the power of the people. The divine image was further reversed by media images after regime change and the removal of those leaders. One clear example is that of the violent killing of Qaddafi in Libya: media images of his corpse transformed him from a superior being into a nonhuman object in the hands of his killers (Khatib, 2013). Also in Egypt, one widely circulated media image representing the victory of the uprising was a picture of children in a public school taking down the oversized image of Mubarak from their classroom. By this destruction of the authority's physical and representative body, the revolution thereby denaturalizes the existing social order.

In his over thirty years as Egypt's president, Mubarak created an image of himself as a war hero, a leader of the Arab world, and promoter of Egypt's economic development. Anything that contradicted this image was censored to keep a coherent public discourse. The limited space that was left for "freedom of expression" targeted other government officials and ministers, while keeping Mubarak and his family out of any public ridicule. In the Middle East Peace Talks in 2010, a news image of Barak Obama in the lead, following him Binyamin Netanyahu, Mahmoud Abbas, Mubrark, and King Abdullah II slightly behind was taken of the event. The next morning state run newspaper Al-Ahram published the photo after editing it to place Mubarak at the forefront of those key figures. Interestingly this decision to alter the photo did not seem to come from the president office but rather the newspaper editorial staff. The editor-in-chief defended the image by saying it was a metaphoric edit, only meant to illustrate Egypt's leading role in the peace process (Guardian, 2010). This again reflects an internalized understanding of the visual discourse, what can be represented and how, when the real image did not match the conventional representation of the president, it was altered, so as to fit the image people should be seeing.

Revolution street art created a public field visibility through which this divine status was contested and debated, not only for Mubarak but also for the leaders who followed him: Tantawi, Morsi, and El Sisi. The same function of image as a tool for representation and creating visibility was used to reconstruct the visual representation of power. Several street art paintings were about flipping the powerful traditional portrayal of Mubarak, to represent him as weak and scared in front of the power of the people. Irony was also a common tool in graffiti and street art images. Artists appropriated the traditional divine portrayal of authority, and re-represented it with a twist to bring about an opposite meaning, thus potentially triggering reflexivity in viewers (see also Wagoner, Awad, and Bresco, forthcoming). These images did not only mock the leaders but also those who glorify them. Figure 11.2 uses traditional imagery of holding high the glorified framed image of the leader. But by changing the face of the leader and the follower to chimpanzees it represents the blind and irrational devotion of followers for their simple-minded leader.

Figure 11.2

Painting by artist Naguib at Tahrir Square, September 2014

The transformation of the leader's image into graffiti images ridiculing him, represents a visual reversal in public space. Even though these practices were there before the revolution, they were in what Scott (1990) terms, offstage hidden transcripts, where the hegemonic visual representation of authority is only mocked and degraded in private social gatherings and online media. The revolution provided a space for those hidden transcripts and backstage performances to be spoken directly and publicly in the face of power. This created new spaces with reconfigured boundaries of what could, and could not, be said in urban space.

This revolutionized urban space was not long lived. Since El Sisi took office in 2014 there has been a tightening security grip on such forms of expression. This censorship not only applies to graffiti images, but also to images produced on social media. Because images on social media are harder to control, authorities often go after the image producers. In 2015, Amr, a twenty-two-year-old serving his compulsory military year, was sentenced by military court to three years in prison for creating a picture of El Sisi with huge black Mickey Mouse ears and sharing it on Facebook. The prosecutors used screenshots from social media as evidence, arguing Amr posted a series of disrespectful images of the president that violate the expected moral behavior and push the boundaries beyond acceptability (Farid, 2015). This example, explicitly expresses authority's tight "moral" control over visual representation. In spite of these examples of ironic reversal, or perhaps because of them, the glorification of Sisi in images still persists. El Sisi is often portrayed with angle wings or a superman suit by his supporters in the street, in newspapers, and online. Those images reinforce the image of El Sisi as a national hero and savior of Egypt, such that those who suggest otherwise are labeled as enemies of the nation. These glorifying images however continue to trigger further ironic counterimages by the opposition.

6.3.2. THE FLAG: IMAGES AS THEY SHAPE EMOTIONS AND MOBILIZE

The famous images igniting the different Arab uprisings mentioned in the introduction are clear illustrations of how certain images move us beyond mere recognition, to affective reactions and in many cases mobilize action. We will discuss here an example of how even the most diffused and banal images can start a new social life following major events to mobilize people toward certain feelings, affiliations, and actions. National flags take up a novel symbolic meaning in times of turbulence. As powerful symbols of national identity they can be used to mobilize collective action toward a common goal. In moments of revolutions, triggered by the disruption of routines, people psychologically invest significant emotional energy into the symbols of nationhood (Giddens, 1985). It is thus not surprising that during and immediately after the eighteen days of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution that flags were being painted and waived all over the country. However, four years later the same flag would take on an opposite meaning.

Unlike the common use of the Lebanese flag after the civil war as a symbol of unity, the Egyptian flag was not a common daily object to be displayed and flagged. It was only apparent around football matches and on poles in government offices and schools. Protest in the years prior to the uprising in 2011 mostly used signs with their demands, without evoking a visual of the flag.

In 2011, an image of a protestor climbing up to a light pole and waving the Egyptian flag in Tahrir square with the background of thousands of protestors became a powerful symbolic image of the uprising: It connoted the slogans "power to the people" and solidarity under one national cause of "bread, freedom, and social justice." A group of protestors walking through neighborhood streets waving the flag and calling on people to join was a common practice during the eleven days of protest in 2011 before Mubarak's removal. In contrast, pro-Mubarak protest groups could easily be identified by the large portrait images of him that they carried. At this time, hanging the flag from a residential balcony was a sign of support for the revolution. Moreover, many of the revolution graffiti images used the Egyptian flag as a symbol of national unity and empowerment.

Fast forward to 2014 after military takeover and president El Sisi getting into power. At this time a flagpole was erected in the center of Tahrir square (Figure 11.3b) after dispute over what memorial can represent the revolution (see Awad, 2017). However, this time the flag was met with much skepticism from activists, who saw it as backstabbing those who lost their lives in the square during protests and an appropriation of the protest square by the new government. The flagpole was referred to as a "khazou," roughly translated as "an impalement." In a previous study, when participants were shown images of the flag on a billboard with the statement "in the love of Egypt," they all readily identified it as a pro-military government image (see Awad, 2017). Also waving the flag in the street or hanging it from ones balcony now had the opposite meaning of supporting military rule.

How did a symbol, so common and culturally diffused, come to be appropriated to mobilize for such opposite causes in such a short time? How did the government monopolize the image of the flag right after the revolution, such that it became an automatic identifier of the regime instead of a revolutionary symbol?

The military backed government after the revolution quickly reaffirmed full control of the representation of the nation using collectively held symbols such as the flag and generic statements that define nationalism and love of one's country. After the military takeover, the image of the flag was quickly appropriated to mean counterrevolution. Hanging the flag was used to proclaim space for the authorities rather than the people. The military also heavily used it in a visual campaign to act in patriotic solidarity with the government against terrorism. The flag became the symbol of the army's dedication to the people in what the campaign refers to as two revolutions, first against Mubarak in 2011, and second against Muslim Brotherhood

president Morsi. The appropriation of the flag was the visual part of the nationalistic discourse widely communicated in official media and city space after the revolution: to be a loyal Egyptian patriot is to support government, opposition is about being a traitor to the country in a time of instability and its fight for safety against terrorism.

In this example, the flag's use goes beyond its pragmatic communicative message to being a signal of spatial borders and affiliations. It performs a further symbolic function of being a "condensation symbol" and "a focus for sentiment about society" (Firth, 1973, p. 356). Flags symbolize the character of a nation, and this character varies by who is waving it, where, and how. Flags come to take those meanings from their poles standing in the street, from being waved by a loyal citizen or a protestor, or from being waved in a football match. In those instances it carries more of an affective rather than an informational message. The numerous flags we see today are un-saluted, un-waved, and unnoticed. They are banal daily reminders of nationhood, being neither consciously remembered nor forgotten (Billig, 1995). The flag becomes embodied by meanings now prescribed to it by the new authority, erasing its earlier meaning. It is only the flags now being waved or saluted that ought to be noticed.

The same flag still frequently appears in the daily life, saluted by children in school every morning, waved at football matches, and standing tall on government flagpoles. However, following its social life over the last few years in Egypt illustrates shifts in power and how the meaning of patriotism has changed, from being a protestor to a citizen loyally following his/her duty to the authority.

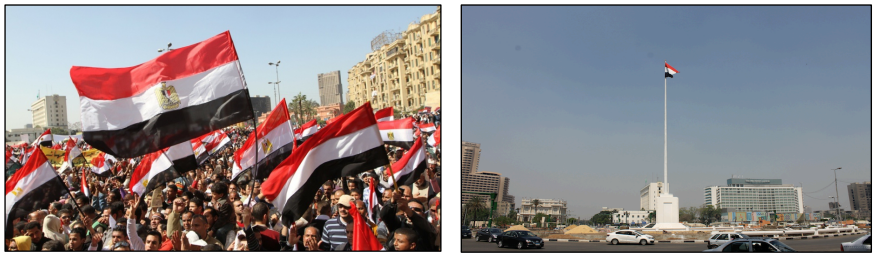

Figure 11.3

Tahrir Square (a) after Mubarak steps down in 2011 and (b) in May 2015

6.3.3. THE TANK: IMAGES AS THEY POSITION

While images represent, create spaces and mobilize, they subsequently pose arguments for a certain position, displaying the producer's stance on a contentious topic. For example, images of different protests in the uprisings positioned protestors as either freedom fighters or terrorists and foreign agents causing civil wars. The choice of which images got coverage in the media, what photo angle is

taken of a protest, and the content of each image posed an argument for or against the protest action. Similarly, photos of Syrian refugees and their circulation in European media make an argument for their helplessness or present them as a potential threat to European culture and security.

An illustrative example of this argumentative function of images is in the layers of graffiti on one wall beneath 6 October Bridge, at Zamalek in Cairo from 2011 to 2013. This example also highlights the social life of images methodology mentioned above, and the analytical value of following the transformation of one image through different actors. The continuous line of argument in this image's social life concerns the contentious military role in the revolution, symbolized by the tank. Was the military a savior of the 2011 revolution or did they take advantage of the situation for their own gain? Does the tank symbolize protection or brutality? This question remains in people's minds, especially given the current military backed regime ruling Egypt.

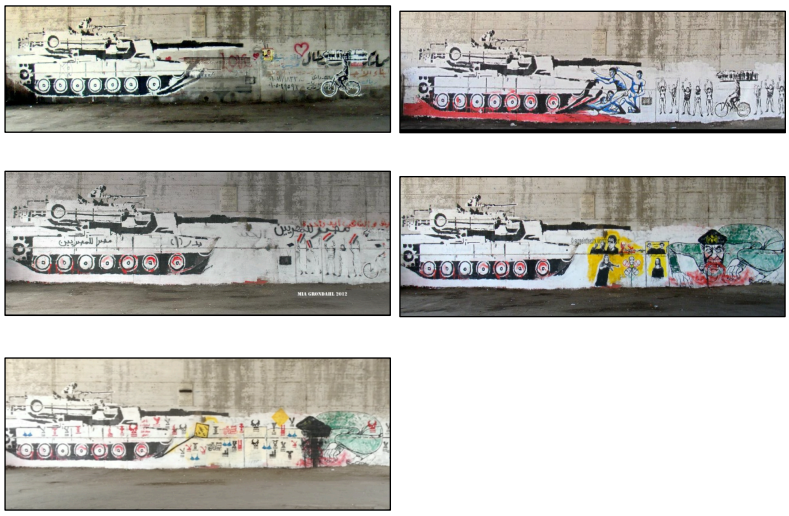

Figure 11.4

Transformations of the "tank and bicycle" mural from 2011 to 2013

The visual dialogue started with a street art image drawn by artist Ganzeer and his friends in May 2011 (Figure 11.4a). The image shows a tank facing a young man on a bicycle carrying a breadbasket. The boy serves as a representative of the working class, which revolution aimed to protect with the demands for "bread, freedom and social justice." It is also noteworthy that the word for "bread" (aish) in Arabic also means "life." Immediately we are struck by the disproportionate power of the two actors. Moreover, the positioning of the tank face-to-face with the boy and his bicycle subtly makes the argument that the army, who at that moment is supported

by many Egyptians and seen as protector, could at any moment turn its weaponry against them.

Soon after in October 2011 tanks did turn against civilians in a violent crackdown on a protest in an event known as the Maspero Massacre. During the event tanks intentionally ran over protestors killing dozens. This was the first transparent sign that the military's self-proclaimed role as protectors was problematic. In January 2012 another artist, Mohammed Khaled, transformed the tank and bicycle image to document the massacre, painting civilians falling under the moving tank with a pool of blood underneath them (Figure 11.4b). Around the bread seller, protestors were added holding "vandetta" masks, an international symbol of resistance. The argument is clear: the military are killers and citizens have the duty to protest against the violations of their rights.

Actors from an opposing position quickly countered this argument. Ten days later, a pro-army group called "Badr Battalion" erased most of the new additions to the image (Figure 11.4c). The tank now stands idly besides protestors with the slogans "the army and the people are one hand" and "Egypt for the Egyptians." The latter is a slogan from 1880s that was used for pro-nationalist anticolonial campaigns and was later appropriated by the military when they seized power in 1952. The protestors are now transformed into patriotic civilians cheering for the tank with flags in hand instead of the vendetta masks. The image makes the argument that citizens should be patriotic by supporting the military which will lead to social stability. As described above, the meaning of the flag is already changing to signal this support.

In response to this, a street art group named "Mona Lisa Battalion" erased what the pro-army group had done and drew different motifs in front of the tank, including a sketch of military leader Tantawi's face as petals of a flower faced with a famous Egyptian actress holding a rifle against it (Figure 11.4d). Also to the right artist Mohamed Khaled drew a green army monster devouring a protestor with blood pouring out of its mouth.

The authorities responded by white washing the wall, leaving only the tank, and using black paint to erase the army monster. Yet again, a new coat of paint was added by artist Bahia Shehab; using her calligraphy project A Thousand Times No, she stencil sprays the wall with different Arabic calligraphy styles of the word "no." Underneath each "no" is a different message, such as "No to dictators," "No to military rule," and "No to violence." Shehab has created a series of graffiti images using different Arabic calligraphy styles of the word "no" and used them to spray paint a series of quotes objecting Egyptian authorities in streets of Cairo (see www.ted.com/talks/bahia_shehab_a_thousand_times_no).

Similar to other revolution street art, the wall was completely whitewashed in June 2013 by local authorities. The image, its layers of reproductions, and its final erasing tell a story of contention political argumentation. Each transformation of the image positioned the actor from the symbol of the tank, as well as their position from the previous argument, and with minor changes to the paintings transformed the message several times to opposite meanings.

6.3.4. THE BULLETS: IMAGES AS THEY COMMEMORATE AND DOCUMENT

Commemorating and documenting the killing of civilian lives through the traces of bullets has been a common practice in the aftermath of collectively felt violence and has become part of contemporary war tourism. In Lebanon, nearly three decades after the civil war, the few remaining buildings and ruins by the Green Line in Beirut – the line that divided the city in two during the war – are still covered in bullets. In the absence of a war memorial, their walls become the primary places of memory for the war. Today there are different attempts at preserving them in the form of official memorials of the conflict (see Fordham, 2017). More recently, bulleted walls and ruins in Iraq and Syria continue to tell a story of the wars ongoing there. In many instances those walls are used as a canvas for street art interventions adding stories of defiance and hope to the imprints of violence.

In Egypt, the remembrance of the lost lives in the 2011 uprising was one of the main themes of revolution street art. Many revolution murals commemorated the revolution "martyrs" using two visual memory functions: honoring the victim and documenting the injustice. The first commemorates and pays respect to the deceased through drawing their portrait, often adding symbols that subsume their death within a higher divine cause. For example, angel wings and phrases from Quran or Bible frame death within religious notions of martyrdom, granting them a place in heaven as having fought for the revolution. Figure 11.5 is a mural in memory of Marian, an eight-year-old girl who was shot multiple times by an unknown gunman while she was on her way to a wedding in a Coptic orthodox church (Hamdy and Karl, 2014). Even though the circumstances of her death were different from protestors who died in clashes with the police or military, her image joined those of the revolution victims in the center of revolution street art in downtown Cairo. The mural depicts the bullets in Marian's body visually referencing St. Sebastian, who is commonly depicted tied to a tree and shot with arrows in Christian iconography. The wings, hallow, the colorful bullets to the right, and the bullet marks appearing like sun flowers to the left all communicate meanings of sacrifice that give to her a holy status.

Figure 11.5

Martyr mural depicted through Christian iconography, downtown Cairo, October 2013

The second visual function used in commemorating civilian lives was that of social documentation of their killing incident and holding the perpetrators accountable. In some instances the painting was done in the same physical location where the person was killed so as to create an instant place reminder. Figure 11.6 shows a photograph and stenciled image of the shooting of Socialist Popular Alliance Party activist Shaimaa al-Sabbagh during a peaceful demonstration in memory of the demonstrators killed in January 25 revolution. The photograph was taken right after she was shot, while her colleague was trying to carry her. The photo created a powerful mnemonic by capturing the iconic "about to die" moment. News photos as such document the sequencing of an event while strategically freezing it at its most visually powerful moment. "Just before death" photos create iconic representations of events for remembrance as they position the event at the "about to" moment (Zelizer, 2004).

The sprayed stencil then took this iconic visual representation and "marked" it onto the walls of the physical location where she was killed. The stencil transformed a news photo that went viral on social media and newspapers into a graffiti symbol, which in turn was diffused on city walls and social media. This continuous social life of image serves documentation and remembering into the future.

Figure 11.6

Photographs depicting (a) the shooting of activist Shaimma al-Sabbagh and (b) the stencil graffiti sprayed at the site afterward

6.4. DISCUSSION: LONG LIVE THE KING … DOWN WITH THE KING … LONG LIVE THE KING …

Political upheavals involve struggles of different groups for representation and visibility, mobilization of masses, positioning within dominant discourses, and a presence in collective memory. With regards to all of these functions, images have a privileged place over written discourse. Visuals reach audience in a timely and affective manner, in many instances transcending language and cultural barriers. Throughout this chapter we have proposed that following those visuals provides one way of looking at cultural and political transformations associated with political upheavals. Through the social life of images, we observe the different functions they serve, the different social actors involved, and their circulation in context.

As illustrated in the examples, visuals are attractive resources for authoritarian regimes to stabilize their homogeneous discourse and display power over knowledge, history, and public space. But those same visual resources create risks for regimes, as they play a central role in igniting revolutions by highlighting the injustices of the system, representing the established image of authority, and giving visibility (and power) to the masses. During revolutions, a social rupture occurs that opens up a gap of opportunity to reconfigure established boundaries and create spaces of contestation and positioning. In return counterrevolutions attack those spaces and visuals through destruction, censorship, and alternative production. Following this contentious and continuous process of change tell stories of political struggles as they are occurring. Thus, the analysis shows the spaces of control and censorship, as well as of agency and resistance.

The different image functions discussed in this chapter highlight the different social and political implications they have on society.

First, the function of visibility and its illustrative example of the authority figure shows different means and forms of visibility. Traditionally regimes' exercise of power has been linked to the authority's public display of superiority and power, visibility then was about the visibility of the few in power to the masses. Surveillance technology later changed the form of visibility to be a tool of control: the masses being continuously watched by the few. The display of authority then became about the normalizing power of the gaze: the citizens internalizing the control through believing that they are always watched (Foucault, 1977). Contemporary new media is further redefining visibility, making those in power, rather than those over whom power is exercised, the primary focus of a new kind of visibility, posing "fragility" to the divine image of authority. The same tools used to promote and celebrate political leaders, are used to attack and denounce them, and previously hidden political practices and events are exposed publicly to a much wider audience across space and time (Thompson, 2005). Those new tools and access to visibility also come with their own risks of misuse, which will be further discussed below in terms of rights and duties.

New communication channels and online media are inevitably changing the power dynamics of visual culture, creating new fields of action and interaction, in which relations of power can shift quickly, dramatically, and in unpredictable ways as we saw in the example of Egypt.

Under the current government in Egypt, the personification of the leader still persists from government-produced images as well as from supporters who are looking for the savior image of a leader. However, there is an inevitable effect of the spaces of contestation that the uprising has opened, which challenge the authority's ability to convey a one-way visual representation. The image of El Sisi is met with contestation by the opposition mostly online but also in street graffiti, utilizing ironic appropriation of his image and speeches, and triggering reflection on the official discourses (Wagoner, Awad, and Bresco, forthcoming). The authority still has the most power over visuals in public space, so that the opposition is steered toward online media. However, the borders between these mediums are becoming more and more permeable, with images traveling between while changing shape and meaning in the process.

Second, the mobilizing potential of images has been apparent throughout history. Flags and religious symbols have been frequently used to motivate people to go off to war and give their life for the higher cause represented by the symbol. These images are powerful group motivators because they speak primarily to our emotions rather than our reason. Through them we enter into a collective stream of feelings and ideas that bind us with others in common cause; this is why they are essential devices for protest crowds and political rallies (see Wagoner, Chapter 5). In the example of the Egyptian flag we see how the sentiments and group boundaries have changed alongside shifting events and power dynamics. While before the revolution

flags only functioned as powerful symbols of solidarity toward a common end in football matches, during the eighteen days of protest and its immediate aftermath the flag absorbed the revolutionary euphoria and became a key symbol bringing Egyptians together as equals protesting in the streets and squares. The flag was not only waved but wore on ones body and painted all over the city. Part of the military's taking back control of the country meant transforming the affective meaning of the flag. Considerable resources were spent on billboards, monuments and celebrations that implicitly connected the flag with support for military rule. These efforts paid off such that today those waving the flag are more likely to be motivated against people protesting the government than with them.

Third, looking at how images position different actors during times of change and create contested spaces of argumentation highlights different venues of agency and social action. Looking at individuals in those contexts as reflexive agents, when confronted with various discourses they actively acquire different positions and those positions in turn influence certain actions (Harré, Lee, and Moghaddam, 2008). In the example of the Tank mural we see that discourses and positioning do not only take place in language, but also in the images we see everyday in the streets of our cities. Images continuously present the multiple realities of a time and their social life shows the negotiation, conflict, and competition taking place between the different positions.

Of importance here are the concepts of rights and duties that are ascribed to each position and the power of different positions (Harré, Lee, and Moghaddam, 2008). While the example of the tank presents arguments between different graffiti artists in opposition and in support of the army in one physical location, the wider visual context involves positions that are widely propagated through different media platforms. On these platforms, images are continuously used to present false arguments, promote and use public ignorance, and position the producer as the source of reality and the audience as the naive and passive receiver of information. There are fabricated images of the authority figure such as in the example of Mubarak news image mentioned earlier, there are images that ignite fear such as those propagated by ISIS terrorist group, and there are images that marginalize entire groups and promote polarization in society. Those images appear to an audience as real representations of the world, and those fabrications or framing are often harder to distinguish by an audience who are less likely to spot the fake or selective representation occurring in the image process (Messaris and Abraham, 2001). In these instances, images have real moral implications in everyday life, positioning entire groups of people as "good" or "evil," "patriotic" or "traitors." They have the ability to humanize or dehumanize individuals, and to legitimize or delegitimize social struggles.

Fourth, images' function to commemorate and document personal as well as collective memories gives them a historical enduring role. Authority's monopoly

over what visuals get circulated and what parts of recent history gets documented does not only shape the past but also the oriented future of the country. The whitewashing of the revolution street art and the lost lives in the uprisings, and replacing them with visuals of the "new stable Egypt" is a clear attempt of regulating the community's collective memory. And even though citizens appropriate those visuals and reconstruct their memories in an individual manner according to their own experiences and opinions, the monopoly over visual documentation has an enduring effect on the long term of enforcing certain memories and promoting the forgetting of others. Also those who have the power of representing the past in visual culture, have the power over dictating who is represented and included in the public sphere and who is excluded. Thus the continuous interventions in the street and online to document the revolution from the perspective of activists has an important role in counteracting this effect and reaffirming presence and alternative narratives of the past. On the long and difficult pursuit of activist goals these solidified images serve as important reminders for what one is fighting for.

6.5. CONCLUSION: BEYOND THE UPRISING

Looking at the Arab uprisings and its different upheavals, trials, and failures through the lens of "hard" politics, may show that the people lost their opportunity for change. However, looking through the lens of visual culture as politics complicates this view to include the importance of the diffused everyday politics (Khatib, 2013). Revolutions are the heightened times where attention is brought to people's will; they are visible and dramatic. But it is in the "infra-politics of subordinate groups" that we can see the continuities of low profile forms of everyday resistance that endure in spite of the disappointments of the different revolutions (Scott, 1990). While the aspired to social changes were clearly not achieved from the revolutionary situations in Egypt, Libya, Syria, and other countries in the region, the visual culture and the actors involved in it illustrate micro processes of change in different forms of resistance to dominant powers.

The transformation of images and their implications reveals a continuous push and pull, resistance from opposition to official visual discourse and from government to alternative visual productions. It opens up the question of whether there was indeed an inevitable effect of revolutionary images in spite of the drawbacks and counterrevolutions. The different functions showed how images could be a symbolic resource for social movements as they influence the political discourse. They also showed that they could be a double edged sword; same images used to create visibility to certain groups, could be used to marginalize them, and same images used to mobilize people against injustice, could turn people numb and passive toward photos of torture and injustice.

The political potential of the different functions of images lies in the hands of the different social actors influencing the images' social lives. The examples discussed in this chapter show active producers of alternative visual culture and critical recipients of the dominant visual discourse resisting powerful ruling structures in spite of their endurance and in spite of the perceived shortcomings and failures of the uprisings. This poses moral responsibility not only on image producers but also their receivers and gatekeepers. To the numerous images we see every day, we should question when is looking and critically appropriating an image an act of political awareness. Acts of perceiving, appropriating, refuting or destroying can all be acts of change in our visual culture. This is because the "images surrounding us do not only show how we inhabit our culture, but also how we remake it, altering the very structures by which we organize our culture" (Rogoff, 1998).

This leads us to argue that there are micro processes of social change that can be seen not only in the visual culture but also in everyday practices. From the unsuccessful revolution, groups of people have become conscious of the possibility of resistance and have learned skills for executing it. In Egypt today we do not find a completely one way, top down production of visual culture; the opposition still influences public discourse with their images, and authorities continue to respond to those images with censorship, imprisonment, and distribution of opposing images. In return, the opposition continues to use online media as well as urban spaces in spite of the risks to affirm presence in resistance to government's attempts to make the "other" invisible.

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CHAPTER 7. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Looking back, these were the three main aims of this thesis: (1) a theoretical understanding of how we act using images and how images in turn act back upon us; (2) a methodological tool for investigating the social life of images; and (3) a perspective on the concrete processes by which images and art can trigger dialogue and social change within a society. I will now summarize where I believe the work stands, where it is falling short, and where it could be developed further.

7.1. LOOKING BACK

(1) A THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF HOW WE ACT USING IMAGES AND HOW IMAGES IN TURN ACT BACK UPON US

This first aim deals with the individual level. Chapter two discusses how we can use sociocultural psychology to understand the intentionality of individuals as they use images as tools to act in society, and how those tools become signs in the environment, with symbolic material power, as they are received in a unique way by each individual.

Chapters four and five highlight with empirical data the different actors and their motives as they use images in urban space, and how each actor's use and interpretation of an image is interdependent on other actors. Chapter four focuses on the use of images as tools for resistance in the hands of protestors, discussing their motives and strategies in using street art, while chapter five highlights the reception side of those images by individuals focusing on how images are constructively remembered by different individuals.

(2) A METHODOLOGICAL TOOL FOR INVESTIGATING THE SOCIAL LIFE OF IMAGES

This second aim deals with the *how to research images?* The methodological approach presented is to investigate images longitudinally as transformative objects over time, analysing the qualitative changes happening to images in relation to wider changes in society and the actors involved. For this the concept of the transformative social life of images was employed, which entails theoretical and methodological considerations that were highlighted in chapter two. Then all following chapters empirically used the methodological framework of the social life of images, looking at social actors, transformative life stages, contentious issue, and the contextual public space (See Chapter 2, Figure 1).

The thesis is grounded on empirical data. The research was data-driven, it started with exploratory data that then informed the theoretical understanding and framework, that then informed further data collection. There was a limitation in finding literature within sociocultural psychology that informs the process of investigating individual and cultural processes through images. Therefore, the methodological framework was developed as a learning process along the way, and is only presented fully in chapter two.

(3) A PERSPECTIVE ON THE CONCRETE PROCESSES BY WHICH IMAGES AND ART CAN TRIGGER DIALOGUE AND SOCIAL CHANGE WITHIN A SOCIETY.

This third aim deals with the sociocultural level. Is it possible to speak of social change -as in collective, symbolic, meaningful and substantial processes of change affecting society (Wagoner, Jensen, & Oldmeadow, 2012)- through images?

Chapter six explores four key processes by which images influence the sociocultural political public space. Whether used from a dominating governing power, from subordinate groups, or social movements, if used effectively, images can create visibility to a certain leader, group, or idea, they can shape emotions and mobilize groups of people behind a cause, they can position different social actors in relation to a contentious issue, and they form an essential resource that feeds into a community's collective memory.

Chapter three also highlighted how images endure through time as a historical and cultural resource carrying subjective representations, meanings, and memories of a nation. And chapters four, five, and six tackled the affective influence of images over the masses especially in contexts of protest and political unrest.

7.1.1. LIMITATIONS

THEORY

While there are numerous theories within sociocultural psychology to understand humans within culture, they rely primarily on spoken and written language for interpretation and analysis. Few literatures within the field offer systematic theoretical and methodological guidance to investigate images as a source of social knowledge and social processes in its own right. This posed a challenge to building a theoretical framework for the research; it also caused a delay in the process of moving from empirical data to theory.

Some of the theories used such as social representations and collective memory were elaborated by different authors to incorporate images, and were therefore easy to relate and apply them to the research topic. While other theories used such as positioning theory and concepts relating to public sphere deal primarily with spoken

and written discourse, and were challenging to see how and if they could also incorporate images as part of the discourse and in what ways they could be interpreted if so. This limitation has also led to borrowing from other disciplines that have dealt extensively with images such as visual culture studies, visual anthropology, and visual ethnography.

Still I think a sociocultural psychology of images could be developed further to inform the theoretical knowledge of images and the methodological tools for investigation. Sociocultural psychology has a unique angle to contribute to visual studies in that it offers an individual understanding of the situated cultural meaningmaking and intentionality in production and reception of images.

DATA COLLECTION

As mentioned in chapters two and five, there were security challenges to data collection. The methods used changed over time to adapt to what is comfortable for participants such as changing from go-along interviews to photo-elicitation. Looking back I think for such a research topic in Egypt in such a time of heightened security and negative perceptions about researchers, there was a need to adopt supplementary and creative sources of data that posed less risk and offered more reach to a wider audience. One example is to rely more on social media data (more on this below), and extend the investigation more in the direction of the social life of images once they travel from urban space to social media; this would have offered naturally occurring uncensored data. Another example is to resort to online questionnaires that also employ photo elicitation and provide a supplementary quantitative side of the research that could inform the qualitative in-depth side (more on this below). Such strategies could in a way navigate through the limitations of conducting research in authoritarian ruled regions and create more space for safety and freedom of expression for participants and freedom of inquiry for researchers.

QUANTITATIVE SIDE

Looking back at the aim of investigating the circulations of images within a certain context and analysing what kind of dialogue and processes they inform, I see a need for a quantitative side that supplement and inform the qualitative inquiry. Especially on the reception side of urban images, reaching a wider audience through online surveys that include photo elicitation to measure for example the reach and retention of certain images versus others. This information could then inform what images are chosen for in-depth qualitative inquiry in interviews and it could also inform the wider reach and power of certain images versus others in a certain urban area. This

supplementary method could also reach a more diverse audience than the ones reached through the snowballing recruitment method.

ONLINE MEDIA

The focus of this research has been on urban images. However, looking more broadly at the transformative social life of images in today's global information technology world, we see that the medium where images are most refuted, reconstructed, edited, and diffused is in fact the online medium. News media images and urban images are quickly transformed into online media, where they reach a wider audience. Online media also gives more space and tools for every individual to be an image producer, editor, diffuser, and destroyer. This medium also gives new meanings to the different stages of the image life, an image producer for example could be the actor who introduces it in a specific platform, community censorship for example could be all individuals who decide not to share an image or report it in a platform as inappropriate.

This prime role of online media in relation to images makes it a primary source of investigation and data resource to take forward the concept of the social life of images and apply it to different topics, especially with a research focus that is transnational. One limitation however is that depending on the context investigated, online audience is still a segmented one, more representative of a certain age group, education level, and access to Internet. In the case of Egypt, only 31% of population had access to internet in 2010 (Ghannam, 2011), which motivated street artists to create images that reach the pedestrian on the street who does not have the literacy or resources for the online media. In such a context, the online media audience are far from being representative of the wider population especially when investigating street art.

7.2. LOOKING FORWARD

7.2.1. RELEVANCE OF THESIS

The approach in this thesis has been ideographic (Salvatore & Valsiner, 2010). It employed an in-depth analysis of certain street artists, pedestrians, and images as unique subjective cases in a certain context, time, and place. The sense-making processes explored in the data are ideographic by nature; they are unique experiences that unfold within a constant flow of ever changing processes in irreversible time (ibid.).

The uniqueness of each story lies in its phenomenological details, diversity, and sometimes conflicting stories that unfold within it (Flyvbjerg, 2006). This opens up psychological understandings and interpretations that can be generalized. They

inform human psychological processes such as resistance, perception, and remembering and how they unfold in certain social context informing spaces of constraints and opportunities for human agency.

Such qualitative studies' findings can contribute to a theoretical understanding of dynamics and logics of certain relations and processes within a specific context. These findings cannot be generalized independent of context, but it is possible to use the findings to inform similar contexts or to offer a degree of comparability to different contexts (Demuth, 2017). Thus theoretical generations from small sample size is possible, but with a specific scope of generalization that is different from quantitative studies (Yin, 2011).

The concept of the transformative social life of images entails theoretical and methodological considerations to be able to understand what images do. These considerations are generalizable and open up ways of investigating different contexts. The methodological framework explained in chapter two can be further used and replicated for a variety of topics and contexts (more on this below). Furthermore, the findings discussed in chapters three, four, five, and six inform theoretical and analytical generalizations. The theoretical understanding of the variety of ways individuals act using images and how images act on individuals and on culture especially in political contexts, is an understanding that is generalizable and could be used to explore the dynamics in a different context.

For example, the perspectives from the graffiti artists interview data are not generalizable to the larger population of revolution graffiti artists in Egypt, let alone graffiti artists/activists elsewhere, but they provide a generalizable understanding of diverse individual motives, resistance strategies, and urban action through art that are interdependent with certain life trajectories and cultural-political contexts. Similarly, pedestrian interviews provide a small sample that cannot be generalized to represent how street art or government urban initiatives were perceived in the society at large, but rather inform a common process of reconstruction and negotiation in interpreting urban images.

7.2.2. TRANSFERABLITY

The theoretical and methodological framework and procedures developed from this thesis as stated above can be replicated in other contexts. The replication here refers to seeking to transform and test those frameworks in other settings and see their validity to inform and in helping to analyse other sociocultural contexts and topics.

With regards to this, I have started an exploratory study looking at the urban images relating to the refugee crisis in the city space of Aalborg. Some ethnographic data has been gathered from volunteering with left-wing groups and experiencing how

they plan for visual campaigns, how they execute them, their strategies for placing the posters in the city, and how they respond to posters they disagree with. Images from Aalborg city centre have been gathered, the images mainly communicate a representation of refugees as either a vulnerable segment in need of help or as a potential threat using terrorism symbols (See example figure 7.1). Also, official statements and censorship in relation to certain posters has been documented. In addition to this, casual conversations were done with individuals who put the posters about their motives and with refugees about how they perceive the different images representing them in different ways.

Figure 7.1

Preliminary data shows a back and forth visual dialogue between conservative and liberal groups that extends back to before the refugee crises. Many images respond to others, appropriating same symbols to communicate opposite meanings (See example figure 7.1). In absence of spaces for face-to-face dialogue between youth from different political groups, the relatively small urban centre of Aalborg provides strong visibility for this dialogue to take place through posters. This city space also encourages activists to use posters to create and communicate a space that is inclusive and welcoming. The refugee topic is the contemporary and urgent topic to contest. It is seen however by some refugees as a dialogue about them rather than involving them, a dialogue that has to do more with the contestation between the different left and right wing Danish youth groups rather than concern with actual refugee issues.

The research is on-going but the theoretical and methodological framework developed from this thesis has provided a clear framework for data collection and approach to cover the various sides of the topic in spite of the different context, contested issue, and the political atmosphere of Denmark.

7.2.3. IMPLICATIONS

Taking this research forward, I would like to explore the practical implications of the analytical findings of the social life of urban images in different contexts. The theoretical and methodological frameworks and findings of the research offer one way of understanding a social phenomenon and analysing it through images, but I would like to take that further to question what kind of implications on the ground could these findings inform.

The research could inform a wide variety of interventions. If the findings can help us understand what urban images create spaces of inclusion or exclusion, which images create attention and invite reflections, what images steer dialogue and mobilize for social change, what images or monuments open up different ways for a community to reconstruct their past and which ones impose a unilateral version, then we can use these findings to inform creative images production processes. If the space exists, we can inform the construction of inclusive urban spaces through images, social movements' visual production strategies, and different public service and political campaigns.

7.3. A FINAL REFLECTION ABOUT EGYPT, REVOLUTION, & ART OF RESISTANCE

It has not been the scope of this thesis to look at the complex political and social dynamics of revolutions, counter-revolutions, or dictatorships. It has rather used a micro lens to look at how individuals navigate through and make sense of those events. How they develop through times of personal, social, and political ruptures using art to reconfigure their environment.

It may seem from one perspective trivial to talk about art of resistance in a context that violates basic human rights, but it is through artistic and creative expressions, humour and irony, images and life stories, that humans adapt through and make sense of those ruptures. It is in those expressions that spaces are opened up, whether in the street or on social media, for creating visibility to the censored voices.

What on the surface appears to be returning to point zero in Egypt, for the individual lives who believed in the cause, the 'revolution continues.' It continues in the life trajectories that are inevitably changed, it continues in the spaces of critical citizenship and expression that opened up, and it continues in the realization that an alternative world is possible. And it continues to shape the lives today of those who took part in it

Artistic acts of resistance offers one lens to see those changes and spaces. Resistance is commonly equated with protest and opposition movements, overlooking quieter every day individual forms of expression. These could be seen in micro acts of image production but also reception and appropriation. It could be seen in dialogue processes in different physical and virtual public spaces.

Street art has been one form of artistic expression from the very first days of the revolution. Through the transformative social life of revolutionary images, we see the continuation, fluidity, and flexibility of those creative expressions as they take different shapes and travel from one medium to another enduring the changing times.

And from this very specific lens I end with the irreversible effect of the revolution on the individual lives affected by it and their everyday forms of resistance in spite of regime suppression, even when it is in the form of a sprayed street stencil or an online meme. It is in the voices that continue when the regime demands only silence, the voices that persist for the hope of another collective moment to bring about the aspired change.

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APPENDICES

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Appendix A. Interview Guide: Street Artists

- Informed consent and permission to record
- Education, work, age, city
- Art as a profession or a hobby

Street Art

- Could you tell me a little about how and when did you start doing urban art?
- Photo elicitation of their graffiti: How they see it? What message they meant to convey and to whom? Was it perceived as expected?
- Where do you choose to draw and why? Do you have any favorite surfaces?
- How do you get inspired? What is your creative process?
- What is your most memorable street art experience?
- What topics do you deal with in your art? Politics, human rights, capitalism, consumerism, etc.
- What is your favorite piece of art you created and why?
- How much does your art affect your everyday life?
- Do you have any role model artists where you get your inspiration?
- Has your style/topics change throughout the years?

Revolution Group Graffiti

- How did street artists coordinate their efforts during the revolution graffiti?
- What do you see as the effect of the revolution graffiti? How effective was the graffiti as a resistance tool?
- How did it become a phenomenon?

- What role has graffiti played in society since Jan 2011? Do you think such new ideas transform our society and culture? How?
- How did Internet and social media influence the street art?
- How did the sub culture of musicians and artists influence the street art?

Dialogue

- When doing a group project how is disagreement managed within the group of artists? Are ideas rejected?
- What are the different ways publics respond? Did you experience the public's reaction first hand while drawing in the street? Which public are you communicating with?

Authorities

- How do you see authorities responding to street art?
- How do you think the authorities understand the graffiti? Why do you think it is a threat to them?
- How unsafe is it to paint in Cairo streets?

City Space

- What is your relationship with the urban space in your city? Do you feel a sense of ownership of your city space?
- Has graffiti changed this relationship?
- Do you think you're changing city culture.

Vandalism

- What's the distinction between street art and vandalism?
- What's your opinion about the Muslim Brotherhood resistance on the city walls?
- What is the difference between street art and museum art?

- Does graffiti art has to be anonymous?
- Does it lose its meaning if it goes to an exhibition?

Way Ahead

- Where do they see graffiti now? Is it dead?
- Where are you now with graffiti? Would you continue to do street art or would you choose other forms of expression/resistance? What topics would you tackle?
- What are your plans in the near future? Any street art projects ahead?
- What advice would you give to street artists?
- What do you hope for Egypt? What do you expect will happen?
- If you would dream of a future of Egypt with no constraints on this dream what would it be?
- If there would be one message you would want to get through to the people by your art what would it be?
- Would you still use art for resistance even if you found no impact?
- Do you see value in researching revolution graffiti from a psychological perspective? What do you think are important angles to look at in research?

Appendix B. Interview Guide: Pedestrian Interviews

- Informed consent and permission to record
- Education, work, age, city
- Places in the city of Cairo they frequent on daily/weekly basis
- Place where you grew up?
- Streets where you spend most time
- Relationship to area of interview, any feelings of belonging or ownership

City spaces

- General associations to different areas in Cairo.
- Different practices and activities you associate with those areas, what feelings and memories about them, who were you with?
- Which spaces of the city makes you feel included/excluded the most

Tahrir Area questions

- Memory of Tahrir area, What is your most memorable experience in this area?
- Graffiti in this area; who you think did it, why they did it, how do you feel about it, how do you perceive different paintings
- How do you think the area has changed over the past 4 years, did your relationship change with this space.
- What specific changes can you recall?
- How do you see authorities responding to street art?

- The overall role of authority in the area

Street Art

- What's the distinction between street art and vandalism?
- How do you relate to spaces with no graffiti, limited graffiti, or ugly graffiti? (when and how graffiti transforms a feeling for the place.)
- What do you think of the revolution street art? Which images of it do you remember?
- What's your opinion about the Muslim Brotherhood graffiti on the city walls?

Photo elicitation

- Do you remember seeing this image in the street?
- If yes: where did you see it?
- Who do you think put it there? what memory or impression did it trigger when you saw it? (whether in the street or in the interview)
- Lastly, I think it'd be worth putting them in front of different graffiti images and asking what they feel and think about them, what they think the mean, what impact might they have,

Future imagination

- How would you imagine this area to be like in 10 years
- What do you hope for Egypt? What do you expect will happen?
- If you would dream of a future of Egypt with no constraints on this dream what would it be?

SUMMARY

This thesis looks at visual images as psychological and political tools for social action. Social actors produce images to represent and propagate particular versions of social reality. These images are in turn interpreted, transformed, reconstructed, and destroyed by other social actors in a continuous process of negotiating social reality and the power of representing it in the public space.

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