— THE GLOBAL MIDDLE EAST —

Schooling the Nation

Education and Everyday Politics in Egypt

— HANIA SOBHY —

Schooling the Nation

Telling the story of the Egyptian uprising through the lens of education, Hania Sobhy explores the everyday realities of citizens in the years before and after the so-called Arab Spring. With vivid narratives from students and staff from Egyptian schools, Sobhy offers novel insights on the years that led to and followed the unrest of 2011. Drawing a holistic portrait of education in Egypt, she reveals the constellations of violence, neglect and marketization that pervaded schools, and shows how young people negotiated the state and national belonging. By approaching schools as key disciplinary and nation-building institutions, this book outlines the various ways in which citizenship was produced, lived and imagined during those critical years. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

Hania Sobhy is a postdoctoral fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity (MPI-MMG). Her research focuses on the politics of education, electoral mobilization and Islamism. She has been published in *World Development, Nations & Nationalism* and *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*. She has worked in education development since 2004 and is a regular contributor to the Egyptian daily, *al-Shorouk*.

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Hania Sobhy
Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity
(MPI-MMG)

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Note on Transliteration

I have used the system of transliteration for Arabic set by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, except for the use of diacritics. In reported speech and commonly used terms, I have used the "g" to transliterate the hard "g" sound as used in the Egyptian dialect; e.g. *majmu'at* (groups) in standard Arabic appears as *magmu'at* in transliterations of reported speech.

Introduction: Schools as Sites of Lived and Imagined Citizenship

It was a mellow winter afternoon and time for practical classes in a boys' technical secondary school in eastern Cairo. The class I was joining was moving for a geometrical drawing lesson in the workshop (which was simply a larger classroom with a different arrangement of desks and no additional equipment). Working at his desk, the teacher did not appear to pay much attention to us. The few students who had arrived started chatting quietly as they gradually took out their notebooks. More students trickled in, and some left again. The teacher was still working at his desk, but as another student who had just come in started to walk out of the classroom, the teacher got up, moved toward him and began beating and cursing him using various obscene phrases. He hit him on the back, head and face and kicked or beat other students who were in his reach near the entrance to the workshop. The student who had received most of the violence seemed to be about to cry. His attempts to protest the teacher's insults were met with more insults. The teacher did not explain the reasons for this punishment, but it was presumably a reaction to the tardiness and disorder on the part of the students. The teacher returned to his desk, albeit after hurling a few more insults, this time directed at all the students. He did not note down any of their names or take any further disciplinary measures against other students who had arrived late or without notebooks. He talked briefly to the class, tasking them with copying a drawing from the blackboard using a method that most of them did not understand. Throughout the rest of the class, the students chatted quietly – with me and with each other – as some of them attempted to copy the drawing while others did not. The teacher continued what he was doing at his desk and did not monitor or assist them, even by explaining the lesson at hand. Later, a photocopied exam question from a previous year that was being circulated among the students arrived at our table. The students understood that this would be the question they would find in their next exam, and some began to discuss arrangements for obtaining a copy of the model answer so that they could paste it into their notebooks, which they would take into the exam hall to replicate the model answer on the exam paper.

This narrative could be read as an example of authoritarian Arab education, demonstrating the power of an absolutist teacher subduing students who do not have the right to speak. It offers a rather poor example of an authoritarian classroom, however, since the students come and go as they please; only some are punished for being late, while most spend the class time chatting and expect to be able to cheat in exams. It might be difficult to think of such a school as a disciplinary institution at all, given that the official regulations relating to attendance, order, instruction, punishment and the integrity of the examination are thoroughly violated. The narrative could also be read as a snapshot of everyday realities prefiguring the Revolutionary moment of 2011, where the role and authority of agents and institutions of the state disintegrates and the breakdown of the social contract becomes vividly manifest. This book approaches such narratives as expressions of a "permissive-repressive neoliberalism" that has been long in the making in Egypt and appears in emergent forms elsewhere in the region and in the global South.

Egypt was recently ranked the second worst country in the world in terms of students' reading abilities (Mullis et al. 2017). Indeed, over the past few decades, Egyptian public education has deteriorated from relatively high standards to varieties of negligence, chaos and violence. The book examines the causes, manifestations and implications of this deterioration. It tracks the forms of privatization and austerity that have reshaped public services in Egypt. It unpacks the critical place of everyday violence in Egypt's version of neoliberalism, as applied to young men in particular and the majority of less-privileged Egyptians more generally. Parallel to unpacking the disciplinary role of schools, the book tracks the transformation of their legitimation roles as institutions of nation-building and the production of hegemony. Under British colonialism, Egyptian schools were critical arenas for the struggle for independence, and in the postcolonial era they were considered powerful vehicles for socializing the young into state socialism and Arab nationalism. Their role and status continued to decline throughout the Mubarak era. In the brief democratic opening that followed the unprecedented mass uprising of 2011, students tore down photos of the deposed president in schools, and references to the Mubaraks were purged from official textbooks. After the removal of the elected Muslim Brotherhood president in 2013, military personnel oversaw the performance of a pro-army song in morning assemblies across the country and "Intellectual Security Clubs" were to be established in schools, with the expressed aim of combatting Islamist extremism.

As such, the book studies the production of lived and imagined citizenship in Egypt in the critical years before and after the 2011 uprising.

It uses schools to tell the story of Egypt's uprising in terms of the relationship of the state with urban educated youth in particular. Based on rare access to Egyptian schools, it investigates the everyday realities and official projects of "schooling the nation" in Egypt from the late Mubarak era to the early years after the uprising. It dissects the constellations of violence and marketization that define everyday governance immediately before and after the uprising and contrasts official narratives and rituals of legitimation to citizenship discourses among young men and women. In rich narratives and detailed portraits, it presents vivid repertoires of experiencing the state, living citizenship and performing the nation in this critical historical moment. Drawing from traditions in political science, sociology, anthropology and education, this book employs an immersed interdisciplinary approach that fills a critical gap in studies of citizenship, subjectivation, neoliberalism and belonging in Egypt, the region and the Global South.

As detailed in Chapter 1, I conducted the first phase of the research from 2008 to 2010, spending close to 500 hours inside six boys' and girls' secondary schools across Greater Cairo and interviewing about 150 students, teachers and principals. I studied not only the academic track (the famous *thanawiya 'amma*) in public and private schools, where the nation's middle classes and cultural elite have traditionally enrolled, but also the understudied track of technical schools that enroll more than half of secondary students. I analyze citizenship narratives in textbooks across the different tracks from the late Mubarak era to the present. I revisited the main research themes in interviews with over 60 students, teachers and experts from 2016 to 2018, mapping the key changes in school relations, textbook discourses and nationalist rituals in the early post-uprising period. In the analysis of this material, I weave in novel quantitative analysis of the sector, relevant poems and raps songs shared by students, and analyze statements and incidents that have stirred public debate. Through this extensive research with young men and women from across the economic spectrum, and analysis of official textbooks and nationalist rituals, I draw out the ways in which schools bring to focus changing dynamics of governance, legitimation, belonging and contestation.

Key Arguments

The book makes three sets of claims relating to everyday governance under neoliberalism, schools as disciplinary institutions and the role of schools in regime legitimation. The first overarching argument relates to what I call permissive-repressive neoliberalism. Permissive-repressive neoliberalism constitutes an idiosyncratic expression of the punitive and deinstitutionalizing aspects of neoliberalism as a global phenomenon, especially as manifested outside of the affluent Global North (Conclusion chapter). I argue that the modes of lived citizenship that affect the majority of urban youth are characterized by the formal and informal marketization of public services (Chapter 2) and a delicate balancing act between repression and "permissiveness" that erodes the disciplinary power of public institutions (Chapters 3 and 4). I stress the ways in which repressive-permissive marketization works differently across classes and how differentially it impacts young men and women. To understand how the Egyptian regime governs, and how neoliberalism works, it is therefore essential to appreciate that in tandem with the state's withdrawal from service provision, there are the promises of petty corruption, the perks of extralegal informality and the threats of varieties of emotional and physical violence. It is not only the market but also repression and permissiveness that fill the vacuum created by the withdrawal of the state.

The second set of arguments relates to the functioning of schools as disciplinary institutions and their role in the creation of neoliberal citizens (Chapter 4 and Conclusion). If Foucault saw modern schooling as a quintessential disciplinary institution, a manifestation of the transition from monarchical repression to disciplinary power relations, these impoverished schools show us no such progression. Neither do they show a simple regression from discipline to repression. There is little in the realities of the majority of schools in Egypt that aligns with assumptions about the school as a disciplinary institution or its role in the production of docile citizens. In the bulk of disadvantaged schools, Foucault's three key disciplinary techniques of observation, normalization and examination are subverted by boys and girls, through rampant truancy, widespread cheating and violations of norms of gender control. Instead of disciplinary techniques, various forms of violence and permissiveness permeate school relations. Such schools do nonetheless produce subjects who are hierarchized, categorized, surveilled, gendered, classed and in different relationships with dominant economic, nationalist and religious imaginaries. These permissive-repressive spaces therefore invite a different engagement with notions of discipline and new ways of analyzing disciplinary institutions (Conclusion).

The third set of arguments concerns the dynamics of legitimation as reflected in official textbooks, school rituals and student discourses. The narratives of official textbooks before the uprising bring to the fore the weak attempts at regime legitimation that stem from a form of depoliticization that avoids key ideological questions while consistently deploying narratives of religious legitimation (Chapter 5). Nationalist rituals in schools illustrate even greater disinterest in legitimation. In the dysfunctional institutions of the privatized state, the nation has no regular audience and often ceases to be ritualistically performed (Chapter 6). The results of this disinvestment in legitimation are manifest in the absence of even modest levels of reproduction of the official narratives of the regime among youth. Love, loyalty, sacrifice for the nation and other key themes of official narratives of citizenship all find little resonance in student discourses. School narratives crystallize the weak inculcation of a neoliberal ethic and the fragility of attempts at nationalist and Islamist legitimation among the younger generations (Chapter 6). The changes introduced in the tumultuous post-uprising years expose the limitations in using schools and textbooks as tools for the consolidation of regime legitimacy (Chapter 7). Permissive-repressive governance therefore spills over into the ways in which the regime legitimizes itself. In parallel with repressive controls on freedom of expression, permissive governance leaves little space for consistent efforts to ensure adherence to the official political line, even in key institutions like schools.

The rest of this chapter lays out the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the study, situating it in relation to the relevant works on Egypt and the region. It outlines the approach of studying the production of lived and imagined citizenship in schools. It identifies the key parameters for studying lived citizenship in schools in terms of the focus on privatization and austerity on the one hand, and violence and discipline on the others. It charts how the research investigates the production of imagined citizenship in schools through analysis of textbook discourses, rituals and everyday student and teacher narratives. It situates the study within the sociology and anthropology of education, and ends with a map of the subsequent chapters.

Approach and Key Themes

A set of diverse bodies of literature and methodological traditions inform this study. Its approach is neither solely embedded in political economy nor wholly immersed in ethnography and sociology, but rather reads these traditions together.[1] This is a political ethnography that uses schooling to understand differentiated lived citizenship and the construction and contestation of imagined citizenship. It brings the study of neoliberalism as an articulation of state, market and citizenship

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[1] As Elyachar puts it, we must read anthropology together with political economy in order to "restore neoliberalism to the context of a longer trajectory of thinking in anthropology and economics about the free market and its bounds" (2015, 428).

(Wacquant 2012) into the concrete space of schools. The modern school has been intimately tied to the functions of the state, from the control of urban populations and the construction of modern armies to the consolidation of nation-states and the crafting of unified national identities (Katz 1995, Jones and Williamson 1979, Hunter 1996). Ethnographic investigation into schools excavates the differentiated lived realities of citizenship within a changing political economy. Textbooks, rituals and everyday school narratives bring to focus key tropes of imagined citizenship and the contestations around them. Inquiry into both lived and imagined citizenship corresponds to the dual roles of schools as disciplinary and nation-building institutions. It also corresponds to the duality of everyday governance and legitimation that runs across the chapters, or of power and legitimacy in Bourdieu's terms (1996). As Bourdieu wrote, "the sociology of education lies at the foundation of a general anthropology of power and legitimacy" (Bourdieu 1996, 5).

This form of inquiry responds to a number of gaps in the literature. Lila Abu Lughod's assertion that "economic anthropology has hardly been done in the Middle East" (1989, 299) remains true over two decades later (Elyachar 2015, 426). We have little ethnography of either violence or markets in the Middle East (Elyachar 2015). Aside from Lisa Wedeen's work on Syria, we also have little work on everyday legitimation. Everyday governance and legitimation both remain understudied. Nonetheless, this work follows in the footsteps of an important body of political ethnographies on contemporary Egypt. This includes the seminal works of Diane Singerman (1995), Julia Elyachar (2005), Lila Abu-Lughod (2005), Salwa Ismail (2006), Asef Bayat (2010) and Farha Ghannam (2002, 2013). While sharing with these works the goal and approach of understanding politics from below, it also compares experiences across different social classes and examines nationalist discourses from above and their reverberations in the everyday. It does this by studying the dynamics of a very particular kind of institution: schools.

The focus on schools in itself addresses key gaps in the literature on Egypt, and on education and citizenship in the region and the Global South. While political ethnographies of education are well established in the Global North, only a limited body of ethnographic studies conducted in the Global South have approached the entanglement of schools with the production of political subjectivities and the construction of citizens (Levinson 2001, Lulyx 1999, Benei 2008). In the Middle East, despite an interest in how education relates to economic, social and political reform, studies of education have long overlooked individual experiences and sociopolitical practices at the school level (Mazawi 2002). The works of Roozbeh Shirazi (2012, 2016), Fida Adely (2012) and Charis Boutieri (2016) on Jordan and Morocco are important exceptions. In a rare focus on masculinity, schooling and belonging, Shirazi (2012, 2016) excavates how the top-down efforts to produce a particular national identity in Jordan have engendered a performative kind of citizenship in schools in which students interrogate official accounts of Jordanian-ness. Also focused on Jordan, Adely's (2012) *Gendered Paradoxes* brings to focus how young people in a girls' public school grapple with nationalism and national identity, faith, the requisites of pious living, appropriate and respectable gender roles, and progress. Charis Boutieri's (2016) *Learning in Morocco* dissects how students and teachers navigate the linguistic and cultural tensions implicated in the contemporary shaping of identity and belonging, modes of governance, and the management of public resources in Morocco. With regard to Egypt in particular, a number of seminal works have touched on the production of citizenship in schools, albeit in the colonial era. Mona Russell highlights how the British maintained their rule by teaching submission through religion and reinforcing British hegemony in history and geography classes (Russell 2002). In his *Colonising Egypt* (1991), Timothy Mitchell devoted considerable attention to the introduction to Egypt of Joseph Lancaster's model school as part of the colonial enterprise of creating order out of indigenous chaos.[2] He noted, however, that schools and universities "were always liable to become centres of some kind of revolt, turning the colonisers' methods of instruction and discipline into the means of organised opposition" (1991, 171).[3] Indeed, Lisa Pollard explains how, as the Egyptians' struggle against British occupation intensified, the educational system became a means through which notions of "the nation," its history, its future and its characteristics were cultivated (2005).

The dearth of rigorous ethnographic or immersed studies of contemporary education in Egypt is in large part the result of restrictions on research access to schools. Notable exceptions in English include the works of Gregory Starrett and Linda Herrera. The case studies in Herrera and Torres' (2006) edited volume, *Cultures of Arab Schooling*, including the work of Kamal Naguib, Iman Farag and Ahmed Youssof Saad, represented a critical opening in the anthropology and sociology of education in Egypt. The more recent compilation by Dorio, Abdou and Moheyeldine (2019) centers the narratives, spaces, and forms of citizenship education prior to and in the aftermath of the 2011 Revolution. Beyond ethnographic work, key scholars, including Kamal Naguib, Kamal Mugheith, Hassan Bilawi and Shibl Badran, have written extensively in Arabic on various aspects of education, democracy and inequality. I build on these seminal works in seeking to deepen and expand investigations into education and citizenship.

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[2] These schools were systems of perfect discipline where authority and obedience were diffused to implicate each individual in a system of order. However, they were few in number, the number of children enrolled in schools was very small, and such disciplinary practices would not necessarily create the desired subjectivities.

[3] Benjamin Fortna (2002) also provides a corrective to the treatment of schools as vehicles of unbridled state discipline by complimenting his work on designs of modern Ottoman education with available records of disciplinary practices in schools. He shows that centralized education was certainly an unfinished project, where there was a great deal of variation and deviation from the uniform ideal desired and decreed by the centralized state.

Lived and Imagined Citizenship

I structure the analysis across the book around the notions of "lived" and "imagined" citizenship. In this, I build on the growing global literature that has nuanced the study of citizenship in its lived, differentiated and enacted dimensions. If one body of literature on citizenship relates to the formal rights and responsibilities guaranteed by virtue of being a citizen in a state, the second highlights the constant struggle of the marginalized to expose the violence inherent in their exclusion (Berlant 2000). As Isin and Turner (2002, 4) explain, contemporary citizenship theory constructs citizenship not simply in terms of legal rights but "as a social process through which individuals and social groups engage in claiming, expanding or losing rights," which has led "to a sociologically informed definition of citizenship in which the emphasis is less on legal rules and more on norms, practices, meanings, and identities."

Lived citizenship underlines how the differentiated rights, duties and meanings of citizenship are experienced in the everyday. Legalistic approaches do not "readily admit to degrees of citizenship or allow an appreciation of qualitative differences in the lived experience of citizenship" (Hall, Coffey and Williamson 1999, 504). Lived citizenship, on the other hand, refers to "the meaning that citizenship actually has in people's lives and the ways in which people's social and cultural backgrounds and material circumstances affect their lives as citizens" (Hall and Williamson 1999, 2). These conceptions are especially relevant for the context and comparative approach of this book. This kind of dynamic, process-oriented understanding of rights is more helpful in contexts "where rights are under-developed or are under threat or for groups who are denied full citizenship rights" (Lister 2007, 695). Differentiated citizenships (Holsten 2008) "mark out radically different terrains, forms, styles and meanings of engagement with the state depending on class, race, gender ethnicity, age and other dimensions of difference" (Cornwall, Robins and von Liers 2011, 11).

Scholars have however differed on how to disaggregate the broad notion of citizenship. For Delanty, citizenship "as membership of a political community involves a set of relationships between rights, duties, participation and identity" (2000, 9). For Ruth Lister, lived citizenship "is about how individuals understand and negotiate the three key elements of citizenship: rights and responsibilities, belonging and participation" (Lister et al. 2007, 168). I take a different approach in disaggregating the elements of citizenship. First, I do not treat participation as a separate category from rights and responsibilities, as participation also entails sets of rights and responsibilities. Second, I disaggregate the rights and responsibilities of citizenship into the four interrelated parameters of protection, provision, participation and legitimation. The classic work of T. H. Marshall (1992) disaggregates citizenship into the civil, social and political rights that define the relationship between individuals and the state.[4] The "3Ps" of protection, provision and participation expand on the Marshallian categories of civil, social and political rights in ways that speak to contexts of authoritarianism, informality and clientelism (Sobhy 2021, 2–3).[5] I add a fourth parameter: "the production of hegemony" that refers to the narratives and practices that legitimize the parameters of citizenship, in the media, in schools and beyond (Sobhy 2021). In brief, "[p]rotection encompasses the most basic civil rights, law and order and national security, provision refers to social rights, public services and economic opportunities, participation captures representation and political rights and freedoms," while the fourth parameter indicates the representations of identity and values that legitimize the obligations of the state and citizens (Sobhy 2021, 11, Diagram 1). As such, I approach citizenship as *the rights, responsibilities*

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[4] "Marshallian citizenship has been subject to extensive criticism over the last two decades and the social model of citizenship has been expanded and deepened by approaches that emphasize the flexibility of social membership, the limitations of citizenship merely as rights, and by perspectives that emphasize identity and difference" (Isin and Turner 2007, 5).

[5] The parameter of protection brings together issues around protection under the law and protection from foreign, insurgent and environmental threats. The second cluster of provision refers to the welfare payments, public goods, services and economic opportunities provided by the state. Participation includes political rights as well as freedoms of expression and association. Although these freedoms are often considered basic civil rights, they are qualitatively different from the more basic protections relating to the rule of law and freedom from discrimination. Separating these rights to expression from more basic legal protections encompassed under civil rights is particularly relevant in contexts of weak institutions and authoritarianism. Political rights include the right to vote and run for office in fair, periodic elections, to belong to a political party and to engage in protest activity.

and meanings that connect subjects to their polity, along the four parameters (4Ps) of protection, provision, participation and legitimation.

Third, I make a distinction between the lived experience of citizenship and the imagined dimension relating to constructions of citizenship and notions of belonging. I approach lived citizenship as the differentiated experiences of the rights and responsibilities of protection, provision, participation and legitimation. Imagined citizenship, on the other hand, refers to the political values and identities that give meaning to and legitimize rights and responsibilities vis-à-vis the polity. Representations of citizenship can be official, state sponsored, popular, mediated or everyday discourses. They are produced, negotiated and contested by various social forces in narratives and images that stem from and produce political emotions. The existence of multiple constructions of citizenship in any context is implied in the notion of citizenship as open to contestation and "fundamentally about political struggles over the capacity to constitute ourselves as a political subject" (Isin and Nyers 2014, 8). Constructions of national identity and political values are central to imagined citizenship. Narratives of collective identity, history and destiny permeate constructions of citizenship and shape representations of belonging. The notion of political values refers to overarching normative principles and belief assumptions about government, citizenship and society, such as egalitarianism, civil liberties, ethnocentrism and limited government (McCann 1997; Schwartz, Caprara and Vecchione 2010). Imagined citizenship therefore includes politically relevant values on individual, religious, cultural, gender, economic and environmental rights and responsibilities. Emotions have long been recognized as fundamental to political identity, citizenship and national identity (Goodwin, Jasper and Poletta 2001; Nicholson 1999; Marcus 2002; Marcus, Neuman and McKuen 2002, Zembylas 2009). Imagined citizenship is animated by the different emotions of love, belonging, ambivalence, indignation or humiliation that are oriented by lived citizenship.

These notions of lived and imagined citizenship are deployed to investigate into how subjects differently live, imagine and enact their relationship with the state. Schools are concrete spaces that bring to light many of these lived and imagined elements. Schools are centrally involved in the processes through which young people develop their sense of belonging and learn the meanings and practices of citizenship (Abu El-Haj et al. 2011). In exploring lived citizenship in schools, I address the 4Ps of protection, provision, participation and the production of hegemony. The constitutional right to free public education itself is a clear provision right, which I examine in relation to access, quality and equity of provision, focusing in particular by centering the question of the marketization of educational provision. Rights to participation in schools are investigated in relation to school activities and rituals and to the right to voice complaints and political opinions. Rights to protection are approached in relation to the protection from physical and emotional harm and discrimination, as well as the application of school regulation, including the integrity of examinations. The production of hegemony is addressed in terms of the promotion of dominant values, identities and forms of belonging in school rituals and classroom relations. I study schools to bring to focus how rights along the 3Ps are differentiated, enacted and denied and how the production of dominant identities and values is lived and contested in everyday school relations. In exploring constructions of imagined citizenship in schools, I examine official textbooks, school rituals and the narratives of students, teachers and administrators. Finally, I draw out the connections between lived and imagined citizenship and between official constructions of citizenship and everyday articulations. This treatment of citizenship is therefore quite distinct from the way in which citizenship is often discussed in educational research, where the focus is on developing citizenship textbooks and programs, especially with the aim of promoting active or multicultural citizenship. It is also distinct from how citizenship/*muwatana* is used in public discourse in Egypt, which is mainly to refer to minority rights, especially those of Egyptian Christians who make up about 10 percent of the population. Thematically, the analysis centres the three most salient elements of lived and imagined citizenship in the Egyptian case: informal privatization, violent punishment and nationalist legitimation.

Lived Citizenship in Schools: Markets, Violence and Discipline

Privatization

The marketization of education is a critical feature of the contemporary transformations of lived citizenship under neoliberalism. Neoliberal policies in education promote “the expansion of the free market; the drastic reduction of government responsibility for social needs; the reinforcement of intensely competitive structures of mobility both inside and outside the school; the lowering of people’s expectations for economic security; and the ‘disciplining’ of culture and the body” (Apple 2004, 15). The central question of equality of opportunity that had dominated education debates has given way to concerns about "efficiency," "choice" and "competition" (Olssen 1996, 339).[6] The privatization of education has swept across much of the Global North and South. Privatization "is not just neoliberalism's strategy for dealing with the public sector," but "a consistent element of its particular form of governmentality, its ethos" (Read 2009, 35). Studying the marketization of education is therefore part of understanding the ethos of neoliberalism, and the transformations of citizenship as manifested in different contexts. Examining the state-market nexus that structures the educational field allows us to identify "understandings of the relationship between private and public through which the meanings and functions of education and citizenship are debated and struggled over" (Lukose 2005, 507). Schools are key arenas where neoliberalism is experienced, nurtured and imagined. Everyday relations in schools lay bear the differentiated manner in which neoliberalism is lived across tiers of schooling, how the practices and normative dimensions of teaching have been transformed and how global discourses of active neoliberal citizenship are deployed in school textbooks and activities.

Although privatization has made inroads in educational provision across the world, preuniversity education as a public good provided by the state remains the norm in most countries. In contexts like Egypt, however, privatization and austerity have thoroughly undermined the nature of education as a public good. Reduced public spending on a massive and expanding education system is a key driver of deteriorating conditions of quality and equity in the system (Chapter 1). The privatization of education in Egypt has mostly occurred through parallel schooling in the shadow education system. The growth of private tutoring in various forms across the globe has been a critical element of the privatization of education over the previous decades (Bray 2017, Bray, Mazawi and Sultana 2013). Private tutoring has fundamentally reshaped Egyptian education in ways that are widely acknowledged in public discourse. This public recognition, however, does not capture critical dimensions and implications of these forms of marketization and rarely references the realities of tutoring in less-advantaged schools, particularly the technical track which enrolls more than half of secondary school students. By examining the lived realities in different tracks of schooling, I explore the multiple forms of formal and informal marketization circulating in the system, how they manifest across different social classes, and their various effects on students and teachers (Chapter 2). I approach 'privatization through tutoring' as a site of aspirations and frustrations across social classes and as emblematic of the wide-ranging effects of the Egyptian state's divestments in social services.

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[6] The key components of neoliberal educational reforms in the Global North have also included efforts to implement standardized tests in order to hold students, teachers and schools accountable, to increase "school choice" (including vouchers and user fees), to privatize (especially in higher education, through increased tuition costs and the promotion of student loans) and to decentralize education provision.

Violence, Discipline and Punishment

Schools allow us to investigate the place of violence, discipline and punishment in the everyday citizenship experiences of young people. A focus on discipline and punishment goes to the heart of understanding the functioning of state institutions, the goals inscribed in them and the kinds of citizens or subjects they seek to produce. Punishment has had a special place in the evolution of modern schooling and its production of subjectivities. The manner in which punishment and codes of conduct in schools are "organized, justified and presented to students" is part of the processes by which certain kinds of students "are assumed and created, particularly in terms of citizens and future workers" (Raby 2005, 71). In the particular context of Egypt, violence – in the form of school punishment, as well as bullying and sexual harassment – occupies a critical place in understanding rights to protection and the meanings around them expressed by young boys and girls. For scholars like Loïc Wacquant, understanding neoliberalism as an articulation of state, market and citizenship requires a keen understanding of the shifting patterns and practices of violence (2012, 66).

My research moves between a number of key questions around the place of violence in everyday practices in schools and its links to the creation of markets, the shaping of subjectivities, the construction and policing of gendered identities, and in generating modes of everyday contestation among young people. I explore the transformation of rights to protection in schools in terms of the application of various regulations and codes of conduct. I deal specifically with issues around "school discipline" (*indibat madrasi*), understood as order and compliance with the rules of the institution, not only because it is a salient topic in the Egyptian context, but also because the dynamics around compliance and noncompliance are a key element of subjectivation processes within institutions.

Foucault and studies informed by his work have used the language of "discipline" to understand the ways in which schools and other institutions produce subjects or shape subjectivities. "Discipline 'makes' individuals," writes Foucault (1977, 170). In his classic formulation, discipline "is the specific technique of power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise. The success of disciplinary power derives no doubt from the use of simple instruments, hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment and their combination into a procedure that is specific to it, the examination" (Foucault 1977, 170). In this view, the production of docile citizens is embedded in the disciplinary techniques of mass schooling. While informed by Foucauldian conceptions of discipline, I engage in a different manner with questions of discipline, punishment and violence (Chapter 4 and Conclusion). My interest is less in modern schooling as productive of a particular kind of citizen or modern subject, than in how disciplinary mechanisms work differently across school contexts embedded in different material conditions. I devote considerable attention to the ways in which processes of discipline and subjectivation are gendered and how this shapes negotiations of femininities and masculinities.

Seminal works in the sociology of education have underlined the ways in which the school tacitly teaches students unspoken lessons about race, class and gender that are often manifested in how schools regulate students' bodies (Anyon 1988, Orenstein 1994). The ideal of the school as a disciplinary institution is critically connected to its production of gendered behavior and feminine and masculine subjectivities. Written and unwritten codes of conduct in schools are "sites of knowledge production, fashioning normative, gendered citizens, and marginalizing those who do not easily conform" (Raby 2005, 71). I probe the gendered dimensions of punishment in schools and the intersections they imply between violence, class and masculinity, reflecting on the most pronounced gendered surveillance and punishment strategies in the schools and their links to constructions and performances of femininity and masculinity. I also bring to the fore the related practices of contestation and noncompliance around changing gender norms among Egyptian youth. Overall, the focus on punishment and noncompliance underlines the differentiation in access to the protection dimension of citizenship (Chapters 3 and 4).

A study of lived citizenship in schools should also include a clear focus on the dimension of participation and its forms and nuances. However, since forms of voice, representation and participation in decision-making are so undermined in Egyptian schools, my treatment of participation is interwoven with the other themes. For example, I address the ways in which the impoverishment and privatization of education has transformed various school activities that have a participatory dimension (Chapter 2), and elaborate on the implications of punishment for voice and expression (Chapter 3). I lay out the impact of self-censorship and the securitization and Islamization of education (Chapter 1) on the parameters of permissible everyday expression and the dynamics around participation in nationalist rituals (Chapter 6).

Imagined Citizenship in Schools: Textbooks, Rituals and Everyday Narratives

Promoting national belonging, patriotism and political socialization into dominant narratives are essential to the institution of mass education. Since the inception of the nation-state, political education has been bound up with the project of nation-building, and the inculcation of patriotism has been widely regarded as a primary purpose of mass schooling (Callan 2004, 77). Imagined citizenship as nurtured in schools is studied along three axes: textbooks as reservoirs of official narratives, nationalist rituals as choreographed embodiments of their key tropes, and everyday relations, activities and discourses in schools as modes of appropriation and negotiation of these official narratives.

Textbooks can serve as a means of examining official narratives and changing power relations in society (Bernstein 1971, Apple and Christian-Smith 1991) through the ways they channel the narratives, knowledge and values that are considered appropriate and important to emphasize to young people by groups in control of textbook authorship and production. They also reflect the changes over time in the discourses promoted by powerful groups. Official narratives in authoritarian states may be viewed with suspicion, privately ridiculed or ignored but may also become hegemonic insofar as they interface with popular imaginaries, as Alia Mossallam's work (2012) in relation to Nasserist Egypt underlines. Because textbooks in Egypt are centrally developed by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and unified across all schools, they represent a critical resource for studying official state-sponsored discourses directed at the majority of Egyptians enrolled in national education. In presenting ideals of citizenship, Egyptian textbooks have attempted to promote values and orientations linked to dominant ideologies, whether state socialism, the market economy, or neoliberal orientations.

In 2006, the mission statement of Egyptian preuniversity education highlighted the aim of providing students with skills for "active citizenship," a term that is closely linked with neoliberal notions of citizenship. For Nikolas Rose, the concept of "active citizenship" limits citizenship to consumers who are "active" only in the choices they can make about their own self-regulation (1999, 164). In this framework, citizenship is reconceptualized away from a "rights" focus toward individuals who adapt to precarious labor conditions and take advantage of market opportunities. As Wendy Brown puts it, neoliberalism has reduced citizenship "to an unprecedented degree of political passivity and complacency" (Brown 2005, 43). Neoliberal citizenship necessitates a particular conception and relationship to social services and the state. I excavate the ways in which changing official narratives since the 1970s are reflected in textbook constructions of citizenship and nationalism, as well as portrayals of the president, young people and citizens, nationalist struggles, ideological currents, historical heritage and national renaissance and decline (Chapter 5). Despite textbooks being centralized and unified, I indicate the nuanced and varied ways in which official narratives are translated across textbooks for different subjects and academic tracks, reflecting the competing influences that shape official discourses (Chapters 5 and 7).

Rituals in schools are also key sites of citizenship-making and nation-building. A significant body of literature has focused on ritual and other school activities in the construction of collective identities (McLaren 1999, Bjork 2002, Bekerman 2003, Ben-Amos and Bet-El 1999, Adely 2010). Such activities play a role "in socializing members of school communities, communicating to them what the institution values most highly, and building a sense of cohesion amongst students, teachers, and administrators" (Bjork 2002, 466). Nationalist rituals, in particular, are meant to serve as arenas "where collective national selfhood is enacted" (Berezin 2001, 93). The power of nationalist rituals, especially under authoritarian regimes, is a central preoccupation in the literature on authoritarianism, particularly the way in which they may function as a disciplinary device to reveal dissenters and as an opportunity to signal passive compliance (Havel 1986, Wedeen 1998, 1999, 2015).

Nationalist rituals in schools are critical for promoting official narratives and national belonging because they embody notions and myths of national identity that include or exclude, as well as norms and values that are normalized, contested or resisted (see Bjork 2002, Ben-Amos and Bet-El 1999, Adely 2010). The patriotic morning assembly ritual is common to many educational systems across the world and most Arab schools. Scholars like Véronique Benei (2008) have focused on how schoolchildren create their physical selves through morning liturgies while enacting and embodying the nation into existence, revealing the sensory production and daily manufacture of nationhood, belonging and citizenship. I approach the daily morning assembly (*tabur*) in Egyptian schools as a key space for the emotional experience and physical enactment and performance of national belonging. However, rather than asking how the nation becomes "this natural object of devotion" (Benei 2008, 72), I investigate the ways in which secondary-school students may avoid or subvert these rituals, or receive them with boredom, nonchalance, ridicule or indignant obscenity, in constellations of emotions and bodily procedures that also constitute modes of performing the nation.

Promoting love and belonging to the nation (*al-hub wal-intima' lil-watan*) is one of the principal goals of Egyptian education and is often explicitly highlighted in policy documents, in the prefaces of textbooks and in their content.[7] If survey data is to be believed, we might conclude that the Egyptian education system has been incredibly successful in achieving its goal of promoting national belonging. In a 2010 nationwide survey, 85 percent of young people expressed a readiness to go to war in defense of Egypt, while 71 percent said they were proud of their Egyptian identity, placing Egypt fifth in international comparisons of young people's pride in national belonging, well above the international average of 58 percent (UNDP 2010, 67–74). My research with students and teachers, however, reveals a more complex picture, accentuated by the rupture of the 2011 uprising (Chapters 6, 7 and Conclusion). Through classroom observations and interviews, I examine the ways in which students reflect on national belonging and how their articulations differ across class and gender, underlining the ways in which they implicitly and explicitly construct citizenship, diagnose social problems and portray Egypt vis-à-vis other nations. I trace how students interact with neoliberal and Islamist citizenship narratives, and raise questions around the blurred boundaries between narratives of responsibilizing, entitlement, clientelism and citizenship (Chapter 6).

Although my focus on schools acknowledges the romance between states and education that constitutes one of modernity's central features (Green 1997), schools are by no means the only sites where students are exposed to constructions of citizenship, the state and the nation. Indeed, other technologies of political communication, from television to the Internet, compete with rituals and textbooks in the production of national identities (Berezin 2001). Young Egyptians learn about nationhood and citizenship through popular soap operas, religious satellite channels, music videos, cassette sermons, youth magazines and various social media. As Lila Abu-Lughod has shown, "television is a key institution for the production of national culture in Egypt," having been used by the government as a tool of citizen education since the 1960s (2005, 7–10). Feature films, Arab satellite channels, private Egyptian channels and social media no doubt play a major role in shaping the political imaginaries of Egyptians (Chapter 6). Schools, however, remain the spaces where most Egyptian citizens have an extended experience of the state. The point is not to argue that either schools or the media are more powerful resources for constructing identity, but rather to examine the kinds of power they have (Levinson 1999), and to treat them as arenas for the expression of different citizenship realities and narratives. Examining textbooks reveals not student identities but how the intentions of agents of the state are translated, while looking inside schools allows us to understand not their overwhelming power, but the contestations within them, the citizenship discourses of young people and their lived experiences of the state. My focus on schools is therefore premised not on an assumption that they shape national identity in univocal ways, but that as key institutions where citizenship is lived and imagined, they are critical locations for understanding the nature and impact of dominant disciplinary and nation-building projects.

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[7] For example, the first three objectives of curriculum development of the Egyptian Ministry of Education have been identified as: (1) national loyalty, (2) religion and respecting others, and (3) basic literacy and numeracy for communication between citizens (Sayed 2006, 62).

Studying Citizenship and Subjectivation in Schools

Exploring how the school produces citizenship or creates neoliberal or other kinds of subjectivities is guided by how we understand the power of institutions to shape discourses, practices and subjectivities. Key social theorists have addressed the internationalization of social control as a central question in their work, including Pierre Bourdieu, Norbert Elias, Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault. For these thinkers, the school is one of the key institutions in which modern subjects are created. There are significant differences, however, in the ways scholars have understood *how* schools teach students these critical lessons and in how this influence can be studied. Various constructs such as the hidden curriculum, reproduction, habitus, socialization, subjectivation and disciplinary power have been used to understand the relationship between institutions and the shaping of the discourses and practices of those subject to their power.

A common thread among these thinkers is that schools teach young people about their position in society. Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1977) and *History of Sexuality Volume 1* (1990 [1977]) in particular "show how the subject is subjected to relations of power as she/he is individualized, categorized, classified, hierarchized, normalized, surveilled and provoked to self-surveillance. These are technologies of subjection brought into play within institutions that … improvise, cite and circulate discursive frames and coterminous technologies that render subjects in relations of power" (Youdell 2006b, 518). Once the individual "comes to know what to expect as 'normal' through the dominant regimes of truth that circulate in schooling, she actually *constructs herself* – and is constructed – through particular speech acts that are the *effects* of these dominant discursive practices" (Kohli 1999, 323). Schools produce students who not only study specific subject matter but also "learn how to embody raced, classed, and gendered realities" (Morris 2005, 28). Explicit content therefore matters less than "the cultural rules embodied in what is taught and how it is taught: those implicit rules that define what is true, what is relevant, what is normal, what is valuable, and who has the right to give voice to a particular discourse" (Donald 1992, 46). The categories and norms in schools create a kind of first template from which future political acts emerge, develop and diverge. As Wacquant puts it, the state "lives 'in here,' ineffaceably engraved in all of us in the form of the state sanctioned mental categories acquired via schooling through which we cognitively construct the social world, so that we already consent to its dictates prior to committing any 'political' act" (2005, 17).

This study is particularly concerned with schooling as a differentiated experience along salient parameters of social difference. One of the major differences between Bourdieu's approach and those of Foucault and Elias, for example, is "Bourdieu's focus on social class and stratification, showing that socialization processes and educational institutions work in different ways for different segments of the population" (Reed-Danahay 2005, 63). Scholars of the political economy and sociology of education have long been concerned with how public schools impart different types of educational experience and curriculum knowledge to students according to social class (Bowles and Gintis 1976, Bernstein 1977, Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, Apple 1979, Anyon 1988, Da Silva 1988, Hempel-Jorgensen 2009, Ivinson and Duveen 2006). One of the key themes in this literature is that children of the subordinate classes are taught, through the manifest and hidden curricula of school, the virtues of compliance and submission to direct orders, while the children of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois origins are socialized in school to be autonomous and to internalize control, thus predisposing children to fit into certain positions in the occupational structure. Other studies of youth culture and schooling, such as Paul Willis' *Learning to Labour* (1977), emphasized working-class resistance to dominant culture, while later work sought to nuance theoretical and methodological treatment of class, culture and resistance (Watson 1993, Davies 1995). More broadly, the critical sociology of education has been "underpinned by concerns about the role that schools play in the reproduction of inequitable social relations along axes of class, gender, race, and, more recently, sexuality"

(Youdell 2005, 250). Despite the importance of this literature in informing my approach, my interest has not been in the production of differentiated workers for the economy or the reproduction of inequitable relations, but rather in the production of differentiated citizenship through everyday practices, rituals and narratives in schools. I therefore build on this tradition, but structure my exploration through an operationalization of the concept of citizenship in order to highlight different dimensions and implications of schooling.

Scholars such as Michael Apple, Lois Weis, Peter Woods and Geoff Whittey have provided important insights that go beyond the more rigid models of cultural reproduction of earlier studies. They emphasize that reproduction is contested and not always successful (Apple 1982, Apple and Weis 1983) and that more attention should be paid to the form and organization of knowledge and pedagogy, to methods of evaluation and the principles that underpin them, and to how all of this is actually experienced by students and teachers (Apple 1982). Ethnographic programs of analysis were therefore seen as more appropriate in aiding the understanding of what schools actually do (Foley, Levinson and Hurtig 2000, Sewell and Hauser 1980, Weis 1982). In this view, analysis of schools has to be more speculative and less determined, where schools are conceived as part of a contested terrain where day-to-day struggles take place at various levels. Any state aim imprinted onto education may act as a constraint, desire or structural pressure upon the school, but it by no means determines the actual schooling experience or its impact on students. The school can thus "serve as a site for the production of alternative and/or oppositional cultural practices which do not serve (at least not in any straightforward manner) the accumulation, legitimation, or production needs of the state or capital" (Apple and Weis 1986, 11).

Agency is therefore an important point of divergence in these debates. It has been argued that Bourdieu, like other early scholars in the sociology of education, "afforded children little social agency and portrayed them as primarily passive in the face of the inculcation they receive" (Reed-Danahay 2005, 63–6). On the other hand, notions of subjectivity typically place greater emphasis on indeterminacy, contingency and multiplicity and allow for individual agency in drawing on the multiple discursive resources that are available to actors in different situations (Ortner 2005, Blackman et al. 2008).[8] Subjectivation, as opposed to reproduction or socialization, entails more open possibilities. The focus on fluidity and indeterminacy can shift attention, however, from structural inequalities that are critical for understanding schooling processes and their impact on students. The point is therefore not "to deny the existence of hegemonic processes in schools but, rather, to problematize their assumed coherence and point to their inherent ambiguity" (Reed-Danahay and Anderson-Levitt 1991, 546).

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[8] As Foucault puts it, individual practices are not invented by the individual himself, but "are models that he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society, his social group" (Foucault 1997, 291). Butler explains this as

The approach I take aims to balance the focus on social stratification and state purposes with an appreciation of fluidity and agency. Approaching subjectivation, difference and agency together, qualitatively and comparatively, allows for appreciating differentiation and contestation, and is critical for understanding schooling as a variable and fluid process. Despite my interest in state purposes and official narratives, I make no assumption that the state or the ruling regime is a monolith or coherent actor. The state is a space of forces characterized by struggle over the very perimeters, prerogatives and priorities of public authority (Bourdieu 1994 [1993]). My research emphasizes the ways in which, at various junctures, from textbook authorship committees to nationalist school rituals, official purposes become rearticulated, transformed, diluted, contested, overturned or ignored.

Finally, whereas textbooks are not usually analyzed in ethnographies of schooling, my analysis of textbook discourses brings official narratives on nationalism, belonging and citizenship into conversation with everyday school relations. Studying text and context together provides insights into both state aims and the ways in which they are translated, received and contested in everyday relations. It is critical to addressing questions about the production of lived and imagined citizenship explored across this study.

Outline of the Book

The rest of the book is divided into seven chapters and a conclusion that develops the key overarching arguments. Chapter 1 outlines the political

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follows: "[T]o claim that the subject is constituted is not to claim that it is determined; on the contrary, the constituted character of the subject is the very precondition of its agency. For what is it that enables a purposive and significant reconfiguration of cultural and political relations, if not a relation that can be turned against itself, reworked and resisted?" (Butler 1995, 46). Agency is therefore not "some natural or originary will; it takes shape as specific desires and intentions within a matrix of subjectivity – of (culturally constituted) feelings, thoughts, and meanings" (Ortner 2005, 34). Putting it differently, these discussions suggest that "resistance" is imbricated within power, not outside it (Young 1990).

and economic context of the late Mubarak era and provides essential background on the education sector, the evolution of nationalist and ideological narratives in textbooks and the securitization and Islamization of education. It describes the key attributes of the research sites and respondents, the methodological issues involved in conducting the research in schools and the selection of textbooks. The next three chapters inquire into the transformation of the school as a space of lived citizenship. Chapter 2 dissects the trajectories, functioning and implications of informal privatization in the different tiers of schooling. Chapter 3 investigates the classed and gendered dynamics of school punishment, the ways in which teachers explain and situate their practices, how students receive and contest them, and the questions they raise around violence, masculinity and poverty. The analysis of permissiveness and repression is expanded in Chapter 4 in the treatment of noncompliance, disciplinary supervision and gendered contestation.

Chapters 5 and 6 are concerned with the production of imagined citizenship as articulated and enacted in textbooks, school rituals and student discourses. Chapter 5 maps how official textbooks define national belonging, construct good citizenship, articulate national decline and renaissance, and deploy Islam in citizenship and nationalist narratives. Chapter 6 asks how the nation is performed in schools and what notions of citizenship are expressed by young people. It analyzes student, teacher and classroom discourses that relate to feelings of national belonging and constructions of citizenship, tracing the place of Islam and neoliberal citizenship in these discourses. Chapter 7 explains the critical changes in the project of "schooling the nation" since the 2011 uprising, outlining the most relevant developments and their implications for the education sector. It tracks the changing narratives and practices relating to informal privatization, violent punishment, noncompliance, contestation and belonging, and analyzes the critical changes in textbook constructions of nationhood and citizenship. The Conclusion chapter develops the key overarching arguments that emerge from the analysis and its links to the 2011 uprising, elaborating the central notion of permissive-repressive governance, its implications for schools as disciplinary institutions, its connections to neoliberalism as a global phenomenon and its impact on everyday legitimation in schools.

1 The Late Mubarak Era, Education and the Research

Crony neoliberalization, a weak informalized state and a deficit of legitimacy has shaped the everyday practices of governance, legitimation and contestation in Egyptian schools. Deteriorating socioeconomic conditions and the weakening of state institutions in the late Mubarak era informed how the regime rearticulated its citizenship discourses. The attempt to consolidate a new elite around Gamal Mubarak and to prepare him to take over after his father deepened the deficit of legitimacy and accentuated the cleavages within the elite and the security services, culminating in the 2011 Revolution. This chapter lays out this broader political context, the resulting state of education and the approach of the study. The first part of the chapter explains the key overarching features of the Mubarak era, highlighting both socioeconomic changes and changes in nationalist and ideological narratives. The second section provides essential background on tracking, quality and equity in the education sector, especially as crystallized in secondary schooling. It outlines the evolution of nationalist and ideological narratives in textbooks and schools and the securitization and Islamization of education. The third section details how the schools were selected for this study, which socioeconomic groups they cater to, how I conducted the research before and after the uprising, the dynamics of my own insertion into the schools, the selection and analysis of textbooks and the most significant limitations of the research.

Transitioning to Neoliberalism

In the early years of his rule, Mubarak relied on the general political direction he inherited from his predecessor Anwar Sadat (in power 1970–81). This included moving away from the state socialism of the Nasser era (1952–70), the slow adoption of policies of economic liberalization, token measures of political liberalization, rapprochements with Islamist groups and the consolidation of Egypt's alliance with the United States. The policies of structural adjustment and economic liberalization initiated in 1991, with their roots in Sadat's Infitah policies of the 1970s, resulted in significant changes in the Egyptian economy and nature of the social contract. They entailed a retrenchment of the state from social protection, basic infrastructure and public service provision. Social expenditure lagged far behind the rapid growth in population, declining from 34 percent of GDP in 1982 to an average of 17 percent in the 2000s (El-Meehy 2009, 14). The late 1990s brought about fundamental changes to rural Egypt, essentially reversing the land reforms set in place since 1952 and causing increased landlessness and rural poverty (Bush 2002). However, levels of growth and job creation were not high enough to balance these negative patterns. The government was also not able to achieve the chief aims of these economic policies in terms of lowering its levels of debt and expanding its exports (Abo El-Abass and Gunn 2011), thereby creating pressure for even more austerity measures.

A new set of critical changes characterized the last decade of Mubarak's rule, what I refer to as the late Mubarak era. A wave of pro-business liberalization and privatization began around 2003/2004 with the appointment of the Nazif government, which was removed by the January 2011 protests. In 2005, new taxation policies effectively removed any semblance of progressive taxation, capping all taxes at 20 percent (Diab 2016). In March 2007, the Constitution was finally purged of references to socialism and replaced with the declaration that "the economy of the Arab Republic of Egypt is founded on the development of the spirit of enterprise." From 2002 onward, under the leadership of his son Gamal Mubarak, official papers of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) began to claim that the state's provision of basic services had led to deterioration in their quality, and that the solution was to open education and health to private investment. The so-called New Thought of the party involved finding ways to divest the state of its "burdens" on those fronts. As measured by the Human Opportunity Index, access to basic services, although unequal, had actually improved in the decade before the uprisings (Ersado and Aran 2014). However, the nominal increase in access was accompanied by deterioration of quality and informal privatization. In the education sector, for example, Egypt achieved higher enrollment in basic education as well as greater access to university education (UIS Online). This nominal expansion in access is structured by the decline in quality and equity, most blatantly reflected in Egyptian students' ranking as second to worst in the world in reading and writing skills (Mullis et al. 2017), and the earlier indicators discussed in the following sections.

The changes of the late Mubarak era critically included the intention to pass on the presidency to Mubarak's son, Gamal, as signaled especially by the constitutional amendments in 2005, which paved the way for his succession. Changes in the political landscape involved a significant reshuffling of the so-called old guard of the ruling elite and the rise of a new guard associated with Gamal. His selected associates from the business community were installed in the ruling party's Policy Secretariat and eventually appointed in key ministerial positions. The regime had arrived, especially after 2003, at a formula for maintaining its hold on power while offering selective benefits to a changing and ever narrowing power base. New forms of patrimonialism and clientelism were manifested in the flagrant manner in which the 2010 parliamentary elections were rigged in order to create a loyal parliament without opposition. This event is privileged in some accounts of the 2011 Revolution as a critical trigger for the protests – including, incidentally, the account of the Revolution in the 2016 textbooks.

Corruption, informality, low wages and unemployment were four defining of the late Mubarak era. Coupled with austerity and privatization, these trends translated into a transformation in the quality of key public services like health and education, transportation, municipal services and law and order. Corruption intensified in all layers of public as well as private institutions under Mubarak, especially during the last 10 years of his reign (Amin 2009, Alissa 2007, Ismail 2011a). A breakdown of the rule of law underpinned the institutionalized corruption that had become endemic in public institutions under Mubarak (Amin 2009), reaching unprecedented levels by global standards (Chekir and Diwan 2015). Linked to corruption, informality is the other form of permissiveness or retraction of the rule of law that defined the Mubarak era. Scholarly work on informality in Egypt has focused especially on informal neighborhoods (Singerman 1995, Elyachar 2005, Ismail 2006, Dorman 2007, Sabry 2010), where housing is constructed without official permits, key services are accessed by illegally tapping into the official means of provision, and all this is done with the complicity of state officials, typically in return for direct payments, bribes and favors. As Dorman (2007) puts it, informality opens the door to the kind of clientelism in search of access to public services upon which the micropolitics of many Cairo neighborhoods revolves. The size of the informal sector in Egypt, in which workers have no legal protection, has increased continuously from the 1980s to the present day, currently representing an estimated 70 percent of economic activity (OECD 2018, Elshamy 2018, AfDB 2016). Young people in particular have been severely impacted by informality in the labor market. In fact, young Egyptians have become the most disadvantaged group in terms of higher rates of unemployment, lower earnings, and limited job security and stability, with the majority of new entrants finding jobs in the informal economy (Assaad and Barsoum 2007). By 2006, initial employment in the informal sector represented half the jobs obtained by female commercial-school graduates, a phenomenon that was virtually nonexistent three or four decades earlier (Amer 2007). Those whose first job after graduating is in this sector generally find themselves unable to transition into formal-sector employment; 95 percent of those who were employed in informal jobs in 1990 were still in those or similar jobs in 1998 (Mokhtar and Wahba 2002, cited in World Bank 2003, 83).

Unemployment has had a disproportionate impact on educated youth in particular. Although it is difficult to rely on official measures of unemployment in the midst of informality and underemployment, existing data show a crisis of unemployment, especially affecting better-educated young people and women. According to official statistics, in Egypt the rate of youth unemployment (as a percentage of the total labor force aged 15–24) from 1990 to 2003 ranged from 20 to 30 percent (World Bank 2019c).[1] After 2003, and especially since 2010, youth unemployment increased to 35 percent, and female youth rates and withdrawal from the labor market significantly exceed male rates.[2] The unemployment rate of young people with advanced education (university) ranged from 51 to 63 percent over the period from 2008 to 2017, while the rate of those with intermediate education (secondary) ranged from 39.7 to 29.9, and those with basic education from 6.7 to 21.5 (ILOSTAT 2019). However, in the case of young females, it is not those with the highest levels of education that show the highest unemployment rate but those with intermediate levels (Barsoum et al. 2014, 30). Because jobs are scarce and of such low quality, a large proportion of young people have had to stop searching for work and are therefore counted as "out of the labor force," not among the "unemployed." It is therefore the educated middle-class youth who suffer the most from unemployment, while less-advantaged youth suffer from precariousness, poor pay and poor working conditions.

Low wages are at the core of Egypt's economic and social problems, and public-sector wages have been declining in real terms for decades (Abdelhamid and Baradei, 2010). Critically, the increasing inequality of wage incomes from 1998 to 2012 has been accompanied by the impoverishment of the middle classes (Assaad et al. 2016). Wage polarization within the public sector accompanied wider patterns of declining real wages, increasing precariousness and informalization. As senior public servants and selected cadres were courted with annual bonuses and raises, an increasing proportion of staff were being hired on differentiated temporary contracts, which offered varying pay structures and minimal wages below the poverty line (such as teachers receiving monthly wages of 100–350 EGP, i.e. 15–50 USD). Household welfare declined for most households between 2000 and 2009. Households reported feeling poorer and the mismatch between welfare expectations and actual welfare increased (Verme et al. 2014, 6).

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[1] The total unemployment rate over the period from 2003 to 2010 ranged from 8.5 to 11.9 percent (World Bank 2019a).

[2] A massive 80 percent of those aged 22 to 29 were counted as "out of the labor force," the majority of them women (UNDP 2010). While the female youth unemployment rate (percentage of the female labor force aged 15–24) ranged from 36 to 58 percent over the period from 1991 to 2018, the male youth unemployment rate (percentage of the male labor force aged 15–24) ranged from 14 to 31 percent (World Bank 2019d, 2019e).

This deteriorating political, economic and social situation was not met with silent approval. Popular protest and oppositional movements grew over this period, especially after 2003. From 1998 to 2011, more than two million workers participated in some 3,500 strikes, sit-ins and other forms of protest, with major strikes in nearly every sector of the Egyptian economy (Beinin 2011). Importantly, however, in the 2000s, unlike the 1980s and 1990s, the government did not routinely repress workers' protests through massive use of violence and typically offered limited concessions to protestors, creating the perception that protesting generated significant gains (Beinin 2011). Reports of police violations and different forms of corruption played a pivotal role in exposing state repression and mobilizing for protest. The growth of independent and citizen media has been critical in this regard, with the emergence since 2003 of some two dozen new newspapers and magazines independent of the regime, offering, along with the Arab satellite stations and the Internet, access to information that was unimaginable a decade earlier (Beinin 2009, Meital 2006). This protest movement culminated in the 25 January Revolution, which prompted Mubarak's removal in 2011.

Political contestation was met with different forms of repression by the state, ranging from the imprisonment of well-known opposition figures like Ayman Nour, to the extension of state security oversight to every sector of society, including schools. Mubarak built on and advanced the authoritarian legacy he inherited from his predecessors. Since coming to power in 1981, Egypt has been ruled under a declared State of Emergency, whereby the regime "has rationalized the outlawing of demonstrations, the use of indefinite detentions without trial, and the endowment of presidential decrees with the power of law" (Brownlee 2002, 6–7). The repression of opposition was also carried out through various forms of intimidation, detention and torture. While the regime's Islamist opponents have been the largest recipients of this repression, secular political activists, human rights activists, organized workers and regular voters have all been targeted, which could be viewed “as an indication of the increasing insecurity of an authoritarian regime determined to maintain its monopoly on power” (Kassem 2004, 187). Oppositional action that “takes to the streets” and organized action that involves oppositional Islamism, especially activities that brought Islamists together with secular activists, were the critical “red lines” that defined the freedoms allowed by the regime (Kassem 2004). Apart from political repression, however, violent and humiliating treatment, and different forms of extortion by police and other state officials, permeated citizens’ daily lives (Ismail 2006). These everyday violations varied greatly based on social class position, where the poor were on the receiving end of the largest share of a wide range of repressive practices. As the late Hani Shukrallah put it,

> [T]he middle-class professionals in Kifaya can chant slogans like ‘Down with Mubarak’ because they risk, at worst, a beating. But most Egyptians live in a world where anything goes, where they’re treated like barbarians who need to be conquered, and women are molested by the security forces. The average Egyptian can be dragged into a police station and tortured simply because a police officer doesn’t like his face. (Cited in Shatz 2010)

It is this everyday vulnerability and repression that occupies this study of lived citizenship. The overall transformation since the late Mubarak era is broadly conceived as redirection of the functions and resources of the police toward regime security and away from the regular functions of public security (see Abdelrahman 2017). This is translated in the sense of diminished access to policing functions for the poor, with the revival of communal arbitration methods and reliance on private security for those who can afford it (see Ismail 2006, 2012).

From Socialist Arabism to Neoliberal Islamism

These major social and economic changes were accompanied by shifts in official narratives of national belonging and ideological legitimation. These narratives entailed updated conceptions of the nation, the people, the army and Islam. Understanding these shifts requires an overview of their transformations since independence from the British in the 1950s. In 1952, Nasser and his colleagues in the Free Officers Movement swiftly removed the monarchy and succeeded in expelling the British from Egypt, proclaiming a revolution led by the army and supported by the people. Their rise to power ushered in the privileged political and economic position of the army and its place in nationalist discourses. State socialism and Arab nationalism developed into the key ideological pillars of the Nasser regime (1952–70) and the bases upon which notions of national identity and citizenship were articulated, including in school textbooks. The route to national renaissance was constructed with reference to an ideal of unity in support of the July Revolution's goals of lifting poverty, raising incomes, eliminating class differences, and providing work and educational opportunities to all (Brand 2014). Nasser's legacy and popularity stemmed in large part from the expansion of a universal and free education system and public health services, massive investments in infrastructure, housing market regulations, guaranteed employment and job security for the educated classes, the expansion of the social insurance system, and partial land redistribution and an industrialization program, all creating a legacy of social mobility, a more egalitarian distribution of wealth and a decline in poverty (Waterbury 1983). With economic liberalization under Sadat and the shift in alliances from the Soviet Union to the United States, official references to the declared principles of the July Revolution quickly receded. From Mubarak's first speech, there was no more talk of class struggles or even "closing income gaps," but rather of desiring to "meet basic needs" in a shared responsibility with Egypt's citizens and their "spirit of initiative" (Brand 2014, 94).

Islam has always been an integral component of the Egyptian state's nationalist discourse and a critical pillar of regime legitimacy. The nature and extent of the use of Islam and Islamism[3] in the crafting of Egyptian national identity and in the broader cultural and moral canvas has varied considerably over time, including in educational discourses and textbooks. The turn toward alliances with Islamism and the greater Islamization of the public sphere started under Sadat (1970–81), primarily to compete with the popularity of Nasser's Arab Socialism. Embracing the Islamic referential was also "instrumental in Egypt's alignment with the petro-monarchies" and well suited to the increasing labor migration to the Gulf (Roussillon 1998, 393). Already in the 1971 Constitution, *sharia* was declared "a" primary source of legislation, and by 1980 this had been amended to "the" primary source. "Science and faith" were explicitly articulated as the basis of Egypt's progress, renaissance and national identity. As early as 1971, Sadat began his speeches with "In the name of God" and addressed his audience as "brothers and sisters," rather than Nasser's "citizens" or "brother citizens." By 1978, he declared himself to be responsible first and foremost to God, marking a departure from Nasser's construction of the Egyptian people as sovereign and as citizens (Brand 2014). Because Sadat's reign was very short on account of his assassination by violent Islamist groups in 1981, the implications of this policy direction only became clear under Mubarak. In fact, Alain Roussillon has argued that for Sadat, Islamization of legislation was mere gesturing, whereas for Mubarak, Islamizing the framework of Egyptians' daily lives was perceived as a means of quelling Islamism itself (Roussillon 1998). This opening toward Islamist forces included the informal integration of "moderate" Islamists into the formal political scene through political parties and professional associations (Campagna 1996).

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[3] "Islamist" is used to refer to the wide variety of groups and discourses that place Islam at the center of their political, national or civic identities. More concretely, I use "Islamist" to refer to discourses and groups that reflect and promote the "Islamist Creed" that only faithful adherence to Islam can bring about power and prosperity for Muslims (Sobhy 2009). The character and focus of this "adherence to Islam" is defined differently by different groups, as are the means for achieving such greater adherence and "return to Islam."

The configuration of Islamist forces exerting an influence on the public sphere did not remain constant throughout the Mubarak era. In the 2000s, the regime encouraged and gave space to a different constellation of Islamisms. Preachers who did not put forward oppositional discourses were allowed to publish in state-sponsored magazines, preach and give lessons in large mosques, university campuses, community assistance associations and religious satellite channels with wide viewership. Their emphasis was on personal morality, chastity, modesty, charitable and voluntary work, and industrial and business entrepreneurship. This increasingly hegemonic mainstream Islamism retained the "Islamist Creed" that faithful adherence to Islam is the route to power and prosperity, but it depoliticized Islamism by ignoring the role of the state in anything from applying sharia to guaranteeing social, economic or political rights (Sobhy 2009). The regime also tolerated and gave space to more conservative Salafi groups and preachers. These groups also emphasized individual morality and stricter controls on modesty and the mixing of genders. They forcefully condemned protest and often democracy, and propagated obedience to the ruler. Despite periodic limitations, both the non-oppositional Salafi trend and the more elite Islamism of the so-called new preachers like Amr Khaled were allowed far greater margins of freedom than other oppositional Islamist trends (Wise 2003, Haenni and Tammam 2003, Sobhy 2009). These non-oppositional Islamisms cohered with the regime's neoliberal and authoritarian projects, as well as its regional and global alliances (Sobhy 2009). Paradoxically, in this period, the regime also invested in a project of "enlightenment" and "cultural cultivation" (*tanwir* and *tathhqif*) led by secular-oriented intellectuals who attempted to engage youth in art, literature and cultural activities, workshops and competitions (Winegar 2014). This was arguably motivated by a desire to appease and draw legitimacy from secular forces, and perhaps to nurture divisions and polarization within the opposition.

"There Is No Education": Quality, Equity and the Secondary Stage

Mubarak declared education to be Egypt's "national project," and it was repeatedly listed as a reform priority, especially from the 1990s onward. However, reduced social spending had devastating consequences on quality and equity in the system, especially given its steady expansion. Many people I spoke to had a very concise and straightforward way of expressing this deterioration. It was sometimes enough to say that I was doing research on education to receive the response, "What education? There is no education" (*mafish taʿlim*). I heard the phrase "there is no education" (*mafish taʿlim*) countless times throughout my research. It was used to refer to the state of education as a whole as much as it was used by teachers, administrators and students to reflect on their specific conditions across different types of schools. What, then, does "no education" mean, and how do its connotations differ in different parts of the system?

Before discussing the quality of education, a brief description of the structure of the system is necessary. The preuniversity education system in Egypt is very large. In the late Mubarak era, it catered to about 17 million students and had over 1.5 million employees. It consists of a primary, preparatory and secondary stage. Under the constitution, the Basic Education stage, encompassing six years of Primary Education and three years of Preparatory Education, is free and compulsory for all children aged 6–14. Secondary Education comprises the two main general and technical tracks. Students who score below a certain annually determined cut-off score in the Basic Education completion exam can only continue in the technical secondary track focusing on vocational skills.[4] A smaller religious education or Azhar track enrolls about 10 percent of students across the different stages. Private schools were still a small part of the system, 7.4 percent of students being enrolled in private preuniversity education in 2006 (MOE 2007).

Private schools remain a small part of the system, but their importance lies in schooling the intellectual, economic and political elite, especially in language schools and international schools.[5] Private schooling started growing in the 1980s, with different rates of acceleration. Between 2001 and 2006 alone, the proportions of private classrooms at primary level increased by 31 percent, while the numbers of pupils increased by 24 percent (MOE 2007, Annexes, 48). Most private schools follow the national curriculum and are monitored by MOE inspectors. Private Islamic schools infuse this curriculum with additional religious content and activities. More than half of private schools are Arabic-language schools, while those targeting the upper-income brackets mostly provide instruction in a foreign language, usually English. Most private language schools follow the national system, although a growing number teach international programs like the British IGCSE and the American Diploma. As detailed in Chapter 2, privatization happens in large part informally through private tutoring and affects students across income brackets. It has done little, however, to remedy the decline in quality in the system.

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[4] Children who qualify to enroll in general secondary schools based on their scores may refrain from doing so for a variety of reasons associated with social background (Assaad 2010, 7).

The poor quality of learning in the system has resulted in a crisis of illiteracy among students as evidenced in Egypt's ranking as second to last in the world in the 2016 international reading assessment PIRLS. Signs of poor quality had been emerging since the late Mubarak era. The results of a 2010 national standardized examination in Arabic, science and mathematics showed that average student scores were less than 50 percent, with large variations within the system (MOE 2010, 2014, 41). In the 2007 TIMSS international ranking, 53 percent of Egyptian eighth grade students (often chosen from the best schools) did not satisfy the low international benchmark in mathematics and 45 percent were also below the lower benchmark in science (UNICEF 2015, 39). This was already 5 percent lower than Egypt's 2003 rank (see MOE 2007, 46, MOE 2014). The decline in quality is caused in large part by poor financing of an expanding system, and especially by the low teacher salaries it entails. Public spending on education in Egypt is low by international and regional standards and has been declining since 2000 (UNESCO 2009, OECD 2015). It is mostly absorbed by wages and recurrent expenditure. It is also skewed toward university education at the expense of primary and basic education and very poorly targeted at quality improvement (for detailed discussions, see Assaad 2010, AFA 2014, MOE 2014, World Bank 2013, MOE 2007, IBRD and World Bank 2005). Public investment in education is not only low but also distributed in a way that disadvantages the lower grades, which are critical for developing a learning base, and the poor, especially outside urban centers. The ratio of spending per student in higher education relative to preuniversity education averaged 3.2 in the same period in Egypt, as compared to only 1.1 in OECD countries (Assaad 2010, 3).[6] Although wages take up most of educational expenditure, teachers' salaries are very low by regional and international standards.

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[5] The majority of Egyptian pupils – about 90 percent – from the bottom four wealth quintiles attend public primary and preparatory schools, and among pupils from the highest wealth quintile, the share attending private or experimental schools is 35 percent at the primary level and 25 percent at preparatory (Ersado and Gignoux 2014).

> I can work and satisfy my conscience as much as the money the ministry gives me. I get 2.5 EGP per class. If a supervisor comes in, here is my work written on the board. Hijri date [Islamic calendar] for 50 piaster, Miladi [A.D.] date for 50 piaster, the title of the lesson for 50 piaster, and the lesson prepared in my notebook for 50 piaster. So I owe you 50 piaster worth of explanation. What do you think I will tell you for 50 piaster?
>
> Teacher hired on temporary contract

The evolution of teachers' pay in recent decades is critical to understanding issues of quality and equity and modes of privatization in the system. Rigorous tracking of the change over time in teachers' wages does not exist. However, like other government employees' salaries, teachers' salaries have fallen substantially in real terms since the 1980s. By 1996, the starting base salary for teachers was 100 EGP per month, at which time about 900 EGP were needed to provide a decent living for an average Egyptian family (World Bank 1996, Annex 2, 1). Calls for increases in teachers' salaries eventually culminated in the institution of the Teachers Cadre in 2006. The Cadre effectively represented a 30 percent increase in the salaries of teachers. However, a beginner teacher still received a salary of around 500 EGP per month, whereas only an income of around 1,200 EGP could put a family of four above the internationally recognized poverty line of 2 USD per day.[7] Furthermore, many teachers in Egypt were simply not hired on the Cadre, but on other types of contracts where pay ranged from 25 to 70 percent of a beginner's Cadre salary.[8] The average annual teacher salary in 2009–10 was EGP

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[6] Per-student spending on higher education amounted to 46 percent of per capita GDP in Egypt on average between 2005 and 2008, as compared to an average of 27 percent in low-middle-income countries and 19 percent in OECD countries (Assaad 2010, 3). An analysis of the incidence of public expenditures carried out by the World Bank shows that 45 percent of public expenditure on higher education goes to the top quintile of households and that 68 percent goes to the top two quintiles, while the bottom quintile benefits from no more than 3 percent of these public resources (World Bank 2002).

[7] This is especially significant because many Egyptian households are single income due to the high unemployment rate and low female labor-force participation rate, officially estimated at 18.5 percent (UNDP 2010, 7).

[8] In 2011, pay on the Reward System (*nizam al-mukaf'a*, or *nizam al-mukaf'a al-shamila*) was 120 EGP per month (and could be as low as 105 EGP with deductions) plus a 1,600 EGP annual bonus, while teachers on the Special Contract (*'aqd mumayaz*) received around 360 EGP per month (which could be as low as 325 EGP depending on deductions).

17,912, i.e. about 1,500 EGP per month (MOE, 2010, 172). This corresponded to 271 USD or $1,022 PPP per month.[9] Salaries increased after the uprising but their value quickly declined in real terms, following a devaluation of the pound and further austerity measures since 2016 (Chapter 7).

Teachers are generally dissatisfied with their pay, lack of decision-making power and autonomy, school allocations and working conditions (see Abdou 2012). The poor conditions of teachers begin within faculties of education. Admission to faculties of education is managed centrally and based on general secondary final grades, as with all university admissions. The minimum score requirements for admission are, however, not among the highest, and many students who enter educational faculties do so because they have not scored high enough grades for other faculties, and not necessarily because of a desire to become a teacher. Within faculties of education, many students complain that they are assigned to programs for which they had not applied, in which they have little or no interest, and for which they are not suited. Faculties of education suffer from overcrowding, limited possibilities for small workshops or seminars, very limited school-based practice and overall conditions that lead to weak professional preparation. In-service professional development also suffers from a host of weaknesses and is seen as having limited impact on teacher performance (see OECD 2015, Ch 5). The image of teachers as low-paid, low-skilled and inexperienced persists (UNEVOC, 2013). This is especially so for technical track teachers and trainers, whose status and career prospects are considered lower than those of general education teachers (ETF and World Bank, 2005a). Teachers in public schools are part of the Egyptian civil service, and the teaching workforce is one of the few sectors in which women enjoy proportionate representation.[10]

Tracking and Quality in the Secondary Stage

As the research focuses on secondary education, a more detailed picture of this educational stage is essential. Between one-quarter and one-fifth of youth in this age cohort are not enrolled in any track of secondary schooling.[11] Of those enrolled in secondary education in 2005–6, 56.3 percent studied in technical schools, 32.9 percent went to public general secondary schools, 2.7 percent were enrolled in private general secondary schools, and 8 percent were attending religious Azhar schools (MOE 2007, Annex 2, 77). Recalculating the ratios taking into account MOE schools only (excluding Azhar enrollment), about 61 percent of students were enrolled in technical schools, 36 percent in general schools and 3 percent in private general schools.[12] General secondary education is a three-year track, where students can select to focus on arts or science subjects and from which successful students can go on to study at university level. The majority of technical schools are three-year technical secondary schools leading to a formal qualification (*diblum*) as a Technician. Students in the technical schools enroll in three main specializations – industrial, commercial and agricultural – from which they can seek formal employment or go on to attend two-year institutes.[13] Students are allocated to specializations based on their scores, regardless of preferences or aptitudes. In 2007, students enrolled in industrial specializations accounted for 50.6 percent of all students enrolled in technical education, while commercial and agricultural specializations accounted for 38 percent and 11.4 percent, respectively (MOE 2007, Annexes, 104). There is a general tendency for male students to be tracked into industrial specializations, while female students are directed into commercial schools. Overall, less than half of all students who enroll at the secondary stage gain access to higher education, where the vast majority attend universities and 6.7 percent attend lower status technical institutes (Megahed and Ginsburg 2008). The vast majority of general secondary students (94 percent) go on to higher education (76 percent to universities and 18 percent to two- and four-year institutes), but only 9 percent of technical secondary students were able to do the same (Assaad 2010, 6).

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[9] The PPP amount, considered more appropriate for international comparison, is based on the World Bank PPP conversion factor, private consumption (LCU per international $) for 2009 of 1.468.

[10] Based on the latest figures, women account for 58 percent of the public-sector teaching workforce, 99.9 percent of pre-primary teachers and 62 percent of primary, 54 percent of preparatory and 43 percent of general secondary teachers, while in technical secondary, they represent 45 percent of teachers in industrial schools and 60 percent in commercial schools (MOE 2020a).

Technical education, in which about half of all students are enrolled, is widely seen as offering almost no educational value. A common statement repeated by teachers was that a technical school qualification is "'no more than a certificate of literacy'." Although it has become increasingly apparent in recent years that technical education was superfluous and no longer served any need (Elgeziri 2010), the government continued to steer students toward it merely to limit demand on general secondary education and universities and to serve as the government's safety valve for young men and women from poor socioeconomic backgrounds (Antoninis 2001, Gill and Heyneman 2000). In addition to its chronic problems of outdated curricula and poorly trained and paid teachers, most schools lack the basic equipment and maintenance required for teaching those outdated programs (ETF and World Bank 2005b).[14] Even official MOE analysis has articulated technical education as inadequate for meeting the needs of society or of local and international labor markets (MOE 2007, 278). Although the quality of education in general secondary is much higher, there are still serious concerns about teaching and assessment methods, rising costs in terms of private tutoring, and low returns in terms of high unemployment among graduates (see MOE 2007, 278). Despite the problems of the general secondary or *thanawiya amma* exam, it is used to decide the academic and productive lives of millions of Egyptians, and it has had a markedly negative influence on the educational system as a whole, leading it in the direction of increasingly arbitrary university admissions and placement policies, and magnifying an already existing culture of teaching and tutoring to the exam (OECD 2015, 164). Poor quality in the secondary stage stems from the poor quality of teaching the bulk of basic education schools, which create a weak knowledge base that becomes very difficult to remedy in the higher grades.

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[11] MOE figures show enrollment in MOE schools and therefore the net enrollment rates do not reflect those enrolled in Azhar schools.

[12] These ratios allow for more straightforward longitudinal comparison of tracking in MOE secondary schools (see Chapter 7), as MOE Statistical Books only refer to MOE schools and do not include data on Azhar education.

[13] Tourism and Hospitality is sometimes available as a specialization, and there are also a small number of military technical schools across the country, as well as five-year technical schools leading to a qualification as First Technician. A small number of technical schools (including a small number of elite technical schools) focus on more specialized or advanced areas.

With some exceptions, teaching in Egyptian schools is characterized by teacher-centered instruction, rote memorization, little or no emphasis on the development of critical thinking skills, a tendency to overemphasize esoteric details and unimportant distinctions, to pay insufficient attention to core concepts and ideas, and too little connection of learning to real life and contemporary circumstances (see, for example, OECD 2015). However, the problems of the system go beyond memorization or the quality of curricula. The deterioration of learning outcomes over the previous decades has not corresponded with changes in pedagogy or a turn toward memorization. In fact, the focus on memorization and exam performance is not merely a pedagogical choice that can and should be reformed by educational authorities: It is critically reinforced by poor resources, the accumulation of poor learning in earlier grades, weak teacher preparation and low trust in the system. If teachers are not sufficiently trained to teach a certain subject, and if students have hardly been able to learn the basics of that subject, memorization can be the only way to pass students from one stage to another. If workshops in technical schools have no functioning equipment, or if equipment is locked away out of a fear that the school authorities would be held accountable for any damage resulting from its use, there are few options apart from memorizing a few points for the exam.[15]

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[14] There is a very significant shortage of teachers in academic subjects, workshops and labs, estimated in 2006 at 13,596 teachers, mostly concentrated in industrial specializations (MOE 2007, Annexes, 106). Most of the teachers employed lack skills, which may be attributed to a lack of adequate training (MOE 2007, Annexes, 106). According to the 2005 Egypt Human Development Report, only 46 percent of employed teachers were graduates of Faculties of Education (UNDP 2005, 64).

To give a concrete example, on one of the rare occasions when I observed a supervisor inside a classroom, he rebuked, interrupted and directed in an authoritarian manner the English teacher giving the class in the girls' general public school. The teacher, however, had simply not received the training to apply the participatory methods advocated by the supervisor, who had briefly received training outside Egypt. In fact, he had very weak knowledge of English in the first place. He himself had graduated from university with poor subject knowledge. Furthermore, his students, who had been through several years of poor English instruction, did not really have the ability to deal with the curriculum at hand and therefore relied on what they could memorize by repeating after him. They needed to focus on what exam questions require, so that they could better target their memorization efforts. In fact, they voiced support for the teacher's memorization-focused approach over the more interactive methods desired by the supervisor. As one student strikingly put it, "the [English] teacher's goal is not to teach us the language. He teaches us what we need for the exam." In turn, exam question and exam preparation guides are geared to these skills levels and reward memorization, not participation or communication skills on the part of students. Rote learning is in fact what happens in the best of classes when the teacher actually enters the classroom and teaches the material. If conducted at all, each class presents students with small bits of data and bullet points to memorize, often presented with little contextualization or connection to applied usage or other material and tasks. The meanings of *mafish ta'lim* become clearer and more disturbing when examining the interaction of privatization, poor resources, absenteeism and permissive assessment, as explained in Chapter 2.

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[15] See Sobhy (2021) for a narrative from a technical school of a "good" memorization-focused teaching performance.

These conditions have led to increasing inequality and diminishing returns to education. Education has been substantially devalued in the face of a rapidly increasing supply of educated individuals and limited expansion in the demand for educated labor (Salehi-Isfahani, Tunali and Assaad 2009). As Assaad and Krafft (2014, 11) show, young people's struggles with secondary education or higher to make a successful modern transition is a relatively new phenomenon in Egypt. High and unequal levels of household expenditure in private tutoring and tracking into vocational and general secondary schools that depend on high-stakes examinations substantially contribute to unequal learning outcomes (Ersado and Gignoux 2014, World Bank 2012).[16] Official achievement data in Egypt show the polarization based on social class and/or financial ability (see UNDP 2010, 44). Furthermore, inequalities in learning opportunities among young Egyptians are high compared to other countries in absolute levels, and learning gaps appear in early grades (Ersado and Gignoux 2014).

This state of affairs has generated significant protest in the education sector. Teachers, administrative staff, students and parents have engaged in various protest activities relating to educational issues. Teachers have resorted to techniques similar to those used in the wider protest movement, from demonstrations to hunger strikes and litigation. Successful litigation included technical education teachers suing for inclusion in the Teachers Cadre. Other categories of teachers and administrators have since successfully fought for the legal right to be included in the Cadre, periodically staging protests in front of the ministry in Cairo. Some of the most widely covered protests by students and parents occurred immediately before the uprising in semiprivate schools in December 2010 and January 2011 and were met with police intervention and intimidation (as discussed in the Conclusion chapter). Apart from these issues around the quality and equity of education, the ideological content of textbooks and everyday features of schools also underwent significant transformations from the early postcolonial era to the present.

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[16] "Success at the pre-university, which can be proxied by whether one is able to enroll in higher education and the kind of higher education one is able to enroll in, is almost wholly determined by the resources that the parents are able to provide to supplement the inadequate public investments" (Assaad 2010, 2). Analysis of test scores from TIMSS and national examinations in the late 2000s shows that more than a quarter of learning outcome inequality is attributable to circumstances beyond the control of the student, such as parental education, socioeconomic background and place of birth (Ersado and Gignoux 2014).

Nationalism and Citizenship in Textbooks and Everyday School Relations

Throughout Egypt's modern history, the education system has been an arena for struggles around national identity, citizenship and the ideologies that inform them. This is not only reflected in official textbook narratives but also in who becomes a teacher, what kinds of narratives can be voiced in school rituals and everyday discourses and the purpose of schools as disciplinary institutions. The Nasser regime (1952–70) treated state schools as central to establishing and maintaining the new postindependence revolutionary political order. It consolidated the role of schools through massively expanding access to education and by attaching considerable importance to school curricula as primary means of disseminating the values, symbols and goals of the July 1952 Revolution. History and National Education textbooks under Nasser underwent a slow and uneven process of change to reflect the new ideologies and directions (Makar and Abdou 2021, Adli 2007). As Arab nationalism and state socialism became the key ideological drivers of the Nasser regime, they gradually became the bases upon which national belonging and citizenship were articulated in Nasserite textbooks.

Starting in 1959, with the greater emphasis on Arab socialism, the education system was tasked with preparing the child for life in "a cooperative democratic, socialist, society" (Adli 2007, Starrett 1998). Textbooks emphasized questions of poverty and exploitation and the expanding social and economic citizenship rights promoted by the regime. Nasser-era textbooks placed great emphasis on class struggle and the struggle against imperialism and framed these as the bases of regime legitimacy (Adli 2001). These were also articulated as part of the core of Egyptian identity, where not only "struggle" but also "revolution" were identified as common threads running through Egyptian history and national identity. Critically, textbooks gave considerable centrality and agency to "the people" (*al-sha'b*, a word that rarely appears in contemporary textbooks) and other oppressed peoples across the world. The textbooks were full of passages about the role of resistance and national liberation movements and revolutions, with special emphasis given to the struggles of peoples and the role of youth in promoting and defending the values and goals of the Revolution (Adli 2001). A measure of ownership of these discourses on the role of "the people" was evident among different segments of Egyptians and was reflected in expressions of their own sense of agency and contribution to the Revolution (Mossallam 2012). Educational discourse also went to considerable lengths to introduce notions of gender equality and emphasize the role of women in building the country. Finally, textbooks also emphasized democracy as a basic principle of the new regime, an assertion that was purely rhetorical, although participation in state-affiliated organizations such as the Socialist Union was encouraged and rewarded.

The centrality of the July Revolution and its declared principles of social justice, anti-imperialism and Arab nationalism were progressively undermined in textbooks under Sadat and entirely removed and revised under Mubarak. The regime sought to promote the new personal vision of Egypt and Egyptian identity of Sadat (who ruled 1970–81), where three key areas represented new developments in Egyptian educational discourse. These were the focus on "science and faith" as the basis of Egypt's progress and desired identity, the beginning of the involvement of international agencies in educational policy-making, and the initiation of experimental schools (a privatization measure whereby higher quality elite public schools charged fees and accepted high-performing students), in addition to a focus on his own personality cult. As Adli (2007) notes, the 1977 History textbook was full of Sadat's photographs, with the greatest importance being placed on individual leadership: Little attention was given to the role of the people, or even to the new political parties that were allowed to form.

Educational goals in the Sadat era also began to emphasize the link between education and employment, adjustment to the open-door policy, and the expansion of technical education to absorb 60 percent of secondary students. In contrast to the politicization and emphasis on "participation" in Nasserite discourses, a number of themes shaped Sadat's educational agenda, including the declaration that there was to be "no politics in education" (in textbooks or in university activism), the emphasis on the "moralities of the village," the importance of tradition and respect for "values," obedience and deference to elders, and the emphasis on faith and religion (for more detailed discussions, see Adli 2001, Brand 2014). Beyond curricula, the Sadat regime enabled Islamist groups to gain control over universities and university politics and Teacher Colleges, with a strong base in Upper Egypt, especially Assiut University (Adli 2001, Khalil 2009). Islamist control over Teacher Colleges has arguably had a profound impact on education until the present day (Chapter 6). Repressed under Nasser, the Islamist forces that gained influence under Sadat and Mubarak had more reason to gradually erase his legacy from the textbooks and replace it with their own.

Mubarak continued most of the trends initiated by Sadat by allowing greater Islamist influence on education, by distancing his regime from the values and rhetoric of the July Revolution, and through the general "depoliticization" of educational discourse and the greater involvement of international agencies in educational policy-making. Discourses on Israel were one aspect of the erasure of the tropes of Arab nationalism from textbooks that became particularly controversial under Mubarak. While global and specifically US pressures relating to curriculum development and the promotion of religious tolerance are frequently highlighted, all other areas of educational policy were heavily affected by foreign technical assistance and neoliberal agendas, particularly in terms of greater privatization and lower educational spending. Studies of Mubarak-era school curricula argue that schools prepare the young to accept that the movement of society is not determined by masses but by individuals so that society's overcoming of problems and crises depends on the existence of the ruler (the manager, the hero, the rescuer, the savior), while the child is raised to equate the government with the state and country and to take the side of political authority, depend on it, trust it and adopt positive attitudes toward it (Abdul Hamid 2000, 124). Textbooks primarily tackle the history of state authority and ignore the people's history, and fail to mention the flaws of different rulers or their relationships with different classes, as well as refraining from the treatment of any controversial issues (MARED 2010). Contemporary textbooks ignore European, American or Asian history, as well as the histories of other colonized people, in order to focus only on the injured self (unique in its injury as it was unique in its historic greatness), with constant expressions of pride in the self and parallel condemnations of others (MARED 2010). Textbooks also increasingly highlighted large portraits of Mubarak and First Lady Suzanne Mubarak, with smaller photographs for other leaders. Research on History textbooks has also emphasized their factual mistakes. In sum, History textbooks aim to create uncritical citizens who are expected to learn and memorize the one and only master narrative or the history of the nation (e.g. Atallah and Makar 2014, Fikry 2015). Egyptian textbooks are of course no exception in this regard. Since "[n]ations rarely tell the truth about themselves," it is not surprising "that the history which is taught to children is often a watered-down, partial and sometimes distorted, sometimes fictional, view of a national past based upon cultural, ideological and political selection" (Crawford 2004, 10–11).

The Securitization and Islamization of Schools

The Mubarak regime's accommodation with Islamists extended the Sadat-era trends of enabling the recruitment of Islamists on university campuses, in schools and as social workers, putting them in direct contact with the public, especially in Upper Egypt (Roussillon 1998, 387). This was combined with the influence of tens of thousands of teachers returning from work assignments in the Gulf and bringing more conservative ideas back into Egyptian classroom. Early-childhoods education was also left to community associations, which are run by religious entities in most parts of the country outside of affluent urban centers.

The outcome has been a pervasive Islamization of schools that is reflected in almost every facet of their appearance and activities. This includes Quran recitation and memorization contests being at the forefront of school activities, daily school radio programs that are saturated with religious content, Islamic prayers and chants replacing or succeeding nationalist rituals in morning assemblies, school celebrations centered on Islamic occasions and teachers pressuring unveiled students and teachers to wear the hijab (see Herrera and Torres 2006, MARED 2010). Girls were increasingly excluded from sports on both religious and cultural grounds, and musical and other artistic activities began to disappear from schools. The morning assembly has been particularly used across Egypt's schools to increase the amount of religious content by altering or replacing saluting the national flag with more Islamic chants (see Herrera 2006, Saad 2006, Starrett 1998). The morning assembly (*tabur*) is therefore a key arena for the contestation of official narratives and is a ritual to which this research pays special attention (Chapters 6 and 7).

Schools are highly securitized and surveilled spaces, not only in terms of who can gain influence on them and what discourses can be voiced inside them, but also in terms of strict limitations on even entering schools, on civil society associations being able to work on school improvement and even stricter limitations on media reporting and conducting research inside schools. Education is often articulated "as a matter of national security" in official statements (Sayed 2006). This terminology gained special currency after the wave of terrorist attacks in the 1990s and the confrontations between the state and Islamist groups. It therefore centers heavily on the shifting relationship with Islamist forces. After the wave of terrorist attacks in the early 1990s, the state took measures to undermine Islamist groups, including loosening their hold on educational institutions (Sayed 2006, 34). The 1990s especially saw thousands of teachers transferred to nonteaching jobs or remote locations on security grounds (Bahaa Al-Din 2004). However, these measures did not undermine the overall trend toward growing Islamization.

Beyond Islamism, oppositional discourses and political expression and organization more generally face severe limitations in schools. As highly securitized spaces, schools are closely monitored to ensure that all school discourses – including every teacher's exam questions and every student's answers – are devoid of oppositional themes, especially under the banner of combatting extremism and terrorism. Political Communication representatives in every educational district reportedly monitor teachers and receive any reports about oppositional discourses in classrooms. In addition, state security officers responsible for the educational file in each district or governorate quickly become involved if there is any sign of collective action in schools. Educational officials and state security personnel therefore retain tight control over political and religious expression in schools, although the scope, effectiveness, consistency and actual purpose of this control are all debatable.

The Research and Its Limitations

This book has been made possible because I was able to obtain an official permit to conduct extended research inside Egyptian schools. Obtaining an official research permit was already exceptional at the time, but research access has become even more difficult given growing research restrictions since 2014. I elaborate here on some of the issues involved in conducting research in this context, how I went about the research, how I chose the research schools and the likely implications of these choices.

My aim was to study mainstream schools catering to different social strata and genders under the national education system. I chose to focus on the secondary stage (Grades 10–12) in order to examine the more elaborate nationalist and citizenship discourses targeted at older students and to be able to engage more meaningfully with young people about the relevant conceptions and performativities across different social strata reflected in the more explicit tracking in the system at this stage. The focus on these mainstream schools excludes the religious Azhar schools, which represented less than 10 percent of the system and can be seen as being similar in terms of socioeconomic profile to public general secondary, and the international schools that make up less than 0.5 percent of schools and student enrollment.[17] My focus was on schools in the largest part of the system: technical schools in which about 60 percent of secondary students were enrolled in 2006, and general secondary schools that accounted for about 25 percent of students (MOE 2007, Annex 2, 77). Private schools enroll fewer than 5 percent of secondary school students, but they represent the politically and socially influential educated classes (see Figure 1.1). From among these private schools, I chose to study the more privileged English language schools. Foreign language private schools enroll about half of private schools students and represent the category most familiar to the Egyptian intelligentsia. The official general/academic (*thanawiya amma*) curriculum is implemented in these schools, but mathematics and science are taught in English and students receive additional instruction in Advanced Level English, whose curriculum is centrally decreed by MOE. Guided by these criteria, I studied schools in different neighborhoods of Greater Cairo, where I was able to gain access through existing contacts.

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[17] The *MOE Statistical Yearbook* does not include the total number of international schools or their enrollment. However, the UK-based education consultancy ISC Research counted 233 licensed English-medium international schools in Egypt that enrolled 126,941 students in 2018–19. Compared to the corresponding 2018–19 MOE figures (MOE 2019), the ISC numbers would indicate that international schools represent 0.4 percent of all schools, 2.7 percent of private schools and enroll 0.5 percent of all students and 5 percent of private school students. The ISC numbers are close to the "220 international private schools" mentioned during an appearance of the Egyptian Minister of Education on the TV show, *Al-Qahira al-Youm*, on May 15, 2017. Other official statements have referred to 250 schools.

I conducted most of the pre-2011 fieldwork from 2008 to 2010. I combined immersive site-specific fieldwork in the six research schools (two technical schools, two general schools and two private schools) with numerous individual interviews and discussions with teachers, students and school staff from different schools across the city and at different

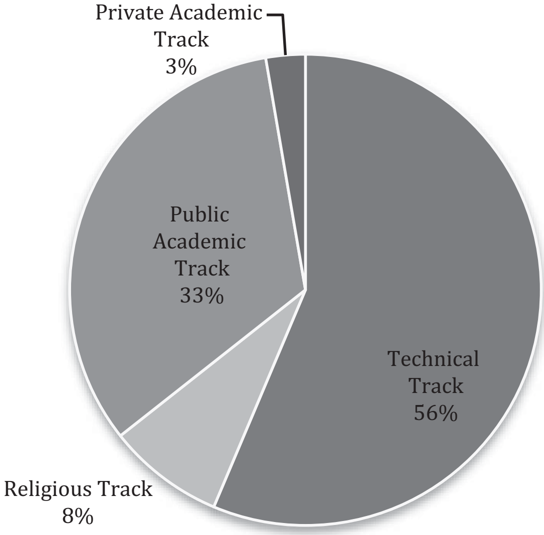

Figure 1.1 Tracking of students enrolled in secondary education in the late Mubarak era

educational stages. In terms of gender, I selected one boys' school and one girls' school in each category of public schools (technical and general). However, upper-range private boys-only schools are not common, as most boys enroll in mixed schools. Therefore, for private schools, I conducted fieldwork in one mixed school and one girls-only school. The six research schools are:

- Public three-year technical secondary school for girls – commercial specialization;
- Public three-year technical secondary school for boys – industrial specialization;
- Public general/academic secondary school for girls;
- Public general/academic secondary school for boys;
- Private English language school for girls;
- Private English language school for boys and girls.[18]

Throughout the text, I refer to the public technical track schools as **the technical schools**, to the public general (academic track) schools as **the general schools,** and to the private general (academic track) schools as **the private schools**. I sometimes refer to school administrators and teachers as a whole simply as "teachers" or "school authorities," but distinguish between administrators, social workers and teachers when this is relevant for the analysis. In order to protect respondents from harm or embarrassment, I have not used their real names, nor those of the schools. I have also not given the name of the neighborhood where the public schools were located, as this may make it easy to deduce to which secondary schools, principals and sometimes teachers reference is being made.

In terms of classroom observation, I spent the school day inside different classrooms in each school for an average of two days per week over a period of one semester for each school, totaling about 480 hours spent in the schools altogether. In each of the six research schools, in addition to classroom observations and open-ended discussions, I conducted semi-structured group and individual interviews with teachers, students and the school principal, and sometimes other administrative staff as well (totaling 149 interviewees: 6 school principals, 34 teachers and 109 students). I also collected other materials that were made available to me and took numerous photos in all of the schools. I asked students, teachers and principals, individually and collectively, about three key themes: informal privatization in the form of private tutoring, forms of control and punishment by teachers and constructions citizenship in terms belonging to the nation as well as how they would describe ‘students as a whole’ or ‘this generation’. Although I asked students to reflect on “love” of and “feelings of belonging to the country,”[19] I did not employ the sociology or anthropology of emotions as a tool of analysis (Abu Lughod and Lutz 1990). I used the invocation of love of country as an opening to discuss constructions of national belonging and citizenship.

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[18] This school is a National Institute. National Institutes are private schools that were nationalized in the postindependence period, which, despite independent management and private fees, are subject to greater MOE oversight.

With an official school start age of 6 years, secondary school students are 15–17 years old and those who had repeated school years (more common among boys) were 18 or older in their final years. Most teachers were middle-aged, married, relatively experienced and hired on permanent contracts. This is not unrelated to the systematic bias toward secondary education (especially general secondary) and urban areas in the deployment of better-qualified and experienced teachers hired under the permanent contracts of the official Teachers Cadre system (see MOE 2014). The research reflects a healthy gender balance due to the selection of schools and because the teaching and administrative staff in all schools always included both men and women.

The four public schools are located in the same lower-income informal neighborhood in the east of Cairo, and the private schools are in two different affluent neighborhoods. Although they are located in an informal neighborhood, the four public schools have been the targets of significant upgrading efforts by nongovernmental bodies. In fact, the two general schools are newly built schools, through funding provided by an international development agency (Figure 1.3), while the technical schools are older buildings (see Figures 1.4 and 2.1). While the educational district is considered underperforming by school actors, it is not one of the worst performing districts in the city or one with the highest classroom densities. Importantly, to categorize the neighborhood where the four public schools are located as informal does not imply that it is necessarily poor. Despite the fact that most residents may be working class and/or working primarily in the informal economy, there is still a clear professional class presence in

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[19] I used “the country” (*il-balad*) as a more commonly used term in everyday interactions. Egyptians hardly use *watan* or *umma* to signify Egypt in everyday talk. *Il-Balad* is also not associated with a particular camp or ideology in the way that *watan* may be associated with the Arab world and *umma* with the Muslim world. In everyday interactions, Egypt is typically referred to as Egypt/*Masr* or *el-balad*: the country. *Il-Balad* has a somewhat more domestic undertone, as it hints at society as well as nation. It is used when discussing social, economic or political issues. In this sense, it could still open up commentary on the state of morality in the country or Islamist critiques of regime or society. As with any other term, however, using it already deploys certain discourses.

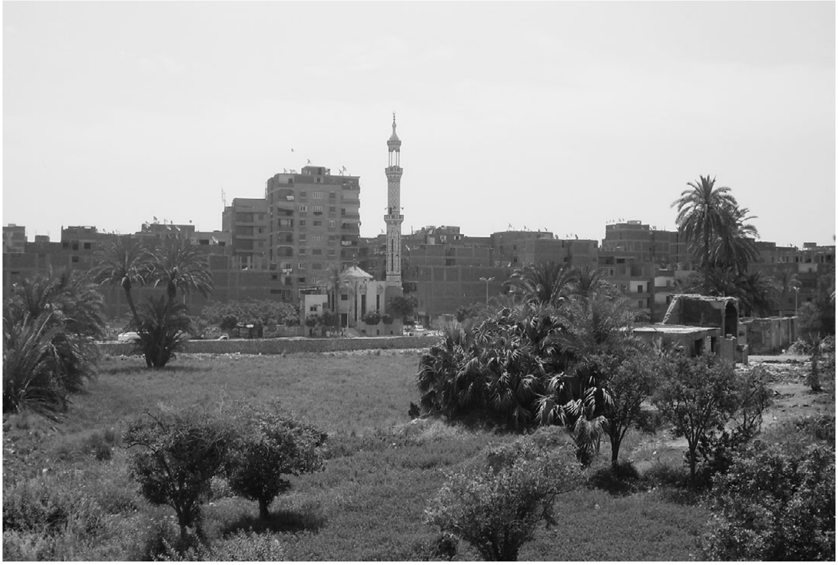

Figure 1.2 Informal neighborhood and remaining green fields near the general schools

the neighborhood. Also, in terms of its occupational composition, geographical features, perceptions and crime profile, this informal neighborhood is not simply like any other informal neighborhood in Cairo. It is not known for extreme poverty, tin houses, high crime rates or the drugs trade. It occupies a peripheral position and has strong rural roots (being composed or surrounded by agricultural land until recent years). Although its main streets are crowded and bustling, the surrounding green fields give it a generally mellow vibe (Figure 1.2). Like many urban neighborhoods, it has a healthy minority of Christian residents. There is also a marked Muslim Brotherhood influence in the neighborhood, which became more visible after the Revolution in electoral campaigning and results. The two neighborhoods where the private girls' school and the mixed school are located, Nasr City and Zamalek, are quite different in composition and features. However, the two schools cater to very similar clienteles within the two neighborhoods and have similar reputations in terms of being considered good private schools that do not charge very expensive fees (about 6,000 EGP per year in 2009 prices). Both schools also offered more expensive programs in international tracks, demonstrating the multiple tracking within both the public and private systems.

This study focuses on the educated classes concentrated in urban areas. About half of Egyptians (45 percent) live in urban areas. The

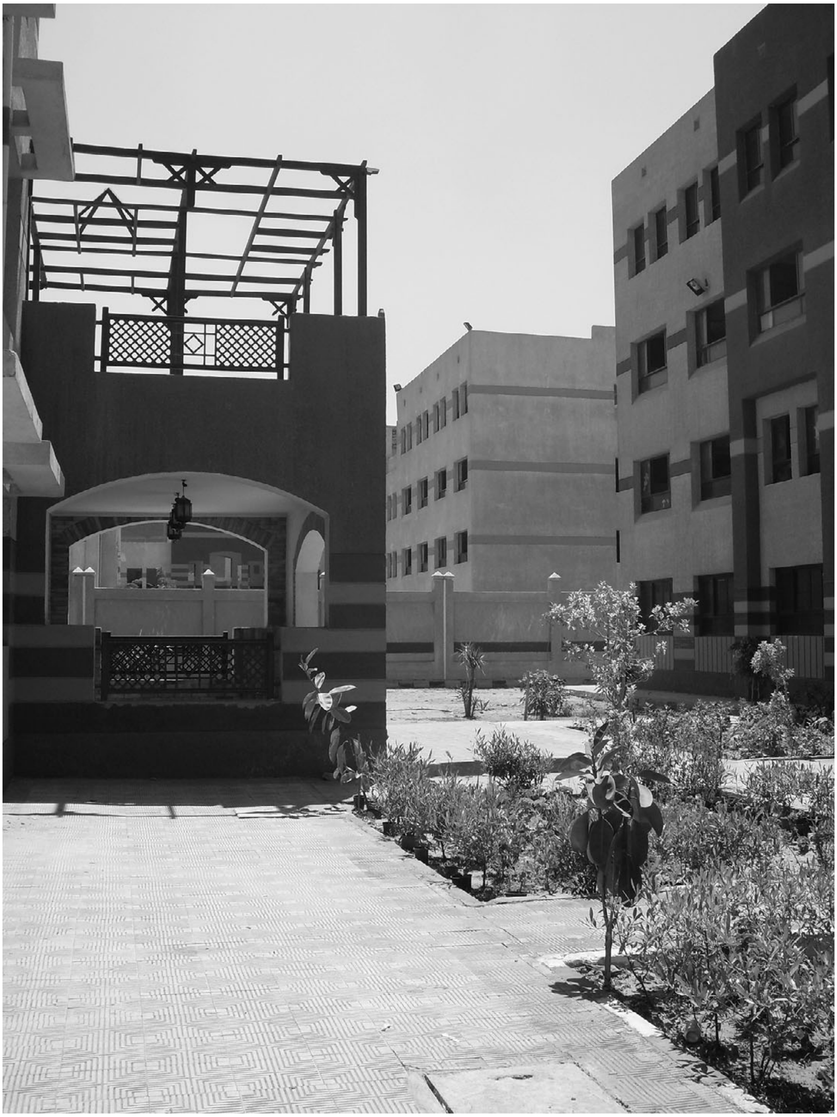

Figure 1.3 The girls' general school, newly built by an international development agency

capital, Cairo, is massive, with close to one-fifth of the country's population or 17.2 million residents in 2017 (CAPMAS 2017), and diverse enough to display a range of urban and peri-urban phenomena. While rural education remains grossly understudied in Egypt, existing research

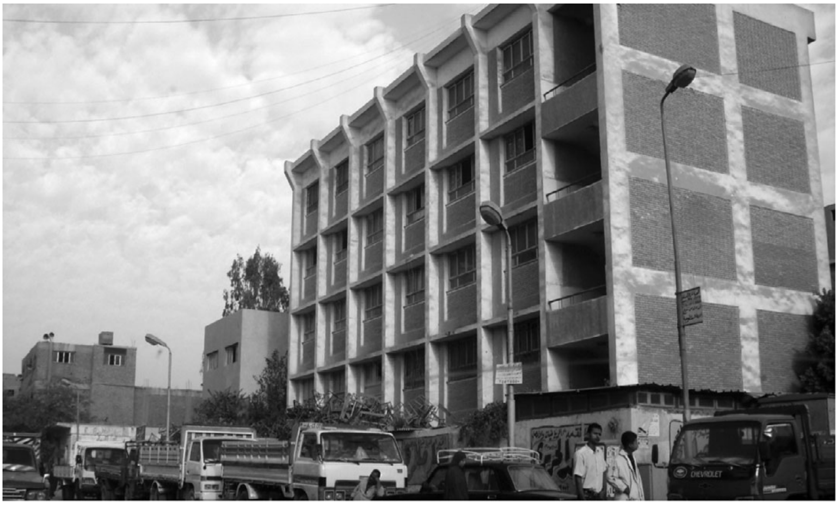

Figure 1.4 The girls' technical school (and tutoring advertisements on the walls of the adjacent building structure)

(Tawfik 2019) suggests that rural schools share key features of the trends in the less-advantaged technical education track described here. The students in the research schools mostly belong to the top three or four wealth quintiles.[20] The research therefore does not directly address the experience of youth in the bottom one or two quintiles. Secondary schooling, and especially general secondary, is a largely urban phenomenon, and one in which children from disadvantaged families are far less likely to enroll (MOE 2007, UNDP 2010). I refer to technical students as belonging to the working classes, general school students to the middle classes and private school students to the affluent classes. Private language school students belong to the highest socioeconomic brackets of the most affluent 3–5 percent, especially that these are foreign language private schools, which enroll less than 5 percent of students.[21] General school students clearly also belong in the top wealth quintile but occupy a wide range, including much of the second quintile. Technical school students may not belong to the poorest quintile, but they typically do not continue on to university nor take part in the traditional middle-class professions, and most likely they would not classify themselves as such. Certainly, even in one school, social class is never uniform, and this research does not attempt to pin down the class location of students by mapping out constellations of economic, social and cultural capital, in Bourdieu's (1986) sense, or the socially embedded practices that are constitutive of class locations and productive of distinction. Importantly however, there is a vast socioeconomic differential across the three tiers of schools, which is especially evident in household spending on education. As I describe in Chapter 2, private expenditure on education per student in the private language schools was 3 times that in public general schools, and up to 30 times the expenditure in the technical schools, whereas private spending in the general schools is could reach 10 times that in the technical schools.

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[20] This assumption is based on a number of available classifications. Students at university, who have mostly graduated from general secondary, predominately come from the highest fourth (27.1 percent) and fifth (46.5 percent) wealth quintiles, and only 4.3 percent of higher education students come from the lowest income quintile (UNDP 2010). This would place (private and public) general secondary students across a very large range of the highest 40 percent of earners. Technical students would likely come from the third and perhaps fourth quintiles, while most of those who drop out before reaching the secondary stage would likely belong to the fifth quintile. Based on the Assaad and Krafft (2014) taxonomy, the private, general and technical students in the research schools, especially given their privileged Cairene location, would most likely belong to the top, second and third wealth quintiles. The private school students would belong in the top of the highest quintile, most general secondary students would also belong in the top quintile, but some might belong to the second, while technical students would likely fall in the third quintile.

A number of aspects surrounding my insertion into the schools arguably influenced my findings and the patterns I was able to observe. This includes the overall learning conditions, and issues around nationality, social class, gender, religious identity and self-censorship. The quality of the time I spent in schools and my rapport with students were shaped by the realities of "no education." As many teachers simply did not show up to class, attention in the classroom was often turned to me, and the "observation" turned into a group discussion. After many classes, in the class time of the subsequent class, there was ample time to engage with students about what had happened, as well as discussing other contextual issues about the school and their experiences, creating greater familiarity and allowing for bonds to form more rapidly with students. My attempt at classroom "observation" was therefore frequently futile and rather unusual by the standards of the anthropology of education. This is why I refer to my fieldwork as research *in* and *on* schools as much as *with* young people.

Being in the schools with an official permit had contradictory implications: It conferred legitimacy and assuaged the typical security fears that relate to foreign researchers. However, even as an Egyptian native, as someone studying in the West, I was faced with a common concern about "tarnishing the image of Egypt abroad." Furthermore, because such research permits are not common, a perception sometimes developed among administrators that I had some supervision or inspection role for the Ministry of Education. This meant that administrators granted me easy access and teachers felt more pressured to improve their performance in my presence. So despite the negative patterns I report, I was likely not exposed to the darkest realities of the schools. Because I did not wear a hijab, I was consistently probed about my religious identity through direct questions about my full name. Since respondents seemed to place significant importance on this issue, my clearly Muslim full name arguably facilitated my access and how most respondents engaged with me, while arguably limiting the openness of Christian students in discussing various relevant issues. One limitation of the research therefore is that it does not directly address the experiences of Coptic students and other minorities, nor of students who would not openly express opinions considered controversial by others. It says little about how Coptic students experience the Islamization of schools, their overall de facto access to citizenship rights, and any oppositional discourses on the state that may relate to their status as Christian citizens. Muslim students might have also reflected on other themes if they had deduced from my demeanor or discourse that I had Islamist leanings.[22] Finally, being a woman arguably facilitated my access, as both girls and boys seemed at ease in speaking and sharing with me.

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[21] Large segments of this social stratum tend however to self-identify as middle class or "upper middle class" (even those that go on to enroll in the most exclusive higher education institutions like the American University in Cairo; see Birkholz 2014).

Another limitation that is worth noting is the potential impact of self-censorship and fear of repression. Discussions of political issues are simply not allowed in schools (see also Abdul Hamid 2000). This meant that I was not able to raise overtly political issues, neither in my research permit request nor in my discussions with those students, and was concerned about encouraging students or teachers to cross any red line. Censorship and self-censorship were prominent and often occurred visibly when students would silence each other through words or gestures, and teachers would correct other teachers or ask them to refer to "officials," not the president and the ministers by name, or when I would jokingly tell students when they criticized the president or the regime, "Do you want them to take away my permit or what?" However, I gradually took my cue from students, and many teachers, who felt at liberty to make oppositional comments. My findings therefore reflect the competing forces of self-censorship, increased indignation and perceived liberty to express opposition in the late Mubarak era.

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[22] Recent research in Cairo has suggested that Muslim women, especially younger, poorer and less-educated women, indicate that they are more religious and adhere more to Islamic cultural norms when interviewed by an enumerator donning the Islamic headscarf, while Christian women tend to downplay their religious identity to avoid appearing antagonistic to the dominant Muslim majority (Blaydes and Gillum 2013).

My findings, based on these urban Cairene schools, do not reflect the full extent of Islamization across Egypt's schools or the Islamist sympathies among its young. Students might have also self-censored expressions of politicized Islamist identification for fear of repression. However, the deployment of Islamist discourses among students (Chapter 6) arguably reflects the selected profile of urban educated youth without too much self-censorship. The relatively free post-2011 elections results, for example, show that although Islamists typically secured significant support in similar urban districts, they received far stronger support in other parts of the country (see, for example, Martini and Worman 2013).

To explore post-2011 trends (Chapter 7), I undertook further intensive fieldwork from March to August 2016, conducted expert interviews in the summer of 2017 and rounds of follow-up interviews in 2018. The research was not longitudinal in the sense of following up with the same students or with teachers in the same schools, and I did not seek a new research permit to conduct observations inside schools. The 2016 qualitative fieldwork consisted of group and individual interviews with over 40 students and teachers from 12 different technical, general and private schools in Greater Cairo. The public schools (technical and general) all had a similar profile to the research schools and were located in comparable neighborhoods (Mit Uqba, Hilwan, Al-Marg, Shubra al-Khayma and Sayida Zaynab) and the private school students and teachers were from privileged English language schools. Apart from the main research themes (privatization, discipline and belonging), I asked about the most important changes since 2011, referencing recent initiatives and official statements. In the summer of 2017, I conducted further interviews on the key themes with experts and stakeholders, including researchers, members of textbook committees, journalists, teacher syndicate leaders and practitioners in NGOs and donor agencies. The interviews revisited the key themes of private tutoring, discipline, punishment and nationalist discourses, mapping them against new policies, reporting and analysis. In 2018, I conducted 10 follow-up interviews with students and teachers, focusing especially on the new reforms that were being introduced.

Sampling the Textbooks for Discourses of Citizenship and Belonging

In addition to the ethnographic study and interviews, I conducted a detailed analysis of the official textbooks for the three years of secondary education in all tracks and specializations. I gave equal attention to the technical education textbooks, which have been mostly ignored in previous research. While building on the available studies relating to different educational stages and historical eras, the research focuses on textbooks in the critical period of around 2011. It draws particularly on examples of the 2009–10 secondary school textbooks, which were taught during my fieldwork in the schools. Egyptian textbooks and their authorship committees generally undergo very limited changes from year to year (Attalah and Makar 2014, Starrett 1998). Most of the textbooks had been in use with limited changes from the 2000s to the late 2010s. These 2009 textbooks in fact continued to be used up to the 2014–15 academic year, with limited changes. I reviewed the relevant textbooks for the subsequent years until 2019–20 and the related news reporting and official statements about textbook changes, and I describe key subsequent changes in Chapter 7.

The main textbooks analyzed are referred to by the indicated acronyms or titles. National Education textbooks start with NE, Arabic language textbooks with AL.[23] Exact quotes are obtained from the following versions.

- *Arabic Language for First Secondary* 2019–2020;
- *History for Third Secondary (Literature Specializations)* 2016–2017;
- *Ana al-Masri National Education for First Secondary* 2016–2017;
- *National Education for Third Secondary* 2015–2016;
- *National Education for Third Secondary* 2019–2020;
- *NEFST*: *National Education for First Secondary Technical Education* for Commercial, Tourism, Professional and Industrial Specializations 2009–2010;
- *NEFSG*: *National Education for First Secondary General* 2009–2010;
- *NEGSC*: *National Education for the General Secondary Certificate* 2009–2010;
- *ALSSG*: *Arabic Language for Second Secondary General* 2009–2010;
- *Wa Islamah*: Arabic Language Novel for the General Secondary Certificate 2009–2010;
- *ALTSTCH*: *Arabic Language for Third Secondary Technical* for Commercial and Hospitality Specializations 2009–2010;
- *ALTSTIAS*: *Arabic Language for Third Secondary Technical* for Industrial and Agricultural Specializations 2009–2010;
- *HGSC*: *History for the General Secondary Certificate* 2009–2010.

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[23] Past textbooks can be requested from the Ministry of Education archives, while current textbooks can be directly viewed on the ministry's online portal. All translations of textbook titles and excerpts are my own.

In addition, I also consulted a number of the corresponding external textbooks and study guides for each subject, as these are the textbooks the students actually use, in addition to their tutoring notes. I used the two most popular external textbook series, *Al-Adwa’* and *al-Mu‘alim*.

In addition to observations, interviews and textbook analysis, I have surveyed a large volume of relevant policy documents, local and international reports, press coverage and social media content, which are weaved into the analysis across the chapters. Finally, apart from the research for this book, my work in the educational field in Egypt extends from 2004 to the present. It has involved interviews and collaboration in numerous rural and urban locations with teachers, administrators, parents and students, researchers, experts and educational officials from the highest level in the ministry to the smallest local level. It has encompassed a range of research, policy and project implementation and evaluation engagements in areas ranging from early childhood education to teacher professional development, school construction and the “new education system” launched in 2018. This wider exposure across educational stages, topics and regional contexts also informs the analysis and arguments of the book.

2 Living the Intensities of the Privatized State: Informal Marketization across the System

Different intensities of informal privatization have become a defining feature of schooling experiences and represent a key component of the lived citizenship of different social strata. Informal privatization-by-tutoring affects almost every aspect of school life in Egypt, from whether the morning assembly ritual is performed to whether students and teachers come to school or enter classrooms at all. It ends up determining which subjects actually get taught and which get sidelined, which attract teachers, and which suffer shortages in the tens of thousands. It is however the *different* ways in which informal tutoring markets are established within and alongside formal institutions in the three types of schools that reflect the functioning of state institutions and differentiated modes of lived citizenship. This chapter provides vivid narratives of tutoring, teaching and cheating practices across a highly tracked system, featuring intimate portraits of exemplary public-school teachers, impoverished private-school teachers and millionaire star tutors presiding over private republics.

Informal Privatization in Egyptian Education

> Free education is a constitutional principle, necessary for maintaining social harmony.
>
> Hussein Kamel Bahaa Al-Din, Former Minister of Education[1]

> Greater efforts are being exerted to broaden the scope of the private funding of education, and to relieve the state budget of major financial burdens.
>
> Gamal Mubarak, Former Head of National Democratic Party Policy Secretariat[2]

Official statements in Egypt have consistently affirmed the inviolability of the constitutional right to free preuniversity education. Ministers of Education often voice harsh condemnation of private tutoring and the teachers who engage in it because of its violation of the principle of equity and the burden it places on families. Nonetheless, the growth of private tutoring has continued unchecked and has spread across various parts of the system. In fact, household spending on private tutoring has long been projected to exceed government spending on education (MOE 2007). The decline over time in teachers' real salaries, coupled with a weak institutional environment, has led to the growth of private tutoring across the system, especially since the 1990s, leading in particular to a "de-facto privatization of secondary education" perpetuated through various forms of corruption and lack of oversight (Sobhy 2012). Tutoring enrollment has been recently estimated at 43 percent in the primary stage, 61 percent in the preparatory stage, 73 percent in general secondary, 33 percent in technical secondary and 22 percent in university (Elbadawy 2014).[3] Although tutoring is more prevalent in urban centers like Cairo, the nationwide prevalence of tutoring has been increasing over time across all levels (Sieverding, Krafft and Elbadawy 2019). Preparatory and secondary stage students who take tutoring often do so in four to five subjects (Sieverding, Krafft and Elbadawy 2019), while 70 percent of those who take tutoring do so over the entire school year (Elbadawy 2014).[4] Furthermore, almost 70 percent of students enroll in private tutoring with their own classroom teachers (ELMPS 2012). Tutoring as used across this text does not refer therefore to taking a few extra classes in a difficult subject, but to pervasive privatized parallel schooling that is driven by forms of permissiveness and corruption in the school system.

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[1] Cited in Tadros (2001).

[2] Cited in Essam El Din (2003).

Tutoring has created a system that is both very inequitable and very expensive (World Bank 1996, Annex 2). Various studies have shown that private tutoring perpetuates and even exacerbates social stratification (Bray 2006, Akkari 2010, Bray and Kwo 2013) and that the marketization of education worsens learning disparities (Tan 1998, Alcott and Rose 2016). However, equity issues are relevant to teachers as well. In a recent survey of primary and preparatory stage teachers, 1 percent stated that they make 10,000–15,000 EGP per month from tutoring income, 3.7 percent made 5,000–10,000 EGP and 96.2 percent made less than 5,000 EGP (CAPMAS 2014). Such figures undermine the commonly voiced argument that no realistic increase in official wages would compensate teachers for their incomes from tutoring (e.g. World Bank 1996). While it is true that an adequate pay raise would not compensate the highest echelons of tutors for the profits they make on the informal market, this does not apply to the majority of teachers. Tutoring presents a very heavy financial burden for families across the socioeconomic gradient (Sobhy 2012).[5] Families in the highest wealth quintile spend about 10 times more than families in the lowest, and expenditures are much higher in urban areas (Ersado and Gignoux 2014). However, while the literature on shadow education has long recognized its impact on social inequality, only a handful of works have studied the multiple forms and dynamics of shadow educations across educational systems and levels (Manzon and Areepattamannil 2014). The rest of this chapter examines how tutoring works inside public *and* private schools in Egypt, how it transforms their functioning and the discourses and practices that explain, contest and perpetuate it.

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[3] It is not clear if there are gender differences in tutoring expenditures. Interestingly, Ersado and Gignoux (2014) found that families spent almost double the amount on tutoring for girls than for boys. A study published around the same time, however, found no gender differences in spending on tutoring (Sayed and Langsten 2014).

[4] According to one survey, 35 percent of preparatory students and 68 percent of general secondary students at the national level reported taking private lessons at some point, but the figures for Cairo were 59 percent and 77 percent, respectively (Sieverding, Krafft and Elbadawy 2019).

Markets of Theatre in Technical Schools

It was time for two back-to-back computer classes for first secondary students in the girls' technical school. The whole class moved to the computer lab. There were two or three students per computer, but the fact that there was a computer lab, that classes were actually held there and that students actually sat at the computers is unusual in public schools.[6] The teacher started dictating the lesson, and the students started writing after her. The teacher said that the class was behind in the curriculum and that they had to complete the lessons in their notebooks. She dictated features of the computer and the steps for completing certain simple operations (copying and pasting into folders). With frequent stops to discipline chatting, latecomers to class and other forms of noncompliance, the dictation was prolonged. One girl who seemed to have significant knowledge of computer use was ignored or silenced when she attempted to answer questions. Finally, the teacher demonstrated something on her computer, and students were allowed to replicate it on theirs. As this was the moment I had been waiting for, I looked at my watch. This lasted for about two minutes. Soon, they had to shut down the computers and the class ended. As we walked up to the classroom, I asked students how they felt about not spending more time working at the computers. They said this was normal. But how would they learn, I wanted to know. They said that those who wanted to could go later to the teacher to get an explanation; they would enroll in private tutoring with her. A couple of students went on to explain their understanding of the silencing of the knowledgeable student who was trying to answer questions and the prolonged disciplining and dictation as all related to "saving" the material and the explanation for the private tutoring. Similar situations of dictation and disciplining to avoid actual explanation were replicated in different classes and subjects.

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[5] According to a recent survey focusing on basic education, less than half the surveyed group (43.1 percent) of parents bears a cost of 51–100 EGP per year; 22.7 percent of parents pay 101–200 EGP per year; 17.5 percent pay more than 200 EGP; and the rest (16.7 percent) pay less than 50 EGP per year (CAPMAS 2014). Another study encompassing secondary education found that average expenditures on tutoring per pupil were EGP 35, 54, and 88 per month at the primary, preparatory and secondary levels, respectively, in 2007 (Ersado and Gignoux 2014).

[6] Where computers are introduced into schools, they are typically locked up "so that students do not damage them." Lab teachers are held responsible for any damage to the equipment and are simply not willing to take the risk or pay the costs of any damage or repairs.

Tutoring in technical education could, however, be seen as a striking phenomenon given the low stakes in this track of education. It was nonetheless pervasive and costly. In the boys' technical school, about two-thirds of first- and second-year students and about half of the final-year third secondary students enrolled in in-school tutoring.[7] First- and second-year students seemed to be more vulnerable than third-year students to teacher pressure to enroll. Their marks had a larger component controlled by schoolteachers. Final-year students sit national exams that are not marked at school, although they still could not pass the year without obtaining marks for "applied" (*'amali*) skills determined by schoolteachers. The rates of enrollment were very similar in the girls' technical school, although in third secondary, some students took classes in tutoring centers instead of at school. The official price of in-school tutoring should be 12 EGP per subject per month, although students reported paying 25 EGP for four classes per month in each subject and a total of 100 EGP for four subjects per month.[8] Those who enrolled in tutoring mostly took classes four days a week for the four core specialized subjects. They often took revision classes for other subjects as well before the exam, such as Arabic and English. Therefore, the average monthly cost of tutoring for technical school students varied between 50 and 100 EGP per month, with an average across the years of somewhere around 80 EGP per month.[9] This represents a significant burden on families, given that many households in informal areas are single-income and that incomes are low and often irregular. If the head of household earned 400 EGP per month, for example, tutoring for one child would already represent one-fifth of household income.[10] Apart from tutoring, students are also pressured to make other payments that do not fall under the schools' official regulations. Often framed as parental contributions to school improvements, in-kind contributions included air-fans, learning materials, clocks and wastebaskets. Students noted that many of these items were later removed from the classrooms to teachers' and administrators' rooms or outside the school. Students were also expected to pay for any photocopying demanded by teachers, including for their official monthly exams.

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[7] Enrollment in these officially organized in-school reinforcement groups varies greatly across the country. In-school tutoring revenues are distributed across the system, with a percentage of profit going to different levels of educational administration, thus creating incentives to retain and expand these markets. The Ministry raised fees in 2016; fees were set higher for urban than for rural areas and were higher for higher levels of schooling. For example, fees for preparatory-level group lessons in urban areas were raised to 35 EGP (just under 4 USD at the time) for the first two years of preparatory and 40 EGP for the terminal year (Sieverding, Krafft and Elbadawy 2019).

[8] There is a more expensive variant of in-school tutoring that is described as Special Groups *magmu'at mumayaza*, where class sizes are reduced. It is a further form of tracking and privatization in the system, where those who can pay more can arguably secure better service.

In addition to the accumulation of poor learning from earlier grades (Chapter 1), two forms of permissiveness drive tutoring enrollment in technical schools: teacher shirking and absenteeism. Even though many teachers attempted to improve their performance in my presence, there was very little teaching in most of the classes I attended in the boys' school. Most teachers did in fact come to school regularly and signed themselves into the school registers, which are closely monitored by educational authorities. They could still arrive late, leave for an errand or just not enter the classroom. Actual teacher absenteeism from the classrooms I observed was rampant in the four public schools. In fact, teachers did not arrive for at least one in every three classes, and often one in every two classes, during my time in the schools. Sometimes teachers arrived at the classroom but did not engage in much instruction. Most classes consisted of teachers dictating very short excerpts of lessons – a few sentences and key points to be written out in student notebooks, which are monitored by the Ministry supervisors – and disciplining every murmur from the students through verbal and physical punishment (see Chapter 3). Furthermore, in technical school, this

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[9] All costs and fees discussed in this chapter precede the 2016 devaluation and should be seen in this light in making longitudinal comparisons.

[10] Many low-skill private-sector jobs in the city paid between 300 and 400 EGP in 2008–10. However, many of the male students held precarious informal jobs and were often expected to pay for their own tutoring costs and many households relied on community assistance schemes, typically run by religious charities.

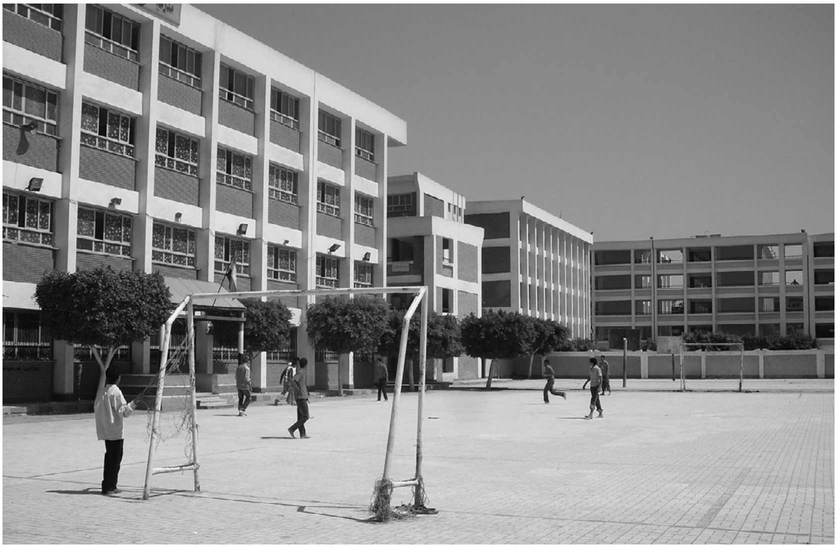

Figure 2.1 Students playing soccer in the boys' technical school, renovated by a donor agency

occurred in a very short school day of about four hours, during which many classes were cancelled. Some teachers did attempt to explain the material at hand, and a minority of students engaged with them. When this happened, it became apparent just how much of that material was beyond the level of the students, some of whom were effectively illiterate, many with very poor basic knowledge of the subjects being taught and others so irregular in their attendance that they could not possibly follow the material. The situation was somewhat better in the girls' school, which had both instruction and learning material that were better suited to students' abilities.

There was very significant student absenteeism in the two technical schools. In the boys' school, attendance was around 50 percent in most of the classes I attended (attendance rolls are called out at the beginning of every class). Students could attend the first four Applied Lessons in the year and skip the rest because this was sufficient to obtain a passing grade. Especially for boys in public schools, many students who did attend left the school in the middle of the day. Students made arrangements with teachers, who would cover up for them if an administrator or inspector checked the classroom. In addition to absenteeism and leaving school in the middle of the day (*katatan*, as students called it), if they stayed in school, students did not always enter classrooms but found other places in the school to hang out and engage in other activities, including playing soccer, running errands for teachers, smoking, trying to talk to girls across the fence or just chatting (see Figure 2.1). As part of the general dysfunction of these schools, students often did not even know the schedule of classes for each day because it was frequently changed without prior notice, as teachers shifted classes between them or did not show up to a class. Many students did not bring any notebooks, pens or other materials to school. In the girls' technical secondary school, there was higher actual attendance in classes as well as in tutoring, due in part to the fact that girls did not have work commitments as the boys did. Girls in the two types of public school attended school far more regularly than boys. Many girls wanted to come to school because it was their main arena of socialization outside the home. School allowed for legitimate mobility outside the home and entailed avoidance of household chores. "School is our outing" (*il-madrasa dih fushitna*), as one student put it.

Therefore, poor learning base, combined with truancy, might have led to tutoring as an understandable remedy to improving learning in technical schools, but tutoring did not actually perform this function. It was structured around memorizing only what was enough to pass the exam, which was very little indeed. The conditions of tutoring and cheating in technical education can be difficult to imagine for outsiders to the system. In the words of a student in the boys' technical school, "Students go to *magmu'at* [in-school tutoring groups] but they don't understand … they just take the *muthakirra* [tutoring summary notes]. That's 90 percent of the cases." It could be assumed that students then studied from these summary notes. He continued, however: "They just put it under the exam paper when they are solving." As another student put it: "[T]hey don't take these sheets to study them, they [enroll in in-school tutoring] and know that the teacher will allow them to cheat on the exam (*yighashishhom*)." Having access to the actual exam questions and avoiding discrimination by teachers was also the main purpose of tutoring in the girls' school: "[Y]ou have most of the exam questions, so you feel safe, otherwise the teacher singles you out."

While permissive assessment is a defining experience for technical school students, they are also subject to idiosyncratic influences. The extent of overt cheating can vary based on the school, the teacher and educational district. For example, although they devised many ways of cheating, students in the girls' school agreed that they could not openly use their tutoring summary notes or books. As one student explained, "Here they write the answers on the walls, on the desks, on their skirts, on the calculator. I learned cheating here." Another echoed: "Study and you'll pass, cheat and you'll get good grades (*zakir tengah, ghish tigib* *magmu*), that's the system of the school." Students also explained the dynamics of exam monitoring: "They don't care. They just put the question on the board and leave the room." However, when one student commented that "[t]hey should be invigilating," another immediately responded that "every student should monitor herself." Cheating was so entrenched that it was not easy for students to accept the idea of real assessment. Students were also aware that their exams were not really marked. Even in the girls' school, students noted that "the teacher marks one exam sheet and marks the rest the same," or that some teachers do not mark, "but they know the level of the school." Students reported being told explicitly by some teachers that they do not need to understand (and that the actual content of their answers does not matter) because all exam papers are marked similarly. This meant that the few students who entertained some aspiration to attain marks high enough to apply for university admission said that they had little faith that their marks would in fact reflect their performance in the exam. The overwhelming majority of technical school students were therefore concerned mainly with passing and said that their marks did not matter for either jobs or entrance into a two-year college. They were also not concerned about skills acquisition. Graduates typically obtain jobs entirely independently of their specializations, through connections and based on competences developed through work experience typically obtained while studying (see Antoninis 2001).

The very low academic requirements and lax assessment in technical secondary schools are driven by the fact that most technical schools are simply not equipped with the workshop materials, tools or specialized teachers to teach students the mandated curriculum. "Practical lessons" in the boys' industrial technical schools were often effectively cancelled due to a lack of materials, machinery or teacher preparation or motivation, as students moved to the workshop or lab to have a lesson consisting of a few sentences dictated to them. Several respondents also mentioned that when principals submit unsatisfactory completion results, they are personally penalized and rebuked, a clear incentive to inflate and falsify school results. As a senior administrator in the technical school recounted, when transfer and completion rates are still not high enough to be politically acceptable, the Ministry simply instructs districts and schools to raise their rates and the marks of students so that they can pass. Cheating and enforced pass rates become necessary based on the realization that real assessment would lead to most students failing (and expensive grade repetition and class densities).

The low quality and assessment permissiveness of technical education starts in disadvantaged basic education schools. Teachers in technical schools expressed that they had no faith in the marks presented by students in basic education – on the basis of which they were allocated to specializations within the school – as they did not reflect the abilities they encountered from each student. In fact, by the time they arrive in secondary school, many students are considered by teachers (and students themselves) to be "too used to cheating" and not accustomed to studying independently without tutoring or parental support. As one teacher explained, cheating "has come to be seen by students as a right they can shamelessly demand of teachers, who are also convinced that they cannot be protected from student intimidation or retaliation or the investigations and sanctions they would undergo if pass rates fall below 'the commonly accepted' levels." Students themselves were in fact keen to share stories of cheating and bribery as indications of the poor conditions of basic education and of their exploitation by school authorities across the different educational stages. As one student in the girls' technical school put it, "[I]n the school I was in, if the parents paid 450 EGP, the teachers gave them the exam answers." According to students in the girls' general school,

> [T]hey just keep passing us and passing us, even if you don't answer they pass you, until we get to the certificate year [the transition from one educational stage to another through national exams] and we know our real level, and even in the certificate, teachers told my dad, "Give me 500 EGP, and I will get her the answers …" It's the same in public and private schools … The answers were written for me on the board … My sister is in 4th grade. She told my mother, "[W]hy should I study? The teacher told me you are passing without studying."

In this context of poor service provision and permissiveness, coercion was the primary means through which teachers ensured student enrollment in tutoring. As one social worker explained, teachers use "all official and unofficial means" to harass students until they enroll in in-school tutoring. This ranges from physical beating to verbal humiliation, threats of expulsion and actual expulsion. These punishments are typically undertaken under the pretext of violations to official regulations, such as wearing noncompliant uniforms, irregular attendance, tardiness or misbehavior. After enrolling in tutoring, this disciplinary wave (in which administrators are largely complicit) ends, and many violations that were unforgivable at the beginning of the year are tolerated. As the social worker in the boys' technical school explained, "[T]hose who have money and can pay pass. The others don't pass … 75 percent of teachers do not explain because they save their energy for tutoring, or they make students not understand so that they need the tutoring … it all depends on tutoring." Because tutoring was normalized, students explained non-enrollment in tutoring to me simply in terms of whose father is deceased, does not live with the family or does not provide for his son. This is a clear testament of the impact of tutoring on equality. As a student put it, "the system of the school is 'you pay, you pass,'" and another completed the well-known motto: "[Y]ou cheat, you get a high score." Those students who did not enroll in tutoring had to rely on obtaining summary notes from friends, being able to cheat in the exam or just being passed because of unofficial ministerial policies that limit failure and repetition rates, although a small proportion of around 5 percent do fail (MOE 2007, 70).[11] As in many working-class households, most of the students in the boys' school worked in the informal economy. This is why some of them even enrolled in tutoring mostly on paper, effectively paying for the leniency required to have irregular school attendance in order to accommodate their working hours but securing the summary notes needed to pass the exam.

While pressure to enroll in tutoring can be explicit and severe, in many cases it is nonconfrontational, implicit and masked. As described in Chapter 3, in the girls' school there were lower levels of physical punishment, but the pressure to enroll in in-school tutoring was equally relentless. Tutoring coercion had become so normalized that students were more attuned to variations within the norm: "[T]here are some good teachers; they reduce the prices and take into account the student's circumstances," while "others just divide the students up into tutoring groups from the beginning." Girls described how, in the first weeks of school, many classes consisted of exhortations to enroll in tutoring, with the full support of the principal. In-school tutoring is, after all, a legal practice established by the Ministry of Education and could be promoted as being in the interest of students. The fact that promoting tutoring replaced actual teaching also sent a clear signal that no teaching would happen until enough students had signed up for tutoring.

Finally, the style and intensity of coercion into private tutoring enrollment varied among teachers and was arguably linked to their own class backgrounds, gender, educational training and even religious background. Students observed that female teachers, especially Christian teachers, were less coercive and more committed to their classroom teaching. In the case of women, this might have been linked to the fact that they were not considered the primary breadwinners and their dependence on the extra income from tutoring may not be a matter of survival for their families. Providing private tutoring and being absent from the home is not considered appropriate for many women and competes with the various forms of unpaid labor and care for which they are responsible. In the case of Christian teachers, lower tutoring coercion may have been driven by their greater moral integrity, as the students and the teachers themselves often argued, or to a perception of diminished entitlement to engaging in extralegal practices. It was also argued that teachers who were university graduates were better teachers and were less likely to coerce students into tutoring and generally had a different approach than Higher Institute Diploma holders. This was linked to their class background, and also to the level of training they received in their respective subjects. As a teacher in the technical girls' school explained it:

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[11] In 2005–6, the official promotion rate was 92 percent, the repetition rate was 5.1 percent and the dropout rate was 2.9 percent (MOE 2007, 70).

> Diploma holders are the same as the students. They cheated and continued. There were shortages, so they hired them. There is no awareness, so forcing students into tutoring is a necessity. There is no choice. They even pay if they do not attend. One of the teachers told a student who does not take a lesson with him: *if you have a chicken and you raise it and feed it and it goes to the neighbor to lay its egg there, you would slaughter it*. You will find worse types in industrial schools. They are from workshops. The others [university graduates], we are embarrassed to even talk about this, because of our principles, values and shame. We need this too [the additional income from tutoring].

In sum, tutoring in the technical schools prevailed despite the lack of any sense of competition over consequential marks, without remedying the profound issues of poor learning, and at significant emotional and financial cost to students and their families. However, while the stakes may not have been high for students in the sense of final marks, they can be quite significant in terms of completion of technical secondary. Obtaining a secondary school certificate opens up the desired (but ever elusive) possibility of obtaining formal secure employment, employment in other Arab countries, possibly better marriage prospects (due to higher social status) and avoidance of more prolonged military conscription.

Markets of Illusion for the Middle Classes

The dynamics of tutoring are very different in general secondary education, and they represent different challenges and serve different purposes for students and teachers in these more competitive markets. While students were usually not directly coerced, beaten or humiliated in order to enroll in tutoring, a variety of more subtle techniques, an accumulation of poor learning in basic education and the shortage of good quality jobs created a strong sense of injustice, exploitation, competition and despair. Here we enter the high-stakes realm of the infamous *thanawiya ʿamma*: the terrifying certificate exams of the secondary stage that determine which faculty and university a student can enter, the ultimate doorway to middle-class status. Because there are significant similarities between tutoring in general and private schools, this section describes the shared trends, while the next focuses on the idiosyncrasies that relate specifically to private schools.

In the two public general schools, enrollment in tutoring was near universal and student absenteeism rampant. Apart from some exceptions, all students in first secondary enrolled in private tutoring in all key subjects. This excludes subjects such as religious education, national education, art, music and physical education, which are not included in the student's final marks. Almost all students enrolled in tutoring in nearby tutoring centers (*marakiz*). Private tutoring centers are prominent in cities and urban centers and are more likely to enroll secondary school rather than younger students. As for *thanawiya ʿamma* students (second and third secondary),[12] their enrollment in tutoring was similarly universal, but they tended to combine tutoring in centers for some subjects with more expensive, higher quality private lessons (*durus*) in smaller groups for other subjects. School attendance differed greatly between first-year and *thanawiya ʿamma* students. First secondary students attended school fairly regularly, despite their enrollment in tutoring, because a proportion of their final scores is determined by monthly exams marked by schoolteachers and in-school performance. *Thanawiya ʿamma* students, on the other hand, tended to attend school for the first couple of weeks and then work their way through reaching minimum and variably enforced attendance requirements for the rest of the year. Beyond the first weeks, most came to school once every one or two weeks. Often, boys came only to jump the fence a couple of hours later. Some were more attached to school, as they came to play soccer in the playground, meet friends or attempt to talk to girls from the adjacent girls' school. For most of the school year, attendance in most *thanawiya ʿamma* classrooms was no more than one-tenth of the enrolled numbers. In many cases, *thanawiya ʿamma* students from different classes were placed together in one classroom so that only one teacher would have to enter the classroom and they would not be left alone. Students also noted that, if I had not been present, no teacher would have entered the classroom in the first place.

Although some teachers attempted to organize in-school revision sessions, there was almost no enrollment in the officially sanctioned in-school tutoring in the public general schools (and none in the private schools). However, while this ensures far better profits for teachers, it deprives administrators in public schools of their percentages of in-school tutoring revenue. Teachers explained that in many schools there was an understanding that informal arrangements had to be made to redistribute the financial benefits across the school, mainly through periodic gifts to key administrators, primarily the principal. In some schools, principals reportedly imposed “fees” on teachers – a kind of private tutoring tax or protection fee – in return for overlooking teacher absenteeism, complaints of poor teaching or veiled coercion of students to enroll in tutoring. A significant subset of teachers did not or could not take part in the tutoring industry, either because they were teachers of non-tutoring subjects or they had moral objections to the practice or faced limitations in fruitfully engaging it (like many women). Some expressed dismay at the prevalence of tutoring because it left them in the classroom with disinterested students who came one day and skipped a week or two, effectively rendering any attempt at teaching on their part futile. Overall, those who did not engage in tutoring also had to withdraw their investment from the classroom and devote their energies to other income-generating or social activities, as entering the classroom would not serve any clear purpose, except if a supervisor was conducting an inspection visit. This means that tutoring, in cases when it becomes so prevalent, renders a large part of the teaching workforce redundant and massively redistributes income, work and prestige across teachers.

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[12] This two-year system was changed back to a one-year system in 2014 and was changed again in 2018.

Tutoring costs are effectively 8 to 10 times higher for general secondary students than for technical secondary, revealing the prohibitive real cost of general secondary and the large income and status differences between students in the two tracks of secondary schooling. The cost of tutoring for public general secondary students was around 500 EGP per month, typically paid over a greater number of months and involving a host of additional expenses. The average cost of tutoring per subject per month for general secondary students was 70 EGP; and students typically enrolled in tutoring in five to seven subjects. The total monthly expenditure was 350 EGP at the minimum and 500 EGP on average, especially when significant additional expenses for private textbooks and workbooks, summary sheets, photocopying, revision sessions and commuting are included. Students and parents also had to factor in the associated costs of a meal or snack in long tutoring sessions and additional clothing costs. If students paid an average of 80 EGP per month for about seven months in the technical track (amounting to 560 EGP per year plus small additional costs), students in the public general schools paid an average of 500 EGP per month for an average of nine months (amounting to 4,500 EGP per year, plus considerable additional costs). The cost of tutoring in general secondary is indeed considerable. It is greater than many public-sector employees' salaries, including the salary of a starting teacher in the Cadre System. Several students noted that their parents had fallen into debt in order to pay for tutoring. Many students explained the huge burden of tutoring on their families, where, as was typical, more than one child was receiving tutoring; commuting across neighborhoods required much time, cost and energy; the mother was not employed; and the father had to work two or three jobs. As one student described it:

> My father tells me you could support a whole family [with your tutoring expenses]. My mother drives all of us to the lessons. There are four of us. One in KG … Yes, she takes lessons too. Where else would she learn? And the higher the fees of the school, the more expensive the tutoring … Two of us are in certificate years. And my father, he is "happy". He does not come home from happiness.

In stark contrast to the technical schools, the quest for rigorous exam preparation was the main reason general secondary students gave for their enrollment in tutoring, although it became clear that this was not so straightforward. Students found my questions about why they enrolled in tutoring counterintuitive, as tutoring had become the norm. They did not refer to coercion by teachers as the main reason, although teacher practices clearly played a role. However, they did try to explain to me that tutoring offered regular follow-up, homework and quizzes and more instruction time to cover the very long curricula. This more-intensive teaching geared toward exam preparation and memorization of the right way to answer the expected questions was simply only available in tutoring. Most teachers, who did provide it in their own tutoring groups, clearly did not offer it at school. According to students, this rigorous exam preparation was available especially in more expensive tutoring of smaller groups and with more personalized help and follow-up, rather than tutoring in large classes in local tutoring centers. In this sense, students typically linked the quality of tutoring to how much it cost. Some also lamented that their families could not afford even more expensive small group tutoring "that was actually good," which they believed was offered in more affluent neighborhoods.

With enrollment in tutoring almost universal and absenteeism among students the norm, most teachers, when they actually arrived in class, did not invest in communicating the material at hand, but mostly dictated key points and touched on small sections of the material. Some teachers gave religious advice to students or let them read the Quran, study for tutoring exams or listen to music. Alternatively, some teachers did not really *teach* the lessons but rather quizzed the students about their existing knowledge in a manner that would exclude students who did not enroll in tutoring. However, in stark contrast to the technical schools, student participation in classrooms, especially in *thanawiya ʿamma*, reflected a relatively strong knowledge base. To give one example, in an English language class, the teacher quickly skimmed over the lesson and began asking questions. A number of students shot back the answers and translations of difficult vocabulary, and not one student complained or asked for an explanation or repetition. The teacher asked about the meaning of the word "exhausted," and a student shouted out the translation "*mutʿab*"; then he asked the meaning of "sail," and another called out "*yubhir*." As one student explained after class, "they take a private lesson with him, so this is kind of a revision for them."

In all six schools, there was a minority of teachers who actually taught classes. They were present in almost every grade. Using a recurrent moral trope, students often referred to them as conscientious [*ʿanduhum damir*]. This meant not wasting class time, not withholding material or obscuring it, not discriminating against students who did not enroll in their private tutoring classes and not trying to encourage or force them to do so. The use of this moralizing rhetoric is significant in that it overlaps with the construction of the citizen as immoral and needing reform, discussed in Chapter 6. It also implies that even if tutoring was indeed normalized, it was not perceived as just or moral. Students often condemned the situation as ultimately unjust to them, and they placed significant moral blame on the teachers especially for its existence. This is partly because they were in a position to witness the discrepancies between the teachers' performance in school and in tutoring, or when supervisors or guests like myself were present. Students in the girls' general school told me that to understand this I would have to come to school as a student: "You will see the teachers for what they really are. When a supervisor comes, we don't believe ourselves. They never explain conscientiously (*bi-damir*), except when we have someone in the class." Unfortunately, conscientious teachers are not always good teachers capable of communicating the material to students. On the other hand, some conscientious teachers are very good at communicating the material, but not interested in teaching to the exam, wanting students instead to understand the material and develop a real appreciation for it. The following description of a teacher in the girls' general school sheds light on the construction of a conscientious teacher and its complex intersections with social class, notions of learning, gender norms and possibly even religious identity.

Mrs. Mirvat immediately stood out. She taught Ordinary Level English at the girls' general secondary school. Her style of dress was different than the other teachers and her hair was always styled in an elegant bun. She was perhaps the only teacher in the school who had a car. This, her demeanor and her elegant style placed her in a different social class than the students and the rest of the teachers. She was widely admired by the students. She came across as strict and did not allow much joking in class. However, she betrayed a certain tenderness and expressed sincere concern whenever a student was experiencing problems. She was not scared of intervening or helping out in such instances. She also stood out as probably the most respectful teacher toward the students in all six schools (including the private schools). She never used rude, accusatory or humiliating language, and always called students "miss" or "daughter." She navigated the school, classroom and students with confidence and grace. She had a reputation as an excellent teacher and as one of those who taught "conscientiously" in the classroom. "Unfortunately, the Christians are better than us in this," one student told me, referring to Mrs. Mirvat and other "conscientious" teachers in the school. In contrast with many public-school English language teachers, Mrs. Mirvat had a real command of English. She also had a real command of the curriculum and the way questions were asked and marked in the final exam. Her classes were rigorous, and students were expected to know all the answers by heart, as demanded by the exam. In the story class, students read in turn from the book and were expected to know by heart ideal answers to factual questions they might encounter in the exam about situations in the short story: for example, "why did Manal get upset when she heard about the scientist's discovery?" Mrs. Mirvat therefore taught to the expected learning outcomes that involved the rote learning that the Ministry demanded, while also expecting students to actually read aloud in English and understand the content well. Several students explained that they sometimes only came to school to attend her class, regretting that they frequently could not do even that, as it was difficult to come to school just for one class and disrupt one's tutoring and homework schedule. The normalized reliance on tutoring therefore paradoxically implied that students could enroll in tutoring even when their own classroom teacher was excellent and conscientious.

Finally, Mrs. Mirvat gave private tutoring on a regular basis, including to some students from the school. Although she was not one of the famous star tutors in affluent neighborhoods, this probably meant that she secured adequate income to maintain her distinct style and living standard. Not all students wanted to enroll in tutoring with her, however. While some viewed her as too strict or academically demanding, it was also implied that she was morally demanding. If a student was late or did not show up to class (to go out with female friends, a male friend and/or in order to spend the tutoring fees on another item), Mrs. Mirvat would make sure to inform her parents. Many girls were not seeking that kind of academic or moral rigor.

Tutoring served multiple purposes for students in ways that revealed their increasingly precarious middle-class status and aspirations and their dilemmas over gender norms. Despite student narratives about seeking rigorous exam preparation, it is not entirely clear what role competitive high-stakes examinations play in the universality of general secondary tutoring in disadvantaged schools. First secondary students, whose marks have very low stakes, overwhelmingly enrolled in tutoring, even while expressing a lack of interest in marks and frequently articulating first secondary as a break between the stressful third preparatory and *thanawiya ʻamma* certificate exams. However, some students stated that they would simply fail if they did not enroll in tutoring. Like their counterparts in the technical schools, many students conveyed that their education in the earlier stages had required no real effort on their part and, that most answers were accepted, cheating was commonplace, exams were easy and everyone passed. One driver of tutoring was therefore the weak foundational skills and fear of failing their subjects, rather than striving for high scores on a competitive exam.

Although some *thanawiya ʻamma* students in the public schools did show an interest in their final marks, many students are not really competing for university. Other than the highest achievers, the chances of the other students in these public schools to do sufficiently well are bleak indeed. Public university entrance scores (centralized and based solely on general secondary exam scores) have been continually rising to the point that top faculties have effectively restricted their admission to students who score higher than 90 percent and in fact over 98 percent for faculties like medicine. Almost 30 percent of those who successfully complete the general secondary stage are not accepted into any Egyptian university or institution of higher education, apart from the large numbers of students who are not placed in faculties based on their abilities, aptitudes or labor market needs (MOE 2014, 64–5).

Most students therefore exhibited paradoxical attitudes about competition for grades. It was as though they could not easily come to terms with the loss of their middle-class status. On the one hand, they were enrolled in general and not technical secondary (an expensive route that is meant to lead to university). On the other hand, they stated that they would never get the high marks needed to enter their desired faculties, nor university at all. They often reproduced the dominant middle-class narratives that they would like to become doctors or engineers, but they also recognized that this was highly unlikely. For example, after starting with “me too, my choice for university is engineering,” one student in the boys’ general school continued: “Well … all of this they are saying is nonsense … We will all end up in an institute [low-status two-year college accepting low scores] anyway.” Others then echoed his assertion. Despite the bitter sense of despair, a significant proportion of these students would probably enter university, although their grades would not allow them to access the more prestigious faculties and universities or to study the disciplines of their choice. Among girls, there seemed to be even less interest in marks. For example, when one high-achieving student explained her tutoring enrollment in terms of the importance of every mark, other students countered that students who care about one-tenth of a mark are rare and that “most girls want to get married,” implying that they would not seek employment or further education after marriage. In fact, many of the girls were already engaged to be married.

Student narratives also reflect the declining returns to education and high unemployment among educated youth, as described in Chapter 1. The level of frustration with unemployment was palpable. Many students felt that university enrollment was no longer worthwhile. They referred to acquaintances who were university graduates but were unemployed or severely underemployed and provided examples of law-school graduates working as cleaners or commerce graduates working as security guards in malls. Many considered education, and not only their own marks, as futile, because “we will all end up ‘on the sidewalk’ [jobless] anyway.” They also perceived university as a continuation of the effectively privatized system of de facto compulsory tutoring and low-quality instruction. In a sense, these young people were stuck between their theoretically middle-class background and expectations that they enroll in general secondary before seeking university admission, and the knowledge that there were very limited opportunities for them among the multitude of graduates from schools in more affluent neighborhoods who were competing for the same university places and the same jobs.

A final note is warranted about the impact of tutoring on the school as an institution of socialization and for the development of diverse forms of knowledge, skills and abilities. Teacher tactics to promote tutoring in key subjects did not liberate the school as an arena for other forms of socialization in non-tutoring subjects. “Activities” (*anshita*) classes in art, music and sports were usually cancelled, ignored or taken over by other teachers. Many school activities from debating clubs to art competitions and student representation exist on paper and appearance only. For example, on one occasion, the principal entered one class I was attending, asked the teacher about the “good students” in the classroom and took them to be presented to school guests as the school’s supposedly elected Student Union. In another instance, a teacher asked students to write a research paper "off the Internet" and to put it in a good-quality binding so that it could be submitted to a district contest. Then he turned to me and asked if I could actually perform that task (to showcase good work to supervisors). Other ways of upholding appearances included parents executing artwork for display in the school corridors, with a teacher's signature underneath to indicate he had supervised the activity with the students. The existence of activities on paper only is a key feature of the permissiveness and institutional collapse resulting from declining social spending (Chapter 3). The only real activities where students actually participated in the public schools were the seminars and trips organized and funded by the NGO sponsoring the school.

Emperors and Republics for the Highest Income Groups

The preceding discussion provides an idea of the diverse meanings of *mafish ta'lim* (no education) in public schools, which enroll over 90 percent of students. However, in many experimental and private schools, the quality of education is markedly higher. This means that students' literacy skills, their learning, their grasp of the material, the expectations placed on them and the modes of instruction and assessment are all more advanced. The private schools where I conducted my research are English language schools,[13] which already represent the more privileged portion (about 40 percent) of private schools. Despite enrolling fewer than 5 percent of secondary students, these schools represent the most vocal subset of the middle and upper classes. Their grievances are focused on the failure of official national curricula and examinations to equip them with the skills and competences they need. Almost universal enrollment in *private* tutoring by students in these *private* schools represents distinct additional dynamics and paradoxes.

The private schools not only had lower class densities and far better learning conditions but also employed some of the most famous star tutors, with whom students in other private schools aspired to reserve a place. Students exhibited even lower attendance rates than general schools, despite the fact that they were paying the regular school fees. They still had almost universal enrollment in tutoring in second and third secondary and at least 60 percent tutoring enrollment in first secondary. However, students enrolled in far more expensive tutoring with famous teachers, usually in nearby tutoring centers in the affluent neighborhoods in which the schools were located. As there are many costs related to tutoring, from transport (usually by taxi) to additional revision classes, to having to pay a large registration fee to reserve a place with a good tutor, overall costs are both hard to estimate (including for the students and parents themselves) and vary significantly between students. My estimate is that the average total private tutoring cost for private language-school students was about double that of general school students at around 9,000 EGP (1,000 EGP per month for 8–10 months).[14] Some students were able to reduce their costs below this figure, while others in higher-end private schools paid more. When factoring in school fees of around 6,000 EGP per year, the yearly private expenditure on education per student of 15,000 EGP is three times the spending in general secondary and 25 to 30 times the spending in technical secondary.

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[13] I conducted observations and interviews in a number of different private schools before focusing on the two main research schools.

In contrast to the public schools, teachers entered classes even when only a handful of students attended. *Thanawiya ʿamma* students usually stopped attending school altogether beyond the beginning of the year, so there was less need for entering classes. Investment in teaching quality was arguably low in the *thanawiya ʿamma* years because students attend so irregularly and because teachers know that students obtain their learning elsewhere. Overall, however, many teachers deliberately lowered the quality of their instruction in the school to encourage tutoring enrollment. As one teacher put it delicately, most teachers “leave something” for the private lesson. A teacher in the private girls’ school, who taught in school the same way she did in tutoring, explained that her colleagues criticized her practice of giving out revision sheets and frequent quizzes in school. Although she was the most senior subject supervisor, they blocked her attempt to spread this practice across the school, one of them asking her explicitly: “What would we offer in the private tutoring?”

The near universality of private tutoring created further remarkable dynamics, including the fact that teacher salaries were lower in many private schools than in the public schools. Some teachers in private schools received pay as low as 300 EGP. Because the revenue obtained from tutoring can be very high indeed, teachers are seen as being allowed to "use the school" to build up a clientele so that schools do not need to attract them with good salaries. As one teacher put it, "it's like in the gas stations, you know [where people work for tips]; the school's attitude is: 'I'm giving you access to a livelihood.'" In fact, not only were their wages very low but also they incurred various additional costs, and their financial rights were frequently violated, a pattern noted by teachers across different private schools. With salaries effectively under the poverty line, even in private schools, this clearly reinforced private tutoring and forced any teacher who wanted to have a decent teaching job with regular working hours (especially women) to turn to tutoring. This also had the damaging impact of expanding the practice in lower grades where there are no competitive exams. Beginner teachers in the girls' school received 400 EGP per month, while teachers in the mixed school received salaries based on the Teachers Cadre rates at around 500 EGP as a starting salary (because the school is a National Institute governed by MOE regulations). Over the course of my research, teachers in the girls' school were eventually given the right to Cadre pay rates as well. More experienced teachers received higher salaries, and star tutors received even higher salaries, although the school was still a client and status base, rather than a source of income, for them. Furthermore, many costs, including pay for cleaners or photocopying sheets for students, are passed on to teachers and students. This has had a strong impact on teaching quality, especially in foundational stages where tutoring is not universal. As one teacher in the girls' school vividly explained:

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[14] Private school students mostly had a two-hour class every day of the week, including weekends, and frequently had special revision or exam classes that lasted up to four hours and sometimes much longer. They could mix between 25 EGP classes, for the easiest subject: O Level English; and 100 EGP or more for subjects like Physics and Mathematics, especially as they are taught in English for most private school students. Private tutoring in Arabic usually cost around 50 EGP. A proportion of private school students have the foreign language of instruction as French, not English. For them, tutoring is typically more expensive. More intensive tutoring with sought-after tutors often begins in September or even in August, before the official start of the school year (in late September), and most tutoring lasts till the night before the exam (the exam period typically starting in early June).

> We had to pay to use the teachers' toilet. The supervisor had the key to the toilet, and to have a copy of the key made for us we had to pay. We paid 5 EGP each every month to get it cleaned by the school cleaners. We also had to pay for the teachers' room to be cleaned. We bought our own wastebaskets and anything else we used, like materials or resources for any activities or class decoration or photocopying sheets. It was up to each teacher really [what costs they invested in]. I did the photocopying of extra sheets thing once, but not again. In the beginning of the year, I bought materials for about 400 EGP [laughing] … my salary.

Private school students saw tutoring as fundamentally driven by the ways in which exams and curricula were designed, as well as the short length of the school year relative to the volume of the curriculum, regardless of how well teachers taught at school. As a student in the private girls' school put it, "[P]erhaps we could rely on school if they explained and corrected homework and held quizzes, but if the curriculum is too long, it still won't work." Tutoring was about exam preparation above all else, above learning the material and above even obtaining valuable marketable skills for them, such as English language proficiency.

Marian and I had been discussing tutoring in a private girl's school, when she mentioned Ms. Naila. She was one of the most sought-after millionaire star tutors. Marian described with amusement the setting and organization of the lessons she enrolled in with Ms. Naila. First, there were "bodyguards" checking if the homework had been completed at the entrance of the tutoring center. They were part of Ms. Naila's staff, but Marian joked at how they seemed to be selected based on body size. They immediately called parents from the student's mobile phone if the student had not attended the previous class, if the homework had not been completed and sometimes if the student was obtaining bad marks in assignments or quizzes. Inside the lesson, silence and behavior were monitored by about six members of staff in a lecture hall of about 350 students. With such economies of scale, this was one of the cheapest lessons available to private school students at 25 EGP per lesson. Marian was not only interested in getting the highest scores on the exams but also seemed to value how the context of the tutoring helped and forced her to study and solve exams. Not only was there a quiz and homework in every class, there were also frequent, lengthy and fully monitored exams marked by assistants. These were then reviewed by Ms. Naila in sessions that extended well beyond class time and frequently involved extensive *tahzi'*: mocking reproaches for bad performers, stern reminders of the necessity of studying hard and the difference every grade could make between getting into your desired college or ending up in a provincial university or a low-status faculty. As the end-of-year exam approached, Ms. Naila held exams where students spent the whole day in the center solving hundreds of invented and previous exam questions. Actual exam questions never departed from Naila's revision questions, asserted Marian (not commenting on whether this implied special connections within the Ministry). Ending her vivid description, she came back to the issue of recent declarations by the Minister of Education about making students attend school and not rely on tutoring. She said that, even if he tried to close the tutoring centers, Naila could set up a whole school in seconds. Pointing to a building inside the school, she said, "[F]or sure Naila could buy any building like this, and tomorrow the lessons would continue; she's a republic on her own."

Ms. Naila teaches Ordinary Level English. The aim of her entire enterprise, however, has nothing to do with developing English language skills. O-Level English is decidedly below the level of most of Naila's English language-school students. In fact, their focus on O-Level English has arguably reduced their overall English language proficiency, as they stop attending school or studying for High Level English, which does not factor into their final grades. Naila's "Republic," as Marian called it, is an empty republic, an elaborate system of hours upon hours of intensive work by students whose skill levels in English supersedes that offered by the Republic. The purpose, however, is different: It is to chase after 20 marks out of the final total, achieved by memorizing almost word for word a short story on which students answer factual questions and by reproducing the way that examiners render controllable the rules of English grammar (ways that were not always grammatically correct). The citizens of this private republic will never be required to communicate in English throughout this process and most expect to enroll in even more private instruction in English throughout their university years in order to actually improve their language skills. Along their tutoring journey, these citizens endure grinding rebuke and reminders of the limited chances that exist for enrolling in good faculties. In her magnificent edifice, Ms. Naila and other Kings of Mathematics, Monsters of Chemistry and Emperors of Physics, as they advertise themselves, were selling nothing more than a slim slice of a chance to achieve the upper middle-class dream. Each neighborhood of the city has its own stars, whales and kings, vividly advertised on walls and buildings, across from schools or on the walls of metro tracks. Outside the affluent neighborhoods, however, what is being sold is increasingly an illusion rather than a small slice of opportunity.

But just as they create emperors and millionaires, tutoring markets also create impoverished and marginalized teachers. These are the teachers of subjects that do not enter official student totals, the arts, music and sports teachers who have seen their roles and statuses take a very deep dive in recent decades. These are also the teachers who want to teach differently, who do not want to teach to the exam, but who want to help students learn and acquire a wider range of skills, abilities and knowledge. They include teachers who think of their teaching as a mission, who have invested in nurturing certain civic, liberal or other values in their students. They include teachers who consider tutoring morally objectionable because it is already their job to offer good instruction, who see it as giving an unfair advantage to those who can pay more and as nurturing constant dependence among students and depriving them of critical skills and initiative. The way that tutoring had taken over the schools meant that instruction geared to higher or diverse skills and abilities – such as High Level English in these English Language Schools – was sidelined to focus on areas that determined student marks and university admission.

The example of Ms. Huda, an exceptional English teacher in a girls' private school, reveals the skills, values, status, social recognition and livelihoods that are lost in this context. "She is one of the best teachers we have," a *thanawiya amma* student in the school told me. "She is like our friend. She really gets us working and participating … Well, we were really active in the first semester last year (first secondary) preparing the lesson and all this … but then … I don't know … we lost the energy … we stopped answering in class, stopped preparing … Well and this year we don't come to school, so …" Ms. Huda teaches High Level English, which uses classical novels, like *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*, and focuses on writing, comprehension and more advanced grammar. Ms. Huda is a lively and highly sociable person with whom it was easy to develop a rapport. She also warmly invited me to visit her in her home. As soon as I arrived, the apartment struck me as an affluent home that had not been maintained for decades, with collapsing furniture and decaying walls. Ms. Huda quickly shared her reflections about this. She explained her inability to renovate the apartment, and that they "do not buy meat," as she cannot afford it. She is separated from her husband and is the main provider for herself and her two children. Despite her decades of experience, her private school salary was exactly in the range of public school teachers – embarrassingly low to state to me openly, but explained as lying within the general pay scale of the school. She did not offer private tutoring, although she sometimes gave extra help to students without charge.

She was very proud of her teaching and placed special importance on her close relationship with students. She tried to teach them well, to get them engaged with the material and to develop their English language and other skills. She talked and joked with them openly about their concerns and problems inside and outside school. She tried to teach them to be independent learners, for example, extracting their own questions from the novels, instead of giving them set questions and model answers as other teachers did, encouraging them to speak up and to express themselves in English. Ms. Huda knew she could have opted to develop mastery in teaching Ordinary Level English to the exam, but her ethic of teaching was diametrically opposed to the logic of dependency implied in tutoring and the focus on the lower skills and rote-learning required for the exam. Throughout my presence in that school, I understood that she was articulating a sense of herself as being "a rebel," in more ways than one: in defending students' interests, in talking openly with them about sensitive topics like religion and sexuality, in securing their trust, in teaching them in a different way, in being a "moderate" Muslim, in countering the "superficial" understandings of religion she felt her students were increasingly adopting, and in questioning the new trend of their seeming alienation from having a career and their preference to be housewives. But at different moments throughout my involvement in that school, a heavy feeling seemed to descend on her. She expressed a sense of futility or despair and a deep sadness about how things had become; about being devalued, excluded and unfairly impoverished. Apart from making a decent living or deeply engaging with students on critical social issues, the space for her to just be a teacher has almost evaporated in today's depopulated schools.

It is not only teachers like Ms. Huda who are dissatisfied with this situation, its financial and emotional consequences and the skills regression it represents. Affluent families are bitterly critical of the need to mobilize the whole family and its resources for questionable skills acquisition at the expense of athletic, artistic or cultural cultivation, or simply social and entertainment activities and adequate rest. Private school students often expressed dismay at having to abandon their sports practice and other social, intellectual and creative activities when reaching the secondary stage because of tutoring and studying commitments. As in public schools, all school activities and subjects aimed at a more holistic development of student skills and abilities were marginalized or effectively eliminated because of truancy and dependence on tutoring. The dynamics of marketization therefore created a sense of grievance and injustice even among the affluent classes who constitute an important part of the country's intellectual elite. In fact, their historical right to a decent and free university education has also been seriously compromised by similar forms of de facto privatization, high densities and the low quality of education in the public universities. Therefore, despite their greater financial means, many affluent families experienced this situation as unfair, corrupt and as placing a heavy financial burden on them. They often complained about the high prices charged by tutors and blamed the government for having let tutoring spiral out of control.

Inequality, Contested Marketization and Neoliberal Teachers

Enough enough enough enough	كفاية كفاية كفاية كفاية
This *Thanawiya Amma* is a nightmare for me	الثانوية العامة دي بالنسبة لي كابوس
For years we've been sitting dazed like bulls	بقالنا سنين قاعدين مبلمين زي التيوس
Enough means enough	كفاية يعني كفاية
I've been taken for a fool for too long	اتضربت كتير على قفايا
But I want to know the end of the story	لكن نفسي اعرف إيه آخر الحكاية
I will not catch up with any college	خلاص مش هلحق ولا كلية
There are no teachers	مافيش مدرسين

There are no invigilators	مافيش مراقبين
If you have money, you will live like the others	لو معاك فلوس هتعيش زي الباقيين
I thought I'd leave the book and start to rap	قلت أسيب الكتاب وابدأ اغني راب
I might find the door to escape the agony	يمكن ألاقي الباب اللي يهربني من العذاب

Abridged lyrics from a popular *Thanawiya 'Amma* rap song (Thanawiya Rap 2010)

Private tutoring has precipitated the disintegration of the secondary school as a site of learning and socialization for Egyptian youth. The technical schools reveal markets for the working classes, where students are effectively coerced by underpaid teachers to enroll in private tutoring in order to secure a passing grade and a formal qualification, under conditions where they receive very little education and pass their exams through open and systematic cheating. Tutoring markets for the urban working classes are created and perpetuated, not voluntarily or through an entrepreneurial spirit based on supply and demand, but rather through different forms of coercion by underpaid teachers. These involuntary markets fail to serve any purpose in providing educational value. In a track that enrolls more than half of the students in that stage, education is absent, cheating is pervasive, and students are forced to buy their degrees by paying for tutoring in return for no instruction. This payment for supposedly free education is being extracted from families that are already struggling to secure their basic needs and from boys below the legal working age juggling precarious, low-paid and sometimes dangerous work in the informal economy to support themselves and their families. Privatization through forced tutoring is a fundamental aspect of the lived citizenship of these young people and is essential to understanding the sense of injustice and inequality they expressed and the forms of non-compliance in which they engage (Chapter 4).

Tutoring for the more privileged students in public general secondary schools reflects markedly different realities of lived citizenship. Tutoring for general secondary students is a market of illusion in which the core of middle-class youth are pushed to participate despite the rapidly declining prospects of achieving the middle-class dream of university enrollment, formal employment, independent nuclear family residence and the semblance of a professional career. Here, the market theoretically presents itself to students as providing an edge in exam performance. This myth is perpetuated through a web of financial interests in what has become a multi-billion pound industry. The decreasing chances for university graduates to make the transition to modern adulthood since the 1990s (Chapter 1) are at the root of the spread of private tutoring in general secondary and from there to lower grades and to university. The risk of being reduced to underemployment, unemployment or precarious low-paid jobs in the informal economy structures the practices and choices of the core of the middle class in Egypt. Informal educational privatization is a means by which families trying to preserve their middle-class status attempt to improve their chances to make such modern transitions. Instead of direct coercion, marketization is made possible by the Ministry's curriculum, textbooks, examination policies and practices, and an overall absence of accountability. A short school year that is incompatible with an overloaded curriculum, teachers shirking their duties due to low pay, and alleged conflicts of interest have made tutoring the norm in general secondary. This has imposed a massive cost on middle-class families with limited and uncertain prospects for commensurate rewards.

There is an illusion of similarity between tutoring in public and private general secondary, but the realities are vastly different especially for the more privileged language schools studied here. Private schools in affluent neighborhoods represent the pockets in the system in which high-income families make a heavy financial and emotional investment in high-stakes examinations that provides a more viable route to a secure professional career. In this highly competitive, nerve-wracking track, they are required to learn and memorize vast amounts of material that equip them with few valuable skills. They have more realistic chances of joining better public and private universities and securing formal employment, but they must suffer the double or triple privatization of paying fees for schools they hardly attend, paying tutoring costs for instruction that is only geared toward exam success and paying for additional learning and developmental programs that their schools should provide.

Apart from inequality, poor learning and cheating, a key implication of the heterogeneity, arbitrariness and extralegality of these forms of privatization is that they are not hegemonic or accepted as legitimate across different social classes, even in the more affluent households. They are variably considered immoral, inequitable, corrupt, unfair and as repressing healthy childhoods and youthfulness. The lyrics and the voice of the rapper in the song highlighted in the beginning of this section, which students listened to on their mobile phones and shared with me, echoes this sense of injustice and indignation. Outside high-end private schools, tutoring in Egypt emerges as a phenomenon that is not easily explained as a remedy to poor education, or as driven by job competition and high-stakes examinations. Across most of the public school system, it is difficult to see it as much more than a deliberate strategy to subsidize low teacher pay outside the law. That is, it is an outcome of austerity and permissive governance that, as Chapter 3 will further demonstrate, is critically facilitated by different forms of violence.

As is the case for other public servants, informal and extralegal income is very unequally distributed among teachers. Although many teachers do rely on tutoring to supplement their incomes, the distribution of tutoring profits is highly unequal, varying greatly based on the subject taught, school location, educational stage and each teacher's entrepreneurial or coercive skills. Strictness in academic matters, the socioeconomic profiles of the teacher, leniency with gender mixing and the reporting of student performance or attendance to parents are all elements that vary significantly among teachers and that are valued by some students and parents more than others. Critically, this type of marketization fundamentally disadvantages women and deprives many of them of the decent livelihoods that were available to them in one of their key traditional occupations in the public and private sectors. Tutor lifestyles of working late and long hours, "jumping around" from one tutoring center or student home to another and dealing with clients, parents and diverse employees is seen as decidedly less appropriate, acceptable or feasible for women, and incompatible with their duties in the home and in caring for the extended family.

Finally, instead of the creation of a new kind of neoliberal teacher or subject, the marketization of education has led to the emergence of a diverse array of dispositions and new and widening regional and gender inequalities. In general secondary, and especially at the higher end of the tutoring market, teachers are now expected to build and maintain customer relations, craft and manage a market image and reputation, develop their performative style (including elements of entertainment and charismatic performance), use advertising and marketing strategies, have catchy slogans and offer special promotions and combinations of services: indeed "to make enterprises of themselves." Teacher and student practices in higher-end private schools are indeed embedded in a neoliberal market logic that has created very unequal highly stratified and gendered outcomes. However, many of the typical neoliberal dispositions do not seem to have materialized in the rest of the education system in Egypt. Instead of the active, enterprising self-help required of neoliberal citizenship, most students are becoming more dependent in their learning styles and unable to approach the learning of materials without direct assistance from an adult or tutor. They feel helpless and indignant in the face of bleak employment prospects and their narratives of citizenship contrast considerably with tenants of neoliberal citizenship (Chapter 6). Although not exactly those predicted by its proponents, the policies and practices of the privatization of education are indeed "creating new ethical spaces and new clusters of goals, obligations and dispositions" (Cribb and Ball 2005, 115).

3 Everyday Violence and Punishment in the Schools

This book starts by narrating a violent scene and this chapter elaborates on patterns of beating and humiliation that many readers will find disturbing. I did not, however, set out to study violence when I started this research. Instead, I wanted to understand the reproduction of authoritarianism through the forms of social control deployed in schools. I did not expect that, instead of an authoritarian project of citizenship, I would encounter a volatile environment in which physical and emotional violence constituted fundamental components of the lived citizenship of young Egyptians. I also did not expect to see such prominent forms of contestation among students across the schools. This chapter and the next unpack the forms of discipline, punishment and contestation that pervade Egyptian public schools. This chapter in particular addresses the key questions relating to violence by school authorities in Egyptian schools in its historical, social, cultural, classed and gendered dimensions. How does violent punishment vary in nature and intensity across types of schools and educational phases? Is violence particularly related to a "culture of the poor" or their structural conditions? Is violence changing in its forms or intensities How do teachers explain and situate their practices, and how do students receive and narrate them? Is violent punishment accepted by students and families, or contested and rejected? How is this violence gendered, and what constructions of masculinity and femininity does it stem from and nurture?

I first situate the question of harsh punishment in global, regional and local perspective. I then discuss the features of violent punishment in both technical and general schools together and the factors that drive them. I discuss private schools separately due to the stark difference in the forms and intensity of punishment. I then explore the links between violent punishment, the culture of the poor and debates around masculinity and violence. Through the example of a demonstration in support of violent punishment in 2011, I begin to address the distinctions between repressive/exploitative and disciplinary punishment made by students and families.

School Punishment in Perspective

The forms of violence found in schools are both physical and psychological, and usually occur together. From the initial introduction of universal education in the Global North in the nineteenth century until well into the last century, beating, humiliation and isolation were routinely used as methods of teaching and discipline (Pinheiro 2006). At home and school, corporal punishment and other forms of cruel or degrading punishment were widely favored methods of "discipline, perceived as 'taming' unruly children, training presumptuous children to take their 'proper places' in the social order and hardening unseasoned children to a difficult, brutal and abrasive world" (Pinheiro 2006). As Middleton (2008) notes in the case of Britain, what now might be considered cruel was likely considered unremarkable in the early twentieth century, at a time when physical violence was a part of everyday life. Corporal punishment and the implements of such punishment were a regular part of the spectacle of power within schools (Middleton 2008). It has been argued that corporal punishment did not constitute the sort of individual that the state in the late twentieth century deemed appropriate, as it tended to exclude rather than include (Marshall and Marshall 1997). Corporal punishment loomed remarkably large in criticisms of educational practice in early modern educational institutions, which "were perceived as poorly regulated, arbitrarily managed, abusive, ineffective, generating resistance" (Deacon 2006, 179). Corporal punishment was associated "with a poor economy of coercion," that is, "the concern was less about inhumanity or violence per se and more about the *kind* or degree of violence that might best mould particular individuals" (Deacon 2006, 179–80). Studies of school punishment in countries of the Global North depict a general progression from negative to positive forms of discipline. Schools increasingly abandoned corporal punishment and resorted to other methods of discipline, such as codes of conduct, suspension and teachers' management of student behavior inside the classroom so as to maintain safe and orderly environments conducive to effective teaching and learning (Cameron 2006). "Punishment in schools began to shift away from the public, the spectacular and the physically violent, to the personal, the mundane and the psychologically compelling, from 'threats or blows' to 'a cold and neglectful countenance' … The body, once made to be tortured, became something to be trained and corrected" (Deacon 2006, 182). Despite this general progression, however, studies of schools in the Global North often observe that children of color, boys and students who receive remedial services for disabilities are disproportionately and more severely subjected to such school discipline (for reviews, see Cameron 2006 and Hyman 1995).

While it may be tempting to think that Egyptian schools are at an earlier point in the same trajectory as countries in the Global North, most indicators point to a rise in violence in Egyptian schools in recent decades. Although corporal punishment has been a regular feature of public and private schools since the inception of modern schooling in the Middle East (see Fortna 2002), the level of violence and humiliation in today's public schools in Egypt is generally seen as unprecedented. In the late 1990s, around 80 percent of the boys and 60 percent of the girls in one study reported being beaten by teachers using hands, sticks, straps, shoes and kicks (Youssef, Attia and Kamel 1998). About a decade later, a study by the National Center for Social and Criminal Research (NCSCR) showed that 91 percent of noncompliant students experienced violent punishment (Yunus 2009). By 2010, further changes in the nature of this violence could be noted, and the topic gained media visibility and attention from commentators. A report by the Egyptian Centre for Human Rights (ECHR) on incidents of teachers committing severe violence against students listed 41 cases that had been reported in the media in one academic year, which included severe beating; the breaking of an arm, a nose or a finger; threats of pushing students out of upper floors or of beating students with shoes; stepping on their necks; hitting them with sticks; puncturing their ears, using an electric Taser; injuring their faces; slandering them and preventing them from entering school (Nasif 2010). According to the report, the reasons teachers gave for such violent punishment included students not understanding the material, speaking out of turn or with a classmate, excess noise in the classroom, attempts by teachers to coerce students to enroll in in-school tutoring or private lessons, students' long hair, students' rejection of punishment, their requests to leave early, their failure to bring the proper notebook or to do the homework, their jumping the fence or not attending morning assembly. On the other hand, official MOE regulations definitively protect students from beating and humiliation, and regular instructions to teachers, especially in recent years, point out that "physical and emotional punishment" (*al-ʻiqab al-badani wal-nafsi*) is strictly forbidden. In fact, amendments to the 2008 Law of the Child went further to "criminalize" school violence against children, instead of leaving it subject to Ministry regulations alone. This took place in a context in which violent punishment was intensifying, and the law was little known across schools.

However, there is little systematic data on how a host of different factors affect school punishment in Egypt, from gender, teacher-training and large class sizes to whether the school has a rural or urban location. Gender however plays a clear role in these dynamics. In his work on masculinity and schooling in Jordan, Shirazi shows how the rationale for different forms of discipline is very much bound up in binary constructions of gender identity and the understanding that boys are inherently more difficult to control and require strict, firm and – depending on the teacher – physical forms of discipline in order to learn how to be respectful and "become men" (Shirazi 2016, 7–8). Indeed, Herrera (1992) explains in her ethnography of a preparatory school in Cairo in the 1980s that teachers make a clear distinction between male and female students and the more effective way of dealing with each one's "nature." Thus, girls are "shamed," punished more verbally and embarrassed in front of their peers, while boys have to be beaten and beaten harshly, as they do not respond to "mild" punishment. In addition to gender, variations in the frequency and intensity of punishment may be related to large class sizes and low teacher qualifications, as suggested by studies in other contexts.[1]

Physical and emotional punishment of students is still by no means unique to Egyptian schools and is common in other countries of the Global South. For example, the findings of a 2007 report conducted in 13 Indian states indicated that about 65 percent of schoolchildren had suffered corporal punishment (Nagar 2007). This is still 26 percent less than the 91 percent figure reported for Egypt in the NCSCR study (Yunus 2009). In some other countries in the Global South, beatings are also common (see Pineiro 2006, Ogando Portela and Pells 2015), though it is difficult to make meaningful comparisons across countries from available survey data where definitions of corporal punishment[2] and harshness are not always comparable, and intersections with social class and gender are not always examined. The disproportionate application of corporal punishment to boys and to children from less-advantaged backgrounds has however been observed in recent studies (Ogando Portela and Pells 2015). With regard to the regional context, it is unlikely that the level of violent punishment in Egypt's public schools is similar across Arab countries, although there is very little comparative research that can fully ascertain this. Anecdotal evidence suggests that current modes of punishment in Egyptian schools are not paralleled in other Arab countries such as Morocco, Tunisia or Jordan, and certainly not in the Gulf countries.

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[1] One study conducted in Yemen suggested that the factors associated with harsh corporal punishment include the school being in a rural area, the child being male, low maternal education and large family size or larger class sizes (see Alyahri and Goodman 2008).

[2] The Committee on the Rights of the Child defines corporal or physical punishment as any punishment in which physical force is used and is intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however slight. Most such punishment involves hitting (smacking, slapping, spanking) children with the hand or with an object. It can also involve kicking, shaking or throwing children; scratching; pinching; biting; pulling hair or boxing ears; forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions; and burning, scalding or forced ingestion (for example, washing children's mouths out with soap or forcing them to swallow hot spices). Nonphysical forms of punishment include, for example, punishment that belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child (see Pinheiro 2006).

While there is no claim that the modes of punishment in the six research schools are representative of violence across Egypt's schools, available data suggests just how commonplace these practices are. The aim of this discussion is to describe the discourses and practices that surround punishment in concrete school contexts. "Beating in schools" is the most common phrase used to describe violent school punishment in the media, public discourse and the schools themselves, so I sometimes use beating (*darb*) and humiliation (*ihana*) to denote terms that are more commonly used in the field. I did not study the interrelated phenomenon, also widely discussed in Egypt, of "violence in schools," which reports rising levels of violence by students against teachers, against school property and against each other. I do refer however to the issues students explicitly raised around sexual harassment by male students (Chapter 4), and issues around student assertiveness after the Revolution (Chapter 7).

Beating and Humiliation in the Public Schools

> There is no education in the first place … The teacher comes in, beats the kids around a little and leaves.
>
> Student in the boys' technical school

Zifta (scum)[3] was the first word I heard inside a classroom in my fieldwork. *Zifta* was simply shouted at different corners of the room and at particular girls by the teacher in the girls' technical school until all students were seated and quiet. Students were also told, with reference to my presence, "If we are not respectable (*muhtaramin*), at least we could pretend to be." Name-calling and scolding were the main practices that many (but not all) teachers used to establish order and calm or rebuke noncompliant or underperforming students in the public schools in my presence. Real or perceived noncompliance was typically responded to with verbal humiliation: *shitima* – name-calling – often directed at the whole class and often extended to more general derogatory statements about the students as a whole, their future potential and their families and parents who had failed to "raise them properly." Students were regularly called stupid, garbage, retarded or animals. "*Hayawan/a*" (animal), "*zift/a*" and "*humar/a*" (donkey) were the most common curses I heard – considered mild enough to use in front of a guest like myself. In one class in the boys' general school, a teacher who often used beating, kicking and derogatory language and gestures with students, simply called out the names of all the students, using "*il-hayawan*" before each one: the animal Ahmed, the animal Fadi and so on. This was not in response to any individual or collective offense, but simply to summon them to the front of the class to collect their medical insurance cards. Violent physical and emotional punishment has become a prominent and normalized aspect of student experiences. The statement in the beginning of this section by a student in the boys' technical school was made in a more general conversation on the school, where the spontaneous translation of "no education" is also that classroom interaction is reduced to violence. This is not a legacy of secondary schools alone. In fact, students and teachers agreed that beating is more common for younger students in earlier grades. These observations are confirmed by a rare nationwide survey in 2012 (ELMPS 2012).[4]

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[3] Feminine of *zift*: Literally, the black tar used for covering asphalt roads, but also indicating someone or something of low value and worthy of contempt.

In the two boys' public schools and, to a lesser extent in the girls' schools, many teachers also carried around hard plastic hoses or medium-sized canes (roughly a meter in length). They used them in the courtyard, corridors and classrooms. Others used their hands and legs to deal with noncompliant students. Although students frequently remarked that beating and humiliation were considerably reduced in my presence, in the boys' technical school, students were still slapped on the face and harshly beaten in my presence, as in the incident narrated in the opening of the Introduction chapter. Furthermore, if the principal was made aware of student noncompliance, students also risked enduring his courtyard drills as an additional punishment, consisting of sets of challenging squats and physical exercises.

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[4] According to a 2012 survey, 80 percent of respondents said that students in their primary school were subject to physical punishment, more than half saying that this occurred either daily or frequently (ELMPS 2012). The percentage is somewhat lower for the older preparatory schools, with 70 percent of respondents reporting regular physical punishment in their schools and even lower in secondary schools, where 30 percent said there was regular physical punishment and 50 percent said that students are never beaten (ELMPS 2012).

In the girls' schools, the use of humiliation was common, but physical beating took different and less severe forms. Teachers in the girls' public schools responded to student noncompliance with punishments that ranged from name-calling, twisting the student's ear or hitting her on the back or shoulder to calling her parents and sending her to the principal. As a student in a girls' technical school put it, "they always hit and never talk gently … They talk with their hands or hit with the stick." While some teachers reportedly slapped students on the face, threats of slapping and the general use of intimidating language and gestures were more common. Pulling scarves off the girls and punching them in the shoulder was far more common than actually slapping the face or the harsher beating I witnessed and was informed of in the boys' schools. According to female students, the major causes of punishment were girls' perceived immodesty, nonpayment of tutoring fees, the personality of the teacher, classroom disturbances and efforts to deter students' complaints.

Although the clearest distinction was gender, with beating being disproportionately applied to boys and the policing of sexuality used with girls, social class was a major determinant of the frequency and severity of punishment between technical and general schools, but importantly within each school as well. Students who came from more affluent or better-connected families were typically afforded better treatment, including the children of schoolteachers. In both technical schools, students who paid their in-school tutoring fees regularly and enrolled early were spared the related abuse. The difference between technical and general schools was also clear. Humiliation and derogatory language were less pronounced in the general schools. Students in the girls' general schools recounted, for example, that one teacher told them when they asked him to explain something. He said, "You will not understand more than this … this is your level." Derogatory language took a less-severe form than "animal" and "scum," although curse words were not uncommon. It was often remarked that students in private schools were not similarly beaten or humiliated. Students articulated dignified treatment as something afforded to those who had the means to pay for it; explicitly portraying the disrespect of teachers as premised on their class status. As students in the girls' general school put it, "teachers treat us as though they are above us," "they treat us as though we are from the street," and "they look down on us." Indeed, one of the reasons students sometimes gave for their entitlement to greater respect was not that this was their right as citizens, students or human beings: It was the possibility that they were not, in fact, destined to low social status as their teachers assumed. As one student put it, "they should not treat us this way … maybe we will graduate and become doctors." Most were aware, however, that such prospects were limited indeed.

Apart from these clear gender and class dimensions, emotional and physical punishment were "informalized" and arbitrary, rather than part of a codified regulation. It was dependent on a number of factors and patterns of exchange in the school context, including student age, personal relations, family background and enrollment in private tutoring with the teacher. It therefore did not represent the same kind of grievance for all students. This added a critical element of arbitrariness or ambiguity in the extralegal application of punishment. For example, the older and more assertive third secondary students in the boys' technical school were notably spared some of the harsher humiliation and beating that many first and second secondary students endured. Teachers were also less able to pressure them into enrolling into tutoring groups (as reflected in their lower enrollment in tutoring discussed in Chapter 2) or to coerce them to perform additional chores in the school. A few students implied that their fathers were able to intimidate teachers in order to deter them from too much aggression. Orphaned students or those whose fathers had left the household were seen as being the worst off in this regard. Active mothers could still intervene and plead for better treatment or fewer financial demands on their children. In the general schools especially, students who excelled in traditional (non-oppositional) areas of religious learning such as Quranic recitation also tended to receive better treatment. This was true of high-achieving students, even though their numbers were limited in all four schools, and they significantly overlapped with the previous categories of more privileged students and children of teachers. Yet others had privileged positions due to their relationships with particular teachers, won by running errands for them or otherwise gaining their favor.

Finally, most public school students did not depict physical punishment as reprehensible per se. They focused on explaining it as arbitrary and unfair, and ascribed its occurrence to discrimination based on social class, financial exchanges or compliance with extralegal demands. This indicates the normalization of violent punishment in schools and in household settings – perhaps in around 40 percent of households, as can be inferred from the NCSCR study (Yusuf 2009). Many parents see physical and emotional violence as an effective and normal child-rearing practice in many parts of the Arab world (Fernea 1995).[5] Indeed, students in the public schools frequently confided that their parents treated them in disparaging and insulting ways, calling them stupid and failures with little potential for success.[6] An important line of defense for students was therefore to insist that teachers were *not* like parents. This insistence also served to counter religious arguments that beating by teachers was sanctioned by Islam by analogy with its (supposed) sanctioning for parents.

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[5] In their study of working children in disadvantaged suburbs of Beirut, Makhoul, Shayboub and Jamal (2004) examined the forms of physical as well as emotional violence children were exposed to and noted that their parents often openly expressed

The Drivers of Violent Punishment

Why were beating and humiliation normalized in the public schools? What generated the perceived increase in the use and severity of emotional and physical punishment? Was it really a question of middle-class teachers looking down on working-class students? How did teachers explain beating? Were they simply reacting to the increasing disrespect, noncompliance and violence they perceived among students? Harsh punishment had different motivators and purposes for teachers and was critical to facilitating other extralegal practices, like private tutoring. As shown in Chapter 2, excessive emphasis on compliance and order was used by many teachers to waste class time, thus increasing student dependence and generating a demand for their own private tutoring services. In the technical schools, noncompliance with official uniforms or other regulations was used as a pretext to harass those students who had not yet enrolled in tutoring.

There were, however, other extralegal practices that harsh punishment and the threat of punishment could facilitate. In both technical schools, students were often forced to clean the labs and perform other chores in the school. In the boys' technical school especially, students were made to sweep the floors and asked to carry out different tasks, such as making tea for the teachers and running private errands for them. Boys particularly resented being compelled to clean the floors and were fully aware that this was against official regulations. As one student remarked, "[T]hey make us sweep the floors. Is this a school for education or for sweeping and mopping?" Students also explained that they were the ones who had set up the labs and arranged the classroom furniture. This work was seen as less humiliating than cleaning floors, but it was nonetheless resented for being an extralegal

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pessimistic views and negative opinions about them, views and opinions that influenced how the children viewed themselves.

[6] Despite the lack of significant recent literature on the matter in Egypt, one study conducted in a middle-class neighborhood indicated just how widespread a harsh disciplinary approach is: About half of parents beat their children, and about 13 percent did so severely (Hassan et al. 1999, cited in Alyahri and Goodman 2008).

means by which teachers and the school took advantage of student labor (arguably saving a portion of the contractual costs provided by the school's affluent sponsors for this purpose). As one student commented, "[I]f I did this work in a workshop outside, I would be treated better and I would get paid." In my presence, some teachers tried to justify these practices, arguing that it was laudable to keep one's surroundings clean and that this was a normal practice in good schools and "abroad." Again, these patterns were informal, arbitrary and not governed by codified rules. Not all teachers forced students to perform such chores, and not all students complied with such directives. It was clear that some students had more leeway than others in performing these chores and could actively resist being forced to do them.

Another important purpose that severe punishment served was deterring different forms of contestation by students. Students understood that those who challenged teachers or complained about them could receive especially severe punishment, and their parents would also be humiliated if they decided to intervene. This was especially true because of the extralegal, unsanctioned practices pervading the schools, which could be used in recriminations against teachers. The humiliation and derogatory attitude toward students was essential in legitimizing abuses against them and preventing them from speaking out against various forms of corruption and dysfunction in the schools. For example, referring to the practice of some teachers of making students clean the floors of the classrooms, one student in the boys' school recounted how a teacher had failed him in the practical exam because he took a video of this practice and the kind of language she used in the classroom on his phone and threatened to expose her. He explained the teacher's derogatory attitude and language, adding, "[S]he makes us feel hopeless" (*bitya'isna*). In another incident in the girls' technical school, parents had come to the principal with a complaint against a teacher who had insulted their daughter. The principal spoke to them in a rude manner, told them they had been unable to raise their daughter properly and abused the mother in particular, instructing her not to talk during the meeting and indicating that, as the father was a respectable and reasonable man, only he should talk. The parents threatened to raise the issue at the district level, and the principal reportedly colluded with the teacher in question to fabricate a memorandum that accused the girl of being the one who had used obscene language with the teacher. Thus, not only were students humiliated if they complained, but also, if they were of modest social standing, they risked subjecting their parents to humiliation, reproach and intimidation if they had to step in to support them.

Ultimately, however, these patterns of punishment were made possible because the state did not have the will or desire to implement the official regulations that protected children from physical and emotional punishment. The majority of beatings in schools happen with complete impunity and the full approval of the school authorities. Teachers' actions are almost never questioned unless parents take their grievances to higher educational authorities, the media or the police, as typically happens in cases where students have been seriously injured in ways that can be proven with medical reports. Parents do, however, need considerable cultural (and economic) capital for the police to show any interest in their case. Teachers were therefore fully aware that they could beat poorer students with impunity and that most students had no effective access to the law. Extralegal violence therefore went unpunished by the Ministry, and students did not have access to the means of deterring it. As one teacher (of psychology and sociology, of all subjects) in the boys' general school told me:

> You see me: I come in with a stick and a hose. I beat and I scold, but they accept it. I tell them: "I am glad to be your mother; would you accept me as your mother?" If not, here is the local police station, go complain if you want, because "teachers are not allowed to beat students."

Public school teachers deployed a number of interrelated discourses to articulate and justify their punishment practices. They framed beating as a means of preserving respect and authority, as appropriate for the "types" of students they had to deal with, as a form of caring and moral instruction in an extension of parental roles, as the only effectively available tool of discipline in the school system and, finally, as sanctioned by Islam. According to teachers, harsh punishment was necessary to maintain order and control. They frequently described students as "only responsive to beating" (*maygush ghir bil-darb*) or "not [properly] raised by their parents". Students' supposed poor upbringing and noncompliance were typical justifications for the use of severe punishment. For example, during a lesson given by one particularly harsh teacher in the boys' technical school, students were disruptive throughout her class, as she continued to punish them verbally and physically. She later explained to me that "animals have to be treated like animals" and that if the students were human, she would treat them as such. In the subsequent class with a different teacher, the same students hardly engaged in challenging or noncompliant behavior. The next teacher was strict, but used very little verbal or physical punishment. She stuck to the material she was teaching and did not seem to be wasting class time. It seemed that violent punishment and humiliation were not needed to ensure the compliance or respect of technical school boys. In fact, one could say that such punishment only led to more disruption and noncompliance.

It has been argued, however, that harsh and humiliating treatment is essentially applied to teachers themselves and might be driving their reproduction of violence in the classroom. In his ethnography of preparatory schools in Alexandria, Naguib (2006) has presented a vivid image of how the oppressive structure within the classroom extends upward into a punitive, oppressive and humiliating relationship between teachers and principals and between school principals and those higher up in the hierarchy of the educational system. The absolute power of the principal was frequently maintained through intimidation and humiliation not through codes of conduct, but rather through unwritten codes of silence and obedience (Naguib 2006). These patterns may have led to teachers being harsh with students and resorting to various extralegal practices. For example, if teachers are held accountable and harshly rebuked for classroom cleanliness even if insufficient cleaning staff are employed and properly paid, they have an incentive to extralegally force students to perform such tasks. As described in Chapter 2, this kind of punitive under-resourced institutional setting also informs permissive practices such as the facilitation of cheating, the presentation of inaccurate attendance data and reporting on other school information and supposed activities to appease supervisors and inspectors. Teachers also frequently argued that beating was necessary because the system had deprived them of all other disciplinary measures, an issue that is revisited in Chapter 4.

As a first and last line of defense, public school teachers frequently argued that beating was sanctioned by *shar'* (Islamic jurisprudence), and they often explicitly challenged its prohibition by the Ministry on those grounds. Because (light) beating of children by parents to promote observance of their daily prayers can be interpreted as sanctioned based on a reported saying of Prophet Muhammad, teachers in public schools reasoned that they were entitled, by analogy, to beat students to instill in them a proper moral upbringing. By contrast, to counter what they saw as "savage" and "thuggish" practices in public schools, teachers in private schools frequently resorted to other readings of Islamic teachings that placed great limits on beating and humiliation of the young. As one private school teacher explained, "Beating was allowed in my day, but it was a certain number of strikes, on the hand only, and the teacher never resorted to beating without prior warning and repetition of mistakes. But the beating of students on the nape of the neck and kicking them (*darb al-talib bil-'afa wil-shalut*) … these are thuggish practices that people do not commit in the streets, let alone be practiced in institutions for the upbringing of young people." A number of teachers I met reacted particularly strongly to the use of religious justifications for beating by public school teachers, elaborating on how they understood the religious sanction for beating and how it related to practices in public schools. As one teacher put it, "*shar'* does not sanction beating … this is an incorrect use of religion. These teachers say it is sanctioned by *shar'* just so that no one objects. The basis of education in Islam is dignity, so how can there be dignity with beating? This issue of beating in the schools is a disgusting habit that they falsely attribute to religion." Another religiously learned teacher in a private school reacted by elaborating on the restrictions on beating in Islamic jurisprudence: that it should not be severe, that it never be on the face and that it never be perpetrated against children younger than 10 years of age. He added that the only clear sanction for smacking children was to encourage them to practice their religious obligations beyond the age of 10, not for other reasons. He added: "I personally do not think in any way that a jurist would sanction what happens in Egypt's public schools. This is torture, not beating." These attitudes by private school teachers already introduce us to patterns of punishment in private schools, although they still do not reveal many of the subtleties and complexities of these patterns.

Before moving on to private schools, one final note is warranted. In describing such routine forms of beating and humiliation, I do not seek to portray technical schools, or public schools more generally, as spaces of violence alone. As I argue throughout this book, repression and permissiveness go hand in hand as features of everyday governance, and arbitrariness, informality and idiosyncrasies always complicate how these modes of governance are lived. For most students, there was always time to chat, to jump the fence, to play soccer or to escape class by running an errand for a teacher, sometimes even being allowed to ride his motorcycle. There was also complicity, leniency, the sharing of jokes, ringtones and religious sermons (and sometimes sexually explicit material between teachers and male students). There are meaningful differences in the prevalence and severity of punishment among teachers, as well as in their engagement in other extralegal practices, as seen in the examples given earlier. Female teachers and teachers of higher socioeconomic backgrounds were seen as less likely to engage in harsh and humiliating punishment. There were teachers who showed compassion for the orphaned or poorer students, and always one or two teachers who encouraged and believed in hard-working students and showed respect for students as a whole. Students in these classes were typically more compliant. To address noncompliant behavior, one of those teachers would say, “Miss, concentrate here please” (*ya anisa, rakkizi hina min fadlik*), while another called out, “Mister, sir, respectable” (*ya ustaz*, *ya afandim*, *ya muhtaram*), to attract their attention and rebuke them. Mrs. Mirvat, a teacher in the girls’ general secondary school (see Chapter 2), called students “my daughter” (*ya binti*) and sometimes preceded their names with “Miss” (in English). At least one teacher in the girls’ general school actively attempted to help students “believe in themselves” and their power to become “successful” by getting them to believe that they can achieve whatever they want, and organized school seminars based on motivational themes (“you are what you believe”). I also did not encounter the type of graphic and pathological practices that occasionally get reported in the national media or circulate on social media.[7] Finally, in more affluent neighborhoods across the country, and especially in the semi-private experimental schools, students are likely to experience less severe punishment and better education than in regular public schools.[8]

Disciplining and Shaming in the Private Schools

In the two private schools, the physical punishment of students was the exception rather than the rule. Aside from the fact that the schools were a relaxed space only occasionally frequented by students for reasons other than learning (see Chapter 2), the style of punishment of the public schools was simply unthinkable. School authorities themselves explicitly rejected it. The parents of these students also possess the material and cultural resources to bring to bear if abuse does occur against their children. This does not mean that beating and humiliation were completely absent in these schools. Patterns of physical and emotional punishment were telling in terms of the neoliberal ethos that governed teacher and student discourses and practices. The practices of Mr. Samir and Mrs. Samia are good examples of the style of physical and emotional punishment that can be found in upper-range private schools.

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[7] These are often only known in the small school community or to social and NGO workers, and might be documented in NGO reports such as the ECHR report referred to earlier (Nasif 2010).

[8] In her study of one of the best girls’ preparatory public schools in its district in the 1980s, Linda Herrera (1992, 31–2) found that the most common methods of physical punishment were hitting the palms of the hand with a stick, making a girl stand with her hands up in the air and punching her in the arm or back. Other common forms of punishment sought to embarrass or shame the student, such as sending her into the corridor with a paper attached to her back with the word “stupid” written on it.

Students were so afraid of Mr. Samir that some reported panicking when they saw his cup of tea being brought in by the cleaner, signaling his imminent arrival. Mr. Samir was a strict physics teacher who was also a “star tutor” (see Chapter 2). He offered rigorous training in a difficult subject that would help students achieve the higher scores needed for admission into prestigious colleges. His punishment was also gendered and discretionary. While he did not physically punish female students, he often used rude remarks and derogatory language to keep students in check (these were still mild compared to public schools). As he told me, he knew which students he could shout at or call “rotten” (*m‘afina*) and which ones he could not. For him, students understood these insults as endearing, funny and a sign of care, so much so that some girls would ask him if he were upset with them if he did not call them names as he usually did. He and other private school teachers did hit students, especially boys. Usually this consisted of punching students on the shoulder or back, which is not considered humiliating. Most of his punishment was related to academic performance, although disruptive behavior was not tolerated either. In other words, his punishments were meted out for “disciplinary” purposes. They were aimed at advancing academic performance and securing a focused and orderly learning environment. He took pride in his power to intimidate students, which established him as a feared and elevated authority. Perhaps like a tough sports coach, his style also effectively scared, motivated and shamed students to perform the hard work needed to obtain high scores. It was part of his entrepreneurial profile and the disciplinary project he was embodying. Indeed his harsh attitude was part of the appeal of the service he provided. Students often noted they found this method effective in making them study (as evidenced by his popularity as a star tutor).

Mrs. Samia, on the other hand, generated far less fear and deference on the part of students. She used derogatory language and insults, but did so jokingly and with feigned anger. Throughout her classes, she would make remarks (in English) such as “very bad behavior … you are not human beings”; “I think I’ve come to a zoo”; or “Here we have a visitor [referring to my presence] … She is here to see your stupidity.” Throughout the class, students were portrayed as not “civilized,” refined or industrious enough. This was seen as endearing and funny by some students, some of whom even tried to provoke her further, but it was ignored and perhaps disliked by others. In Mrs. Samia’s classes, students displayed the same limited interest and compliance they showed for most other teachers because they enrolled in tutoring in most subjects. Additionally, like Ms. Huda in Chapter 2, Mrs. Samia taught High Level English, a subject that did not affect students’ final scores. She was not teaching a supposedly important subject like Mr. Samir, was not a millionaire star tutor and could not rely on similar incentives and pressures for students to remain attentive. Her subject was paradoxically declining in prestige despite the importance of English language competence for her students (see Chapter 2). She may well have been dealing with her own frustration at the declining importance and status given to her subject, her own meager income relative to other teachers who offered tutoring and, more generally, the diminished authority and audience for the school's civilizing role in the production of refined subjects.

Clearly, there were fundamental differences between the disciplinary styles of even the harsher private school teachers and the beatings and obscenities used in the public schools. The underlying assumption in the private schools was not that beating is legitimate and does not need justification, but rather the contrary. For example, whereas teachers in public schools explained beating in terms of poor student upbringing, Mr. Samir told me, "I am impolite, and everyone will tell you this." He also offered students a highly valued service that was believed to greatly enhance their chances of success. It was not at all clear what public schoolteachers offered. Importantly, he taught the same way at school as he did in his private tutoring, placing him in that special category of "conscientious teachers" (see Chapter 2).[9] He explained diligently, did not waste class time and provided a high level of instruction. He did not need to withhold information to build up a clientele among students: He was already a sought-after star with a long waiting list. He had plenty of financial and moral capital to obviate any dependence on severity in order to extract resources from students or to encourage their enrollment in his tutoring classes. His severity was "disciplinary" and not seen as being in pursuit of personal gain.

Violent Punishment, Poverty and Masculinity

If violent punishment was so limited in private schools, was it simply part of the culture of the poor – an acceptable social practice among vast segments of the population that simply found an expression in schools? Is this violence caused by poverty itself? Without ignoring the role of the state in deepening this violence, it is necessary to acknowledge the link between harsh punishment and structural inequalities in the form of poverty. Studies from India (Kumar 2005, Proctor 2015) and Brazil

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[9] There was still more class time, more revision classes and more exercise exams in tutoring than in school, which explains why most students still enrolled in private tutoring, either with him or with other tutors.

(Goldstein 2003), literature on child-rearing in the UK (Walkerdine and Lucey 1989, Gillies 2008) and a large body of empirical studies in the United States (see Straus 2000, Dietz 2000) all establish a link between harsh forms of punishment directed at children (and women) and social class or "structural stress." Different studies have concluded that a clear relationship exists between the resources held by parents and the child-rearing practices they pursue (Gillies 2008). Walkerdine and Lucey's (1989) classic, *Democracy in the Kitchen*, emphasizes how middle-class child-rearing practices of "sensitive mothering" are articulated as normal and desirable through the language of developmental psychology. As such, they are accepted as self-evident markers of "good parenting," particularly when compared with representations of ignorant, insensitive working-class practices (Walkerdine and Lucey 1989, 102). Walkerdine and Lucey, however, showed how styles of parenting that are more democratic, dialogic, "involved" or "sensitive" reflect not only distinctly middle-class values but also middle-class resources and possibilities. Research on parenting in working- and middle-class families in the UK suggests that children who are encouraged to reason and negotiate can become assertive and defiant (Gillies 2008). While this might be considered precious or self-assured for a middle-class child, outspoken working-class children are likely to be viewed as dangerous and their assertiveness as having severe consequences (Gillies 2008, 107, see also Baumrind 1991).[10]

Other studies have similarly suggested that the same set of behaviors or attributes could be evaluated by the school according to the social class of their bearers: assertive behavior from middle-class girls being met with approval but seen as "troublemaking" from working-class girls (Walker 1989, 267). Studies in the sociology of education have long emphasized the ways in which students from different social classes are taught different skills in schools. Bowles and Gintis (1976), for example, have argued that students from different social class backgrounds are rewarded for classroom behavior that corresponded to personality traits allegedly rewarded in the different occupational strata – the working classes for docility and obedience, the managerial classes for initiative and personal assertiveness. The virtues of compliance and submission to direct orders are emphasized to disadvantaged children, while middle-class children are socialized in school to be independent and autonomous and to internalize control (Da Silva 1988, Hempel-Jorgensen 2009, Ivinson and Duveen 2006).

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[10] Baumrind (1991) has discussed the relationship between parental choices of disciplinary style and the contextual realities of their communities. The authoritarian parenting Baumrind found among African Americans appeared to be suitably protective of children living in dangerous communities, where authoritarian behavior may reflect – and indicate to children – nurturance and protectiveness.

Such negative perceptions of assertiveness are one factor that may drive working-class parents to nurture different qualities in their children, but poverty itself drives such practices in additional ways. For some working-class parents, the use of relatively harsh disciplinary strategies could be related to a belief that their children "must become strong individuals in order to survive the risks and demands of inner-city life" (Holloway et al. 1997, see also Goldstein 2003). Extreme poverty also creates a variety of stressors that reduce parents' resources and abilities to raise their children in a caring, supportive and involved manner because, in many such cases, parents are absent, work long hours, must deal with multiple anxieties and lack the capacity to be supportive (Currie 1998). In fact, it has been suggested that the level of stress a parent experiences is lessened by the parent's belief that corporal punishment is valuable (Crouch and Behl 2001).

It is also critical in the case of Egypt to appreciate that the normalized deployment of violent punishment in schools may not be surprising where physical and emotional violence are common features of social relations in the home, workplace and public sphere. Parents and teachers, especially men, have to deal not only with the stress, uncertainty and deprivations linked to poverty but also with everyday patterns of repression and humiliation in their encounters with the state. In her study of the production and control of social space in new urban quarters in Cairo, Salwa Ismail draws out the humiliation of young men in encounters with the everyday state, which is "embodied especially in such police tactics as roughing up, beating, and slapping" (2006, 123). In his ethnography of state-owned textile companies in Alexandria, Shehata (2003) describes the absolute concentration of power and repression in the hands of the top manager, and the regular use of humiliation, intimidation and even physical violence in highly delineated hierarchical relations within the factory. Shehata (2003, 2009) describes the existence of an ideology justifying inequality and authoritarian social relations within the factory, where managers as well as many workers believed that superiors needed to be tough and distant and, in some cases, abusive and condescending to be respected. This expression of social distance and hierarchy recalls the ways in which Foucault linked punishment with the superiority of the sovereign (Foucault 1977). In the premodern state, as well as the modern household, corporal punishment is deployed as a means of avenging perceived contempt for an authority figure (Westlund 1999).

If teachers treated their children in the same manner as they treated students, beating could be seen as a social norm that penetrates the school and overrides school regulations. However, there was frequently a class difference between teachers and students in the public schools, and many teachers saw themselves as coming from a higher social class than their students (except for teachers of practical or technical subjects in the technical school). This might imply that they may have treated their own children with significantly less violence and greater respect. Many of them certainly enrolled their own children in private or experimental schools where they were not beaten or humiliated in the same manner. The aforementioned study by the Egyptian National Center for Social and Criminal Research, which indicated that over 91 percent of non-compliant students experienced violent punishment, also showed that about 40 percent of families believed in violence as a means of education and upbringing (Yunus 2009). Although more detailed and recent studies are needed, these rates suggest that teachers apply vastly more punishment to students than families do. Recent ethnographic research in popular neighborhoods in Cairo also suggests that violence at home, even in poorer homes, is far less severe than these forms of violence in poor schools, and its frequent use is discouraged and negatively viewed (Ghannam 2013).[11]

In sum, these patterns of punishment are an expression of structural stress, as much as they are by-products of the regime's social policy, its style of governance and its strategies of legitimation. The structural violence of poverty, precarity and blocked opportunities, as well as the everyday violence of the police and state authorities, against men especially, are preserved and extended into these violent practices against students. The male students then release this violence not only on other male students in line with the commonly described trends of rising violence in schools, but also on teachers who are perceived to be weak and on girls and women. In the public sphere and in the context of the schools, the most obvious form of violence by students against women takes the form of sexual harassment, threatening behavior and verbal aggression toward female students, as described in Chapter 4. As Bourdieu puts it, one "cannot cheat with the *law of the conservation of*

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[11] Ghannam explains the use of violence in the family as follows: "For it to be acceptable, however, violence should be measured and infrequent. A slap on the face is the most common type of physical disciplining of family members and is often a symbolic gesture that asserts the power of the man in front of others. Although more severe forms of corporal punishment are sometimes deployed by husbands, fathers, and brothers, these forms are usually discouraged and negatively viewed. A man who indiscriminately uses force is linked to ghabaawa, which usually refers to stupidity but in this context refers specifically to 'social incompetence' or the inability to materialize the appropriate social norm in the right setting" (2013, 115).

violence: all violence is paid for … The structural violence exerted by the financial markets, in the form of layoffs, loss of security, etc., is matched sooner or later in the form of suicides, crime and delinquency, drug addiction, alcoholism, a whole host of minor and major everyday acts of violence" (Bourdieu 1998, 40, original emphasis). Teachers become convinced that they must act in violent and even in arbitrary, volatile and intimidating ways in order to avoid being perceived as weak or being subjected to humiliation or violence. A vicious cycle of harsh punishment creates violent retaliation, legitimizes the use of violence and reinforces the perceived need for harsh punishment.

The link between masculinity and the harsh practices of male teachers must also be nuanced. Different scholars have shown how violence can occupy a prominent place in constructions of masculinity (Kandiyoti 1994, Connell and Connell 2000). Physical punishment in schools is not only disproportionately experienced by boys but is also more frequently – and almost exclusively in its severe forms – administered by men. It is therefore arguably part of a distinctly masculine discourse or masculinity training, where physical dominance becomes central in the construction of masculinity. Bringing up boys using corporal punishment can be a "way of claiming or asserting masculinity" (Connell 1995, 83, Moore 1994). The disproportionate use of beating by male teachers may, therefore, be related to a sense of vulnerability in the face of a perceived assault on their masculinity due to the various stressors to which they are subjected. In this sense, every humiliating encounter with higher education authorities or wider forms of abuse by the police or agents of the state might drive male teachers and parents to reassert their sense of dominance through violence in the classroom. This assertion of domination is also expressed in terms of the control of female modesty in girls' schools, as described in Chapter 4.

For male teachers in particular (the key perpetrators of the more severe forms of beating), low wages undermine their claims to performing ideal masculinities as primary breadwinners. Being unable to provide for their families (nuclear as well as extended) injures ideal masculinities in ways that do not apply to women. This bears strongly on the greater frustration that male teachers may feel and the greater pressure to secure additional funds, even if this includes involvement in harsh or morally questionable practices. Manhood is also defined around certain forms of integrity and independence in income generation, increasing the frustration of male teachers in failing to adhere to the various dictates of masculinity.[12]

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[12] Despite its importance, however, violence is not argued to be a primary defining element of masculinity, including in lower-income neighborhoods. As Ghannam has shown in

As explained in a lesson in one of the textbooks, a "real man" does not use his public office to extract additional resources.[13] Kamal Naguib has in fact used the language of impotence in describing the situation in which many teachers find themselves, arguing that they experience three levels of "impotence": social and economic impotence stemming from their low salaries, which prevent them from earning a decent living; creative impotence because they have little autonomy in the classroom and are subject to surveillance and institutional pressures; and the impotence that results from their students' full awareness of all of these conditions (2006, 66).

A Demonstration in Support of Beating?

One incident concerning violent punishment received considerable media attention in 2011. The incident was revealed in a video of a teacher in a small community nursery in a village beating a crying child harshly and repeatedly, while pulling her hair and also beating other children on their hands, backs, heads and feet. The video was widely viewed on social media and received considerable news coverage, leading to significant public outrage and condemnation. Especially in the exceptional context immediately following the uprising, this brought about a swift official response in the form of the suspension of the teacher and the announcement of the closure of the daycare center. However, reporters covering the incident were confronted with a gathering of the mothers and their children outside the closed kindergarten in a demonstration of sorts. The parents were expressing their support for the teacher – who was also the manager of the nursery (and likely a local notable) – calling for his release from police custody and for the reopening of the nursery. They also emphasized that the beating happened with their full approval.

Although it could be inferred from the chant they were repeating, "We want the nursery," that their main concern was that the daycare center remain open, they did explicitly support the teacher's beating of their children. In interviews with the media, they also referred to how

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her ethnography of masculinity in urban Egypt, "good grooming, nice manners, fashionable clothes, skill in navigating the city, assertiveness and courage, the ability to provide for one's family, and knowledge about when to use violence to defend self, family, and relatives" are all critical enactments in the daily assertions of manhood (2013, 24).

[13] The lesson on "manhood" in the technical secondary Arabic Language textbook highlighted manhood in terms of integrity in taking up public office so that the minister who is a real man, for example, remains in office so long as he preserves the rights of his nation and only cares for the voice of his conscience.

they themselves punished their children. As one mother put it, “I myself beat him to death by the time he gets to the nursery.” Another parent explained to the reporter from the capital that beating was necessary given the “nature” of the rural child: “[W]e are here in a rural area, children are a bit stubborn … beat the child, it’s OK. What’s important is that he comes out educated.” The young child who was seen being beaten in the video was actually interviewed by the media as well. She said, possibly instructed by her elders, that the teacher was beating them because they had not done their homework, but that he loved them and brought them sweets. Another older child accounted for the incident in this way: “[T]he basis of education is beating, but not with this cruelty,” adding, however, that “just as there is beating, there were also means of education and entertainment” in the center. If a daycare center run by a charitable organization was the only outlet available to the community’s children, parents may have been forced to support these practices publicly and maintain that beating was a positive practice. These discourses do, however, confirm that beating for the sake of promoting learning (harsh but “disciplinary’” punishment) and beating in the context of the provision of other forms of care were accepted by many parents. As Ghannam has shown, “measured and deployed for a socially acceptable reason, the use of violence is sanctioned. When used to uphold social norms and cultivate proper men and women, violence is positively viewed” (2013, 114). Children, for their part, explicitly recognized beating as the norm in educational settings, but saw it as balanced by other forms of provision. It is still worth noting that, even in the context of an orchestrated attempt to save the daycare center, some small children spoke out against corporal punishment that is unnecessarily cruel.

This incident can help us understand why beating had become so contested in Egyptian schools. Neither effective learning nor other forms of care or respect framed its exercise in the majority of public schools. Contestation of punishment has intensified because of the demise of other features of respect in the schools. Studies show that disadvantaged students especially tend to define respect broadly as teachers caring for them and having positive expectations of them (Davidson 1999). “Students believe they are respected when adults challenge them to succeed academically, give attention to their particularities and commonalities, are responsive to their needs and foster positive expectations” (C.A.R.E: Challenge, Attention, Responsiveness, and Expectation) (Hajii 2006, 66). Indeed, students across the schools valued and were responsive to teachers’ respect in terms of both fulfillment of their duties to teach well in class and not coerce students into tutoring, and teacher encouragement or consideration for their circumstances. It is in this light that the harsh practices of some teachers are accepted, but not those of others. Even in private schools, Mr. Samir's "impoliteness" was tolerated and even reportedly found endearing by many students. Mr. Samir had very high expectations of his students and provided them with a quality of instruction that was considered one of the best in the country. No claim is made that his punishment is wholly benign or without negative emotional consequences, at least for some students. His punishment techniques could be understood as being part of both a "disciplinary project" *and* an educational endeavor in which the subject matter was actually taught to students, who then had real prospects of competing for university places based on their marks. Contestation of beating has increased in schools because, as parents explained in the pro-beating demonstration, beating can be acceptable only "if the child gets educated." Chapter 7 explains how some of these issues played out several years after the Revolution.

Conclusion

If *zifta* was the very first word I heard in a classroom in my fieldwork in the girls' technical school and my introduction to the constant rituals of humiliation in the public schools, the closing of my fieldwork in the girls' general school was an incident that highlighted the modes of disentitlement normalized in the schools. It brought home the meanings of degraded citizenship and the ways in which it is nurtured and legitimized. This was a situation in which one of the most "conscientious," respectful and caring teachers in the school (Mrs. Mirvat; see also Chapters 2 and 4) told me the students did not deserve the computer-based English language course I had bought for them and for which they had asked me a number of times. Having always been warm with me, on that last day she rebuked me for buying the course, arguing that students were not serious about their request, nor had the will to make use of the material, nor to really develop their English language skills. She preferred to take the course and then give it to some serious students in a gradual manner. For her part, the school principal effectively prevented me from sharing the course with either the students or the teachers. She seemed appalled that I had sought to bypass her and simply democratize student and teacher access to this special resource by allowing them to make direct copies of the digital material. Her response was harsh and immediate. She not only prevented me from meeting the students again but also effectively asked me to leave the school. The principal probably initially understood the present to be a personal gift (even if presented under the guise of a gift to the school) and was shocked at my social incompetence or perceived disrespect.[14] Students themselves had no doubt that the course would not be shared with them if it went through the principal. However, they also seemed disappointed that I had not realized this on my own. I had come face to face with the norms of entitlement, power and hierarchy in the school. My minimal gesture of gratitude and educational support was too offensive to the personalized hierarchical clientelism through which resources were meant to be dispersed in the school.[15] On a methodological note, it is only when the norms of the field are broken that they show themselves most vividly to researchers. On my last day at the school, I had still not understood the school. I had so blatantly violated its norms and disappointed its different actors. This was a humbling reminder of our limited knowledge of any given field and of the long process of understanding that evolves slowly as we break and uphold rules, discuss and disagree, compare, read and theorize.

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[14] Gifts to principals are a common practice for education students and researchers who pass through schools and are given the principal's signature that they have completed their practical work in the school. Even if it was not perceived as a gift to the principal, it could have been understood as a gift to the school, but certainly in that case it would be the principal and the principal alone who selectively controlled teacher and student access to it.

[15] Perhaps as Dorman has suggested in relation to donor-backed urban upgrading programs, they "failed, in part, because they were implicitly predicated on the logic of dealing with the *sha*'b [people] as citizens with rights and responsibilities, as opposed to clients seeking protection and favour" (2007, 255).

4 Gendered Noncompliance and the Breakdown of Discipline

> Severity with learners is harm upon them, especially in younger children. The learner raised in injustice and repression becomes overpowered, the vastness of his self is narrowed, its enthusiasm done away with. It brings him to lethargy, drives him to lying and cunning, which is to pretend other than what is in his conscience in fear of the outstretching of hands with oppression over him. As such, it teaches him craftiness and deceit, which become his habit and nature; and the meanings of humanity that he possesses are corrupted.
>
> فصل في أن الشدة على المتعلمين مضرة بهم، سيما
> في أصاغر الولد...
> من كان مرباه بالعسف والقهر من المتعلمين، سطا به
> القهر، وضيق على النفس في انبساطها، وذهب
> بنشاطها، ودعاه إلى الكسل، وحمله على الكذب
> والخبث، وهو التظاهر بغير ما في ضميره، خوفا من
> انبساط الأيدي بالقهر عليه، وعلمه المكر والخديعة
> لذلك، وصارت له هذه عادة وخلقا، وفسدت معاني
> الإنسانية التي له.
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> From the "Muqaddima" of Ibn Khaldun[1]

What implications do the realities of lived citizenship shaped by violence and privatization (Chapters 1–4) have for student subjectivities and practices? What implications do everyday practices of punishment and surveillance have on the production and performance of gendered subjectivities? What impact do they have on forms of noncompliance and contestation in the schools? Are Egyptian schools producing obedient subjects who defer to figures of authority? Are students submissive or afraid of teachers, as expected in authoritarian education models? Are they disciplined into docile subjects by the techniques of modern schooling or into active citizens through the mechanisms of neoliberal governmentality? In contrast to depictions of authoritarian Arab schooling and its role in producing obedient submissive citizens, this chapter describes the collapse of this model of schooling and the kind of authoritarianism it implies in the case of Egypt. In contrast to obedience or submissiveness, it highlights pervasive forms of noncompliance and contestation, illusory forms of control over schools in the context of state withdrawal and de facto privatization. It expands the analysis of permissiveness and repression by bringing to the fore further aspects of school relations in terms of general noncompliance, failed disciplinary supervision and gendered contestation. It inquires into the dynamics around sexual harassment that represented daily concerns in the public schools and are critical for understanding the surveillance of sexuality, the circulation of violence in schools. The concluding chapter returns to the question of how these practices of violence and noncompliance shape our understanding of the school as a "disciplinary institution" in Foucauldian terms.

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[1] Arabic text cited in Sadiq (2010), English translation my own.

Authoritarian Schooling, Obedience and Noncompliance

Arab commentators have long linked cultures of schooling to the maintenance of authoritarianism through their role in nurturing obedience and unquestioning acceptance of authority. Leading Arab intellectuals such as Hisham Sharabi (1975, 1987) and Halim Barakat (1984) have criticized Arab culture, child-rearing practices and schools as barriers to democracy. A diverse literature in the Arab states stresses that schools train students to become obedient and submissive by embodying these values in student–teacher relations (Watfa 1999). With particular reference to Egypt, students are characterized with obedience, passivity, fear and fatalism, as slaves to a text received from a higher authority, incapable of scientific thinking, experimentation, doubt, measurement, proof and criticism, and thus with a deadened capacity for discussion, dialogue or creativity, or a desire for change (Bilawi 2000, 178–9). The question of school cultures and democracy has been particularly prominent. Despotism inside schools is linked to a monopoly of decision-making processes, relationships of dominance and submission, and the negation of difference or alternative points of view. Studies have outlined the expected outcome for authoritarian schooling in terms of disinterest in or even hatred of the school, a tendency to rebel whenever possible, a spirit of cowardice, selfishness, passivity, hypocrisy and backstabbing among members of the school community, cultivated through a training in showing absolute submission to superiors, limits on innovation, discussion, scientific thinking and cooperation in solving problems (Radwan 1970). Abdul Hamid (2000) has argued that the dominant means of social control in Egyptian society are reflected in the means of control in the boys' general secondary schools he studied in terms of a lack of dialogue, authoritarian relationships, the absence of freedom of expression and dissent, and forms of exclusion and symbolic violence against disadvantaged students. Based on an ethnographic study of classroom and school culture in preparatory schools in Alexandria, Kamal Naguib concludes that "the public-sector school represents a microcosm of the authoritarian state" where "the values that dominate classroom culture – authoritarianism, dominance, control, suppression and submission – permeate school social organization, and society as a whole" (2006, 68). He concludes that schools clearly reproduce a despotic personality characterized by passivity, servility, fear, resentment, impotence, lying and cheating (Naguib 2006). These works point to a large array of traits and dispositions linked to authoritarian schooling, but a related set of propositions are particularly concerned with harsh punishment and its implications.

Harsh Punishment

One of the lesser-known critiques of harsh punishment in education appears in a seminal sociological text by the Arab philosopher Ibn Khaldun written in 1377. In the quote given at the beginning of this chapter, Ibn Khaldun suggests that harsh treatment of students undermines their appetite for learning, drives them to lethargy and deceit and leads to the general corruption of their character. Different bodies of literature in the fields of psychology and education have pointed to a host of traits – from depression, fear and anger to poor executive functioning – associated with harsh treatment and corporal punishment, especially in its severe and frequent forms.[2]

Corporal punishment has been associated with a variety of psychological and behavioral disorders in children and adults, including anxiety, depression, withdrawal, low self-esteem, impulsiveness, delinquency and substance abuse (DuRant et al. 1994, Goodman et al. 1998). With particular reference to corporal punishment in schools, most studies in the Global North underline the negative consequences of even the milder and more codified forms of corporal punishment practiced in some of these countries, especially the United States. A 2010 report on the impact of corporal punishment in the United States found that harsh physical punishments do not improve students' in-school behavior or academic performance, some studies showing that they are in fact correlated with lower academic performance (HRW 2010). The report further highlights how children who have been subjected to hitting, paddling or other harsh disciplinary practices have reported subsequent problems with depression, fear and anger, and that they frequently withdraw from school activities and disengage academically. In contexts where corporal punishment may be more normalized, studies still note its negative effects on child development. A study of corporal punishment in four countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia has demonstrated its negative impact on academic performance (Ogando Portela and Pells 2015). A 2011 study comparing two private West African schools concluded that children in a school that uses corporal punishment performed significantly worse in tasks involving "executive functioning" – psychological processes such as planning, abstract thinking and delaying gratification – than those in a school relying on milder disciplinary measures such as time-outs (Talwar, Carlson and Lee 2011).

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[2] While researchers agree that frequent and severe corporal punishment should be discouraged, some argue that there are cultural, age, class and individual differences in how mild and infrequent punishment is perceived and how its short- and long-term impact on children can be assessed (see Ripoll-Núñez and Rohner 2006).

Psychological and educational research has therefore linked harsh punishment to four main areas of student discourse and practice: an increased propensity to engage in violence, an inability to internalize moral values, a negative self-image and increased noncompliance. The cultivation of negative self-image through derogatory treatment by teachers is detailed in Chapter 3, and its place in student discourses in Chapter 6. In this chapter, I focus particularly on noncompliance and on aspects of violence by students, in particular the issue of sexual harassment. I additionally discuss how school punishment represents attempts to discipline students in ideal femininities and masculinities. A key difference between studies of harsh punishment and Arab critiques of authoritarian schooling relates to obedience and submissiveness.[3] This difference suggests that the scale and nature of punishment has changed from the patterns earlier studies of Arab schooling had observed, where punishment may have been placed at the service of the disciplinary project of schools, whereas in the current research noncompliance emerges as a dominant feature of contemporary Egyptian schools.

Noncompliance

As opposed to terms like misconduct or resistance, noncompliance is not necessarily meant to carry a normative value, but rather indicates behavior that does not comply with the expectations and structured activities of adult authorities in schools (Stevick and Levinson 2003).

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[3] Submissiveness involves complying with requests to appease others, even though one doesn't want to, as the person perceives that the costs of resistance outweigh the costs of compliance. In their landmark research, Allan and Gilbert (1997) explain that submissive behavior includes escape, passivity and involuntary compliance, essentially designed to signal "no threat" (to the dominant person) and avoid escalation of conflict.

Literature on school discipline suggests that forms of student noncompliance may develop when teachers use harsh or arbitrary punitive measures, maintain extreme social distance because of classroom size or teacher personality, or use arbitrary criteria in judging students' work (see Woods [1990] for an overview). Furthermore, D'Amato (1993) has argued that, in the absence of either compelling structural returns to education in respect of improved social standing, or situational rewards in respect of interest in material and positive classroom relations, student frustration often escalates into more volatile forms of noncompliance.[4] Such a process can help students establish and modify their understandings of material in a way that is meaningful for them. Davidson (1996) has argued that a number of factors contribute most to student alienation, and hence noncompliance, including educational tracking, negative teacher expectations, differential treatment of students, enforcement of hierarchy and status divisions, and withholding or making inaccessible knowledge that students need to succeed. These elements of low returns, poor learning, tracing, arbitrary treatment and assessment, teacher shirking, and punitive and disparaging teacher behavior define the realities of most contemporary Egyptian public schools and many private schools as well (Chapters 1–3). In 2007, a study by the Egyptian Center for the Right to Education linked rising violence by students and teachers alike to critical patterns of school governance, resources and pedagogy, including the focus on memorization, abuse and physical punishment by teachers, weak oversight over education, high class densities, a lack of school activities because of short school days and multiple shift schools (Yunus 2009).

Noncompliance has been a subject of considerable debate in the sociology of education. An important current in the sociology of education sees noncompliance as a fundamental feature of working-class education. Scholars such as Willis (1977), Foley (1990) and Holland and Eisenhart (1990) have argued that, contrary to top-down models of the imposition of unequal social relations, educational institutions are one of many social sites within which specific populations actively reproduce their own subordinate status. Status negotiations within and between peer groups, conscious and unconscious strategies of resistance to institutional authority, and the realistic perception of often limited employment opportunities after leaving school life are assumed to channel the creative interactions of students themselves toward the reproduction of standing relations of power. From Willis' Hammertown "lads" to Eckert's (1989) Detroit "burnouts" to McLaren's (1999) Toronto "cool guys" and Macleod's (1987) US Northeastern "hallway hangers," resistance researchers identify rebellious subcultures and trace them to the culture of the working class. They argue that these young people learn a discrete culture in their local milieu – family, neighborhood and peer group – that clashes with a middle-class oriented school system. This is thought to activate a rebellion characterized by truancy, delinquency, disinterest in school and troubled relations with teachers, thereby leading to poor grades and streaming into nonacademic tracks. In rejecting school, these youth rebuff irrelevant school qualifications and eagerly anticipate the "real world" of employment (Davies 1995, 663). In relation to gender dynamics, Paul Willis' (1977) argument was that by contesting schooling, working-class youths reproduce themselves as future manual laborers and homemakers. It is therefore argued that a defiant masculine ethos propels school rejection, whereas female opposition to school is less confrontational and disruptive and lacks the bravado that the "lads" supposedly expressed (Ohrn 1998, Davies 1984, Griffen 1985, Anyon 1988).

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[4] "Structural rationale" refers to students' perceptions that doing well in school will help their career opportunities, social status and economic mobility. That is, education will have the "extrinsic value" of improving their position in the broader social structure. "Situational rationale," however, also refers to students' perceptions that doing well and participating diligently may be a "means of maintaining valued relationships with teachers and peers and of gaining access to experiences of mastery and accomplishment" (D'Amato 1993, 191).

Based on his work on Canadian high schools, Davies (1995) challenges the argument that misbehavior is a conduit for differential class outcomes, but agrees that gender traditionalism rather than class background is a more durable source of cultural reproduction through school underachievement. Several studies have indeed suggested that, among less successful students, male and female roles become polarized over time (Davies 1984, Holland and Eisenhart 1990). It has been argued in different contexts that working-class girls' opposition to school is articulated through different forms of "gender traditionalism" (Weis 1990, Lees 1986, Griffen 1985, Davies 1984, Gaskell 1985). This means that girls accentuate their femininity in exaggerated displays of physical maturity and hyper-concerns with romance on the one hand, while prioritizing domestic roles such as marriage, child-rearing and household duties over schooling on the other. This arguably provides students with alternative identities from which they can repudiate school-sponsored middle-class ideals of femininity such as diligence and passivity (Davies 1995). Yet this opposition is also thought ironically to trap girls into early marriage and motherhood, thereby reproducing their positions as working-class wives and mothers. We will see that for girls across the schools, a considerable proportion of their noncompliant behavior indeed revolves around expressions of femininity. Female students engaged in other forms of noncompliance during class time: talking to friends, using mirrors to fix their headscarves or makeup, listening to music or religious sermons on mobile phones, and displaying a general disinterest in the content of lessons. It is not difficult to see why the majority of girls in the technical school, and many girls in the public general school, valued marriage and relationships over work, given high unemployment, underemployment, very low wages and sexual harassment in the sectors in which they are most likely to find work.

Clearly, however, noncompliance in Egyptian schools is also a symptom of the dysfunction of public schooling and its de facto privatization. The scale of noncompliance is also a testament to the growing exclusion of most of the middle classes. Not only the working classes but also the majority of young people are implicated in these patterns of exclusion and gender traditionalism. Furthermore, while many students may be fully aware of the empty content and illusory promises of their education and be resentful of school authorities, confrontational behavior is only one way of expressing this awareness. The choice of noncompliance is also shaped by the link between social background and vulnerability to arbitrary punishment, as described in Chapter 3. Some of the most vulnerable or disadvantaged youth might not feel empowered to display noncompliance at all, if they are unable to rely on social or familial resources that could temper punishment by teachers. Forms of noncompliant and challenging behavior in the schools were also exacerbated by perceptions of the unfairness and extralegality of practices that pervade the public schools. In this light, noncompliance in Egyptian schools cannot be seen only as a working-class phenomenon but is a fundamental symptom of the informal privatization and breakdown of secondary education in Egypt. Other factors frame noncompliance and permissiveness in the schools in terms of the institutional setting, including poor resources and officially sanctioned cheating, the conditions and incentives of teachers, and, as they frequently noted, the tools available to them to deal with noncompliant behavior or to maintain any semblance of discipline in the schools.

Gendered Noncompliance and Contestation

They taught us by the cane	علمونا بالعصاية
And breastfed us fear	ورضعونا الخوف رضاعة
They taught us in school	علمونا في المدارس
The meaning of the words: “All Rise”	يعنى إيه كلمة قيام
They taught us to fear the principal	علمونا نخاف من الناظر
So that all talk is suppressed	فيتمنع الكلام

They taught us how to fear	علمونا إزاي نخاف
And how to cower	وإزاي نكش
But they forgot to teach us respect	بس نسيوا يعلمونا الاحترام
So don't be upset	فمتزعلوش
If I do not listen to what you say	لما أبقى مش باسمع كلامكم
And don't be upset	وماتزعلوش
If I'm out of order [or: against the system/regime]	لما أبقى خارج عن النظام
What do you expect from a child they raised by scolding	مستني إيه من طفل ربوه بالزعاق
Other than trouble and fighting?	غير المشاكل والخناق

From the 2010 poem *Juha* by Hisham El-Gakh[5]

Contestation and noncompliance were prominent features of school relations in all the schools. In fact, it should not be very surprising that harsh and repeated beating did not produce the desired classroom compliance. Since the time when it was first prescribed in British teaching manuals, the excessive use of corporal punishment has been understood to produce what educational psychologists referred to as the "hardened offender," who believed that he (or she) was "an ill-used person," suffering punishment merely because the teacher was "in a position arbitrarily to exercise a coercive authority" (Middleton 2008, 269). This explains students' nonchalance in the face of the prospect of being beaten. It explains why in many classes students simply did what they pleased, regardless of the likely response in terms of humiliation or physical punishment. More broadly, however, the school's directives, rules and regulations were violated in fundamental ways. Regulations around attendance were systematically violated, as described in Chapter 3. Rules and expectations of good behavior and appropriate attire were scarcely observed across the schools. Nevertheless, especially due to pervasive extralegal practices, students and parents have indeed become more assertive in making complaints, threatening escalation to higher educational authorities and, in some cases, filing police complaints. Students displayed keen awareness of the arbitrary repression to which they were subjected. Many voiced their opinions and challenged the teachers' decisions, despite the harsh consequences.

Noncompliance and challenging behavior were most consistently apparent among the boys at the different schools. I experienced the technical boys' school especially as a volatile and violent space in comparison with the other schools (although it was not as violent as some schools that have received press coverage). Despite – and arguably because of – the use of physical punishment by teachers, students frequently engaged in confrontational behavior. In almost every class in the boys' technical school, one or more students engaged in behavior that was guaranteed to elicit verbal humiliation and physical punishment from the teacher. Indeed, if the frequency and extent of their noncompliance is a good measure of a lack of fear, docility or submissiveness, boys in the technical school were the least docile, though boys across all the schools were generally assertive. They also engaged in ridicule, pranks or other retaliation against teachers. In fact, on one of my first days of fieldwork in the boys' general secondary school, a car belonging to one of the teachers had disappeared. Students had apparently arranged for it to be removed from the vicinity of the school, and the teacher had to leave the school and frantically search the neighborhood for it. While I witnessed far less challenging behavior in the girls' schools, female students were more engaged in direct contestation, usually in the form of complaints related to rectifying educational injustices. Boys seemed to resort to retaliation, challenging behavior or generalized noncompliance rather than filing complaints or openly protesting teachers' decisions. Indeed, other studies have shown that girls seem more invested in educational justice, which boys may see as hacking at meaningless detail (Ohrn 1998).

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[5] For the full poem, see Al-Gakh (2010), English translation my own.

Although girls were more active in contesting teachers' decisions within the rules of the game, their attempts were typically aborted by provoking them into breaking those rules, or falsely accusing them of doing so. In a typical authoritarian tactic, a student who contests a teacher's decision as unjust is insulted and provoked until she either backs down or raises her voice and responds with inappropriate language of her own. It often starts with comments on the student's demeanor or the typical retort: Don't look at me like this. Any change in the student's tone of voice or body language is articulated as evidence of the student's poor character and behavior and grounds for her to be punished and maligned instead of her own grievance being addressed. In rare cases, if the student cannot be provoked nor backs down, the grievance is heard but the outcome may still not feel positive to the student. The following example from the girls' technical school shows some of these patterns at work.

A diligent student who sat in the front row in a first secondary class recounted an incident when she protested against an exam result in which most students had failed or had scored very badly. The exam questions covered material that the teacher had not covered in class, nor had she indicated that it would be covered in the exam. The student objected in class, was harshly rebuked and was sent to the principal's office for punishment. There, she was further rebuked and humiliated until she entered into a crying fit. She later managed to secure the support of her friends in upholding her claims and got other teachers to vouch for her, as her own reputation was now in question. Since she was a serious and wellbehaved student who had been treated very harshly, she did receive support from both students and teachers. In the end, some remedial action was actually taken. The scores for some exam questions were cancelled. She seemed, however, to have been deeply hurt by the experience. The educational injustice had partly been mitigated, but her humiliation in the process was left unaddressed. Her right to object, her justified grievances and her dignity were not fully acknowledged, nor respected. Such dissent had some chance of success if it came from individuals who were able to gain wider support through the social capital of being a diligent student, or other forms of capital and clientelism. In most cases, however, the emotional and practical costs are very high. In fact, based on his fieldwork in a public preparatory school, Naguib (2006) observed that those who confront the power of the school – through police complaints, for example – eventually lose and even drop out of school.

In some cases, students and their families resorted to direct violence or threats of violence against offending teachers. Since the beginning of the 2000s, news reporting and media portrayals of Egyptian education, including at least two popular feature films, also paint an image of a rising violent, assertive and confrontational attitude among students. These reports especially highlight students' (especially male students') verbal abuse, intimidation and physical aggression against teachers. These patterns are reflected in the discussion on Minister Badr's notorious statements on school punishment in the Conclusion chapter. The focus of the media attention is typically on the relatively more privileged general secondary students, the main locus of middle-class interest. Age is also critical, as secondary students cannot easily be compared to primary students in terms of their propensity to dissent, fear and submissiveness. Naguib (2006) has noted that students in preparatory schools displayed an extremely aggressive and confrontational stance toward the school system to an extent that was unparalleled in the history of Egyptian education. He describes a new wave of student violence in schools, which includes damaging school property, beating teachers, infighting and smuggling soft weapons such as blades and knives into school.

Permissiveness and the Semblance of Discipline

Accompanying and facilitating these forms of noncompliance was the fact that official disciplinary procedures, such as grade reductions for poor behavior, detention or temporary dismissal, had progressively become more complex or obsolete. Teachers often commented that they had no measures either to hold students accountable for their behavior or to incentivize them to study. Teachers emphasized that, in effect, students could not be penalized or expelled for tardiness, absence, poor academic performance or classroom disturbance. Teachers' powers in this regard had been curtailed precisely because of the potential (and reality) of the abuse of such powers in order to extract resources from students through rewards and punishments relating to tutoring enrollment. This has meant, however, that some of the teachers who had used marks to extract resources from students would now resort to physical and verbal intimidation. The informal withdrawal of the state from public service provision had therefore contributed to the rise in both permissiveness and violence. Teachers and students agreed that dismissing a student from class, as opposed to verbally or physically punishing them, was a reward, not a punishment, because they could then roam the school, chat with other dismissed students or simply be happy to escape the stifling classroom environment. However, this means that the problem is not that formal disciplinary powers have been withdrawn from the teachers. It is first and foremost a result of the poor state of education, the displacement of classroom instruction by tutoring, students' diminished motivations, given the low returns to their education.

Most teachers do not find it easy to deal with these realities. The resentment and reluctance of principals and teachers to give up disciplinary control is reflected in their continued investment in a semblance of observation and normalization. Teachers and administrators across the schools continued to threaten students with grade reduction or suspension for absenteeism. They resorted to (arbitrary and reversible) dismissal letters in order to maintain a semblance of discipline. Teachers warned students that "this year is different" and that they really will get expelled this time if they exceed the absenteeism limits. This, however, contributes further to the sense of the arbitrariness and informality of state regulations and their poor enforcement. As detailed in Chapter 2, the general institutional setting also informed extralegal, permissive teacher practices that undermined various facets of discipline, such as the facilitation of cheating, the presentation of inaccurate attendance data and other reporting on activities and formalities that were only intended to appease supervisors and inspectors. Just as teachers dutifully collected attendance records in each class (although rampant absenteeism does not always show up in official school records submitted to the Ministry), principals and administrators continuously filled out reports verifying the smooth functioning of the school.

Administrators are of course fully complicit in regularized games of pretend discipline in the schools. Even though principals have substantial power over their schools, they are subject to continuous monitoring and supervision from higher educational authorities, and their work is regulated by ministerial orders pertaining to every minute detail. Punishment and harsh penalties are the fate of dissenting principals who fail to implement the regulations and instructions coming from above (see Naguib 2006). District and central Ministry supervisors – sometimes two or three visiting a school per day – constantly collect data about various aspects of school performance. Supervisors have little real power to assist schools, however, and are usually accused of monitoring the most superficial and least important aspects of school or classroom life, especially cleanliness and maintenance, issues over which the school in fact has little control due to centralized hiring and resource decisions and other limitations on school spending. Some also monitor the morning assembly and report on the presence or absence of the president's photographs in every classroom. Many are aware that they are monitoring issues over which neither they nor the schools have any real power and keep their visits brief and focused on fulfilling the minimal formalities that complete the required paperwork. As respondents frequently noted, this has led to a situation where most schools maintain excellent records and most teachers across the system receive "excellent" annual appraisals, in stark contrast to the realities of the schools.

A set of dynamics is therefore in place that renders an elaborate system of educational supervision, as a disciplinary technique, meaningless. Similar to the manner in which beating and punishment were conducted in the schools, harsh rebukes may be meted out to the teacher, even in front of the students, but little formal disciplinary measures are taken (or effective remedial program implemented) that could structure teacher incentives to alter their behavior. In fact, many subject supervisors who are meant to monitor and advise teachers with regard to their teaching performance do not even enter classes. They sign their attendance in the main visitors' register in the principal's office, stay for tea and a chat, and may look at the teacher's preparation notebooks. In remote areas of the country, where transport to the school may require a few hours and the transport allowance is a negligible fraction of the actual costs, supervisors may call the principal or teachers by phone in lieu of a visit. When supervisors are known to enter classes, teachers are alerted and attempt to prepare the class beforehand so that the final performance is a satisfactory one. This is often accomplished by explaining a lesson and coaching the students on the answers and then explaining the same lesson once more in the presence of the supervisor, and even then only allowing the best students to raise their hands and picking them to answer. The disciplinary technique of supervision is further disrupted by the realities of informal privatization. It is very difficult to attribute student familiarity with the material to the class teacher in the first place.

Student competence is equally likely to have been developed in private tutoring, a fact that is well known to supervisors.

Gender Surveillance and Contestation

The breakdown of discipline was particularly visible when it came to female modesty, bringing to the fore the role of schools in the construction of ideal femininities and masculinities. Different projects of coolness and distinction competed with the schools' conservative ideals of gender behavior and led to constant struggles around modesty, dress and sexual harassment in the schools. Although girls were subjected to corporally less-severe forms of punishment than boys, they endured an additional form of surveillance and punishment relating to their adherence to standards of modesty. If school relations effectively accentuated aspects of violence in constructions of masculinity, they highly sexualized girls in the emphasis placed on their modesty and comportment. Ideals of modesty and femininity, however, were articulated and enforced differently across the schools. Constructions of modesty and the control of related behaviors overlapped with constructions and embodiments of social class, distinction and coolness; and this was critical to the daily struggles around the attire and behavior of girls across the schools.

In the technical and general schools, girls were monitored and harshly rebuked on a daily basis for violations of the codes of modesty and ideal femininity. These practices were directly countered and strongly disputed by the students. As one student in the girls' technical school put it, "they talk about things that should not be said. They are always making insinuations about 'girls who stand at street corners' or at the bus stop. They assume you must be waiting for a boy. They always talk harshly." In fact, one of the most contentious issues in the general public school was the girls' desire to layer their headscarves, that is, adding scarves of different colors or patterns under the permissible white or navy blue scarves. There were disputes about scarves almost every day in the school. Girls were rebuked and threatened that the unacceptable scarves would be confiscated and cut up with scissors, even when less than a centimeter of the colored scarf was showing, or if the white scarf had any pattern. Students perceived this as unreasonable and cruel. It was also very unevenly applied. Such disputes frequently escalated if students contested teachers' statements or practices. They quickly became framed around the impoliteness and poor upbringing of students, as with other forms of contestation in the public schools. Students especially resented the associated implication – and often the explicit accusation – that they only wore the colored scarves to attract the attention of boys, or because they were planning to meet with boys after school, before which they would remove the mandated plain white scarf to reveal the more appealing colored layer (and perhaps even remove the school uniform to reveal a matching outfit worn underneath it).

Importantly, control over female modesty was neither codified nor formalized; it was diverse, diffuse and extended outside the school walls. Tearing up unacceptable scarves with scissors and pulling girls by the scarf are not of course decreed by official codes of punishment. Nearly any teacher or administrator could rebuke and humiliate students in the school, around the school or indeed elsewhere in the neighborhood. While most teachers and administrators felt they had the right to enforce standards of modesty, they also differed greatly in their interest and willingness to exercise this entitlement. The practices of school authorities not only implied enforcement of the wearing of the hijab and of austere and unadorned uniforms; it also meant the enforcement of more conservative ideals, such as the prohibition on wearing trousers (commonly held to be contrary to Islamic edicts in popular quarters in Cairo and the rest of Egypt), even when trousers are sanctioned under Ministry guidelines. In fact, the headscarf itself was approved as an acceptable part of public school uniform after its pervasive and de facto incorporation into student attire, and after many cultural and security struggles (see Herrera 2006). The role of the Ministry was only to organize and formalize its use by identifying acceptable colors that match school uniforms.

The actual practices of girls, their dress and behavior, and their relations with boys were almost completely divorced from the control the schools attempted to assert. The rules, reprimands, threats and maligning were ignored and subverted on a daily basis. The harshness of sustained attempts at surveillance, normalization (through humiliation), control and punishment partly indicate a failure of the desired disciplinary role of the school. Like the physical beating of boys, it did not seem to deter noncompliance, but rather indicated a failure to discipline. Girls regularly violated the modesty ideals promoted by the school authorities and did in fact reportedly engage in frowned-on contact with boys.

School rules therefore clashed with the girls' desires not only to meet boys and find their life partners but also for greater social distinction. For many but not all girls, the ideal of conservative femininity promoted by the schools was not seen as cool.[6] Appearing cool and projecting higher social status was seen as demanding less conservative dress and behavior. The way the girls dressed when I met them outside school or when they came to school for revision sessions after the end of the school year was telling of the vast gulf between the school ideal and their everyday styles. Although virtually all the Muslim girls wore a headscarf, a majority seemed to prefer close-fitting and very colorful clothing. Teachers were obviously aware of this, and many did not particularly disapprove. Teachers therefore seemed equally divided or torn between these conflicting ideals and desires. In one instance in the middle of a rather relaxed philosophy class in the girls' general school, a student brought out recently taken professional photos to show to the small group – not only to classmates but also to the teacher and to me. The students loved the photos, and the teacher commented in a rather neutral tone: "flirty and all" (*dallu'a wi kulu*). The student was indeed striking a flirtatious pose in the photos, sporting tight and colorful clothing, with heavy makeup and an elaborate scarf style. Another girl then showed me her own professional photo. This was in fact in the form of a business card with the word "hot" and other English words on a colorful embossed background. She was also in colorful, tight-fitting clothes and struck a flirtatious pose. In addition, she was not wearing a headscarf in the photo, and it was a full body shot. I thought the picture would be considered scandalous, but again, there was approval from students. In response to my expression of surprise at how "different" the girls looked in the pictures, the response was "Of course, in the photos we become *wilad nas*," a term that connotes, among other meanings, higher social status. Being flirty and feminine was desirable and cool across the different schools and seemed to successfully override and disrupt school attempts to promote more conservative ideals.

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[6] Other work on femininities and masculinities within the sociology of education has suggested that schools not only reinforce dominant social gender roles but also "enforc[e] a set of sex and gender roles which are more rigid than those current in the wider society" (Delamont 1990, 5).

Finally, there seemed to be less zeal and vigor in monitoring and dealing with violations of norms of modesty in the technical girls' school than in the general schools. Three factors may have driven this difference. First, the principal was not as strict on this matter as the principal of the general secondary school, indicating how idiosyncratic factors shape informal gender surveillance in the schools. Second, she was not forced to become as involved in the issues surrounding the sexual policing of girls that emerged due to the proximity of boys' schools to the general secondary girls' school and the resulting struggles around sexual harassment in which the school had to become involved. Third, different expectations may have been placed on girls in general secondary. In a concrete sense, technical school girls were closer to their expected age of marriage and were actively searching for life partners, whereas general schoolgirls are generally not expected to marry except during or after university and are seen as being more likely to be taken advantage of in relationships without a viable prospect of marriage.

In private schools, there is also considerable variation in the monitoring of female behavior, depending on the neighborhood, the school's proximity to boys' schools, the tradition of the school and the current administration. Many parents seek and value schools that control and monitor female sexuality, mobility and gender-mixing. Most private language schools do monitor quite intrusively various details of student dress – nail polish, hair coloring and styling, the style of trousers, the length of skirts and the height of socks, for example – in an effort to foster and preserve a certain image and reputation for the school. The purpose varies from projecting a conservative or Islamic image to a more modern and cool image in higher-end and mixed schools. In the two private schools, control of dress was more formal, rebukes far less humiliating, and dissent less prominent. Students, both boys and girls, in different private and public schools still complained of school rules and the control of personal expressions of style. This is not surprising, given that the rejection of school rules and guidelines on dress pervade almost all schools that enforce any kind of dress guidelines (Thornberg 2008).

The response of school authorities in the private schools to violations of these codes was typically a strict but brief rebuke. Further punishment could consist of making offending students stand outside the principal's office for some time. In some cases, this was followed by a formal warning sent to the parents for acknowledgment. This could be followed by further measures (e.g. after a certain number of warnings), where parents would be summoned to the school or the student could be temporarily suspended. Such escalation was relatively uncommon. In the private girls' school, which was adjacent to a boys' school, in addition to enforcing rules on dress, one of the school's principals reportedly patrolled the area around the school after the end of the school day to see if girls were talking to boys. This zealous behavior was mocked by several students, even those who were critical of the girls' behavior. The relaxed attitude in high-end schools arguably exerted significant pressure on traditional schools to liberalize, as students pressed for a change in uniform and fewer restrictions on style. Like the public school girls, many private school students felt that these restrictions were not cool and therefore undermined their quest for social distinction and their class image compared to a far more liberal elite. They sometimes succeeded, however, in bringing about change to the rules, instead of subverting them in a constant process of contestation. For example, the students and principal of an ex-missionary school explained to me the process by which girls were given a choice over the school uniform and voted for a change in its colors, with less-conservative styles and permissions to wear trousers, instead of the traditional dress or skirt.

The dynamic around such contestation was very different in the mixed school and featured much less prominently in school dynamics. Dress regulations were less restrictive to start with, and most disputes arose around new or eccentric styles worn by both boys and girls; most notably among boys growing their hair long or out in an Afro style or wearing chokers or bracelets. Gender-mixing was allowed by definition, although a girl and a boy sitting alone in a secluded area of the school was not permitted. Students in mixed schools are typically afforded far greater liberties by their own parents to mix outside the school in social clubs, private tutoring or at birthdays and arranged gatherings. The private schools therefore found ways to better accommodate changing gender norms and were not engulfed in daily disputes over these matters. However, this may have been partly due to the fact that they did not confront the additional layer of disentitlement implied in the lack of public safety in popular neighborhoods.

The Loss of Public Safety: Sexual Harassment and Moral Blame

One morning, as I was entering the girls' general school, a male teacher was hurling curse words at a girl and accusing the girls more generally of lacking in manners and modesty and being the ones who run after boys and flirt with them. The girl was angry and was arguing with him. There seemed to be an especially tense atmosphere in the school that morning. I was eventually informed that a girl had just been attacked outside the school by a boy who injured her hand with a razor. The principal had left the school, probably to talk to the principal of the adjacent school and attempt to find the perpetrator. It was repeatedly emphasized, by the girls and the teachers, that the girl was a model student who dressed very modestly. It was noted that she wore the long scarf that falls from the top of the head to below the waist (*khimar*), that she was a good student, that she attended religious lessons regularly, was proficient in the proper recitation of the Quran and was sometimes asked to speak on the school radio. While this highly modest profile obviously did not protect this girl from being harassed, teachers still took this opportunity to level abuse at the girls in general and accuse them of bringing about their own harassment through their immodest dress behavior.

Blaming assaulted woman is of course quite common in Egypt as elsewhere, although sexual harassment is endemic in Egypt. One survey of sexual harassment conducted by the Egyptian Centre for Women's

Rights (ECWR) found that 83 percent of women (most of them sporting headscarves, and many wearing the *niqab* or more conservative forms of veiling) reported experiencing sexual harassment. In the survey, male as well as female respondents said that harassment was caused by women being immodestly dressed, with the police typically ignoring and reluctant to investigate harassment cases (see Abdelhadi 2008, Mayton and Ammar 2008). As Ismail has observed in her study of a popular neighborhood in Cairo, the headscarf was not taken as a guarantee of modesty by many young men, and stories about its use "as a cover for compromising conduct" were invoked to undermine women's claims to modesty (2006, 109). Indeed, it was typical for boys in the schools to dismiss all girls as having a bad reputation or for being immodest. They would discuss certain schools and make some distinctions or hierarchies of modesty, but essentially they expressed the same views of the girls.[7] It seemed to be a much more encompassing (generational) observation than one targeted at any specific category. Islamic injunctions are often implicitly or explicitly deployed in attributing moral blame to female immodesty. However, girls are blamed for sexual assaults on themselves in various other contexts, especially where this is a widespread phenomenon, as in disadvantaged areas in countries of the Global South. Sexual aggression by male teachers and boys is often dismissed as "just boys being boys," while girls are blamed for "asking for it" (Pinheiro 2006, 112).[8]

The control of sexuality and female mobility can also be intense and harsh in contexts where girls might face insecure conditions and sexual predation. In her powerful ethnography of impoverished families in a *favela* in Brazil, Goldstein (2003) observes that the survivalist ethos of many of the mothers who have to cope with a harsh world leads, in turn, to some rather harsh forms of discipline and punishment. Goldstein observes that mothers greatly fear that some of their children will find the street more attractive than their crowded, destitute and sometimes contentious households. These women often initiate harsh, even brutal or degrading forms of discipline in the hopes of keeping their children in line and off the street. This applied to boys as well as girls. Girls who spent too much time on the street were seen as girls "of the street," without the protection of a man or a family, and thus open to sexual predation. Despite significant differences between this context and the research sites, these dynamics recall the strict limits teachers placed on students' presence in potentially dangerous streets around the public schools and their vulnerability to various forms of deceit, harassment or sexual assault. They highlight the relationships between poverty, harsh punishment and gender surveillance that can become central to school relations.

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[7] Many of the girls also made references to the "reputation" of the school, either when I asked them about it or organically within their discussions. By the school's "reputation," they almost always meant not its educational profile but how "loose" the girls in the school were perceived to be, which had an impact on their own reputations as members of that school community.

[8] In studies in West and Central Africa, teachers justified the sexual exploitation of female students by saying that their clothes and behavior were provocative and that the teachers were far from home and had sexual needs (Pinheiro 2006, 119). In the Middle East, sexual harassment of girls is not commonly reported, perhaps because girls are commonly separated from boys in schools and because girls are reluctant to speak out; but a study in Ethiopia, for example, found that students attributed the sexual harassment of girls to the way the girls dressed, and not to boys' attitudes toward girls (Pinheiro 2006, 119).

Therefore, while the surveillance of modesty in public schools may have been extensive and the punishment it generated humiliating, it had a complex and mutually reinforcing relationship with patterns of sexual harassment around the schools. After all, the justification that is almost always given for harassment is that girls dress and act provocatively. Sexual harassment is an issue that many schools constantly have to deal with. This was especially true of the girls' general public school, which was directly adjacent to both the boys' general secondary school and another boys' preparatory school. This meant that the school authorities had to deal with harassment issues almost on a daily basis. Some parents simply did not want to take their girls to school because of the constant harassment. Many girls resented, feared and were deeply hurt by the harassment they encountered, which did not only involve cat-calling and flirtatious approaches, but often involved forms of intimidation and aggression. Disrespectful harassment and hostility ranged from empty bags of chips being thrown at girls to a whole range of verbal sexual harassment, which was often rude, insinuating, ridiculing or insulting, rather than flirtatious, admiring or courting. The younger preparatory school boys, who did not have serious prospects of courting the older girls, constantly attacked and intimidated them nonetheless. They tried to push against them or fake attempts at physical contact in ways that seemed to occupy an ambiguous space between attempted sexual contact and bullying.

Beyond this everyday verbal and physical harassment, incidents of sexual assault were also not uncommon, including a case of assault recounted to me in the school. Students explained how a student had arrived in school in torn clothes and a hysterical state after being assaulted by one or more boys, and was locked in the toilet by the principal until her father and brother came to collect her. In response to my shock at the story, students commented that this was "normal."

Several other stories were referenced of girls from nearby schools being assaulted. This was a heavy topic and the girls did not want to discuss the incidents in any detail. As discussed further in Chapter 6, the theme of physical vulnerability, sexual harassment and the lack of public safety constituted a distinct element of citizenship disentitlement as constructed by female students in particular.

Chapter 3 has already suggested that harsh punishment by teachers is reproduced and circulated in violence by students, especially boys. In her work on the enactment of masculinity among Palestinian youths, Peteet highlights how some men who were subjected to beatings and torture during detention in the occupied West Bank prisons return home and inflict violence upon women (1994, 45). In exploring the relationship between dominant constructions of masculinities and the sexual harassment of young women in Australian secondary schools, Robinson (2005) highlights the ways in which sexual harassment is integral to the construction of hegemonic heterosexual masculine identities; the importance of popularity, acceptance and young men's fears within male peer-group cultures; and the utilization of sexual harassment as a means through which to maintain and regulate hierarchical power relationships, not just in relation to gender but also in how it intersects with other sites of power such as race and class.

Finally, despite the humiliating punishment and the rhetoric of morally blaming girls, school actors did in fact make concerted attempts to rectify the public safety situation for girls. Girls themselves tried different strategies to avoid the twice-daily ritual of harassment when arriving or departing from the school. Some tried to walk out of school accompanied by teachers, many made sure they walked out in groups or with at least one other student, and a few carried small self-defense tools such as pepper spray, a pin or a small knife. The most effective strategy unfortunately was not to come to school at all.[9] At one point, teachers and students began to access the school from another gate that was not adjacent to the boys' schools, but that gate was eventually blocked because local residents used the area outside it as a waste dump, and the educational and local authorities could not prevent them from doing so. The school authorities attempted to implement different strategies, such as changing the timing of the start and end of the school days for each school, having teachers patrol the area around the school, or preventing (male and female) students from lingering outside the schools. It was largely in vain. The principal of the school had also tried to convince the district educational authorities to switch the newly built schools so that the girls' school could be the one on the main street instead of being in the middle, between the two boys' schools and only accessed by a small passageway. This proposal was rejected. A delegation of parents and teachers went to the head of the local police station to ask him to assign a policeman to the area to prevent harassment. He reportedly refused their request unless the parents paid the police officers themselves. The efforts of school actors were therefore especially fruitless as they encountered a weak and informally privatized state apparatus that was increasingly unwilling to serve less-affluent citizens. As middle-income parents and teachers who were supported by an affluent patron, they were spared the humiliation that the poor encounter in police stations, but they were denied the protection they sought and were confronted with the expectation that they should directly cofinance the state's provision of the basic collective good of public safety.

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[9] The risk of sexual harassment is recognized as a key barrier to schooling and an important determinant of school dropout rates in many parts of the world, especially in rural areas where students must travel significant distances to get to school (see Pinheiro 2006).

Impossible Femininities and Injured Masculinities

The attitude of girls around sexual harassment reflected a number of critical tensions around violence and physical vulnerability for both girls and boys. Their distanced reaction to sexual assault reminded me of the mix of distance and indignation with which boys reacted to the issue of physical assaults by teachers. Boys often wanted me to record the beatings and insults, urging me to document them and gesturing to me to write it down in my notes; checking with me, "Did you write that one down, Miss?" After describing regular practices of beating and humiliation, one student declared, "I'm talking to the minister from here and saying this. We are suffering, Miss." There was a desire to shame the teachers, to expose them or to exact a measure of justice out of them. There was a clear sense of grievance and a desire for accountability.

However, many students refrained from decrying the violence as directed to them personally, and many maintained a matter-of-fact or even a playful attitude, not one of pain and indignation, but rather one of wanting to expose, mock and debase the teachers. For both boys and girls, there was a resigned or matter-of-fact attitude that this was a reality with which one had to live. In a sense there was nothing to do about it, nothing other than what most girls normally do: try to stay in groups, hope that a male relative, teacher or neighbor can escort them through empty or very crowded streets, and hope to be lucky. For girls, deepening the discussion around sexual assault risked bringing up the usual narratives of blaming the victim. If a student was attacked on the way to school, she had probably been walking alone to school. It may then be asked, but why would she do that, or why do her parents allow this; what kind of family is she from? That is, I understood the reluctance of the girls to elaborate on this matter, despite their usual openness, to stem from a deeply ingrained awareness that any discussion of sexual assault would inevitably bring blame onto themselves: not only onto the victim in question or her family but onto all girls, and especially those who may engage in the same behavior, including something as simple as walking to school un-chaperoned. The reality of sexual assault and the moral blame connected with it had direct implications for the spaces of freedom girls try to carve out for themselves.

Avoiding these realities indicated complex desires and fears – the desire to enjoy their limited margins of freedom, and the fear that these spaces may be lost. Incidents of sexual assault give legitimacy to strict family and school surveillance, the monitoring of girls and the various restrictions on their mobility. Implicit in this relative silence is an acute realization of the limited and fragile legitimacy of their presence on the street, the lack of protection by the state, the legitimization and impunity of transgression against female bodies, and possibly a suspended appropriation of the assessment of their deviance from ideals of modest femininity. The very presence of (young) women in the public space, especially in the street as its epitome, could be incriminating and open them up to violation and accusations of moral failing. Girls already had to try to be as un-present as possible on the street. As one girl put it, “In order to walk in the street, a girl is expected to be deaf and blind … and mute too”. This “demure femininity, rooted in the notion of a closed, contained body moving toward a clearly defined destination through public space, both enables and constrains a woman’s presence in public” (Lukose 2005, 514).

Similarly, to understand the boys’ sometimes nonchalant reactions to physical assault by teachers, it is essential to appreciate that being beaten could be construed and experienced as an assault on masculinity, which it is not pleasant to confront, highlight or dwell on. Being beaten can represent a distinctly masculine shame, intimately linked to income, power and social status. Given the dynamics of punishment described in Chapter 3, the assumption would be that if a boy is better built or more aggressive, he would not receive as many strikes from teachers. If he has enough money to pay regularly for private tutoring, he will be spared the related harassment from teachers. If he has a family that could deter or intimidate teachers, he could be among those standing by the side of the classroom while others swept the floor. As such, being subject to physical punishment represents an injury to masculinity in exposing physical and social vulnerability, confirming the degraded citizenship of the less advantaged. Downplaying physical punishment could allow male students to more successfully embody masculine ideals.

Conclusion

The forms of noncompliance and the breakdown of discipline and supervision described here, coupled with cheating and teacher shirking in Chapter 3, are key manifestations of the "permissiveness" that I argue is a primary feature of the lived citizenship of the majority of Egyptians (Conclusion chapter). The term "permissiveness" as applied to lived citizenship is inspired by parenting literature. The literature on parenting and teaching styles often refers to authoritarian, authoritative and permissive adult styles in describing approaches to discipline (see Baumrind 1971, 1991, Maccoby and Martin 1983, Firmin and Castle 2008). Authoritarian parents are controlling, rigid and cold. They are strict and demand unquestioning obedience from their children. Above all, children of authoritarian parents are not allowed to question or disagree with their parents. Permissive parents, on the other hand, provide lax and inconsistent feedback to their children. They are typically less involved in their children's lives than other parents and place fewer limits on their children's behavior. Authoritative parents are firm and set clear limits on their children's behavior while allowing interaction and dialogue with their children. The withdrawal of the state from providing a range of protection and provision and participation rights encompass some of the meanings that parenting literature sometimes refers to under a fourth neglectful style, where parents are not responsive to children's needs, do not show them care and have few expectations about their behavior or achievement. While neglectfulness is applicable to many of these patterns, the term "permissiveness" signals a wider array of related phenomena, including informality, precariarization and corruption, as well as the acts of legislation and allocation of resources involved in the creation of these phenomena. Applying these categories to modes of governance and lived citizenship is not meant to suggest a paternalistic portrayal of the role of the state. Permissiveness is meant to signal the deliberate breakdown of the rule of law that encompasses all of these phenomena. It is about the withdrawal of the right to protection under the law that is fundamental to the "lived social contract" (Sobhy 2021).

The forms of noncompliance described here stem from alienation from school relations and declining returns to education, which are premised by the withdrawal of provision rights (of good quality education for all) by the state. The dynamics of contestation and noncompliance around gender norms do not only reflect competing gender norms. They critically reference the withdrawal of rights to protection and public safety. The weakening and corruption of the protective functions of the state meant that public school actors, even in the relatively more privileged general secondary schools, could not call upon the police or rely on other institutions of the state to deter sexual harassment or control drug-dealing and violence around the school premises. Islamist discourses served to define and emphasize the limitations on female modesty. As such, they partly obscured the withdrawal of the state from its protective functions and enabled the framing of the failure of public safety as a personal or social failure stemming from the improper conduct of the citizen. Perhaps in this sense, they offered school actors a semblance of control, causality and even agency to draw upon in situations they had failed to tackle in practical terms. Finally, student silences around harassment and beating seemed to point to how untenable the hegemonic ideal femininities and masculinities were for poor students, within the prevailing neoliberal and Islamist frameworks. The ideals they were meant to embody were not compatible with the resources the system granted them. These gendered implications of dominant governance strategies are crucial for understanding everyday lived citizenship and student discourses on national belonging covered in Chapter 6. First, however, Chapter 5 explores how these modes of lived citizenship are implicitly legitimized through official narratives of citizenship and belonging in nationally unified textbooks.

5 Nationalism, Belonging and Citizenship in Official Textbooks

Which narratives of imagined citizenship frame and legitimize the modes of lived citizenship of withdrawn protection and provision described in Chapters 1–4? How are relations of permissiveness and repression dealt with, and how is neoliberalism articulated in these narratives? How is national belonging constructed and justified? What sorts of national glories are celebrated and how is the route to national progress described? What place does the figure of the leader, the army and Islam take up in these narratives? How are the parameters of protection, provision and participation and legitimation constructed in official narratives? This chapter and Chapter 6 draw a picture of how citizenship and belonging are delineated and enacted in the schools. They enquire into the place of schools in the production of hegemony. They address the ways in which education is part of wider ideological struggles and transformations and a space in which negotiations and accommodation take place between different forces.

Apart from detailing the key tropes of official narratives of citizenship and belonging, this chapter stresses two key points. First, the selective insertion of Islam at the center of textbook narratives of national identity and citizenship reflects far deeper Islamization than other official discourses, say of Mubarak himself, lending legitimacy, resonance and force to the wider enabling of Islamist trends in the public sphere. A more authoritative framework had to be summoned to tell young people that permissiveness is a result of their extralegal and uncivil behavior, that prosperity can be achieved through the reform of their personal conduct, and that loyalty and defense of the nation will always be part of their religious duty. Islamist narratives in the educational sphere have been deployed in the service of the state and in the legitimization of existing citizenship realties. Second, very limited attempts are made at legitimizing the actual ideological directions and policy choices of the regime in its general neoliberal orientation. Charity and entrepreneurialism are encouraged, but only in a limited number of texts. Everyday repression and the diminished access to the law are not discussed, and the existence of political repression is obscured through the emphasis on freedom of speech and democracy as values supposedly promoted by the regime. As opposed to the relatively clear identification of the ideological, domestic and regional enemies of the postcolonial regime (Chapter 1), Mubarak-era textbooks make some references to (Islamic) terrorism and vague foreign (Western) conspiracies. Nationalism is retained as a primary legitimizing trope and internal dissent is portrayed as stemming from enemies of the nation. The Conclusion chapter revisits the related questions around nationalism, politicization and depoliticization in light of changes since the Revolution.

Constructions of national belonging and citizenship are analyzed across a sample of secondary school textbooks that were in use throughout the late Mubarak era and early post-2011 period (see Chapter 1). The analysis focuses on four subjects that are most relevant for national identity, belonging and citizenship. National Education and Arabic Language are given detailed treatment, while examples from History and Islamic Religious Education are introduced to support the key arguments. Arabic Language and National Education – especially taken together – are the most important subjects for studying official citizenship narratives and shifts therein. Previous analyses of contemporary textbooks have also tended to focus on History and Religious Education (e.g. Starrett 1998, Toronto and Eissa 2007, MARED 2010, Attalah and Makar 2014). National Education (*Tarbiyya Wataniyya*, which can also be translated as Nationalist or Patriotic Education), taught in some grades as Citizenship Education or Civics, is, nonetheless, the subject directly tasked with conveying official narratives of citizenship to students. However, like Religious Education, it is a pass/fail subject that does not affect the student's final marks and is therefore afforded little instruction or study time. By contrast, Arabic Language is one of the subjects that receive the greatest attention from students and teachers. It is also saturated with discourses of nationalism and citizenship in assigned readings, poems, novels, essay topics in exams and grammatical exercises with recurrent themes. I show how final exam essay topics in Arabic Language have been the most politicized aspects of the curriculum, as a site where regime narratives can be updated more rapidly, without the complications of commissioning textbook authorship committees. Additionally, some components of the Arabic language curriculum – especially the Readings (*qira'a*) and Novel (*qissa*) – constitute a more engaging improvement to the information-heavy and tedious textbooks. This was notable in observing their delivery and reception in classrooms, where students could interact with meanings in the readings and with some images in the assigned poetry. Arabic Language textbooks could therefore be seen as the most critical sites of identity and citizenship construction. I first address issues around national identity and belonging across the textbooks and then proceed to construction of citizenship, along the four parameters of protection, provision and participation rights (see Introduction).

Patriotism, Belonging and Loyalty

Like many other textbooks, a Quranic verse prefaces the 2009 textbook for *National Education for First Secondary Technical* (*NEFST*):

> O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). Surat al-Hujurat, verse 13.[1]

The verse identifies the best individual and the best nation as those that are most pious. The goals of the textbook, also listed at the outset, stress promoting belonging to the nation and the *umma* (the nation, often used to refer to the global Muslim community) and the preparation of the "good productive citizen" adapted to economic competition in a changing world and labor market (*NEFST*, 8). The first four goals of the textbook are as follows:

1. Presenting the student with concepts and terms that deepen belonging and loyalty to the nation and *umma*.
2. Preparing a generation that participates in and leads economic life in a new world based on competition.
3. Preparing a good, productive, responsible citizen aware of the requirements of the labor market.
4. Training the student in practicing the values and behavior that allow his or her launching into a rapidly changing world.

This textbook provides the most consolidated and elaborate introduction to the nationalism and citizenship projects of the late Mubarak era. It arguably draws on the discourses of the so-called New Thought of the then ruling NDP, linked with the rise of Gamal Mubarak. It significantly deviates from them, however, in the explicit centrality given to Islam and personal piety. Patriotism or nationalism (*wataniya*) is defined as "belonging to and love of the nation that the human lives in." In the introductory explanation of the nature of National Education and the justification for its study, the key idea is that the person belonging to a group naturally owes it the duty of loyalty and sacrifice at any cost. The example presented to support this claim is "the stance of President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak when he was faced with the crisis of Israel's refusal to withdraw from the Taba strip and its claim that Taba is part of Israeli land. He stood tall to say: 'Egypt will not give up one grain of sand, and it will also not close the doors to negotiation.'" Next, patriotism is contextualized in relation to Ancient Egypt and Islam. The text explains that *wataniya* is one of the most important "discoveries" that the Egyptian people have given humanity because "we have inherited from our Ancient Egyptian forefathers a homeland that they established thousands of years ago and is still present until our day as a testimony to the greatness and genius of the Egyptian" (*NEFST*, 15). It then states that Islam emphasized and in fact achieved equality based on "piety, good deeds and an enlightened mind," regardless of race or ethnic origin, and was therefore a corrective to fanatical nationalism, yet it also affirmed that "belonging and loyalty to homeland and nation was a human instinct blessed by the noble Islam":

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[1] English translation of Holy Quran 49:13 (Ali 2001).

> With the spread of Islam, equality predominated and discrimination was removed, as there was no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab except based on piety, good deeds and an enlightened mind … This is because Islam came to all people, to fulfill the humanity of the human being as a vice-regent of God on earth, and is not exclusive to one race or nationality. This Islamic instinct continued to protect our nation and our nationalism from fanaticism; and belonging and loyalty to nations and the *umma* was a human instinct blessed by noble Islam. (*NEFST*, 15)

This excerpt underlines not only how intimately national identity is linked with Islam but also the tendency of textbooks to present a superficial account of Muslim history, representing only its "golden ages" (echoing Islamist discourses) and excluding any reference to civil strife or the injustices and repressive practices of the rulers of various Muslim dynasties. Three examples are then provided to explain Egyptian nationalism and patriotic behavior. The meaning of nationalism is first constructed in terms of a rejection of foreign linguistic and cultural influences and of pride in the Arabic language. Three patterns of behavior are presented as "unacceptable" and as revealing "the weak nationalist sentiments of some youth" and a lack of pride in the Arabic language: (a) many young people wear clothing with foreign inscriptions, "even when it is made in Egypt and those who are wearing it are our Egyptian youth"; (b) we see in many Egyptian streets banners written in Arabic letters whose meaning is foreign (like Carpet City, Power Clean, High Class); and (c) the title "Mr." has spread in schools instead of *ustaz* so that our teachers of Religious Education and the Arabic Language are being called "mister" or "monsieur" (*NEFST*, 31). Mubarak was again presented as taking patriotic stances, as evidenced by his effort "to alleviate the Iraqi aggression on Kuwait" in 1991. There is no mention of the deployment of Egyptian troops in Iraq or any reference to the US-led war. Across this and other textbooks, praise of the leader often occurs in this format of simple messages devoid of context or detail. Figures from the pre-independence era are also celebrated. The anti-colonial nationalist leader Mustafa Kamel is presented as a symbol and embodiment of true nationalism. This is demonstrated by referring to Kamel establishing a nationalist newspaper to express his patriotic stance. There is no mention of popular agency or the mass mobilization and civil disobedience that were integral to the anti-colonial nationalist struggle.

> Mustafa Kamel *jaahad* [has struggled/undertook jihad] for the independence of Egypt and its liberty domestically and internationally and exposed the faults of colonialism using the Dinshaway incident until Lord Cromer was forced to resign. He also established the *Liwa'* Newspaper and the Nationalist Party to spread awareness and fire up the nationalist sentiment of citizens against British occupation. Mustafa Kamel's jihad/struggle was not a matter of mere slogans or speeches but of constant movement, communication and messages overflowing with patriotism and expressing the feelings of an Egypt in revolt. Mustafa Kamil was not a seeker of fame or power, but a nationalist symbol concerned only with his nation's affairs, regardless of the expense and sacrifice in effort and money. (*NEFST*, 32)

Here, there is a gesture of Islamizing the largely secular pro-independence movement through using the terminology of jihad. This is critically coupled with a sanitization of the struggle for independence by ignoring the elements of protest, civil disobedience and strike action that were in fact critical to that struggle. The exclusion of protest from the history of national independence is paralleled by the portrayal, in an Arabic Language reading in *ALTSTIAS*, of the nationalist leader Saad Zaghloul. The assigned reading piece is a speech where he confirms that he will now proceed with negotiations with the British regarding independence and that "all that remains is for each of us to return to his work," and to believe that he is contributing with his work "a treasure to the nation's treasures" and "a power to its powers." This was the same discourse employed to demobilize protest after Mubarak was deposed in 2011. Good Egyptians and "honorable citizens" were expected to disengage from protest, "go back to work," and let "the wheel of production turn."

Apart from these explicit constructions of nationalism, Arabic Language textbooks in particular provide implicit constructions of nationhood and belonging. The textbooks contain numerous readings and pieces of poetry on the duty to protect and serve the nation. The readings focused on Quranic texts, the discourses of early Muslims, the discourses of twentieth-century writers on early Muslims, texts on nationalist (pre-1952 or the 1973 war) themes, or social themes such as friendship and smoking.[2] In addition to the Readings section, poetry selections included pieces reflecting on the universe and nature, love of the nation, humor, friendship and manhood. The themes of national devotion and sacrifice are reflected in readings like a poem by the celebrated poet Ahmad Shawqi from the colonial era and a sermon by a pre-Islamic poet urging his tribe to fight the enemy (because dying with dignity is better than a life of humiliation [*thul*]). The centrality of Islam is reflected in the explicit, desired sense of national identity and citizenship, as well as in the frequent use of religious content, readings and exercise questions. For example, under the heading "With faith and science we protect youth and build Egypt," an excerpt from a poem by a poet named Umar 'Asal declares the following:

> And Egypt whose banner youth raise high
> the day of victory was achieved and the clouds cleared
> It wants the youth of the Nile a blessed generation
> and through religion and piety elevated. (*ALTSTIAS*)

Assigned literary pieces also included a central piece of Muslim heritage: the speech of the first caliph Abu Bakr upon assuming the caliphate after the death of the Prophet, which emphasizes political consultation with the people and the equal rights of the rich and poor.[3] In general, Quranic and religious themes represented 10–25 percent of the examples provided for literary analysis or grammar. This percentage was higher in the external study guides actually used by students, reaching 50–100 percent of examples in some sections. According to one study of official textbooks in the different educational stages, direct or derived religious material amounts to 30 percent of Arabic textbooks in general education (Khalil 2009).

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[2] As an example of textbook readings and their themes, the titles of the readings in the textbook for Arabic Language for Third Secondary Technical for Industrial and Agricultural Specializations for 2009/2010 were: *Justice*; *Islamic Civilization: The Impact of Arab Culture in Europe*; *Population and Environmental Issues: The Hidden Enemy*; *The Age of Scientific Achievements: Can We Catch Up with It?*; *Sportsmanship and How We Can Promote It*; *Social and Literary Figures: The Liberator of Women – Qasim Amin*; *Sinai*; *Smoking and Addiction*; *Currency: A Means Not an End*; *Humor Is Therapy*; *Fine Arts and the Position of Islam on Them*; *An Article* by Muhammad Abdu; *A Portrait of a Poor Girl*; *Article* by nationalist leader Saad Zaghloul; *Friendship*; *Manhood* by Ahmad Amin, an Islamic Azhari writer; and *A Poem* by Umar 'Asal.

[3] The text reads: "I have been given the authority over you, and I am not the best of you. If I do well, help me; and if I do wrong, set me right. Sincere regard for truth is loyalty and disregard for truth is treachery. The weak among you shall be strong with me until I have secured his rights, if God wills; and the strong among you shall be weak with me until I have wrested from him the rights of others, if God wills. Obey me so long as I obey God and His Messenger. But if I disobey God and His Messenger, ye owe me no obedience. Rise for your prayer, God have mercy upon you."

Wa Islamah and the Centrality of Islamist Nationalism

Apart from these short readings, the mandated novel for general secondary Arabic throughout the Mubarak era, *Wa Islamah*, crystallizes the key themes of Islamist nationalism as conveyed to students. In fact, due to its length and engaging style, this novel can be considered the most extensive and elaborate nationalist narrative to which Egyptian students are exposed in secondary school, and essentially throughout their formal education. Authored by Ali Ahmad Bakathir, who has been called "the pioneer of Islamic/Islamist Literature" [*ra'id al-ruwaya al-Islamiya*], the novel seems to have been introduced into the curriculum as early as 1945, although it was removed after the 1952 Revolution; and the author, despite his links with the Muslim Brotherhood, was reportedly spared persecution by the Nasserite regime because of the prestige and influence of the novel (Hamid 2010). *Wa Islamah* is also part of the curriculum of other Arab countries and was produced as a major feature film, which continues to be frequently broadcast on Egyptian television. Regardless of the historical accuracy of the novel, it revolves around the struggle against and defeat of the invading Crusaders and Mogul Empire. Its key premise is that the ultimate expression of Islamic and nationalist identity is the defense of the nation against the foreign forces that are repeatedly attempting to subdue it. It emphasizes the importance of personal morality based on the Islamist idea that "abandoning Islam" leads to foreign occupation and subsequent misery and humiliation. In its emphasis on the role of the religious authorities in relation to the war effort, it also lends great importance to their fatwas as the legitimate guidance for the ruler and community.

Wa Islamah highlights the importance of obedience to the good ruler who wages jihad and the patriotism of Egyptians. It portrays Egyptians as docile people with massive inert power that manifests itself when there is a need to defend the nation from its external enemies. As one teacher put it while explaining the incidents in one chapter,

> Qutuz called for *jihad*, and this is the character of Egyptians … the Egyptian personality is moderate in its reactions … When *jihad* was announced, people refrained from vice and sins, they refrained from alcohol consumption, houses of worship filled up … this is a trait in Egyptians from ancient times and still exists until now. The true caliber of Egyptians shows itself in trying times.

Like most historical narratives in the textbooks, it is not primarily concerned with the conditions of ordinary people, justice, poverty or inequality. For example, it does not discuss the burden of the war effort or the huge taxes levied on citizens. Instead, Egyptians are portrayed as willingly and honorably sacrificing for the nation. When the Mumluk princes refuse to continue funding the war effort, the ruler decides to take these funds by force. He then collects more money from every able Egyptian household and sends preachers across the country to emphasize the duty and virtue of supporting the (defensive) jihad effort. The ruler, Qutuz, is presented as heroic and exemplary, and the Egyptian people are praised for their sacrifices.

The climactic scene of the novel underscores its key message and explains its name. The long-lost love of the lead character, the warrior Qutuz, is injured in battle. Qutuz runs to her and cries out, “O my beloved, O my dear,” but she urges him to continue fighting and says, “Do not say ‘O my beloved’, say *wa Islamah* [O my Islam].” Defense of the (Muslim) nation, Islam and “Jihad”– the name of the beloved of Qutuz – are all merged into a heroic narrative centered on a military leader and the struggle against external enemies. As one teacher commented in explaining the final scene and its key phrase, “so this sentence, if you understand it correctly, means: do not put personal interests above the interests of the nation.” The novel crystallizes the selective manner in which Islam is constructed and stripped of emancipatory and oppositional potential. The jihad to which the novel refers, and promotes throughout, is the jihad against the aggression of a foreign “other,” not against the vices of the self or local tyrants, and not the struggle to establish a better or just society.

Across the different educational stages, the Arabic Language curriculum presents a thoroughly selective, sanitized, simplistic and depoliticized image of Egyptian, Arab and Muslim literature, intellectual heritage and history. Apart from *Wa Islamah*, the other long novel that students are exposed to in the preparatory stage is *Uqba bin Nafi’*, a story about the Islamic military leader who conquered North Africa. Such detailed, immersive narratives are not afforded more secular themes, not even the lives and work of pre-1952 nationalist figures, which are dealt with in short reading passages. In fact, Egyptian students do not study the major works of Egyptian or Arabic Literature in any systematic manner. They study one novel by the Nobel Laureate Naguib Mahfouz (but not in the secondary stage). This is his *Kifah Tiba*, a fiction imagined in ancient Egypt that also describes wars against a foreign power that was ruling the country. They do not study his celebrated *Cairo Trilogy*, for example, in which the anti-colonial Egyptian nationalist struggle is a key theme and nuanced social criticism is central to the drama. They also study one book (The Days *Al-Ayyam*) about the childhood and life of the major intellectual figure Taha Hussein. They do not, of course, study his effectively banned major work The Great Upheaval/ *Al-Fitna Al-Kubra*, which dissects the critical events surrounding the Muslim civil wars that created the Sunni–Shia divide and fundamentally shaped the course of Muslim history dynasties and jurisprudence.

History textbooks also present a simplistic and narrow vision of human history, where other cultures and their contributions are largely ignored, and Muslim history is voided of its richness and complexity. The 2009 *History for the General Secondary Certificate*, for example, not only places the origin of all virtue, civilization and innovation in Islam (and sometimes Ancient Egypt) but also depoliticizes and obscures difference, hierarchy, ideology, division and struggle in the history of Egypt and Islam. The result is that students are left with an idealized picture of Muslim history and know little about the violence and injustice that plagued different Muslim caliphates. History textbooks devote very little attention to the domestic practices of the Muslim empires, the evolution of Muslim legal thought, practice and institutions, or the conflicts between different Muslim political forces. They focus instead on the struggles of Muslim empires against other empires. Islam is portrayed as the source of justice, equality, freedom, fraternity, tolerance and democracy. This contributes to a view of Muslim history as one of unity, power and piety, reinforcing the central "Islamist creed" that Islam is "the solution" that has historically led and should lead, if followed correctly, to "power": national independence, dominance and prosperity (see Sobhy 2007, 2009).

Furthermore, as witnessed in different classrooms, the curriculum as taught in the schools in the different years is even more deeply embedded in a "mainstream Islamist" (Sobhy 2009) sensibility. For example, the following Arabic Language passage for grammar practice given by a teacher in a second secondary general classroom puts forward the key Islamist premise that links personal religious adherence with national and global security, prosperity and progress:

> Humanity will not be able to enjoy safety and stability except if it returns to the heavenly messages, to their refined values, free from personal interests and extremism, at which point every citizen feels that he is responsible before God, so he performs his work with sincerity and honesty, watching his Lord, delivering the dues of his nation, and this security predominates, and love spreads among the children of the nation, and they reach heights of progress and prosperity.

Similarly, this passage for grammar practice from one of the most popular external textbooks (*Al-Muʿalim: Arabic Language for Second Secondary General*, 2009–2010, 296) states:

> The world is about to explode with weapons in the hands of powerful states. People are starting to be fed up with the control of poor states by rich states. Famines are usurping souls, while grains are thrown into the sea so that they become scarce. Is there a way to remedy this condition? The way is religion, which mandated the meeting of people on the basis of compassion, mercy and cooperation, a meeting that should bear its fruit. There is no way for the removal of vice from the world except through religion, for it tames instincts, strengthens the soul, establishes justice, organizes human relations on the basis of virtuous morals, and shows that (virtue) and justice do not discriminate between races, but are applied to the people of the earth.

The message is that injustice and inequality in the world is caused by powerful, rich, exploitative (implicitly non-Muslim) countries that dump grains into the ocean while poor people die of famine. However, if these nations faithfully adhere to religion, then justice, mercy and cooperation will prevail. Injustice and exploitation are externalized to the non-Muslim realm, and justice and prosperity are premised on adherence to religion.

Postcolonial constructions of citizenship and nationalism have also been erased from contemporary textbooks. These constructions focused on discourses of liberation from imperialism, solidarity with the struggles of Arab peoples and other oppressed peoples, freedom from exploitation, expanding social provision and the equality of women. The History textbook examined for this chapter (*HGSC*) places the origin of virtue, civilization and innovation in either Ancient Egypt or Islam. Little discussion is offered of any intellectual trend in Egypt or elsewhere in the Arab World (from socialism to political Islam to Baathism or Wahabism), of internal or regional struggles, hierarchies, differences or divisions. These selective silences are reflected in other History textbooks, where, in reference to the postcolonial regime for example, only the nationalization of foreign companies is portrayed as a positive nationalist act: There is no reference to the nationalization of local industries or to socialist legislation, practices, symbols or rhetoric (see MARED 2010). Similarly, the Sadat era is reduced to the declaration of a new constitution and the 1973 war, without any reference to economic liberalization, openings to Islamism or even Sadat's assassination. However, two themes do represent continuity with the Nasser era (1954–70): glorifying the president and sanctifying the military. Discussions of nationalism in the textbooks are permeated with references to the president's actions and pronouncements as examples of true patriotism and wise stances. The military is constructed as the final savior and ultimate guarantor of the state.

Finally, the textbooks implicitly construct Egyptian nationalism as something of the past. Ancient Egypt and its accomplishments are constructed as key sources of national pride. Nationalism is embodied in historical struggles against foreign occupations of Egyptian land. Poetry pieces about love of the nation and Egyptian nationalist writings typically came from the pre-1952 era during the struggle against the British – but *not* from the more revolutionary phases of that struggle, such as the Urabi Revolt or the 1919 Revolution. Not only is Egyptian nationalism about relations with the "other," but it is also about relationships that are over and done with: foreign occupation or aggression.

The Good Citizen, Islam and Neoliberalism

The parameters of good citizenship are heavily embedded in religious discourse across the textbooks. The first five characteristics of the "Good Citizen" listed in *NEFST* include "Faith in God Almighty and adherence to the correct teachings of religion and respect for the beliefs of others"; "Integrity and diligence in work in pursuit of pleasing God, whether this work is religious or worldly"; and "Commanding virtue and forbidding vice through wisdom and good advice in his social sphere, in application of God's words: 'Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for thy Lord knoweth best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance'" (Surat al-Nahl, verse 125[4]; *NEFST*, 20). The idea of commanding virtue and forbidding vice in particular is often used to pressure others into Islamic observance and is the basis of the establishment of public morality police in countries like Saudi Arabia.[5] The Good Citizen should also possess a host of additional civic, patriotic and "modern" qualities, values and attitudes. These include awareness of his civil and political rights and duties; a sense of initiative and positive participation in developing his society, including volunteer work and participation in elections and political party work; the use of scientific methods of thinking; moderation and acceptance of the other; the preservation of national unity; avoidance of passivity, selfishness, self-centeredness and apathy; pride in and belonging to the nation, its history and civilization; and faith in one's skills and abilities, and developing them in order to contribute to the elevation of the nation (*NEFST*, 20). This text exemplifies a pattern whereby citizenship, national belonging and piety are discussed together, mainly in order to emphasize the citizen's duties to elevate the nation and observe religious injunctions in ways that obscure notions of citizenship as entitlement to rights.

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[4] English translation of Holy Quran 16:125 (Ali 2001).

[5] This verse could also be taken as inviting non-Muslims to join Islam, but this is not a theme in the textbooks.

There are important overlaps between some of these discourses and the promotion of neoliberal "active citizenship" in citizenship education curricula across the world. In fact, the Mission Statement of the Egyptian Ministry of Education in the late Mubarak era explicitly referred to active citizenship: "The Ministry of Education fosters equal opportunities for all Egyptian students to realize a quality education that empowers them to become creative, life-long learners who are tolerant critical thinkers with strong values and a wide range of skills for active citizenship and dynamic participation in an ever-changing global society" (MOE 2007, 76). New secondary school civics curricula across liberal democracies since the 2000s emphasize "active" engagement within the polity, presumably in response to the perception of young people as disengaged from political involvement. The language in these curricular documents "obliges the individual to be both responsible to the state and self-regulating so as to lessen the claims made upon the state" (Kennelly and Llewellyn 2011, 906). The idea of citizens being responsible for their conditions and the related narratives and process of responsibilization are central to neoliberalism. For Nikolas Rose, neoliberalism involves technologies of the self, or conduct of conduct, which in turn entail ongoing processes of responsibilization (1999). The neoliberal state seeks to create not only an individual who is an autonomous chooser and an enterprising and competitive entrepreneur managing his or her own life trajectories, but also "manipulatable" and continually encouraged to be "perpetually responsive" (Olssen 1996, 340).

Apart from its articulation of the Good Citizen around religious adherence, volunteerism and hard work, *NEFST* also devotes a chapter to describing the desirable individual qualities that lead to national progress. These values include time management, democracy, excellence in performing one's work and "community participation" (usually used to indicate charity and volunteerism). While these values are articulated as the "causes of the progress of advanced states," they are often framed within Islamic traditions, especially in the areas of democracy and excellence, and/or linked to the exemplary positions of President Mubarak. Thus, even in the deployment of modernist or neoliberal themes, Islamism, nationalism and glorification of the leader are used as frames of reference. The treatment of democracy in this textbook focuses on how the principles of democracy had their grounding in Islamic tradition and how both the regime and the education system support democracy. The textbook emphasizes that Islam had called for democracy and its values and principles and applied those principles fourteen centuries ago while Europe was in the Dark Ages. The democratic principles of freedom of belief, fraternity, equality, individual accountability and popular consultation (*shura*) were given textual support from the Quran and the *hadiths*. The textbook defines democracy as a system in which "power is left to those whom the people chose to handle their affairs, expanding the circle of people's participation in responsibility and decision making," and in which citizens have the right to express their opinions in complete freedom through legitimate channels, making the people the decision-makers and participants in directing the agencies of the state and in exerting oversight over them (*NEFST*, 65).

To clarify the parameters of good citizenship, the textbook provides descriptions of bad citizens as well. From the very first pages – following the example of nationalist sacrifice by Mubarak in relation to Taba – students are invited to reflect, by way of contrast, on "individuals who commit unacceptable acts in society, from crimes and drug dealing, to abuse of public funds, non-compliance with the manners of public roads, lack of environmental awareness, lack of respect for the rights of others and many of the events we see in newspapers and different media day and night" (*NEFST*, 14). The nationalist/patriotic president who takes a stance (in relation to the other) is contrasted with the bad citizen who commits unacceptable, unethical and illegal acts. The textbook reflects the mantra of "science and faith," championed by Sadat as the key values guiding the nation. Beyond the focus on religion, role models to emulate are primarily scientists, but also famous scholars of Egypt and Egypt's only Nobel Laureate for Literature. According to the textbook, Egyptian models to be proud of in all fields, like "Avicenna, Jamal Hamdan, Mustafa Musharafa, Naguib Mahfouz, Ahmad Zuweil, Magdi Yacoub and other Arab scientists across history," are presented to students "in order to take them as role models and become acquainted with their scientific achievements" (*NEFST*, 14).

As apparent from the definition of the good citizen, political rights were interestingly highlighted, despite the repression and actual restrictions on their practice (see Chapter 1). In terms of political rights, *NEFST* presents democracy as a positive value, but does not indicate concrete rights or liberties associated with it. It then describes the state's "support for democracy" and its protection and defense of freedoms by highlighting Mubarak's supposed emphasis on "consulting with opposition leaders in all situations that necessitate the adoption of a unified stance" and his insistence on the right of young people to "participate with their opinions in confronting society's problems" (*NEFST*, 67). The textbook then moves to the Ministry of Education's efforts in "supporting democracy" through initiatives such as debating societies, the school parliament and the TV show "A Dialogue with Adults," through the introduction and deepening of concepts of tolerance, national unity and rejection of extremism, and by convening videoconferences with teachers to receive their feedback (*NEFST*, 68). As elaborated in Chapter 6, such activities hardly reach the majority of schools due to poor resources. The text then explains that democracy and social peace are the natural outcomes of a good education. The student who has been trained to understand dialogue and who courageously expresses opinions and accepts those of others will be raised with the seeds of democracy within them and become a responsible citizen who participates with conscious will in choosing his leaders, a believer in teamwork who is able to coexist with others (*NEFST*, 68).

Freedom of speech was therefore the main citizenship right affirmed by the textbooks, even if it was often denied in reality. There is little mention or explanation of other political rights, the political system or existing political parties in this textbook, although such theoretical explanations exist in other textbooks. As outlined previously, within its articulation of nationalism and patriotic behavior, the textbook already delineates the acceptable parameters for participation of the citizen in political change. In particular, protest as a mode of political expression and participation, even within sanctioned nationalist themes, has been erased from national history and from discussions of patriotic behavior. With the effective blocking of other institutional channels of participation, however, the vilification of protest amounts to a denial of participation rights.

Beyond this supposed support for democracy, other social, economic and political rights receive minimal coverage in all the textbooks. There is no mention of social justice or social and economic rights, as found in Nasser-era textbooks, for example. The focus is instead on the role of the citizen in elevating the nation through sacrifice, piety, charity and entrepreneurship. It is again *NEFST* among all the textbooks examined that provides the most explicit definition of the developmental ideology of the regime, which seeks to displace the responsibility for social issues, social provision and indeed renaissance, onto society. A lesson entitled "The Role of the State in Human Development" is divided into brief sections on education, training, health, the environment and self-education. Lists of laws issued, national conferences held and a declaration that education is Egypt's National Project were presented as demonstrating the interests of the state and its achievements in relation to human development. These were followed by a section on "Activating the Role of Civil

Society in Human Resource Development," where "civil society" is associated with the Mubarak era in particular; is portrayed as having contributed to solving transportation, education and housing problems; and is the hope for a true renaissance:

> The term "civil society" began to appear after President Mubarak came to power in the beginning of the eighties, that is, society with all its civil nongovernmental and non-profit organizations and institutions that contribute to economic social and political activities and conclusively and effectively confront the chronic problems the state is suffering from in the fields of transportation, education and housing. It is futile to rely completely on the state to solve these problems, and the hope in bringing about a real renaissance will not come about except by reviving the institutions and organization of civil society. (*NEFST*, 50)

Civil society in the regime's discourse is made up of organizations that provide services and assistance to the poor, most of which are either faith-based or funded through international organizations. To be clear, civil society is not used to refer to advocacy groups, professional syndicates or human rights organizations, which are the targets of periodic repression and condemnation. Nonetheless, the president is indirectly credited with this explosion of charitable citizenship.

A brief discussion of globalization sheds further light on the ideological direction promoted by the textbooks. The text outlines the arguments put forward by critics of globalization (inequality, unemployment, environmental impact, Americanization, the power of multinational corporations) and its proponents (offering technological solutions in many areas, better products due to competition, greater international cooperation). The text concludes that globalization is simply a fact that has taken over the world and "cannot be avoided by hiding in the caves of the past," even if inequality is caused by global patterns and is unavoidable (*NEFST*, 35). The prescription that emerges from the discussion is interesting. The role of Egyptians in a world defined by technological, communications and economic change is to achieve excellence in their work in order to perfect local production, to buy local products to reduce unemployment, to refrain from the overzealous buying of unnecessary foreign products and to arm themselves with spiritual values and avoid psychological illnesses (*NEFST*, 30). These prescriptions return to the role of religion as a coping mechanism and lay the basis for blaming the citizen for the consequences of these economic policies in terms of the decimation of local industries, balance of payment deficits and personal responsibility for productivity.

Not only do the textbooks ignore most categories of rights in relation to the state, but they also reflect a denial of forms of exclusion and difference relating to class, region, gender or religion. The textbooks either downplay or ignore various forms of difference, poverty and inequality. In particular, the Islamization of the public sphere since Sadat has implied a fundamental shift in the position of Egypt's Christians as equal citizens of the state. Since the late 1980s, Coptic and secular figures have had no success in replacing the memorization of Quranic selections in Arabic textbooks with other material, nor in reducing the overall Islamic orientation of the texts. Coptic history has always been part of history curricula (Abdou 2017b), and Mubarak-era textbooks do explicitly highlight "national unity," respecting the "other" and combatting extremism as aspects of good citizenship.[6] However, the frame of reference for discussing political and moral issues is clearly Islamic, emphasizes the supremacy of Islam over all other religions and presents it as the basis and predecessor of all human, and especially European, intellectual and scientific achievements. Some scholars have argued that forcing Islamism into textbooks is not only aimed at establishing an Islamic and Islamist identity but also serves to humiliate and disparage minorities. Thus, in one example, the few pages devoted to Coptic history in one textbook end with an assignment to "write ten lines to the Danish cartoonist who maligned the Prophet" (MARED 2010). Toronto and Eissa have similarly argued, with reference to Islamic Education textbooks, that they exhibit "the inherent contradiction in promoting tolerance and respect for other religions and at the same time including material that instills an exclusivist, triumphalist attitude by emphasizing the pre-eminence of the Muslim community" (2007, 49; see also Groiss 2004).[7] It could be argued that the instances in which religious faith (without framing it in Islamic terms) is articulated as the basis of good citizenship constructs ideal citizenship as inclusive of both Muslims and Christians. However, the saturation of the public sphere and textbooks themselves with an Islamic framework can only be seen as undermining the inclusion of Christian citizens.

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[6] Based on a textual analysis of Egyptian history textbooks from 1890 to 2017, Abdou (2017b) finds that, with few exceptions – and contrary to widely circulated claims – Coptic history has consistently been included in official textbooks, but allocated a disproportionately smaller space compared to other eras. He also shows how Copts are constructed in these historical portrayals as a largely persecuted and victimized people (by Egypt's Roman rulers), with few contributions – implying a narrative arc of decline.

[7] In his detailed report on the content of Egyptian school textbooks of all grades and subjects, Groiss (2004) documented the passages that relate to Jews, Christians, war, peace, the Palestinian problem, jihad, terror and tolerance. Groiss, who has conducted similar studies of Saudi Arabian, Iranian and Palestinian Authority textbooks, surveyed 103 Egyptian textbooks for use in primary, preparatory and secondary state schools and 16 textbooks for use in preparatory and secondary schools within the religious Azhari school system, published between 1999 and 2002. His conclusions can be summarized as follows: Judaism and Christianity are both respected as monotheistic religions and despised as unbelief; the Christian West is not presented as a rival as such, but the Crusades and modern Imperialism are vividly described using hostile language; Egyptian textbooks endeavor to foster a positive attitude among students toward the Copts, who are depicted as an integral part of the Egyptian nation (although incidents of conflict are not discussed); the image of the Jews, both historically and at present, is very negative; Zionism is portrayed negatively; the Middle East conflict is depicted as a

When mentioned, sectarian tensions are portrayed as foreign directed, addressed by the declaration of a new Coptic national holiday by the "wise president," and not really a problem because there is no discrimination in Egypt or fanaticism among its people. As the textbook puts it, "President Muhammad Hosni Mubarak affirmed this fact by issuing his important political decision whereby the 7th of January [Coptic Christmas] became a national holiday in Egypt for all Muslims and Christians, which is a clear message to anyone who dares to tamper with national unity in our dear Egypt" (*NEFST*, 72). Another section in *NEFST* explains the role of the state in supporting national unity and preserving society's values, and provides the awkward example of the rejection of foreign intervention in educational curricula (*NEFST*, 30), a prominent theme of Islamist discourses on education discussed in Chapter 6. Egyptians are portrayed as a tolerant people "whose hearts fanaticism [has] not entered." Sectarian incidents are condemned as attempts to weaken the nation linked to the "old attempts" of the British when they were occupying Egypt and trying to cause disunity by claiming to protect Coptic Christians. The latter, however, realized this plan and took part in demonstrations for the liberation of Egypt so that the conspiracies that caused strife between the sons of the same nation were destroyed. In this narrative, the external enemy was the cause of the problem, not any official or societal discourses or practices, and it was the Copts who chose to resist such attempts. The textbook affirms that all Egyptians have the same rights and duties, and that places of worship provide educational, health and cultural services to all Egyptians in all sectors of society without discrimination with the goal of developing society. It should still be noted that the discourses of the textbooks are still more tolerant than many variants of public discourse in the country. They therefore signal to students and teachers the parameters of sanctioned discourse about Christians, sectarian tensions and interfaith relations.

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usurpation of Palestinian land by foreigners with the help of Western imperialism; the solution to the conflict depends on the Palestinians being granted their rights; the 1973 war is depicted as a major Egyptian victory; martyrdom for the nation is exalted; jihad is portrayed in its military sense only; and although there is a rejection of terrorism in principle, there is support for Palestinian operations in Israel.

Finally, gendered dimensions of citizenship in terms of disentitlement and discrimination are also hardly discussed. In relation to gender, a section of the Islamic Religious Education textbook outlines traditional female occupations as more appropriate for women (teacher, nurse) and explains the different rights to inheritance of women as commensurate with their different financial responsibilities. While the textbooks generally operate within traditional parameters and portrayals, they do not deploy the sexist and derogatory discourses that are widely employed in public and private discourses.

While *NEFST* provides the most explicit and extensive discussions of citizenship among all secondary stage textbooks, the corresponding textbooks in the general track, National Education textbook for first secondary (*NEFSG*) and National Education for the General Secondary Certificate (*NEGSC*), had a markedly different content and focus. The first secondary textbook, *NEFSG*, is divided into sections on the "Historical Importance of Egypt's Location," "the Genius of the Egyptian people" (focusing on the establishment of the first centralized state in history, and describing the apparatuses of the Ancient Egyptian state, the production of paper and its construction wonders), the Crusades and military responses to them. These are all topics covered elsewhere in Geography and History textbooks in the general secondary and earlier grades. The second part of the textbook discusses a number of modernist, liberal, nationalist and Islamist intellectual figures – notably ignoring leftist figures, including Rafa'a al-Tahtawy, Muhammad Abdu, Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayid, Sayyid Darwish and 'A'isha Abdul Rahman. The presentations are very cursory and offer bullet points to be memorized as opposed to detailed narratives to reflect upon. For example, the section on the modernist Islamic thinker Muhammad Abdu emphasizes a number of discrete ideas: his respect for "the mind" (reason) and its use in interpreting the Quran, his rejection of blind adherence to tradition, the compatibility of Islam with the demands of modern times, the permissibility of relying on non-Muslims in areas that "benefit Muslims," the permissibility of depositing money in savings accounts, encouragement to learn foreign languages, the notion that predestination does not imply surrender and despair but reliance on God through work, the importance of perseverance and trust in God, and finally his rejection and condemnation of Sufi Orders that ignore the value of work and call for life to be abandoned in the name of reliance on God. Despite the importance of these issues as topics for debate for the past century of Islamic thought, the textbook did little to invite students to reflect on them.

In terms of the parameters of citizenship, references to the rights to protection, provision and participation were mostly absent from the general secondary textbooks as well. One telling exception is a brief mention of "social solidarity" in the third chapter of *NEGSC*, where the "achievement of the values of social solidarity" *before* 1952 includes introducing social insurance, pensions and insurance against old age and sickness. The example reflects three critical elements of official discourses. First, these rights are described as "Islamic" so that the Islamic frame of reference had to be prominent. The reference to Islamic values is not, however, employed to provide a religious basis for these forms of social protection as part of a more progressive understanding of Islam or of a religion-centered but right-based citizenship. Second, social solidarity is described in relation to "values," not articulated as "rights" framed in terms of social justice, nor placed within a discourse on a welfare or developmental state. Third, it is the pre-1952 monarchical order, not the Nasser era, that is credited with the focus on social protection and public services. This reflects to some extent the hostility to the Nasser in official discourses since Sadat and Islamist influence on Arabic textbook authorship (Chapter 1). The text briefly indicates that social solidarity was expanded by the July Revolution and that recently the state has guaranteed the provision of services to its citizens through its specialized National Councils, such as the National Council for Women, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and the National Council for Human Rights. The work of these councils is however very limited in terms of their impact on the ground, much of it in fact being funded by donor projects and private donors, not by the state.

While operating within the same framework as the textbook for technical education, notions of citizenship were not as explicitly articulated, the role of civil society and the importance of democracy were not stressed, and brief discussions of intellectual trends in Egypt in the first half of the twentieth century were superficially introduced. On the one hand, it is possible that the "New Thought" of the National Democratic Party under Gamal Mubarak had not yet arrived to these general secondary textbooks. On the other hand, it was perhaps intentional that a nod toward rational moderate Islam was thought to be well suited and more legitimizing to present to middle-class students.

Citizenship rights are not referenced in any of the Arabic Language textbooks, except for a prominent focus on justice presented within an Islamic frame of reference. Two of the three Arabic Language textbooks examined open with readings on justice, which were fully based on and refer back to early Islam, the Quran and other foundational Islamic narratives. The first lesson in the technical track textbook (*ALTSTIAS*) presents a more explicitly Islamist discourse that links Islamic notions of justice to the state, its governance and the condition of the nation. It explains that justice is the basis of religion, of governance and the civilizing of the world, stressing that the nation would be in good standing only if there is protection for the weak and the deprived. The stated "main ideas" of the lesson include the following: the justice of the ruler being to rule by what God has decreed; religion's call to justice; the Prophet warning against injustice; the just having a high status among the people and being rewarded by God; the history of Islam as based on justice; and (caliph) Abu-Bakr establishing justice as the just Prophet had taught him. In the textbook for the General Secondary Certificate (*ALSSG*), the lesson on justice states that the whole history of Islam was established on the basis of justice alone and equality in all things, that Islam made justice the basis of all triumph and blessing, and that the unjust will be the fuel of hellfire. The main ideas given in the reading include themes such as: "the concept of justice in the Holy Quran"; "with Godly justice, the conditions of human societies improve"; and "justice is the first of God's attributes, on which he establishes his creation." Strikingly, the only readings that relate to state-society relations are entirely based on an Islamist frameworks, where the progress of the nation and the establishment of justice are premised on and stem from Islam in general, but not also on governance based on Islam. Nonetheless, even when Islam is associated with justice, there is no elaboration of concrete legal, political, economic or social rights that could be inspired by or derived from Islamic texts.

Two final examples show how the textbooks obscure citizenship rights and discuss them only via nationalist and religious tropes. A brief section in the general secondary History textbook describes the conditions of Egyptian society under British occupation. Here, poor social conditions are presented as a reason for rejecting British rule, and it becomes appropriate to demonstrate the injustice that befell the Egyptian people under occupation. The neglect of education by the British, its high fees and limited recipients are highlighted, as well as the introduction of English as the main language of instruction. Even the otherwise censored term "poverty" is used. The spread of feudalism, the unequal distribution of agricultural land and its concentration in the hands of the few are examples of the negative social realities under colonialism. Most peasants suffered extreme poverty (*mu'damin*) in this period, and workers had no rights protecting them from the oppression (*istibdad*) of their employers, nor any pension rights or social insurance, so that "major capitalists exploited workers in the worst manner." This sudden snapshot of social conditions stands almost on its own in the entire textbook. There is no mention of how these conditions compared to those under the preceding ruling dynasties, nor indeed the succeeding regimes, and certainly not to contemporary conditions. The passage is clearly an abridged remnant of Nasserite textbooks. However, it is telling that the only citizenship-related and ideological references – to capitalism, exploitation, poverty, social insurance and to "the people" as workers and peasants – retained in History textbooks several decades later are those that refer to conditions under rule by the "other". The "other" can be held responsible for poverty, inequality and the lack of access to education, otherwise such terms and issues are almost never referenced. Another discussion of state provision and taxation policies in this textbook describes taxes on agricultural land under Islamic dynasties and their differentiation based on the religion of the taxed individual.[8] This is followed by an explanation of the categories of distribution of *zakah* or religious alms to the poor and needy (in another rare mentions of "the poor"). Here, taxation is embedded in an Islamic framework and poverty is linked to the elective religious duty of the "individual" to pay alms.[9] While Egypt's experience of state socialism is given almost no treatment and portrayed in a more nationalist and less ideological light, even economic liberalization under Sadat is largely ignored, other than the focus on the 1973 war, construed as a decisive military victory for Egypt.

Arabic Essay Questions as Regime Messages

Arabic Language essay questions (*ta'bir*) in unified national examinations represent a key vehicle for expressing regime messages in the school system and offer a succinct distillation of nationalist messages in the curricula and how they are meant to be replicated. Essay questions are developed centrally each semester and can therefore be frequently updated. They also happen to be an arena in which oppositional discourses can be voiced, monitored and suppressed. The following are three indicative examples of essay topics from General Secondary Certificate final exams between 2002 and 2009 (Chapter 7 discusses post-2011 examples).[10]

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[8] *Khiraj* is typically levied on non-Muslims (an unspecified amount in the textbook, although 50 percent of the produce of Jewish lands is listed in the same lesson), and *zakah* is taken from Muslims or converts to Islam (10 percent). The *jizya*, another tax on non-Muslims, is mentioned, along with an explanation that it is not an Islamic innovation.

[9] *Zakah* is not collected by the state in Egypt, making it far closer to charity than to a duty or entitlement of the citizen.

[10] Past national exams can be requested from the Ministry's archives, but they are also reprinted in external study guides.

- Love of the homeland is part of [religious] faith and should be translated into words and deeds. *Write expressing your noble feelings and [describing] what youth should do to serve their homeland.*
- Egypt will rise with the thought of its scientists, the arms of its youth, the flourishing of its economy, the strength of its army and its adherence to its religious values.
- Egypt, God's *kinana* [*lit.* quiver] on his earth, has unified its people and sacrificed its youth and its money to fight off the barbaric attacks of the Tartars and Europeans, and still has the prominence in defending its nation and unifying it. *Write about the role that Egypt undertook, and undertakes, in the defense of the Arab nation and achieving its unity.*

The framing of these essay topics builds on the overall spirit of the textbooks and succinctly reflects the key political messages that students are expected to echo. As apparent from the first essay topic, love of nation and faith are intimately linked, and students are expected to expound on their "noble feelings" of love for the nation. The other dominant themes are also well represented: including "science," faith and the army as essential to national progress; Egypt being under constant external threat and supposedly continuing to "defend Arab causes"; and the duty of the young to serve their homeland. It is clear to students that only answers that fit very closely with the spirit and letter of textbook discourses will receive good marks.

Conversely, essays that do not follow the official line are expected to be marked down at the minimum or the student might receive a failing grade for the essay section, for the whole subject or to face even more dire consequences. Although most cases receive little or no national coverage, independent newspapers have reported on cases where students or teachers have been penalized for voicing opinions critical of the regime, however mildly. In one of the more highly publicized cases, a technical education student in Luxor attempted suicide in 2008 after failing to find employment because employers feared harassment by state security if they hired him. The student was famous for his phrase "an unjust leader and an oppressed people," written across an examination answer sheet for which his school failed him in the final exams. In 2010, a preparatory school student who wrote an essay expressing dissent in her Arabic exam received a failing grade in this subject, underwent security investigations and would have had to repeat the year had her case not received national media attention. Teachers feel similarly monitored, and their every mark – in fact, anything they or their students write – may be scrutinized by supervisors and cause trouble with security personnel in the Ministry and beyond (see Chapter 1 on the securitization of education). It is not only subject supervisors and other supervisors who monitor teachers. This surveillance may be coordinated with the security personnel in each school and educational district. In fact, throughout their own schooling and university years, teachers also undergo different forms of political and security screening, monitoring and investigation by state security for engagement in oppositional activities of any kind. On the other hand, students who do not wish to engage in flattery to the regime or give credence to its claims are able to choose nonpolitical essay questions, of which there is traditionally at least one topic among the three choices given in the final exam. These typically address issues relating to friendship and family, or the dangers of smoking or drug use among youth.

Author, Textbook, Teacher, Student

The preceding discussion may make the textbooks seem more coherent and developed than they really are. Most textbooks are structured in a very exclusionary manner in their presentation, content and expected modes of reproduction and assessment, and this is fully recognized by students and teachers alike. Textbooks are usually composed and often approached by students and teachers as sets of definitions, lists of events and dates, and likely exam questions, with “ideal answers” prepared by tutors and found in external textbooks. They were also not treated as exalted sources of authoritative knowledge. They were often dismissed as “stupid,” “retarded,” “garbage” and as “not reflecting reality,” and almost always condemned as too long and filled with useless detail (*hashw*). Engagement with textbook content seemed so limited that I sometimes doubted whether it was worthwhile studying it. However, textbooks are not just important for understanding the official tropes of imagined citizenship or how they are skewed in the educational sphere, but for appraising the legitimizing power of the state in how far these narratives are lived, appropriated or contested by students (Chapter 6). The textbooks and the diversity within them also indicate key struggles *within* the state.

The diversity and multiplicity in these official narratives indicate a state that is not a unitary entity putting forward one coherent message for young people across educational stages, tracks and subjects. The main source of this bounded diversity is not only competing voices and currents within the state bureaucracy, including Islamist-leaning staff in the Ministry of Education: It also stems from subject-related differences. Textbook authorship is a bureaucratically driven process in which all participants have been cleared by the security apparatus and they exercise self-censorship based on their understanding of the red lines they are meant not to cross in relation to politically sensitive issues. The composition of authorship committees and their disciplinary backgrounds leave an undeniable mark on the textbooks.[11] For example, Arabic-language professors have a tendency to have Islamist sympathies. This may explain troubling patterns like the fact that Egyptian or Arab literature is hardly taught to Egyptian students in any meaningful manner, probably because its best works are not sufficiently Islamist or non-oppositional. History professors, conversely, typically have nationalist, leftist or liberal inclinations. Religious Education textbooks are greatly influenced by official religious institutions (al-Azhar and the Coptic Church). National Education authorship committees are sometimes composed of history and philosophy professors, and sometimes political science professors, who tend to be liberal and emphasize theoretical explanations and descriptions of political institutions.

Beyond their content, the wider institutional setting, assessment dynamics, presentation style, teacher training, attitudes and values all determine what actually arrives to students from these textbooks. Textbooks are taught (or not so well taught) within a particular schooling context. The nature of assessment in the system, which especially involves exam-oriented tutoring and pervasive cheating (Chapter 2), determines if and how the texts are presented. That is, students might pay for one or two revision sessions for a pass/fail subject like National Education, but its classes are often cancelled or taken over by other teachers, and student knowledge of this material is patchy at best. The content and message of the texts is mediated by teachers and, importantly, by private tutors operating outside the formal system. Textbooks do not speak in the classroom. Teachers speak for them and students receive them, and they are mediated by the discursive field in which they arrive.

Notably, if the textbooks were taught in a cultural context that is not so saturated with Islamist discourse, the same textbooks could be presented and received very differently. To give one example, on a rare occasion when National Education was actually taught in a classroom during my time in the schools, the main message of the first lesson of the book (discussed earlier) was that believing in God is the basis of citizenship and the definition of the Good Citizen. This was the point the teacher repeated over and over in between her admissions that she was not familiar with the material and her complaints that this was not her subject of specialization. While religious adherence as a component of good citizenship was indeed listed explicitly and prominently in the textbook, other themes were also mentioned, including respect for the beliefs of others, knowledge of civic and political rights, and participation in political and volunteer work. The teacher, however, seemed to be unwilling, unqualified or unsure about how to elaborate on them. As Khalil (2009) notes, when it comes to intolerance and discrimination, the flaws of these textbooks are multiplied many times over when they are interpreted by teachers in classrooms.

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[11] I do not detail these issues for each subject, but scholars like Ehaab Abdou (2017a) have described relevant aspects of the ideological battles over the country's modern education and textbook content.

While students mostly engaged with the texts instrumentally and with distance and indifference, classroom commentaries of the official curriculum were made with humor and ridicule, especially with regard to the provision of social services. For example, when commenting on the state's achievements, one teacher in the girls' private school simply changed his tone to convey sarcasm, employing rhetorical questions: "The state provides what, children? It provides everything for us." This kind of subversion was far more common, at least in the research schools and in my presence, than more overt and elaborate contestation. This type of ridicule was, however, applied to discourses on the state but not to discourses that invoked religion and generated considerable deference, as elaborated in Chapter 6.

6 Performing the Nation, Imagining Citizenship: School Rituals and Oppositional Non-belonging

How do textbook narratives of citizenship and belonging manifest in the schools? How far do these narratives trickle down to school rituals and seep into teacher and student discourses? How far do they generate forms of appropriation and deference? What constructions of the self and of young people do everyday narratives of imagined citizenship imply? What are the classed, gendered or generational differences in how themes of national belonging, citizenship, Islamism and neoliberalism were articulated? How far does the Islamist influences on textbook discourses also extend to domination of school activities and everyday discourses? This chapter is concerned with how official legitimation is lived in the everyday and how citizenship is imagined from below, by inquiring into both rituals and everyday narratives. The first part of the chapter addresses the dynamics around the morning assembly (*tabur*) in the different schools and the performance of its nationalist components. The second part develops the key themes that emerge from the observations and interviews with students and teachers relating to the narratives of national belonging and citizenship, and their classed and gendered dimensions.

Performing the Nation in School

Symbols and representations of the nation are prolific in Egyptian schools in flags, maps, posters and artwork, as well as in the morning assembly and school radio. Until 2011, photographs of Mubarak (and sometimes the former first lady) were displayed in all the research schools and in almost all classrooms. Nationalist poetry was featured in decorative posters and was recited on the school radio in official competitions. Maps of Egypt and representations of various landmarks, mosques and other architectural and historical monuments were abundant in the schools. Non-oppositional Islamic content was also prominent in the schools in posters of Quranic verses, prophetic sayings or narratives about Islamic historical figures. For example, promotional material advertising the vision and mission of one of the schools were

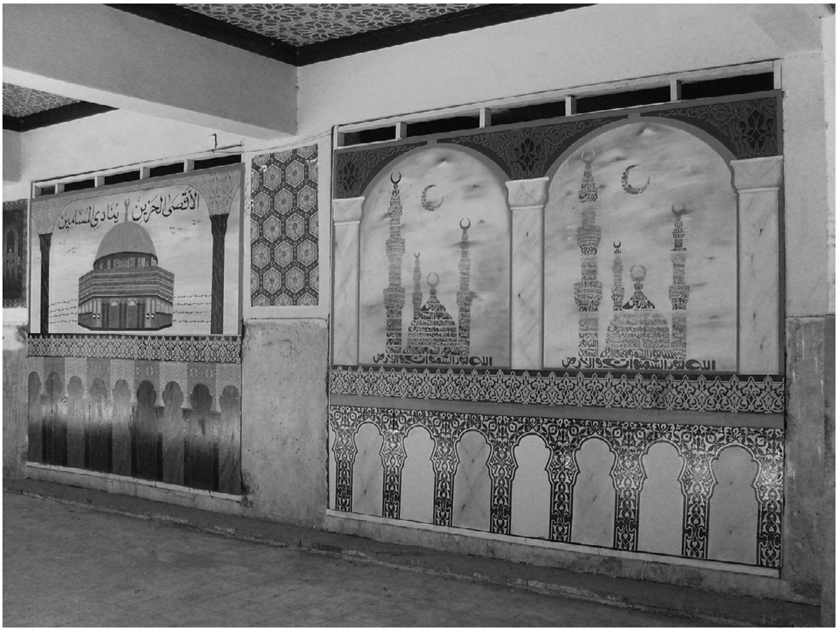

Figure 6.1 Artwork on the walls of the boys' technical school. The text in the left panel reads, "The sad al-Aqsa [mosque] is calling unto Muslims"

made in the form of Islamic prayers and Ramadan calendars. Posters and artwork in the different schools reflected religious themes, such as the artwork in Figure 6.1 in the corridors of the technical school. Written or visual representations relating to foreign injustices, such as conditions in Palestine or Iraq, could be found in some of the schools. There however no oppositional content relating to nationalism or citizenship in any publicly visible form.

Apart from these representations, the morning assembly is the central ritual that attempts to establish a daily presence and performance of the nation in schools. The daily school assembly or *tabur al-sabah* (literally morning queue) is the main formal ritual that all schools are required to hold at the beginning of the school day. Schools receive regular directives about *tabur* and its content, its importance, upcoming inspections and competitions, and specific injunctions such as the need to "to emphasize the achievements of the minister and the government." *Tabur* is meant to have a number of components, including saluting the flag, singing the national anthem, a physical exercise routine, general school announcements and a school radio program coordinated by an assigned teacher.

The school radio program could broadcast a variety of items. It may include a Quranic recitation or a chosen *hadith* (reported narrative of Prophet Muhammad), daily domestic (and international) news, displays of student talents or an artistic contribution such as a poem or a short musical performance, news of prizes received by students, a quote of the day or a piece of general information and announcements of school and district-level activities such as student elections, yearly festivals and exhibitions, wall journals, debates, sports, art or music competitions or tournaments.

In reality, most of the components of *tabur* cannot be properly performed in many public schools. In fact, the first obstacle to the performance of the nation in schools is that there is often no music accompanying the national anthem. Many schools do not have music teachers, and students do not have any opportunity to develop musical skills allowing them to perform the musical accompaniment to *tabur*. The shortage of resources in public schools means that is no development or display of other student talents and hardly any real activities to report. School activities (*anshita*) are critical for civic education and fostering national belonging, including volunteering and collaborative work, social, cultural, religious, sports, artistic, and creative activities, trips, psychodrama and seminars about social issues (see Al-Sayid Muhammad 2006, 141–3). However, music, sports, arts and other creative and intellectual activities have almost completely disappeared from school life in most public schools (see Chapters 1 and 2). This is not only due to the exam-driven focus on subjects that affect student grades, but also because of three other interrelated factors: meager or nonexistent budgets for school activities; corruption and complex bureaucratic procedures that impede the utilization of existing resources; and serious shortages in teachers in the relevant specializations, who earn low salaries and lack opportunities to offer private tutoring. Reportedly, these school activities have also been limited because of a fear that Islamist forces will dominate them. Therefore, despite the importance of school activities in cementing official nationhood and citizenship projects, in most schools, activities of all kinds are effectively absent as a direct result of prevailing social policies and security concerns.

The performance of the morning ritual is highly variable across the schools of the capital and the country more generally. In many public schools, especially in the lower grades, *tabur*, if performed, is typically reduced to four components: invocations to stand in line properly, salutation of the flag, one couplet of the national anthem and, more often than not, a collective reprimand and humiliation of the student body, usually for a lack of order or proper comportment during the nationalist rituals. In many secondary schools, the morning school meeting is simply not prepared or performed. It is reduced to an attempt to escort students to classes in a more or less orderly manner. Even in its reduced format, the process of maintaining order during assemblies I attended was rarely smooth. Sporadic insults ("come on you two animals": *yalla ya hayawan inta wi huwa*) escalated into a collective reprimand of the student body with varying levels of obscenity and physical violence involving the use of canes and hoses (see Chapter 3).

On top of this, most secondary school students do not in fact attend *tabur*. Most students do not come to school regularly because of their reliance on private tutoring (Chapter 2). However, many of those who do come arrive at the end of assembly. In fact, in the girls' public general school, which was the most orderly and strict of the public schools, special incentives, warnings, reminders and threats had to be made to get students to attend the morning assembly on a particular date because the school had to participate in the district Assembly Competition, an exemplary *tabur* was being prepared, and competition officials were going to be present on that date to inspect the assembly. Despite the diminished audience on most days, the four public schools did attempt to maintain a semblance of *tabur* in the first weeks of term, albeit in an abridged and hasty format. There was some attempt to get students to stand in line and chant the salutation of the flag and sing the national anthem. It was clear that particular teachers and administrators in each school were more interested than others in *tabur* discipline or in students displaying the correct patriotic demeanor with sufficient vigor during the salutation of the flag and the singing of the national anthem. The principals of the boys' technical school and the mixed private school placed particular importance on this aspect. They brought up *tabur* in their reflections on the school and students and invested considerable efforts in trying to cement the ritual. For these principals and other invested teachers, *tabur* and discussions of *tabur* were occasions to lament the lack of a sense of national belonging on the part of the students. In the technical boys' school, students singled out for more serious violations of "the mannerisms of *tabur*" (*akhlaqiyat al-tabur*) were retained for special reprimand and punishment by the principal, including the difficult courtyard physical drills he was known for. Proper comportment at *tabur* included the vigorous singing of the national anthem and chanting of the flag salutation, refraining from any other speech or movement, standing tall and upright, and embodying pride, respect, devotion and commitment to the nation.

In both private schools, *tabur* was certainly performed and prepared by both teachers and students. Students came up to the microphone and led the salutation of the flag, read headlines from official newspapers, recited a chosen piece of poetry or shared a piece of general knowledge with the student body. Teachers often led a brief morning exercise, and the students marched to their classes in an orderly manner. Because secondary school students in the private schools had very low attendance rates (less than 10 percent of the cohort) and many arrived at the end of assembly, they were hardly parties to this ritual. It is relevant in this regard that most public secondary schools are *only* secondary schools and do not enroll students in the primary or preparatory stages.[1] Most private schools, conversely, enroll students in all stages. This explains why they retain a far greater semblance of discipline overall and why *tabur* still has some attendance, as the nation retains something of a regular audience of (younger) children.

Reception of the nationalist elements of *tabur* implied intensities of avoidance, ridicule, indignation, obscenity and contestation among students, and boys especially. Even in assemblies that were being in fact performed, as in the private schools, most secondary students and many preparatory students did not utter the flag salutation and national anthem. Some did so without the required vigor, others made fun of enthusiastic performances of the national anthem by younger students, and yet others murmured alternative lyrics to the national anthem. These highly critical songs were widely known and circulated, primarily among boys, in the schools. These were typically short verses fitted to the same tune of the national anthem or to other popular tunes. The lyrics were in fact deemed by the boys to be too obscene to repeat in front of me. They were typically variations on themes of abuse by the nation and state, of disentitlement and failure, of being violated by the nation or of the nation being promiscuous. They were narratives of shaming and disentitlement. One general secondary student provided the following description of *tabur* in his school:

> There isn't even a flag salutation. The flag is torn in the first place. It doesn't have an eagle [the eagle in the middle of the Egyptian flag]. Other students, yes, they know something about Egypt: "Long Live Egypt." There are a lot of songs about Egypt. They all have obscene words. They compose new songs to curse their country (*yishtimu baladhum*); that's how much they love it, they don't love something called Egypt.

Students were constructing and solidifying new symbols and meanings in relation to the nation, ones that were bound up with their experiences and understandings of citizenship. The reluctance to sing the national anthem or enthusiastically salute the flag and the use of obscene language could of course resemble a form of (male) teenage rebellion against authority and the mandated embodiment of discipline and enthusiastic performances of national devotion. This does not fully explain student behavior or their “alternative” nationalist lyrics. For example, many students also chatted with friends during the Quran recitation in *tabur*. This was not only disrespectful but also violated the explicit religious injunction to listen attentively when the Quran is being recited. There were no popular songs ridiculing the Quran. When deviating from what may be considered proper religious conduct, students employed a variety of other discourses to describe their behavior, contextualizing their actions or simply accepting blame for them (e.g. that they cannot really hear the recitation because there is a lot of noise, but, yes, they should listen attentively. No such justification is needed to excuse unpatriotic discourses and practices. Rather, many students openly expressed a lack of love or belonging to the country.

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[1] The semiprivate experimental schools (now called Public Language Schools or *Rasmiya Lughat*) are an exception to this rule.

Un-loving the Nation

Given the insistence on national belonging in textbooks and the media, I expected significant expression or even lip service to love of the nation among students, especially that most discussions were being conducted inside the schools and in front of peers. However, even when students started with affirmations of love of the country, they seemed unable to conjure up further support to their statements and quickly began to articulate the opposite view: that there was no reason to love the country. After their preliminary responses, whether negative or affirmative, students developed further reflections that almost always centered on the negative conditions of citizenship as lived and experienced. These reflections had important intersections with both gender and social class. Previous studies have linked class and gender to political knowledge and national belonging among Egyptian students, although their conclusions do not reflect a clear consensus. One study of Egyptian school students found that older, male and private school students were more politically aware than younger, female or public school students (Al-Tukhi 1999), although other studies did not note these gender (see Awad 2006) and class differences (see Al-Sayid Muhammad 2006, 137). Other studies suggest that girls may experience greater pressures to show obedience to and conformity with social norms (see Al-Sayid Muhammad 2006). Some studies reported the sense of national belonging being rated higher among girls than among boys (Sabah

2004). Other studies, however, noted higher male ratings or no gender differences, where boys were portrayed as having more sense of belonging due to greater levels of participation in different public activities, and because they had more freedom, more social engagement and participation (see Al-Sayid Muhammad 2006, 133).[2]

While students in the general schools seemed to be by far the most vocal and oppositional in their discourses, similar attitudes prevailed across the six schools among both boys and girls. Boys, however, tended to be more direct in expressing a distinct and open lack of a sense of belonging. Many simply answered "no" or "of course not" – they do not feel love for or belonging to the country, and some quickly linked this to a desire to leave the country altogether. Girls tended to begin their reflections with short affirmations: "of course" or "surely" we love the country. Another frequent first response was the effectively evasive and religiously framed statement: "Egypt was mentioned in the Quran." Students would then continue with phrases such as "not a lot" and "we love it in words, not in deeds."

As if emboldened by their collective reflections, this would frequently progress into statements like "If we as a people benefited from Egypt, we would love it," and "We are oppressed in the country … we don't feel our freedom or anything." As a female private school student put it, "Why should I love it if I am not getting my rights in the country? One can be proud of one's country when one sees something good in it, when they do something good for you." This sequencing of responses may explain why surveys of nationalist sentiment might record overwhelming expressions of national belonging (UNDP 2010). While the first and socially sanctioned response may be "Yes, of course we love the country," this is not always the final answer. Although the general tone was similar, I found that boys were generally more engaged in oppositional discourses and somewhat better versed in the details and concrete examples of corruption than girls. This may have also been informed by differences in political interest between boys and girls and therefore a difference in their exposure to political news and media, including its oppositional variants.

The lack of national belonging among students was a significant theme for teachers and principals as well. They frequently referred to the lack of vigor in the salutation of the flag as the most immediate manifestation of this, but mainly focused on young people's desire to leave the country and their despair or anger at conditions in the country, notably unemployment and corruption. For example, when reflecting on "this generation," the principal of the general girls' school said that there is no belonging and that this is the first thing that can be noticed. She explained that this was because students did not know the national anthem and were not getting the lyrics right. She then continued that the students were frustrated because everyone tells them that there are no job opportunities and nowhere to go. The principal of the mixed private school voiced similar sentiments on lack of belonging, albeit with a different justification: "The children have lost faith in us. The state they are in, we are the reason for it. All the role models are corrupt … They hear about corrupt people. They do not feel they belong to the country. Many of them want to travel. They didn't used to salute the flag when I got to this school." Teachers sometimes blamed public discourse or parents for the lack of a sense of belonging among students. As one teacher put it, this is because students hear in their homes statements like "Damn this country; is this a life we are living?" (*yikhrib bit dih balad, hiya dih ʿisha illi ʿayshinha*?). As the principal of the girls' private school put it,

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[2] While it has been argued that interest in politics among students is primarily influenced by family factors (Awad 2006), studies among Egyptian youth and school students found that boys had higher rates of reading newspapers than girls and more knowledge of political facts. This can be attributed to different interests and socialization and the fact that girls are required to spend more time doing household chores and studying (Al-Tukhi 1999, UNDP 2010, 41).

> Unfortunately, there's not this power of feeling loyalty to the country. They hear what's going on around them, from their parents, about everything, transportation, economic crisis, private tutoring costs, living expenses … I feel that they always say: "there's nothing" … they don't have the hope or loyalty to improve anything. They feel the future is not bright. I don't want to say they are lost (*dayi*), they are better than that, but the circumstances around them are not good.

While many teachers lamented the lack of feelings of belonging among students, this was frequently excused or contextualized. Across the different schools, teachers had immediate explanations for the lack of national belonging they felt was predominant among students. These explanations were not about unpatriotic youth or bad citizens, nor were they contrasted with the wise president or the good Muslim who loves his nation, as articulated in the textbooks. They revolved around the various facets of lived citizenship. As a teacher in a private school put it, "At the core is the relationship between the state and the person … if it is normal, then there will be love and belonging to the country." Another private school teacher concluded, "If the citizen is treated humanely, then he will have belonging and he will want to give to the country. If you treat the citizen as less than an animal, he sees that this country deserves nothing."

Some teachers also voiced a particular difficulty or ambiguity in dealing with dominant expectations about national belonging and their role in promoting it. Several teachers noted that they wanted to instill love of the country into their students or lamented its absence. In their own reflections however, many digressed into an affirmation of student alienation, and even their own lack of national belonging. As teachers in the girls' general school reflected, "It's true, why should he love it, he has no apartment, no job and no good treatment, even ourselves, we don't feel belonging." A teacher in the technical girls' school offered the following reflections on belonging, knowledge of the country and issues of inequality and corruption:

> No, they know nothing about the country. You know the social conditions we have. Sometimes I talk to them about Egypt … to love Egypt … but the country gives them nothing … We have class backwardness [inequality]. These people are neither blind nor idiots. They know the income coming into Egypt and where it goes. Sometimes, I tell them, if only you knew about the miracles of ancient Egypt … but the level of culture is low. For me, I look at Ramses' statue or the pyramids, and I feel I am the son of a civilization.

If textbook themes of love and belonging were not replicated by students, neither were other constructions of citizenship in official textbooks. As described in Chapter 5, textbook discourses of nationhood and citizenship focused on building Egypt through science, on good citizens adjusting to the demands of a changing economy and on Egypt being under external threat from an "other" that is a major cause of injustice and disentitlement. In their critical narratives, many students reversed the significance of the intended sources of national pride provided in the textbooks and provided alternative notions of citizenship and belonging. Celebrated Egyptian scientists and the achievements of Ancient Egyptian civilization were not key themes in their discourses. When they were mentioned, however, they were frequently used to mount further criticism of current affairs in the country. The only times students made reference to science in relation to nationhood or citizenship was to comment that "no one gets their rights in the country" because world-renowned Egyptian scientists like Nobel Laureate Ahmad Zuweil had to leave the country "to get their chance." The only times that Ancient Egypt was mentioned was also in negative commentary on contemporary conditions: "We say we have the pyramids, but what did we invent this year?"

Similarly, the image of the unjust "other" was hardly present in students' discourses. In fact, students often constructed Egypt negatively, in contrast to other countries "that progress and prosper." School-level discourse on the "other" reflected a more general tendency to attach to the West and the "other" the opposite of what is construed as lacking in

Egypt or about Egyptians. The “other” was primarily just, fair and other countries offered contexts in which people could live as citizens with respect, especially the poor, and where one does not need connections to get a job. The “other” is also hard-working and productive. Not only were the West or the United States frequently invoked in this regard, but also China and other, richer Arab countries. As a student in the public general girls’ school put it, “In China, they beg people to take a vacation, and the students here, they just dance or sleep in the playground.” Just the mention of China in one conversation prompted one student to declare that Egypt is the most backward country in the world. Even one of the most vocal Islamist teachers argued, “We have to admit that in the U.S. there is fairness and justice,” juxtaposing this to the patrimonialism and connections required to access opportunities and resources in Egypt. In fact, the “other” mainly featured as the standard against which to measure the country. As one student put it, “You can see films about the life of American youth, the lives of other countries. [Young people] grow up with the idea that Egypt is bad. Its debts are endless. America is much better, or Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Australia, China, or the Emirates.” As a female student put it, “If I had not been born here, I would not like to live here.” These themes resonate with narratives in popular films, serials and TV programs.[3] In an era of far more open media and greater exposure to global and regional trends, the vivid multiplication of Egypt’s “others” seems to have rendered the image of Egypt and Egyptians increasingly negative in the eyes of young people, as well as strengthening alternative notions of citizenship, as suggested by recurrent themes in student discourses.

Constructions of Citizenship among Students

Young people in all the schools, as well as their teachers and principals, linked national belonging to disentitlement to citizenship rights and the weakening of state institutions. They immediately rechanneled the discussion of national belonging into a critique of lived citizenship and political realities. Students implicitly discussed citizenship in its four dimensions of protection, provision, participation and legitimation (Introduction chapter). They especially emphasized themes relating to provision and protection, and the associated legitimizing narratives. The main reasons not to love the country were most consistently articulated with reference to provision of services and opportunities: unemployment, poverty and inequality, as well as protection under the law: corruption, lack of public safety and everyday humiliation or loss of dignity. In both technical and general public schools, humiliation, premised on social class, was a distinct theme for both girls and boys. Private school students, on the other hand, framed their expressed lack of belonging in terms of blocked opportunities and a lack of desirable jobs, in addition to systematic corruption and cronyism. Previous studies have also argued that economic factors, especially unequal distribution of incomes and unmet basic needs, impacted students' sense of national belonging (see Al-Sayid Muhammad 2006, 137–9).

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[3] Films arguably have a more significant impact on student discourses compared to other media, as the news and political talk shows are not very important in comparison to patterns of the consumption of films and television dramas by teenagers (see Mahmud 2004). A 2004 study found that all teenagers watched television, about half of them watching it regularly, and almost all of them watched, whether regularly or irregularly, television serials (*musalsalat*) aired on Egyptian state television, be they romantic, social, historical or political in content (Mahmud 2004). The study found that the preferred television viewing for teenagers was Arabic films, followed by religious programs, Arabic plays, Arabic songs, television serials, foreign films, sports and then educational programs (Mahmud 2004, 486).

Most students placed unemployment and underemployment at the heart of their reflections on national belonging. Unemployment was such a dominant theme for general school students that it seemed to define their whole outlook on their generation and on national belonging. As detailed in Chapter 1, the most deeply felt impact of neoliberal policies and the failing rule of law in the late Mubarak era was increased unemployment, informalization and inequality of opportunity, disproportionally affecting women and educated youth. Students used language that reflected the powerful emotional impact of unemployment. They reflected on "this generation" as "frustrated," "in a bad emotional state," "feeling they were in a closed circle" and "with no way out." They drew upon the experiences of their relatives and acquaintances, among whom unemployment was prevalent or even dominant. Students in the general schools noted that even graduates of good faculties and universities could not find jobs, commenting that most boys end up hanging around cafes and seeking to leave the country. "There are no jobs. We expect that we too will take the certificate and 'sit' (stay unemployed). All our friends are in open universities, and in the end they too 'sit.'"

The implicit framing of employment as a primary citizenship right has to be understood in light of the absence of other social rights. The intense concern with unemployment has to be seen in light of the lack of social safety networks in the country, where basic needs cannot be met except through employment. There is no unemployment insurance to speak of, and other welfare provisions addressing poverty, disability, illness or old age are limited and difficult to obtain. In a 2010 national survey, respondents stated that they found the future less predictable, jobs uncertain and incomes very irregular. One of their major concerns was the risk of having serious health issues and falling into poverty due to the costs of medical treatment (UNDP 2010, 86).[4] Technical school students did not seem to feel as vulnerable to unemployment per se; after all, boys in technical schools were almost all employed, albeit in temporary, seasonal, low-skilled and very low-paid work in the informal economy. This is not uniformly the case across the country, as overall unemployment rates among technical school graduates are very high. Unemployment rates vary considerably across the country and are much higher in Upper Egypt in particular (Chapter 1). Some male technical students, however, did express a desire to leave the country and were concerned about the difficulty of obtaining jobs in the future, especially stable, better paid jobs in the formal economy.

Unemployment as intimately linked to reflections on love and belonging to the country also translated in dreams of migration. As one student immediately responded, "If I finish and 'sit' (become unemployed), will I love Egypt?" Teachers and principals also focused on unemployment in their reflections on national belonging. Strong imagery was used in relation to unemployment: "It's all black and closed in front of the kids," as one principal put it. As the principal of the boys' general school framed it, students want to "graduate and find work, but most men graduate and sit at home … you know how much money he needs to get married and have a home? So they want to leave the country. They think of things financially … not love of the country … It's all because of this unemployment." Therefore, closely related to unemployment was the desire or hope of leaving the country in search of jobs. This desire, especially among boys, was even more pronounced for private school students and was reflected in classroom discourses. As one French teacher expressed it in composing her sentences for grammar exercises: *Je ne souhaite qu'une chose: vivre en Amérique. Je souhaite que mon frère réussis, et que nous vivions au Canada.*[5] Indeed, a national survey of youth found that more than 28 percent of male youth stated an intention to migrate, with socioeconomic background being positively correlated with this intention, those expressing it coming from the highest socioeconomic level (UNDP 2010, 39).

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[4] "This uncertainty about the future seems to be an integral aspect of the experience of poverty in Egypt. It brings an intolerable sense of insecurity and vulnerability to lives of the poor. They feel vulnerable to trivial and accidental incidents. Insecurity is related to lack of health security as indicated by the poor when expressing their fears about tomorrow. The first fear they describe is being sick and unable to afford treatment. All interviewees of focus groups considered health as a major asset whose absence necessarily leads to poverty" (El-Laithy 2007, cited in UNDP 2010, 86).

[5] Translated into English: I hope for only one thing: to live in America. I hope that my brother succeeds and that we live in Canada.

Related to unemployment and underemployment, income inequality, poverty and rising prices were particularly prominent themes in the reflections of public school students. In their responses on national belonging, students made statements such as "I see people who cannot eat, and those who can eat chicken every day" and "There are people whose salaries are huge, and here there are people who sleep in the street." Several students explicitly stated that incomes in the country should be more equal. There was a clear awareness of the privileges and rights afforded to other Egyptians based on income. Students made statements like: "Those who are really living in this country are those who have money." As Ghannam (2002, 173) has also found, people strongly believe that the rich, who have more money and better connections, enjoy more protection and are better able to secure access to various resources. World Values Surveys show a sharp rise in the aversion to inequality for almost all income groups and all social groups in Egypt between 2000 and 2008, with the poor growing more inequality-averse than richer people over this period preceding the 2011 Revolution (Verme et al. 2014). Poorer people seemed to have become more aware of their relative conditions and expressed this new awareness through changes in views on a broad range of topics. The results from the World Values Survey show that dislike of inequality is also positively associated with freedom and interest in politics, but negatively associated with trust and religious practice (Verme et al. 2014). The limited liberalization of the late Mubarak, combined with the increasingly visible forms of inequality, manifested, for example, in the growth of gated communities whose advertisements permeate popular television programming may have contributed to this growing awareness of inequality as well as the more secularized oppositional discourses circulating in the liberal independent media.

Not only poverty, but even hunger featured in many student discourses, which they linked to inequality, government policy and crime in their neighborhoods. Students asked, for example, "How can someone see people dying of hunger, how can they go to bed at night?" Another student stated, "They are about to starve the people." As one student in the public general girls' school elaborated, "Poverty makes people do these things. And more and more, the poorer we get, we are killing each other. Even rape … if a guy can't afford to marry … The poorer the country, the more we are tearing each other apart." Similarly, a 2010 national study of the causes of poverty as perceived by the poor concluded that "youth, both urban and rural, explained poverty on the basis of the failure of state policies to protect low income groups in the face of the trend towards privatizing the economy" (UNDP 2010, 86).

While clearly frustrated with conditions in the country, private school students used themes of recognition instead of livelihood and survival in reflecting on nationalism. Poverty per se was not a key concern or theme in their discourses, perhaps reflecting limited awareness of or concern with wider social conditions. Many still felt that there was limited sense of national belonging in their generation and highlighted the sense of limited employment opportunities. As a female private school student put it,

> Most people are not interested in the country. For example, if they say there is a war tomorrow, will all the guys want to go? Do you think they care about it? No. They all curse it and the day they were born in it and will flee it whenever they can. If you say I want to stay and build my future, he will say: "Where is the future?"

As another private school student put it, "Yes. It's true. We don't have belonging. We are coming out in an age when the country doesn't give us anything. People say it didn't give us anything so that we should give back. They don't know how to give back."

Students were bitterly critical of the state of education in the country, a key example of the state of public services and citizenship right to provision. "There is no education" is the common refrain interlocutors frequently employed, sometimes just on the mention of education (Chapter 1). Students also reserved special ridicule for public or free education. As one student remarked in the course of a conversation, "This is the free education that they try to make us feel indebted for (*yiziluna bih*), and they don't actually give us anything." Public education had become so maligned that students often used a refrain from popular culture where signs of ignorance (of basic facts, terms or foreign words) received the joking comment, "Excuse him, he's [received] free education" (*ma'lish aslu ta'lim maggani*), or variations on this refrain. Private school students were also frustrated with the quality of education and its implications for their future prospects. Their curricula, examinations and admission into universities are all determined by government policies. Their only potential encounter with public education is the possibility of enrolling in a public university. They equally mocked regime claims of free education (where tutoring is commonplace and prestigious faculties charge significant fees) and lamented the poor quality of public universities and the relatively poor prospects it implied for them. As one student put it, public universities "are becoming like *ma'ahid* [low-status two-year colleges]. Even the new private universities, people say they are expensive and people still enroll in tutoring as well. Good education costs money."

Beyond the provision-related aspects of citizenship, students also highlighted issues relating to protection in terms of the rule of law, the right to equal and dignified treatment and public safety. For public school students especially, it was not only economic exclusion that was highlighted but also the humiliation and derogatory treatment that came with it. With reference to both love of the country and in the course of ongoing discussions in the schools, students referred to humiliation and disrespect in interactions with agents of the state in the school, which they understood as being related to their low social status. Students were aware not only of their lack of access to legally available rights such as medical insurance or freedom from physical punishment in the school, but also of the humiliation they would face if they attempted to access those rights or to challenge violations of their rights (see Chapter 3). As one student commented, "They are disgusted of us when we go to the *ta'min* [medical insurance room at school] and they tell us to get out … as if we are beggars."[6] Students weaved the verbal violence of humiliation into their reflections on national belonging and the desire to leave the country. As one student put it, "Here, what do we get? We are insulted and humiliated, and that's all (*Binitshitim wi nitbahdil wi khalas*)."[7] Student narratives on national belonging highlighted the theme of humiliation based on poverty, as in "The poor are treated like dogs." Finally, some boys also linked humiliation to being harassed by the police or treated abusively when drafted into the army, sensitive topics that students did not elaborate on.

Also linked to the dimension of protection under the law, corruption was a key element of the citizenship narratives of students, along with other forms of permissiveness, cronyism and the absence of the rule of law. Poverty was frequently linked to corruption in the discourses of public school students: "Would we be like this, if we did not have all this theft and corruption?" However, this was not a reproduction of official discourses highlighting individual petty corruption, but more an example of subversion centered on use of the forbidden term "poverty," where corruption was not related to individual morality but to the regime and the president. Students linked national belonging to the cases of corruption that were being uncovered and described how this encourages further corruption across the system. As students in the boys' general school asked, "The income of the Suez Canal, where does it go? Whose pockets does it go into?" Private school students also frequently brought up corruption in their reflections on belonging: "The people responsible for the country; they are the ones stealing it." Corruption was therefore politicized and not linked to the practices of the bad citizen, although the following sections give examples of negative self-perceptions and blaming the citizen.

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[6] Every school should have medical supplies, a nurse and regular visits by a doctor, and all students are officially covered by national medical insurance. Students knew, however, that the nurse and doctor do not regularly come to school and usually have few, if any, medical supplies.

[7] *Bahdala* is "something that unsettles or disturbs one's sense of honour and integrity" (Ismail 2011b, 850).

Overall, there was a sense of gravity in the discourse of some students on these matters and a rather discernible narrative of causality leading from the regime (and before 2011, Mubarak himself) to poverty and social ills. In the girls' technical school, for example, students linked conditions in the country with the president, some immediately moving to disentangle the twinning of nation and president: "I love Egypt, but the President, I hate him." The same sentiment was echoed by general school girls: "I love it, but I don't love the one controlling it." "He is bringing down the county (*midayya' il balad*) … girls get kidnapped and body parts get stolen … and education; there is nothing." In fact, at points students made statements like: "We want the president to be changed," or "To fix things, everyone has to be removed … the minster, everyone … We need all new people." The idea young people were explicitly articulating in an authoritarian context was that it is because the ruling clique is corrupt that ordinary people are poor. In contrast with textbook discourses, the solution was not renaissance through pious entrepreneurship – the solution was the complete replacement of the ruling elite.

Rights to public safety that were underlined in discussions of belonging often revolved around the daily concerns around sexual harassment discussed in Chapter 4. Even if harassment was a more prominent theme in the girls general school, girls in the technical school also brought up fears of sexual harassment in their reflections about the sense of belonging to the country. In addition to the themes of unemployment, poor education and humiliation, they articulated the state's functions in terms of security and mocked the regime's claims of Egypt being "the country of security and safety" (*balad al-amn wal-aman*). Girls, especially in the public schools, expressed serious concerns about their physical vulnerability and fears of sexual assault, while boys saw economic opportunities as more important in achieving their future goals as the expected main breadwinners of their families. Public safety concerns were not only related to sexual harassment however, the school authorities and students in the general boys' school also expressed public safety concerns and had also attempted (and failed) to secure police presence around the school to deter violent fights among students, drug dealing and drug use near the school.

The right to participation featured little in student discourses, even for private school students. There was little mention of rigged elections, even in discussions of corruption. While some students did use statements like "there is no democracy" in their reflections on national belonging, this was not a recurrent theme, nor an aspect expressed in significant detail. This is interesting in that it also contrasts with textbook discourses, where the only rights explicitly highlighted were the supposed right to participation and support to democracy (Chapter 5). Reflecting the limited political participation before 2011, as well as possible self-censorship, only one student referred to the possibility of being arrested in a demonstration and the violent police treatment associated with it as another reason to hate the country. That student was indeed arrested on January 25, 2011, on the first day of the uprising, although he was released several days later.

The discourses and emotions described here arguably reflect the growth of independent media and other forums where dissent could be voiced and information shared more freely in the late Mubarak era. A number of studies have highlighted the role of Arab satellite channels in the political socialization of the young in Egypt and the shaping of young people's political priorities and perspectives (Abdullah 2007, Al-Tukhi 1999 and Mahmud 2004). The media, newspapers (Al-Tukhi 1999) and more recently satellite television channels (Abdullah 2007) are considered the main sources of knowledge about politics. Arabic satellite channels, especially *Al-Jazeera* and *Al-Arabiya* at the time, had privileged positions in this regard (Abdullah 2007). However, this was balanced by the growth of relatively independent Egyptian satellite channels in the 2000s. In the course of our conversations, especially in the general schools, students and teachers referred to issues that were raised on the popular political, social and news talk shows aired on privately owned Egyptian channels. These programs (such as *al-'Ashira Masa'an*, *Wahid min al-Nas* and *Al-Qahira al-Yum*) regularly discussed issues around corruption and highlighted, to varying degrees, the plight of the poor and those living in informal neighborhoods. Especially after 2011, social media became even more important for the young. The balance between Arab and Egyptian satellite channels shifted again in subsequent years in light of increasing control of local media after 2013 (Chapter 7).

Locating Neoliberal and Islamist Citizenship

The neoliberal and Islamist elements in the official narratives of the Good Citizen found more complex reflections in student constructions of citizenship. The preceding discussion shows that the parameters of neoliberal and Islamist citizenship as outlined in the textbooks did not take root among students. In all the schools, the negative conditions in the country were directly attributed to the state, the regime and the president, not to the inevitable results of globalization or the negative practices of citizens, their lack of piety and the shunning of Islam, or the practices of the aggressive other, as in textbook discourses. Their narratives of imagined citizenship implied that services, economic opportunities and protection under the law should be provided by the state, not by entrepreneurial citizens. It may be that because an explicitly anti-neoliberal rhetoric was not strong in most oppositional media, their criticisms were not framed directly in opposition to the parameters of neoliberalism.

The neoliberal "responsibilization" of the citizen (Rose 1999), however, was an issue that students and teachers dealt with in complex and contradictory ways. Lack of ambition, materialism and the triviality of students' interests were key themes articulated by teachers in their reflections on "this generation" of students. Many teachers portrayed students as being without aim or ambition, an empty generation that "does not work hard and has been brought up that way," that wants money without putting in the effort to get it, that is "dependent and will always be like that"; that "their state is upsetting because they are the future of the country", and that they "just care about soft drinks, crisps and ringtones." These discourses maligning young people were, however, paradoxical, gendered and contrary to the neoliberal ethos of material success. There were cases where the same teachers who portrayed students as "lacking in ambition" would also assert that students are "frustrated" because of blocked opportunities: "They could score above 95% and not get into any good college." Contrary to the idealized neoliberal active citizen, interest in financial success was criticized by school authorities across the schools. Teachers frequently lamented that students only cared about money and future incomes and took all their decisions on that basis. In the private schools, teachers remarked that students asked them which faculties they should enter to earn better incomes, while in the public schools, teachers joked that many students wished they could become football players in order to make huge amounts of money. While both girls and boys were negatively labeled for lacking in ambition and patriotism, it seemed to be easier for teachers to call girls superficial and "empty inside," while excusing boys as the subjects most affected by the negative economic conditions and everyday repression in the country: "Why would he love the country if he has no apartment, job or good treatment?" Therefore, while criticizing materialism, teachers frequently affirmed the importance of material and financial concerns, especially for boys.

Finally, neither in student discourses nor in their reported practices was there a strong interest in active, participatory and charitable citizenship as promoted in some textbooks. Participation in civic activities was very limited among students because it was not encouraged or even tolerated by the state or school, despite a growth in community outreach and charitable activity among the more affluent classes. There were very limited forms of local participation among students, except for attending religious and Quranic recitation classes. According to a 2010 national survey, fewer than 3 percent of young people participate in volunteer work or group membership, even of recreational or sports teams (UNDP 2010).[8] In the private schools, there were attempts to engage the students, who were largely absent and overwhelmed by exam preparation, in school activities to promote the image of a vibrant school or to continue the earlier legacy of community outreach of established schools. A small number of those private school students students did mention engaging in charitable activities, as well as in private creative and civic programs over the summer vacation that were not attached to the school.

The other element that seemed to be underrepresented in student discourses was Islamism. I expected to find more prominent deployment of the Islamist themes of rule by sharia law or the protection of religious identity and morality. It is possible that some students downplayed or censored their Islamist views in my presence (see Chapter 1), but their general openness with me and the deployment of Islamist narratives by teachers in the shools indicate that self-censorship was not the key issue here. The example below where students did not hesitate to challenge my intervention on an issue relating to religion may also indicate that self-censorship in front of a guest was not the barrier to deploying and defending Islamist narratives. The discourse of these urban educated youth was simply less saturated with Islamism than textbook narratives. Students did not even employ the Islamic notions of justice and the just ruler found in the textbooks, although they seemed by no means hostile to these notions. It appears that concerns with protection and provision were too dominant and that mainstream Islamist narratives had a diminished hold on young people's political imagination in those regards. Where, then, did all the Islamism go, if not into their discourses on citizenship? One area of overlap is the link between textbook criticisms of the young as bad citizens and adherence to Islam as being at the core of the definition of good citizenship.

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[8] In terms of group membership, including participation in youth centers and sports clubs, political parties, unions and associations, housing and school boards, only 4 percent of young people appear to have participated in any of these groups; the majority have taken part in recreational activities, with 67 percent participating in youth centers and sports clubs (UNDP 2010, 40–1). Those who participate in political parties represent only 0.12 percent of young people in the eighteen to twenty-nine age group, while 84 percent of eligible youth did not exercise their right to vote in the last election.

A narrative from the classroom can shed better light on how the themes of neoliberalism and Islamism are linked, as well as providing insights into student relationships with the authority of the text and with hegemonic Islamist discourses. In an Islamic Education class in the general girls' school, the teacher elaborated on a number of *hadith* (reported sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) from the official textbook. One *hadith* was about the importance of *itqan* or diligence in performing one's work. In his commentary on the importance of *itqan*, the teacher explained how they (in the west) progress and that we have backwardness because each person is not performing his role. The teacher noted that abroad, "they work eight hours; but here you wake up, go to work, have breakfast, bring onions, sit and chat … A large percentage do not do their work well." He continued, "Our factories are failing and closing down. Why? Because of lack of diligence and carelessness (*'adam al itqan wal-ihmal*)." *Itqan* is in fact a key trope in the responsibilizing and maligning of young people in mainstream neoliberal Islamism (Sobhy 2007).[9] The next brief *hadith* was about the grave sin of harming one's neighbors. The teacher elaborated that those who leave their laundry dripping on that of others and thus causing them harm are not really Muslims. The woman who does this, "Is she a Muslim?" he asked the class. They nodded that no, she is not. Another example was about people disposing of their garbage close to the houses of their neighbors. These were also declared not to be Muslim, an assessment seconded by the students once more.

The teacher's explanation was aligned with the official discourse on citizenship in the textbooks, where responsibility is placed on the individual for the bad conditions in society, not the state's duty to provide public services or the citizen's right to receive them. They also touched on issues that were very close to home for the students. In the neighborhood of this school, the municipality regularly failed to collect the garbage, despite the newly introduced – and significant – garbage-collection fees paid by citizens. Garbage collection had become a serious problem in Cairo and other parts of the country. If residents preferred to throw their garbage further away from their own homes, and therefore probably closer to the homes of others, did this really mean they deserved condemnation as infidels? What I found more striking was the willingness of students to accept and defend such statements that were essentially applicable to many of them or to their families and neighbors. It also seemed to me that these were grave pronouncements on who is or who is not a Muslim, as they contradicted mainstream Muslim jurisprudence, which clearly delineates the sins that are considered grave enough to warrant such judgment. After class, I asked students what they thought of the lesson and wondered if it was right to pronounce on the infidelity of a Muslim. A student tried to explain that the teacher was only really talking about those who intentionally meant to harm their neighbors. Another student stood up, as if to give a formal sermon, and with a pious demeanor reiterated the message of the teacher and the importance of obedience to the words of the Prophet and God and to be good Muslims. The situation became tense, as I was perceived to have challenged orthodox understandings of Islam and the very status of *hadith* as authoritative, not the textbook narrative or the teacher's interpretation. In fact, one of the students subtly signaled to me to end the conversation. She later told me that she agrees with me, but that students "are not used to discussing anything about religion" and that anyone who does so is "a transgressor and at fault" (*kharig wi ghalat*). This was despite the fact that I only referred to the well-known Islamic prohibition on making pronouncements on whether or not someone is a real Muslim, and suggested that we know many people who may engage in such behavior, including in this neighborhood: Are they then not "Muslims?" I had clearly violated the dominant norms in the school, and, as a result, they rendered themselves even more visible. As I realized in my attempt at a small token of gratitude and reciprocity to the students (Chapter 3), it is when violating the norms of the school that they render themselves most visible.

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[9] For a discussion of the uses of *itqan* in non-oppositional Islamist discourses, see Sobhy (2007).

This narrative was perhaps an example of the deference that educational scholars attributed to authoritarian Arab education (Chapter 4), which I only witnessed in relation to discussions that involved religion. This deference was however ambiguous and suspended. Clearly, my reception of these words was different than those of the students. It was as though I had taken the words to their depth and length, while the students passed through and beside them. They did not resist them or accept any challenge to them, but also they did not affirm the way I took the discourse to its logical conclusion: that many of the neighborhood's residents should be considered infidels in this interpretation. This deference was therefore partial and distanced. The

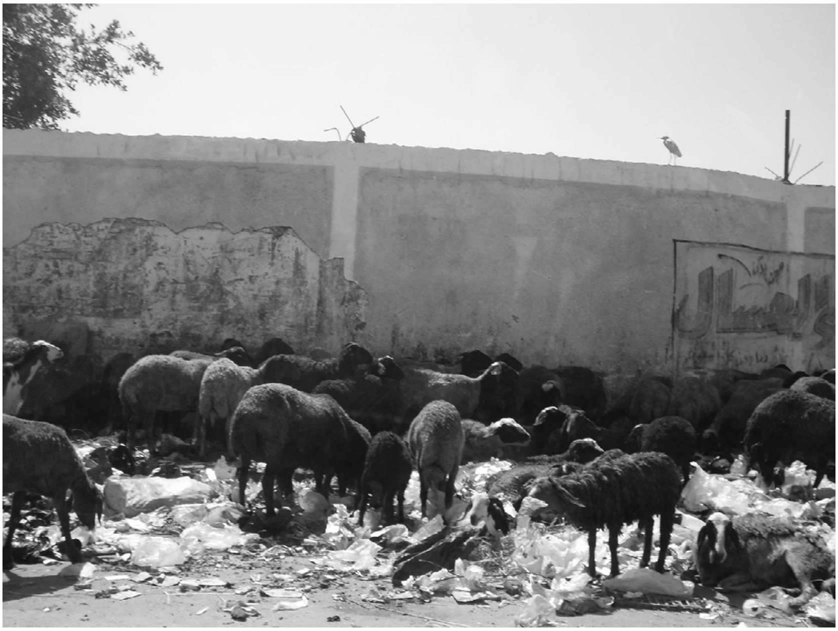

Figure 6.2 Opposite the gate of the boys' technical school: uncollected garbage, animals grazing, tutoring advertisements on the wall

discourse had to remain suspended, true as received religious orthodoxy, but loosely linked to everyday realities. What remains clear is that issues framed in terms of religious authority would be treated with deference, that challenges to them would be countered and maligned and that, indeed, students had hardly been exposed to more open discussions of religion. The larger political implication is that there may be less need to scrutinize Islamist ideas or political programs if political opponents are construed as anti-Islamic or as contradicting Islamic dictates (as the experience of the March 2011 referendum especially brought home). The textbooks had succeeded in cementing the hegemony of Islamist discourses and their relevance to all social affairs. Students were willing to take the religious blame, regardless of how counterintuitive or inaccurate it might be, so long as it was done in this suspended manner.[10]

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[10] This suspended distanced relationship to orthodoxy is also not the same as the more intellectual trend of post-Islamism that questions and reinterprets, although there are important overlaps to be explored.

Other narratives confirmed this distant deference and ambiguous relationship with Islamism and the responsibilizing of citizens. When I asked a teacher in the same school to tell me a little bit about the neighborhood, "garbage" (*zibala*) was not only the word she used to describe the neighborhood as a whole, but a main theme in her narrative on the place. She commented on how the neighborhood was full of uncollected garbage. This was clearly evident around the school, as occurs around many schools in the country (see Figure 6.2).[11] The municipality only cleaned the streets, removed the garbage and placed plants along the sides of the streets when an important official was rumored to be planning a visit to the area. This was a significant event in the life of the community that several other respondents also referred to, stressing that they had never seen their neighborhood so beautiful. However, the plants were removed on the same day, and the garbage quickly piled up again, especially close to the schools. In parallel with the absence of garbage removal, the teacher explained that all the other services in the neighborhood were also very poor. In fact, no public transportation served the neighborhood, whose residents had to depend on private microbuses.

The question of uncollected garbage actually had a direct effect on this school and public safety within it. One of the school gates had to be closed off with cement blocks because residents were disposing of garbage in the passageway to the gate and setting it on fire, both effectively blocking the entrance and creating choking fumes every morning. The gate that was blocked was the one referred to in Chapter 4, which female students had used to avoid constant harassment from boys from the adjacent schools. Although this teacher, who displayed a very pious demeanor, spoke disparagingly of those who disposed of the garbage, blaming them for throwing it near the school, she mainly focused on "services" and the actions of the municipality in her narrative. She certainly did not call the residents infidels or bad Muslims. Furthermore, she explained that teachers in the school had written many letters to the educational authorities and the municipality, and had made attempts to remedy the situation with the help of the influential sponsors of the school. School actors were not passive, nor did they make those appeals to the residents themselves. They took action and demanded it from government bodies, and tried to get influential patrons to mediate between those government bodies to achieve their goals. They may have displayed deference to hegemonic Islamist discourses, but they also attempted to invoke their supposed rights as citizens and drew upon patron–client relations in improving their situation. They acted based on their needs and the possibilities available to them.

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[11] The piling up of garbage near schools, opposite them or directly adjacent to their walls, is a reality for many schools across the country, a topic frequently covered by the press. This may be because there are often open unused nonresidential spaces around schools.

This was a key moment when I had to deal with my desire to render "the social more real, more orderly, more predictable than it is" (Ball 2006, 4). To my dismay, students and teachers did not neatly divide themselves into either Islamists or non-Islamists, self-blaming or government blaming, citizen-responsibilizing or rights-claiming, docile or defiant, or indeed either citizens or clients. I had to begin to accept that the world as it is, will always be "complicated, confused, impure, uncertain" (Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron 1991, 259).

Students could also not be placed into either having a negative self-image or an understanding of being subject to injustice, or as either fitting into "individual agency" or "state agency" camps, as elements of both coexisted in the discourses of many students and teachers. One student in the girls' general school mixed the categories in this manner "In the end, we are treated unjustly. If we were educated properly from the beginning, we would have been great people. Now we turn out disgraceful" (*binitla' 'irar*: a strong expression implying being worthless and disgraceful). Students certainly used notions of individual morality to discuss grievances at a more micro-scale, notably characterizing teachers' practices in terms of a lack of conscience (Chapter 2). However, the textbook focus on corruption from the perspective of individual morality, legitimated within an Islamic framework, was largely subverted in student discourses. It was not just the messages of the curriculum that were instrumental in reinforcing constructions of students as bad and unworthy. Disrespect and the derogatory treatment of students was systematic and normalized through the patterns of physical beating and humiliation in the public schools, though far less in the private schools (Chapter 3). Many teachers, and according to the students, their own parents, were constant sources of charges and portrayals of failure and worthlessness.

In sum, there were clear tensions in student and teacher discourses between constructions of the young as bad citizens and therefore as responsible for negative conditions in the country, and young people as oppressed and unjustly treated by those in power. This complexity and overlap are inseparable from the way the late Mubarak regime made corruption integral to the daily functioning of Egypt's citizens.

From cheating on exams to bribing government officials to obtain services (private tutoring included), almost every citizen was in some respect a participant in extralegal, illegal and questionable practices. Every citizen could be/is corrupt. This embeddedness in corrupt or extralegal practices is more endemic and more blatant among lower middle-class and working-class parents, whether it is because of the way they disposed of their garbage or built their homes without permits on agricultural land (as in much of the neighborhood of the public schools) or clandestinely siphoned electricity off from the main public network without a license (see also Singerman 1995, Ismail 2006, Dorman 2009). By staying outside the public education system, higher-income students and their parents were not involved in illegal practices in the way that lower-income parents often had to be. Even though higher-income parents may still pay small bribes, often justified as a form of social solidarity with underpaid employees, for them privatization implies being somewhat more insulated from everyday corruption and extralegality. As such, the affluent classes, especially in their everyday realities, could occupy a somewhat higher moral ground from which they could, and did, protest against the state.

Another contrast to textbook narratives related to the idea of the nation under threat from external enemies, a theme that is also prominent in Islamist discourses. Perhaps surprisingly, only a minority of teachers, but none of the students, cast Egypt in geopolitical terms in their discourses on national belonging. Some teachers referred to foreign plans for the weakening of the country and the targeting of its youth. Here, when the blame was placed outside the young, it was directed at the other (the West) as corrupting youth, often intentionally. As a vocal Islamist teacher in the general public boys' school put it, this generation is "oppressed (*mazlum*), targeted and its destruction is [deliberately] planned out (*mitkhatatlu izai yitdammar*)." A religiously observant teacher in the girls' private school also opened his reflections on "this generation" by referring to the loss of identity due to conscious plans to "marginalize youth, direct them away from what is important and corrupt their awareness" (*teghayyibuh*). These teachers saw foreign intervention in education as a key means whereby this intentional corruption of youth was being carried out by high-level education officials. Perhaps in this sense, they were the ones who had most appropriated, albeit in an oppositional vein, the official discourse of Egypt as a state under threat from external powers. For a number of those teachers, the weakness of education, and especially of science education and scientific research, was juxtaposed to the strength of Israel, which produced advanced weapons. For example, with reference to the choice many students made to study arts instead of sciences, a teacher in the public general boys' school commented:

> There is a problem in science subjects in Egypt … Israel is so small and produces weapons … It's a problem of the curriculum. Iran is rising too. They started putting obstacles in science. Even in setting the weekly timetable they have science subjects right after each other. The minister is a just a big employee. They tell him the main lines, and he applies them … This is a predetermined policy … They include things to destroy the identity of students.

Fatma Sayed (2006) and Linda Herrera (2008a) have written in significant detail on the discourses and conspiracy theories that surround foreign intervention in Egyptian education. In these discourses, the destruction of education is seen as a deliberate policy by the U.S. to maintain the inferiority of Muslim countries, especially in relation to its ally Israel. The fact that students did not raise this theme is an example of key generational difference in the appropriation of Islamist discourses.

Finally, in discussions with teachers and principals, criticisms of the young were also linked to interpretations of Islam that were understood in moral terms, especially in terms of sexual morality. For example, in reflecting on this generation, the principal of the technical school evinced both apologetic and sympathetic views of the students, combining moral blame of young people and society with the narrative that this is a disadvantaged generation that had its excuses (*gil ma'thur*). His focus was not on poor economic conditions, but on "the lack of adherence to moral and religious values." In many cases, teachers mentioned increased access to pornography, the consumption of which seemed to be rampant among the male students. This was a frequently voiced concern, especially in the public schools, and was directly linked to new media technologies, the Internet and patterns "coming from abroad." However, this moral lens, which reflected the themes of mainstream Islamist and non-Islamist discourses, was not the key theme for most other teachers or students. Many teachers and administrators in fact explicitly resisted describing the students as a corrupt and lost generation and therefore as bad citizens. Across the schools, teachers often referred to the bad conditions (*zuruf*) in the country and to students as oppressed, unfortunate or crushed by living conditions (*mazlum*, *ghalban* or *maghlub 'ala amruh*).

Conclusion

School rituals and student discourses reveal the poverty of participation and legitimation in schools. Participation as an element of citizenship is rarely practiced in any of the venues designed for it in the schools. Even the mandated participation in nationalist rituals is hardly enforced in secondary schools. Such participation becomes an image presented on days when inspector visits are expected, but is otherwise abandoned by students and teachers alike. The lack of participation relates not only to a crisis of belonging and legitimacy, but equally to poor resources and the de facto privatization of secondary education through tutoring.

Across students from the different tiers of schooling, neoliberalism was far from hegemonic, national non-belonging was consistently voiced and Islamist discourses were deployed in ambiguous and generationally differentiated ways. Students and teachers related the conditions of lived citizenship directly to government policy and weaved this into their constructions of nation and state. Notably, students used vocabulary that had long been erased from official textbooks, deploying the language of rights, injustice, humiliation and poverty. Many students especially emphasized humiliation based on social class. Even middle-income students in the general schools represented themselves as poor and placed this self-identification at the center of their discourses on the nation and citizenship. Private school students from higher-income groups used the themes of recognition and underemployment instead of livelihood and survival in referring to the lack of opportunity and employment, even though they expressed the same sense of a lack of national belonging and the desire to leave the county. It is nonetheless critical that the concern with blocked opportunities or the reproduction of their class status had reached high up into the affluent classes and is prevalent across the educated classes. Textbook discourses promoting national belonging, active neoliberal citizenship and docile Islamism had therefore not taken root among students across the schools.

While the analysis explains the bounded set of themes that structured student and teacher discourses on these matters, this is not to deny the variation, fluidity and different possibilities within these discourses. First, how students feel about, perceive or relate to these narratives not only varies from one individual to another, but also goes through periods of flux, as is apparent from the changes in discourses about national belonging and its expression after the "January 25 Revolution" (see Conclusion chapter). Patriotic nationalism was not rejected per se by most students, as might be the case, for example, in some countries of the Global North, and therefore remains a relevant register ready to be activated under different circumstances, as occurred in 2011. Second, what I am implicitly characterizing as a relatively secular discourse of citizenship among these urban Cairene youth cannot be generalized to all parts of the country, especially given the dominance of variants of Islamism in public discourse and education. Third, just as lines could not be easily drawn between the deployment of discourses and practices that implied citizen entitlement and those that implied citizen blame, the distinction between discourses of love of and sacrifice for the nation, as opposed to discourses of a non-belonging or even of hate, is also a delicate one. Major contemporary events, whether the 2011 protests or the repression that followed the disbanding of the Rabaa sit-in, can be as important in shaping discourses on national belonging. Constructions of the national self, of the state and of national identity, and perception of political opening, are all elements that can change significantly and quite rapidly based on changing political realities.[12]

Finally, student discourses about economic exclusion, its politicization and the desperation expressed in relation to the strong possibility of unemployment cannot be assumed to be equally common to disadvantaged youth in different contexts. Many of the exclusions to which these young people are subjected are common to other contexts in the Global South, as well as having some resemblance to underprivileged schools in countries of the Global North. However, research among young people in different contexts shows the variation in how they relate to the realities of exclusion and their utilization of neoliberal themes or other related tropes, such as hard work, education and faith in meritocracy (e.g. Swartz et al. 2012).[13] That is, there is no necessary link between social exclusion and its articulation within citizenship discourses, nor is there a necessary association between social exclusion and forms of national belonging. As Yuval-Davis puts it, “discourse on social locations, complex as it is, cannot be conflated with the belonging discourse on identifications and emotional attachments, and any attempt to do so is essentialist and often racialized” (2006, 202).[14]

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[12] Research has suggested, for example, based on the examination of discourses of national character and consciousness before and after the Orange Revolution in the Ukraine, that high-school students' experience of new forms of community and solidarity during the "revolution" led to the emergence of novel articulations of national identity, and that national consciousness was therefore an effect rather than a cause of the Orange Revolution (Fournier 2007).

[13] For example, a study of township youth in South Africa found that few young people made an explicit connection between the government (or apartheid) and their present socioeconomic circumstances, and that many saw hard work and education alone as the key to achieving socioeconomic mobility (Swartz et al. 2012). In fact, the strongest contrast between that study and the findings here came in the earlier researchers' assertion that there was "almost no evaluation of the inferior quality of township education and lack of available jobs" and instead a strong sense of responsibility and a seeming faith in the "meritocracy myth" (Swartz et al. 2012, 30–5).

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[14] For example, a study of British Muslim youth noted that their normative accounts suggested an interpretation of citizenship that is congruent with the neoliberal discourse of individuals taking responsibility for maintaining social order, while noting varying levels of alienation and affiliation with Britishness when it came to citizenship (Mustafa 2016).

7 What Has Changed in Education Since the Revolution?

The 2011 uprising is a watershed event in contemporary Egyptian history. The Revolution, as it is commonly referred to in Egypt, denotes the unprecedented scale of peaceful mass demonstrations and the eighteen-day sit-in in Tahrir Square that led to the removal of Mubarak. January 25 was the start of a cycle of protests that continued in tumultuous months of protest, government reshuffles and historical elections and referenda. This chapter asks what changed in relation to the production of lived and imagined citizenship in schools in the critical years immediately following the Revolution. I first outline changes in the wider political, economic and social context, before mapping key changes in the educational sphere, presenting novel analysis on trends in teacher salaries and public spending on education. The remainder of the chapter analyzes my research with students and teachers, teachers and stakeholders from 2016 to 2018. It updates the discussion on the themes that are methodologically and conceptually developed across Chapters 1–6 in relation to informal privatization, permissiveness and violent punishment, and maps key changes to textbooks, rituals and student narratives relating to citizenship and belonging.

Key Developments in the Post-Uprising Context

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, henceforth the SCAF, formally assumed power from the removal of Mubarak in February 2011. In the months following the removal of Mubarak, the rallying cry of the protesters for “Bread, Freedom, Social Justice” was not completely ignored by the SCAF. Freedom of expression and association witnessed a clear blossoming, and significant concessions were made with regard to selected socioeconomic demands. There seemed to be some recognition of the pitfalls of Mubarak’s crony neoliberalism and attempts to project the image of the emergence of a new order. This period witnessed an alliance between the SCAF, the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi forces (Roll 2016, Létourneau 2016) that was critical to the large Islamist electoral victories in the relatively free elections after 2011. These victories culminated in the election of the Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohamed Morsi for the presidency in June 2012. Dissatisfaction with Morsi's performance led to the mass protests of June 30, 2013 that preceded his removal by the army on July 3, 2013. The current president and ex-Minister of Defense, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, was elected in 2014 after a brief interim presidency. The Sisi regime also initially seemed to be distancing itself from the model of the Mubaraks and recalling the legitimacy of the Nasserite model of a welfare and developmental state. A number of major projects and reform plans for different sectors were embarked upon.

However, the neoliberal direction of austerity, subsidy reduction and privatization was eventually presented as the only way to prevent Egypt's bankruptcy and access international credit. Many of the changes introduced after the Revolution were either reversed or their effects were eroded by subsequent changes. For example, a gesture toward progressive taxation that had raised the income tax rate for the highest earners to 30 percent in the aftermath of the Revolution was revised back to 22.5 percent in August 2015. The effects of the introduction of a minimum wage in 2012 and salary increases in selected sectors have been wiped out in real terms by the rise in prices for key goods and services that was unleashed by the currency devaluation of November 2016, as well as the reduction of subsidies on key goods and services, especially energy prices.[1] By 2017, the annual inflation rate reached 34 percent, the highest in almost a hundred years, while food prices rose by 43 percent in a country that is highly dependent on food imports.[2] The currency devaluation was part of a bailout package by the International Monetary Fund launched in 2016.

There was little change to the trends inherited from the Mubarak era, including poverty, high youth unemployment, low public sector wages and endemic corruption (Chapter 1). Poverty has continued to increase despite these new direct transfer programs (Hussein 2020a).[3] From 2012 onward, the rates of youth unemployment remained around 30–35 percent, and unemployment among educated youth in particular ranged from 50 to 60 percent (World Bank 2019c; ILOSTAT 2019). Perceptions of corruption and the absence of the rule of law are similar to pre-uprising

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[1] Salary increases for the security services and judiciary might have enjoyed an upward trend in real terms.

[2] *Al-Masry Al-Youm* newspaper, August 14, 2017.

[3] Loan conditions also included increases in direct transfers to the poor and additional measures to increase food subsidies. These increases were limited, have also been eroded in real terms by inflation and are not expected to cover those who will fall below the poverty line as a result of the new economic policies (see El-Sharnoubi 2017).

levels.[4] A 2019 increase in public-sector wages that barely restored workers to their predevaluation real incomes, excluded teachers and had no impact on the vast segments of the workforce in the informal economy and the private sector, half of whom receive wages below the new public-sector minimum wage of 2,000 EGP per month (Hussein 2020b). Rights to participation also underwent important changes in this period. Limits on expression, association and organization continued since 2011 with varying intensities and patterns, and have been codified into new laws and institutional structures (Hamzawy 2017). The disbanding of the pro-Muslim Brotherhood sit-ins in August 2013 represented the biggest incident of police repression in Egypt's modern history. By April 2014, key cadres of the secular groupings that had led the protests since 2011 had also been imprisoned and their various groups and activities outlawed. Political expression and media freedoms were also progressively undermined (Badr 2020).

Official discourses of legitimation underwent significant flux after 2011. Under the SCAF, there was official acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the Revolution, along with the assertion that it had been protected and supported by the army. The rise of Gamal Mubarak, a figure from outside the military establishment, his allies and their corruption were articulated as the main causes of the 2011 protests. With the prospect of Gamal's takeover after his father eliminated, there was no reason for protests to continue and it was time to rebuild the country. The Brotherhood had little time to fully develop their legitimizing narrative that oscillated between Islam, the restoration of stability and drawing legitimacy from the Revolution. The removal of Morsi in July 2013 was accompanied by an intensification of nationalist rhetoric, the reliance on new legitimizing narratives and the rearrangement of regional alliances.[5] The new legitimizing discourse revolved around demonization of the Muslim Brotherhood, the war on terror, the continuity of the January 25 Revolution in the June 30 Revolution, and the inseparability of the army and the people throughout Egyptian history (van de Bildt 2015). In addition, the regime is portrayed as protecting Egypt not only from religious fascism and foreign conspiracies but also from the prospect of state failure.[6]

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[4] Corruption remains prevalent after the revolution and recent anti-corruption campaigns have almost entirely disregarded petty corruption (Fayed 2017b). According to Transparency International, Egypt's 2017 score of 32 in perceptions of public-sector corruption ranks it at 117 out of 180 countries. This is similar to its pre-2011 rankings on the same indicator (Alissa 2007). In 2018, Egypt ranked 110 out of 113 countries in the Rule of Law Index that traces perceptions of how the rule of law is applied in a host of areas, including the justice system, regulatory enforcement, security issues, fundamental rights, government powers and corruption (WJP 2018). Egypt's ranking in 2021 was 136 out of 139 countries (WJP 2021).

[5] The ceding of sovereignty over the two strategic Red Sea islands of Tiran and Sanafir, and thus control over the Straits of Tiran, to Saudi Arabia, can be seen as symbolic of the regional realignments.

Education after the Uprising: Ambitious Plans, Budgets Halved

These broader transformations all had their implications for education. One clear and positive change in the educational field after 2011 was the increase in teachers' salaries. In the beginning of the school year in 2011 and again in 2012, teachers engaged in sizable strike action demanding better pay and conditions.[7] The first stage of the pay increase came as part of the introduction of a minimum wage for all public sector employees in 2012. This was followed by further increases in teachers' salaries that came into effect in 2014. However, the post-2011 increases have largely been eroded by waves of inflation, especially after the 2016 devaluation, and teacher's salaries remain very low by international and regional standards. By 2018, the average monthly salary could be estimated at about 2,725 EGP (152 USD), which is equivalent to $716 PPP, when adjusted for purchasing power parity.[8] This represents 70 percent of the pre-uprising average of $1,022 PPP (Chapter 1). It is also one-fifth of the average OECD teacher salary and one-third of salaries in countries like Brazil and Turkey (OECD 2018). In addition, salaries in 2018 represented around 73 percent of GDP per capita, compared to 123 percent in 2010.[9] An OECD study estimated salaries at 160 percent of GDP per capita in 2012 with the post-uprising increase, while underlining that evidence points to an average wage of 3–3.5 times per capita GDP as conducive to a productive education system (OECD 2015, 184). Until 2021, the new public sector minimum wage had not been applied to teachers, although they do receive small annual increases.[10] The deteriorating conditions of teachers have exacerbated teacher shortages so that by October 2019 the Ministry of Education admitted to a massive shortage of 300,000 teachers.

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[6] In 2017, for example, the president called upon the media and intellectuals to create "a phobia of the collapse of the state" among citizens, whereby even valid criticism of the weak performance of state institutions is portrayed as destabilizing the state. These statements were widely covered in media outlets – for example, *Al-Ahram Al-Arabi* on July 25, 2017.

[7] Starting in 2011, over 130,000 teachers were also gradually transferred from precarious poorly paid contracts to the official Teachers Cadre system.

[8] Estimating teacher salaries over time is exceedingly challenging in the absence of official publicly accessible data. I estimated the average salary in 2018 based on the publicly available salary table at the time, which incorporates the 2014 salary raise, and where starting salary is 1,853 EGP, reaching 3,666 EGP. I calculated the average based on the numbers of public-school teachers at each level of the Cadre in the 2017–2018 MOE Statistical Book. The PPP amount, considered more appropriate for international comparison, is based on the World Bank PPP conversion factor, private consumption (LCU per international $) for 2018 of 3.806. Actual salaries in 2018 might have been slightly different than the 2014 table figures, due to small annual increases and deductions since 2014 salary raise. However, higher estimates that circulate in the media often reflect desired or promised salary increases or might rely on salary information that is not representative of the national average (such as those of Giza and Cairo). The large regional variation in salaries has been noted in earlier studies, where salaries in a handful of governorates, including the capital, can be *more than double* the national average (OECD 2015, 184, see also MOE 2010). In fact, other available estimates of net salaries in 2018 were 5–10 percent lower than the salary table after adjusting for deductions.

Plans were announced in 2018 for the introduction, in the same year, of "a new education system" branded "Education 2.0." Despite the ambitious vision it presented, the initial conceptualization, prioritization, budgeting and implementation did not offer clear prospects for tackling the fundamental problems of quality, equity and management in the system: in terms of teaching quality, teacher shortages and wages, poor infrastructure and poor and inequitable distribution of resources (Chapter 1).[11] Instead of increased spending to match this ambitious overhaul, public spending on education has declined to about half its pre-uprising levels and is very low by international standards. By 2018, spending on (preuniversity and higher) education as a percentage of GDP had declined to 2.16 percent, half of its 2014 levels, in spite of the 2014 constitutional stipulation of a minimum public spending on education of 6 percent (4 percent for preuniversity and 2 percent for tertiary) (EIPR 2021). The budget allocated to preuniversity education for 2018–2019 represented 1.7 percent of GDP or slightly over 6 percent of public expenditures, compared to 3.5 percent of GDP and 12.6 percent of public expenditures in 2010.[12] The corresponding OECD average, as well as the averages in countries like Mexico and Turkey, is around 3.5 percent of GDP (OECD 2020). In fact, when taking into account that the system caters to over twenty million students, spending per student is very low in international comparison. Average annual spending per student in 2018 amounts to a very modest EGP 4,400 or $1,160 PPP.[13] This represents about 10 percent of the OECD average and 20–50 percent of the average in countries like Chile and Mexico (OECD 2020). Similar to pre-2011 trends, this deficiency in public spending on education is compensated for by private spending, primarily on the pervasive tutoring that has transformed education over the past decades (Chapter 2).

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[9] I calculated average annual salaries as a percentage of GDP per capita (current LCU), based on World Bank data.

[10] Teachers were excluded from the 2019 public salary increase on the grounds that the state budget could not accommodate teacher salary increases because of their large numbers.

[11] Analysis of different aspects of the reforms can be found in the author's publications in English and Arabic from 2018 onward, including research and policy papers and a number of op-eds in the Egyptian daily *Al-Shorouk*.

[12] The 2018 calculations are based on the official government of Egypt figures, where expenditures on preuniversity education and total public expenditures are obtained from the 2018–2019 budget (MOF 2018) and GDP is obtained from the website of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development. The 2010 figures are obtained from an MOE report (MOE 2010, 168 and 179).

When asked what had changed in education in general since 2011, most respondents in 2016 and 2017 said either that there had been no change or that change had been for the worse. Sentiments were more negative in 2018, following the first steps of the introduction of Education 2.0. Students and teachers expressed a very negative view of education more generally and of their own schools in particular. They used the same pre-uprising tropes of the system as dysfunctional, unfixable and education as nonexistent (*mafish taʿlim*/there is no education). They elaborated on this with reference to widespread cheating, poor Arabic language skills (including among secondary school students), the rising costs of private tutoring, high truancy and the general disregard of school regulations. Teachers complained about the unqualified minister and the failure of management, and referred to the promised salary increases as annual promises to motivate teachers to carry out their assignments in the exam-monitoring period. Several teachers also referred to short-lived experiments with curriculum improvements, for example, to introduce “cooperative learning,” but like previous attempts, these quickly ended due to a lack of resources and follow-up, high classroom densities and lack of teacher buy-in.

Business as Usual in the Privatized State

On private tutoring in particular, there was limited change in student and teacher discourses compared to the pre-uprising research (Chapter 2). General secondary students agreed that the Ministry’s efforts, including declarations of the illegality of tutoring and the announced closures of unlicensed tutoring centers, had no impact on their absence from school, their enrollment in tutoring, teachers shirking their duties in school, nor on the high cost of tutoring. Teachers similarly observed no impact on tutoring enrollment, and linked this to a lack of interest in real reform on the part of policy makers. School was therefore still constructed as a place where "We don't do anything," even if it remains an arena of sociability, especially for girls. Students referred to the patterns of teachers running classes as tutoring revisions to their own private students, that "They don't really teach," and that "They only care about formalities." Technical school students also noted rising tutoring costs and referred to the patterns of de facto compulsory enrollment in tutoring and normalized cheating. Some general secondary students also recounted stories of teachers attempting to coerce them into enrolling in tutoring (overt coercion being more common in technical than in general secondary, and in lower grades than in the secondary stage).[14] Recent data indicate that the prevalence of tutoring has been increasing over time across all levels (Sieverding, Krafft and Elbadawy 2019). Tutoring also remains expensive, with the average expenditure on tutoring for current students being equal to 18 percent of average per capita consumption (CAPMAS 2016).

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[13] Average spending per student of 4,409 EGP is obtained by dividing the 2018–2019 *preuniversity* education budget of about 88.7 billion (MOF 2018, 32) by the number of *public* school students of about 20.1 million in the same year (MOE 2019).

Permissiveness, or normalized noncompliance with school regulations, has therefore arguably only intensified. Little had changed in the systematic violation of school regulations, from attendance to dress code and the integrity of examinations (Chapter 4). Pervasive truancy was reflected in comments about school attendance as "a waste of time" and "our relationship to the school is that we go there to submit our papers to have a placement number for the exam." Students agreed that the ministerial emphasis on restoring "discipline in schools" had no impact on their everyday interactions or rates of attendance. Again, echoing pre-2011 themes, girls also referred to noncompliance with regard to expectations of modesty, commenting, "Girls come to school with one outfit and leave with another for going out," and "The school mosque is like a hair salon" that girls use for grooming.

Especially in technical schools, students referred to the normalized patterns of cheating. Systematic exam cheating across the system is confirmed by recent official studies indicating the poor literacy skills in the basic education stage, which suggests that many students had cheated on their exams so as to pass without being able to read and write.[15]

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[14] According to one study, half of the students at the basic education stage (grades 1–9) enroll in tutoring with their own classroom teachers (Ille 2015).

[15] In May 2015, the Minister of Education announced that about 30 percent of 3rd and 4th primary students had failed a nationwide diagnostic literacy test. Another study that found that over 35 percent of preparatory stage students cannot read and write (MOE 2014, 63).

Cheating is commonly justified as equalizing unequal conditions, including income-determined access to quality education and tutoring, the convoluted difficulty of exam questions and the unfairness of the university admission system (whereby a student's entrance to a college and their future prospects depend on very small grade differences). While cheating in technical education is still as neglected as the track as a whole, a trend toward organized cheating in general secondary has attracted a lot of public attention. Even general secondary students defended a famous Facebook page that leaked final-year exams. In June 2016, a major crisis erupted over the leaking of general secondary final exam questions and model answers. The leaking of the exams, and the subsequent rescheduling of some exams, prompted widespread outrage in the media and a wave of student demonstrations demanding the resignation of the Minister of Education. Students also referred to trends of extralegal access to exams and answers, as well as to reports of instances whereby the children of local elites are assigned to separate examination halls, where they are allowed greater leeway for cheating. The measures taken to reduce reliance of private tutoring and reform assessment for the general secondary track were therefore met with skepticism.

Contested Punishment: Restraint and Continuity

Reflections on violent and humiliating treatment reveal more dynamism than issues around privatized public services. Social and political commentary since the Revolution has highlighted increased levels of contestation and lower citizen tolerance for violations by figures of authority. The revolution itself and the protest cycle from 2011 to 2013 are manifestations of such contestation. Whether it is violations by police officers or beatings by teachers, ordinary people have been showing less tolerance and greater resistance to such practices (see Ghannam 2013, for example). This greater sense of entitlement also went through periods of flux, mirroring the political changes that had arguably encouraged them. For most respondents, one of the most notable changes after 2011 was a rise in forms of defiance among students. Teachers especially highlighted examples of increased contestation of physical and verbal punishment. As one teacher remarked, "Now when you tell a student, 'Come here, girl' (*ya bit*, derogatory), she answers back that she has a name you should call her by." Students also referred to their own opposition to such behavior, notably using new formulations that suggest a greater sense of entitlement to respect and redress: "If he verbally aggresses me (*ta'ada 'alaya lafthiyan*), I tell him I will make a complaint to the supervisor or administration, so he backs down." Students referred to teachers using more negotiation and dialogue to resolve conflicts. Even in interviews with male technical school students, who are usually the recipients of the harshest forms of punishment, they referred to teachers controlling students less through physical punishment and more through grades and emotional appeals and reprimands, or what some referred to as moral punishment (*ʿiqab maʿnawi*), such as using statements like: "I have now lost faith in you," or "You are not a man, so do not speak to me." Although such emotional punishment remains officially prohibited in Egypt, students found these methods more acceptable than direct humiliation or beating. Student reflections on the contestation of punishment should however be seen in light of the difference between secondary education and earlier stages, where beating is harsher and more prevalent (ELMPS 2012).[16] As one student put it, "In preparatory there is a lot of beating of course, but not in secondary," and "The teachers know the difference: in preparatory the students don't talk, but in secondary they talk back."

While there seems to have been a positive trend of reduced harsh punishment, this does not imply a reversal of normalized patterns of beating and humiliation in secondary education, nor in the younger grades. News and social media continue to report cases of severe punishment by teachers, including an incident that resulted in the death of a preparatory school child in 2015. The Ministry continues to issue regulations prohibiting physical and emotional punishment, but action is rarely taken against teachers who violate these regulations. Even in cases of severe physical assault that end up in court, teachers still receive unexpectedly light sentences. Interviewed teachers did not shy away from referring to their own resort to harsh punishment: "We start with words first, and if there's no effect, then we use kicks (*bil-shalut*)"; or "We beat the students based on the principle of 'beat the tied-up one and the loose one will be afraid'" (i.e. making an example of some students to intimidate the others); or "I curse their fathers and mothers and say go away, you son of a shoe (*imshi ya-ibn il-gazma*), and you can write that down." Boys continue to be the main recipients of corporal punishment, and there is strong continuity with pre-2011 gendered patterns and discourses (Chapter 3). For example, teachers in the girls' public general school explained that girls at this age should not be beaten, that the maximum is "verbal violence" and "normal curse words like 'donkey' and 'stupid.'" Teachers agreed that boys, on the other hand, are casually kicked and beaten with sticks and that "a boy would not respect the teacher without beating." Students referred to the arbitrary nature of punishment: "A teacher's punishment depends on which student he is facing." Students' statements also reflected the distinction between disciplinary and repressive or exploitative punishment (Chapter 3): "We have a brotherly relationship with some teachers, and we can accept a beating from them because there is a human relationship and the beating is brotherly, not oppressive (*akhawi mesh qahri*)." "Disciplinary" physical punishment, motivated by concerns perceived as legitimate in upholding institutional norms, was largely accepted: "Beating is sometimes in 'official' things: for example, if I arrive late, there is a beating."

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[16] According to a 2012 survey, 80 percent of respondents said that students in their primary school were subject to physical punishment, more than half saying that this occurred either daily or frequently (ELMPS 2012). The percentage is somewhat lower for the older preparatory schools, with 70 percent of respondents reporting regular physical punishment in their schools and even lower in secondary schools, with 30 percent saying there was regular physical punishment, and 50 percent saying students are never beaten (ELMPS 2012).

Several teachers and students also noted that violence by male students increased after the Revolution, as violence by teachers decreased. Teachers in one school referred to the "rapidly rising curve of violence among students." A student in the same school explained that he physically attacked a teacher once because the teacher cursed him using vulgar language and that the supervisor let him go back into class afterward "because he saw that it was the teacher who was at fault." Another explained how he completely humiliated a teacher and was suspended for a week, that that was better because he could just rest at home, and that the teacher was later transferred to another school. Student violence, the loss of control over schools and the portrayal of students as unruly and ungovernable were already prominent themes among teachers before 2011 (Chapter 4), but they clearly found new resonance after the Revolution.

In private schools, where violent punishment is not a prominent issue, teachers still felt their authority was being undermined, but through very different kinds of practices. They portrayed students, especially in the aftermath of the uprising, as using collective action "for any demand," including administrative issues like changing class schedules. Secondary students were especially seen as subversive, "protesting for the sake of protesting," "always objecting" and "from the Down! Down! Gang" (*min shillit yasqut yasqut*) [referencing the chants of the Uprising: "Down with Hosni Mubarak"]. Many teachers therefore emphasized what they perceived as the negative aspects of what had become a vocal student body. Several teachers also employed anti-Revolution tropes, interpreting the Revolution as having encouraged young people to be impolite and purposelessly subversive. This was articulated in terms of students having a higher voice, "not understanding what freedom means," being bold, misbehaving and "lacking respect for elders after they had seen the elder in the country [the president] being disrespected."

Teachers were not uniform in their portrayal of these trends. Some teachers, while agreeing that there had been a rise in assertiveness, portrayed it more positively. They saw students as copying and learning from the wider context, noting that "students really changed … they know their rights" and that "now they demand their rights." They were able to challenge authority because "it worked outside: a president was removed." A number of teachers also said that they had changed their own views and behavior – for example, imposing fewer limits on students, or no longer engaging in behavior they forbade to their students, like using swear words or eating in class. Overall, teachers seemed to agree that, while this trend was most marked immediately after the fall of Mubarak, it was still leaving an imprint on student behavior. These trends point to generational transformations that are at the heart of perspectives on the Revolution and that will remain critical for future political developments.

Forms of participation, expression and organization in schools saw a clear change in the aftermath of the uprising. This was noted in respondents' remarks on students organizing protests and in media reports of students removing photos of Mubarak from schools across the nation in 2011. Rights to participation in schools oscillated in line with political events and their forms arguably varied based on social class. However, despite larger margins of freedom between 2011 and 2013, expression in the schools was not simply free after the Revolution, the dynamics in each local context playing a key role in determining the responses to signs of collective or political actions in schools.[17] This margin of freedom had almost disappeared by 2016. Especially in comparison with the immediate post-2011 years, teachers agreed that there is currently far less freedom of expression for them and for students.

Discussing politics and religion is still "forbidden in schools," as teachers put it. Close security monitoring returned forcefully to the schools since the removal of Morsi. As one teacher in a private school explained, "I have zero freedom to speak in school … The ministry supervisor tells me to stop talking politics on every visit he makes to the school … He tells me you will not be able to withstand prison." Teachers in the private schools mentioned examples of colleagues who were assumed to be Muslim Brotherhood sympathizers and were made to resign after 2013. But fear of repression was not the only reason they felt more restrained, as the polarization in society itself was expressed as a key constraint. As one private school teacher explained, "Before June 30, yes, we could talk … now we cannot talk … It's coming both from the school administration and our own inclination … Of course, there is *amn el dawla* (state security) everywhere, and they do report what happens. You cannot talk freely with your own colleagues … it's forbidden regardless of being in a public or private school." Students also seemed to be visibly guarded and did not elaborate on current political realities as they did in pre-2011 fieldwork.[18]

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[17] For example, even after the removal of Mubarak, police officers stormed a school in Qena in an attempt to obtain the names of students who had been demonstrating for the removal of Mubarak's photographs from official textbooks and for the removal of the governor of Qena (as reported in *ElBadil Newspaper* on February 28, 2011).

Textbook Citizenship Narratives under the SCAF, the Brotherhood and Sisi

Promises of comprehensive reforms to school textbooks have been made since the removal of Mubarak, and after every major political change since. Although textbook reform is generally a rather slow process, there have been important changes and considerable public debates about the content of textbooks from 2011 to the present. The main areas of change and contention relate to whether and how the uprising and the subsequent events are portrayed, how the old and new regimes are discussed, claims about the Islamization of textbooks under the Brotherhood and calls for reforming textbooks to combat extremism and violence since Morsi was removed from power. These are all issues that are directly linked to questions of citizenship and national belonging.

The most notable changes to textbooks under the SCAF (2011–12) included the swift removal of photos of the ex-first lady and paragraphs devoted to the late Mubarak era more generally from the textbooks. This was accompanied by the insertion of short sections praising the January 25 Revolution in some textbooks and celebration of its achievement of its goals of removing the corrupt Mubarak regime. Portraying the Revolution as succeeding in its limited goals paved the road for condemning the continuation of protest. Protesters making additional demands for transitional justice and deeper socioeconomic and political reforms could be portrayed as creating strife, unrest and economic loss, and the ongoing Revolution could be construed as a mixed event "with positive and negative aspects." As explained in Chapter 5, Arabic essay questions in national exams are key means whereby the regime conveys succinct messages of appropriate political discourses to students, and are far quicker to introduce than textbook changes. By the middle of the 2011–2012 school year, students in one educational district were asked to write an essay on the following topic: "The January 25 Revolution is an event that changed history. Discuss its positive and negative aspects." A question in another exam asked students to expound on this sentence: "Work and real production cannot be achieved in the light of the continuation of revolutions, and Egypt these days needs work instead of demonstrations that obstruct production." Essay topics under SCAF therefore reproduced the Mubarak-era theme of juxtaposing protest to productivity and stability (Chapter 5). The Revolution was already being stripped of its initial portrayal as a positive, peaceful and patriotic undertaken by "pure youth."

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[18] This is likely due to the fear of repression, but it is possible that it was easier to establish trust and rapport with students in the more immersed pre-2011 research.

Despite significant media hype at the time, changes to textbooks were similarly limited under the one-year reign of the Brotherhood (Attalah and Makar 2014). However, the changes were suggestive of at least three potential trajectories. The first was a conservative "Islamizing" direction, especially given the Brotherhood's alliance with the Salafi forces throughout the transitional phase. For example, two minor modifications were noted in secondary school textbooks: A picture of an Egyptian women's rights pioneer was removed from the textbook (although the description of her role was not), as were pictures of young people killed in the January 25 protests (martyrs of the Revolution). This suggests a more conservative or Salafi orientation in which images of humans are frowned upon, as is political protest. A comparison of a 2012–2013 civics textbook with earlier versions shows that earlier references to national unity substantiated by illustrative images of the Coptic cross and Quran were removed, and a section on "political consciousness in Islam" was more prominently positioned (Sasnal 2014). There were also media reports of modifications being planned to remove from an assigned novel references that "contradict sharia" so that "wine" is replaced with "cake" and "amorous relations" with "legal marriage." Another minor change came in the form of a grammar exercise sentence in a primary Arabic-language textbook: "*Al-Ikhwan* [The Muslim Brothers] are the builders of humanity … *Al-Ikhwan* are the route to progress." This recalls Morsi's inauguration speech in Tahrir, where he referred to the blood of men who had watered the roots of the trees of freedom with their sacrifices "in the 1950s and 1960s" (when the Brotherhood was repressed under Nasser). This kind of change suggested a direction toward rewriting the history of Egyptian nationalism in terms of the struggles of the Islamist forces and of the Brotherhood in particular. It is also consistent with "Brotherhoodization" (*Akhwana*) or the staffing of state institutions with

Brotherhood cadres, initiated under Morsi. There was, however, a third direction exemplified by the 2012 Civics Textbook for Second Secondary General. Although it bears some of the hallmarks of Islamist framing and discourse, explicitly declaring the ineligibility of Christian citizens for the highest public positions like the presidency, it is written from a rights-based perspective, giving detailed attention to a range of political and associational rights and freedoms, emphasizing economic and social justice, and displaying and respecting the diversity of the Egyptian political landscape. Although the textbook was developed at the height of the Revolutionary era before Morsi came to power, the Brotherhood did not prevent its introduction. Another textbook – *I The Egyptian* – discussed in the following sections, whose authorship committee was at work when Morsi was in power, also reflected more inclusive and pro-Revolution views.

Overall, however, over this very short period, the textbooks remained largely unchanged, and exam questions also stayed within the old orientations. For example, the anti-protest discourse was apparent in Arabic essay questions, as in the topic "Peaceful sit-ins are a legal right that has prerequisites (*shurut*), but if it turns into the occupation of streets and squares and stops the flow of traffic and the obstruction of institutions and attack on property, it becomes chaos."[19] It is precisely such narratives that legitimized the repression unleashed on the Brotherhood's supporters when their sit-ins were violently dispersed in 2013 and their subsequent protests were attacked and prohibited. While the essay questions could have been influenced by other forces within the state bureaucracy, the anti-protest rhetoric reflects the Brotherhood's generally hostile attitude to protest by non-Islamist forces since 2011. It is also consistent with the larger ethos of the textbooks. Based on a study of post-2011 Egyptian history in textbooks, Ehaab Abdou shows how they reflect and reinforce a template that "prepares large segments of Egyptians to be receptive to possible abuses of power, including the state's crackdown to reduce or oppress dissent, which is justified by successfully mobilizing fears such as imminent foreign intervention or possible chaos" (Abdou 2017a, 93–4).

Even after the removal of Morsi in 2013, most textbooks remained substantially unchanged (Attalah and Makar 2014, Sasnal 2014). However, after the election of Sisi, during the 2014–15 school year, MOE reported that it had made changes to 30 textbooks and designated 1,290 books for total revision over the following three years. Most of the focus went to the issue of "combatting terrorism." A ministerial committee reportedly revised all Arabic-language textbooks in order to "purify them from topics that may incite violence or extremism or point to any political or religious inclinations." The most controversial changes included the removal of sections of the assigned novel *Uqba bin Nafi'* concerning the violent behavior of a conquering Islamic military leader, and the removal of a reading passage in which triumphant birds encircle hawks and set them on fire as they sing nationalist chants (risking a parallel with incidents of ISIS burning prisoners being reported in the media in the same period). Textbook revisions and "purification" therefore essentially meant deleting potentially "violence-inciting" sections without changing the kind of novels and topics students must study or the actual ethos and basic orientations (including Islamist ones) of the curriculum (Chapter 5). The Ministry in fact came under fire in the liberal media after 2014 for its ongoing consultations with the Salafi Nour Party on educational matters.

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[19] Politicized essay questions often receive national media coverage; see, for example, Makhlouf (2012).

By 2017, textbooks had revealed more substantial changes. One of the most notable themes has been the discussion of the January 25 and June 30 protests. As these themes are integral to constructions of citizenship and national belonging, it is fruitful to examine them in some detail. One example can be found in the 2016–2017 *History for Third Secondary* textbook, which ends with a short chapter on "the two revolutions." The four-page text summarizes the most significant political events from 2011 to 2014. It reflects the key elements of the official narrative on the transitional phase and the regime's portrayal of its rise to power. It equates both events in importance, portraying both as "revolutions" and both as positive and necessary, and therefore seeks to draw legitimacy from both. Referring to January 25, the text states that the people felt that they had achieved the goals of the Revolution, especially with the fall of Mubarak, and that the SCAF protected the Revolution and enabled it to achieve its goals. According to the text, the Muslim Brotherhood ruled in the same manner as previous governments by protecting its interests through both legal and exceptional means. The text explains that Morsi issued a constitutional declaration to enable him to rule exclusively, placed Brotherhood members in key positions across the state apparatus (Brotherhoodization) and mismanaged the country in general and the economy in particular, leading to rising foreign debt and inflation. The people therefore sought to withdraw trust from Morsi, "who did not fulfill any of the demands of the Revolution," and called for early elections (p. 152). Morsi rejected this call, the opposition rejected his invitation to dialogue and the people came out to the squares in a new revolution on June 30, 2013. The army leadership issued a declaration giving Morsi 48 hours to respond to the people's demands. His supporters held sit-ins in two public squares, which "noticeably disrupted the lives of people in those neighborhoods" (p. 153).

After a brief listing of events, the text concludes that with the election of Sisi, "a new page in Egypt's modern history was turned after two consecutive revolutions: January 25, 2011 and June 30, 2013, which put Egypt on the right path to the implementation of democracy, the elevation of the people's interests, and the achievement of progress, growth and prosperity" (p. 154). Significant controversy came with the final-year national examination for this subject, when students were asked to answer the question "What if Sisi had not made the June 30 Speech?" This opaque hypothetical question sparked widespread criticism, leading the Ministry to announce that this question would be removed from the final scores. A Ministry official assured the media that no student answers "that carry political connotations" would be scored. Another official announced that all sections and any reference to the two revolutions will be removed in the following year's textbook and admitted that they have caused increasing problems in schools, as well as for setting examinations.[20] The textbook was still being assigned in 2019–2020, however, and the offending chapter had not been removed.

Two other 2016 textbooks presented contrasting portrayals of the Revolution, citizenship and national identity. One is the *National Education for First Secondary* textbook entitled *I the Egyptian* (*Ana al-Masri*), the other is the *National Education for Third Secondary* textbook.[21] While both textbooks provide theoretical discussions of democracy, political participation, the constitution and electoral processes, *I the Egyptian* prefaces many of its discussions with a glorification of the January 25 Revolution. Upturning key tropes of pre-2011 textbooks, it depicts revolution as a consistent and positive characteristic of the Egyptian people, who carried out their first revolution for social justice under the Pharaohs. As outlined in its preface, "good citizenship" is seen as a defining trait of the Egyptian character across history, which believes in the values of citizenship that support nation-building, such as freedom, tolerance, love, brotherhood and unity. A member of its authorship committee described the technocratic and nonideological manner in which the task was approached, but also that the endeavor was initiated in 2012 under Morsi in a novel process that involved competing voices and different orientations, even if not all were equally heard. Although National Education receives far less student and media attention as a pass/fail subject (Chapter 5), it is still striking that one of the most pro-Revolution textbooks was still in use in 2016–2017. By 2019–2020, however, the book was no longer being assigned, although two short assigned readings in the Arabic Language textbook for this cohort presented a positive treatment of the January Revolution and the struggles of Egyptians for freedom.[22]

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[20] As reported in *AlMasry AlYoum* newspaper on June 17, 2017.

[21] Both textbooks were accessed from the textbooks portal of the Ministry of Education (http://elearning1.moe.gov.eg/) in the summer of 2017. The cover of the online version of NETS retained the dates of the previous academic year 2015–16 (http://elearning1.moe.gov.eg/sec/semester1/Grade3/pdf/trbia_wtanea_3sec.pdf), while *Ana al-Masri* stated the 2016–17 date (http://elearning1.moe.gov.eg/sec/semester1/Grade1/pdf/trbia_wtanea_1sec_sb_wb.pdf).

National Education for Third Secondary for 2016 offers a completely different perspective. It ends with a chapter on "Revolution as a model for political participation." The chapter starts by explaining the "political values of revolution" as valorizing "national consciousness." Revolution is constructed as a quest for renewal, which not only involves modernization and progress but also includes acceptance of the other and of the technological and information revolutions. The third element of revolution is freedom, which the text explains does not mean chaos or indecent behavior that disrespects religion or morals, but rather freedom of thought controlled by an authority that delineates what is creativity and what is an affront to religion law or traditions. Freedom also encompasses freedom of belief, "according to the correct understanding based on the renewal of religious discourse" (p. 45). The fourth element is a woman's freedom "to express her political and social opinion and to be an effective element in all fields that religion calls for, especially that women have not achieved their rights yet" (p. 46). The text then presents revolution as a valorization of security (*al-thawra qima amniya*). Here students learn that the purpose of revolutions is not change to the worse, the spread of chaos, the use of arms, terrorizing of citizens or (moral) loss of youth, but rather radical change for the better through the achievement of security for citizens, protecting the young from losses and eliminating corruption in all its meanings (p. 46). The text proceeds to highlight revolution as a valorization of morals, self-actualization and the affirmation of cultural identity, critique and creativity (but not as a vessel for foreign ideas), as renewal of religious discourse, and finally as valorization of "work and production." It continues to briefly explain the January 25 and June 30 Revolutions based on the official narratives.

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[22] In the 2019–2020 Arabic Language for First Secondary textbook, one assigned reading reflects on the struggle of Egyptians for political, social and economic freedoms, while an assigned poem offered homage to the martyrs of the January Revolution, glorifying their struggle and emphasizing that this was a peaceful revolution for "bread, freedom and social justice."

The text is therefore fascinating for the manner in which it uses the discussion of revolution to reproduce an anti-revolution discourse and embeds this into securitized narratives and traditional values seen as appropriate to emphasize to young people. The text mixes very conservative ideas with a supposed defense of freedoms in a framing that is significantly legitimized in reference to religion, while implying an anti-Islamist message of moderation. This discussion was, however, substantially revised in subsequent years. In the 2019–2020 version of the textbook, the first part of the text was completely removed, and the subsequent interpretation of the two revolutions was replaced with a discussion of "Egyptian Revolutions as a Model for Political Participation," which offered a very brief overview and listing of the reasons for each of the 1919, 1952, 2011 and 2013 revolutions, albeit giving more space to the latter.

Taken together, these three examples of how the Revolution has been portrayed reflect the overall attitudes of the regime and its hesitation in pushing too forcefully away from the Revolution or toward its own narrative, and in developing and policing a coherent narrative. They demonstrate the multiplicity and diversity in textbook discourses and their messages, even when they stay within official parameters or red lines. In the end, the pro-Revolution textbook was no longer assigned, as was the most heavily securitized anti-Revolution rhetoric. What remains is a more ambiguous and incoherent balancing act between 2011 and 2013. The flux, hybridity and uneven change in textbook narratives at such a delicate historical juncture is perhaps to be expected. Recent scholarship has shown how Nasser-era textbooks also evinced diversity and multiplicity in ideological and nationalist narratives, especially in its earlier years (Makar and Abdou 2021).

Finally, the continuity in the long-standing silences of the textbooks should be noted. While referencing terms like prosperity and corruption, there is very little discussion of the rights to protection and provision at the heart of student concerns (Chapter 6), and the rallying cries of the Revolution. In 2014, a new section in the *Third Secondary History* textbook portrayed the Sadat and Mubarak eras collectively in a more negative light, primarily in relation to economic liberalization and privatization policies. This turned out to be a minimal change that did not resonate in other textbooks. Textbook changes, and therefore this analysis, revolve mainly on the parameters of participation and legitimation in terms of political values and the relationship with political Islam.

The National Drama in School

After the removal of Morsi in 2013, military personnel oversaw the performance of a pro-army song in the morning assembly across the country. Almost every year since 2013, attempts were made to introduce pro-army songs into *tabur*.[23] Almost every year, declarations were made about the importance of reinvigorating the nationalist rituals in *tabur*. Various measures to "instill national loyalty" in schools have also been announced since 2014, including the establishment of "Intellectual Security Clubs" in schools to spread official narratives. Student participation in the daily rituals of national belonging in *tabur* was however as limited as it was before the uprising. With reference to the Ministry's purported efforts to reinforce and monitor nationalist rituals, teachers in a boys' general school commented that this is all "words on paper" and that there are more teachers than students in *tabur*. As one teacher noted, "Students salute the flag with their hands in their pockets" and "about 20% attend while 80% wait outside the school and enter when *tabur* is over." Teachers in this school explained that *tabur* involved two brief components: the anthem and the flag salutation, with occasional additions of school news and a saying or *hadith* of the Prophet. This is already far short of the ideal conceived by the Ministry (Chapter 6).

Interestingly, however, students in the same school explained that saluting the flag consisted of chanting "long live Egypt" (*Tahya Masr*) three times and "God is great" (*Allahu Akbar*) three times, the latter Islamic chant not being part of official regulations. Teachers also noted that, despite recent declarations, *tabur* inspection visits are not a new phenomenon, especially in primary and semiprivate experimental schools, and that any teacher who did not perform the rite of saluting the flag was summoned for investigation by state security. Responses also reflected the diversity in the ability and willingness to follow the official guidelines. In a girls' general school, teachers noted that the Ministry's declared interest in *tabur* was indeed reflected in their school and that the assembly was prolonged because the students have to say the whole anthem and not just the first paragraph. They quickly explained, however, that national belonging cannot be measured by the anthem or flag, but rather by feelings of "ownership of the country."

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[23] In the lead up to the 2018 presidential elections, there were official directives in some governorates, including Cairo, to broadcast a new pro-army special forces song in *tabur* as well as during the break. The production of the song *'Aalu Eih* is seen as part of Sisi's "presidential campaign," but not all versions of the song have footage of Sisi: see www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRSFp4-Rbpc. The lyrics celebrate the bravery and sacrifices of soldiers who were killed in the war against the Islamist insurgency in Sinai.

The overall image remains one of noncompliance, avoidance and disorder. In response to more general questions about *tabur*, students in general secondary shared statements like the following: "We don't know what the flag salutation is in our school," "We come at our own pace," "We don't attend *tabur*" and "We don't wake up early." Referring to first secondary (where there are higher attendance rates in general schools), another student explained: "We attended *tabur* once last year … There was nothing in it … just noise. They make you do exercises … We just talk to each other … If someone says something [on the microphone], we can't hear it … Some students clap, but we can't hear." Students explained that, despite the announced "discipline" measures, there was no real penalty for missing *tabur* (or for absence from school): "They were strict in the beginning … We signed a declaration that we would attend, and then we didn't go, and nothing happened … If they had punished us, we would have arrived early."

Girls in a technical school provided more vivid details of the state of *tabur*. They first asked me "what anthem?" They could not recognize the words to the national anthem when I mentioned them. One student commented, "Here we don't have this anthem … The anthem is just some unrecognizable words." Another commented that the last time she had heard it was in primary school, "where we chanted 'Long Live the Arab Republic of Egypt' and then 'God, Nation, Belonging (*Allah, al-watan, al-intima'*).' " The second part is again an unsanctioned Islamized addition to the decreed salutation of the flag. They also explained that they do not attend *tabur*, that they arrive late and that no one penalizes them for this. One girl, however, noted that she did attend *tabur* and explained that it involves the school radio and news and that it is the same girl who presents it all year round, where she recites the Quran, the proverb of the day and a piece of general knowledge. Students explained that the teachers themselves do not monitor *tabur* (except for the first few rows), and some of them gather together and chat on the side. However, if there is inspection by district officials, everything looks great, and the teachers are there and they scold or beat the students if they are not disciplined during *tabur*.

With reference to the pro-army song introduced into *tabur* after the removal of Morsi in 2013, a number of students were aware that *Tislam al-Ayadi*[24] was played for some time in their school, but then stopped.

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[24] The long song *Tislam al-Ayadi* praises the army and soldiers in general for their sacrifices in defending the nation. A video of it features images of soldiers and footage of Sisi in military attire, as he was still Minister of Defense. While not making direct verbal or visual references to the removal of Morsi, it was quickly produced after June 2013 and is widely seen as praising the army for ending the rule of the Brotherhood.

The song was a source of open contention among respondents. Upon its mention, one student commented, "This is not an anthem, and it is contested and its place is not the school." Another added, "Why should they play it? This is not a patriotic or nationalist song." While not referring to their own political positions, a group of teachers remarked that an adjacent school used to play *Tislam al-Ayadi* during *tabur* and that that was "wrong because it divides the school into two sides, and for sure there are students who lean to one side and others who lean to the other." Finally, none of the teachers or students I interviewed had heard of the "Intellectual Security Clubs" announced by the Ministry or any other initiative to strengthen national belonging. In one boys' general school, teachers did refer to new religious seminars sponsored by the Ministry of Religious Endowments, where an Azhari sheikh came every Monday to speak to students about correct religious understanding (as part of efforts to promote "moderate" state-sanctioned Islam). They noted, however, that the lectures stopped after two months.

As in the pre-2011 narratives, students articulated national belonging as tied to the denial of protection and provision of citizenship rights, although the theme of political repression appeared in many responses. The collective discussions generated by the theme of national devotion echoed the oppositional non-belonging expressed in pre-2011 research centered on themes like economic exclusion, undignified treatment and exit. The first responses immediately referenced unemployment and underemployment: "Love of Egypt … when we graduate, we don't work with our degrees." When one student affirmed that she did love Egypt, one of her peers retorted, "Do you love it because you get free *tamwin* [a basket of rationed subsidized goods]?" Expressions of national devotion were therefore countered with reference to the very limited forms of state provision. Several students, including girls, noted that if they had the freedom, they would leave the country. Notably, several respondents brought up political repression in response to questions about national belonging. As one teacher put it, "Girls come from their homes with their own position toward the country. They are coming from families where there have been political arrests or bad economic conditions. Each student has a particular position toward the country, and there is frequently little scope for debate about it." Despite expected self-censorship, veiled sympathy with the Muslim Brotherhood was apparent in some of the interviews, especially among teachers and especially in general secondary schools. When asked about national belonging among students, teachers in a boys' general school referred to students who have intellectual interests and strong oratory skills and are members of the Muslim Brotherhood and remarked that others are against them, but without having convincing arguments.

Teachers in private schools especially noted a difference between the immediate post-2011 era and subsequent years in terms of expressions of national belonging. In commenting on *tabur*, they agreed that there was a greater sense of belonging among students and that this was observable during the salutation of the flag and the national anthem in the morning assembly (which is more consistently performed in private schools). One teacher called the period after the revolution "the most beautiful time" because of student enthusiasm, respect for the ritual and seeming sincerity. As one teacher put it, "They stood with reverence and interest." She immediately made comparison with the current situation, saying, "Now they sing *zabadi zabadi*" (referring to a mocking version of the anthem, where the word *biladi* [my country] is replaced with *zabadi* [yoghurt]). Several teachers also agreed that they themselves felt they belong to the country more and had greater interest in *tabur* in the aftermath of the Revolution. Teachers said that they felt proud of being Egyptian and that "others" "respected us more." One teacher who worked in a private school where foreign teachers were also employed elaborated on the changing dynamics between Egyptian and foreign teachers. She described the subsequent reversal of the increased respect for Egypt, Egyptian teachers and the nationalist rituals of the school. Teachers also observed a rise in interest in politics among students in the same period, compared with a reluctance to engage in political debate thereafter, due to fears of both repression and heightened political polarization. Apart from ruptures and continuities, the post-2016 interviews point to increased political polarization, possibly increased pro-Brotherhood sympathies, and a higher salience of political repression in discourses around citizenship and national belonging.

Conclusion

Considered along the parameters of lived citizenship, protection, provision and participation in schools all underwent a period of flux and reversal after the Revolution. Narratives of legitimation, belonging and citizenship also underwent significant changes in textbooks, rituals and everyday discourses. While the provision dimension of education (its funding, quality and privatization) saw significant changes that were quickly reversed, the dimension of protection exhibited more dynamism in relation to harsh punishment and noncompliance. Participation in nationalist rituals and collective action underwent clear but short-lived change. Student and teacher reflections indicate a trend toward increased entitlement and a reduction in the intensity and severity of violent punishment. Contestation and challenging behavior were seen as rising among students. Notably, private school students seemed to engage in more collective, protest-like contestation, demanding changes or greater rights; whereas public schools engaged in more individual contestation and retaliation to everyday violations of dignity. Despite these changes, there were clear continuities in earlier patterns, including the gendered, classed and arbitrary nature of harsh punishment, and the pervasive noncompliance with school regulations, including widespread cheating and avoidance or a lack of regard for nationalist rituals.

Despite the continuity in official constructions of imagined citizenship, textbook changes since 2011 reflect a distancing from the Mubarak era and a pronounced incoherence in portrayals of the Revolution. The debates around textbook changes and the example of the withdrawal of the 2017 exam question relating to the regime's official narratives highlights an awareness of the deeply contested narratives of these events. This awareness is partly the result of the long-standing Islamist influence in the educational sphere in teacher recruitment and textbook content (Chapters 1 and 5). As such, official narratives of the deposition of Morsi would be especially resisted in the education sector. Especially since 2014, there was also discussion around eliminating texts that may encourage "violence or extremism," although actual changes to the Islamized orientation of the textbooks have been very limited.

Especially in private schools, teachers emphasized a notable increase in students' sense of entitlement, collective action and political engagement and national belonging in the two years following the removal of Mubarak. Beyond this period, the citizenship narratives developed by students were remarkably similar to pre-uprising discourses. There was a clear return to the pessimistic outlook of blocked opportunities that had been interrupted by the excitement and optimism of the revolutionary phase. Oppositional non-belonging centered on protection and provision but political repression became more prominent in constructions of exclusionary citizenship, while the attribution of unjust realities to the regime and the head of state had disappeared. The most noteworthy difference between pre- and post-uprising trends remains the exception and rupture in the status quo that the Revolution itself represented on almost every front.

Conclusion

Schooling the Nation in the Shadow of the Uprising

"What use is education for a lost nation?" Egypt's president asked rhetorically during a televised conference on education in 2016. The statement went viral on social media, eliciting strong reactions among Egyptians, who expressed dismay, confusion and indignation that their president should diminish the importance of education or insult Egypt as a lost nation. Many of these reactions, however, missed the context of the statement – Sisi was not, in fact, referring directly to Egypt. They also shifted attention away from the substantive content of his intervention, in which he referenced key elements of his understanding and hopes for education and the "Egyptian character we want to educate." The two main points he raised are directly pertinent to the themes of this book. He first asserted that "knowledge and learning are not enough," nor is what is taught in school: discourses in the mosque and church and in the media are equally important "in building the character we want." He went on to say that, among the countries in the region in which "the chaos we are witnessing" has occurred, there are those with good education systems and where illiteracy had been almost eliminated. He was likely referring to Syria, where the quality of preuniversity education was considered to be relatively high. He declared that these countries had been unable to construct the character that could have protected them from such scales of death and destruction. It was at that point that he posed the question: "What use is education for a lost nation?"

The second point in the president's intervention related to the kinds of schools that could serve as models for Egypt. Drawing on a recent visit to a primary school in Japan, he reflected on the group dynamics, calm and order he had witnessed. He described the lunch scene where no child ate until everyone had been served and a specified student leader gave the signal to start, noting in particular that the students accepted the food offered to them without making objections or additional demands. He remarked that there was no violence or harshness on the part of the teacher, who hardly had to direct the students. The president concluded that these schools had created a personality characterized by consensus with colleagues, docility and deference to leadership, commitment, cooperation, team spirit, strict compliance and discipline.[1]

Such reflections crystalize longstanding themes in how regimes in Egypt, in the region and elsewhere have understood the role of schools in the production of citizenship. They touch on the functions of schools both as nation-building institutions that nurture national belonging and loyalty and as disciplinary institutions that cultivate desired values, attitudes and subjectivities. The comments are also revealing for their silences about social inequalities and the neoliberal transformation of education over the previous decades. As such, they reference issues at the heart of this study: the potential power of schools to instill docility, compliance and deference to authority; the place of harshness (or emotional and physical violence) in everyday processes of subjectivation in schools; the role of schools in creating a commitment to the nation and reinforcing regime legitimacy, and the intersections between schooling, neoliberalism and the 2011 uprising.

Based on rare extended access to Egyptian schools and analysis of official textbooks, this book examines the production of lived and imagined citizenship before and after the 2011 uprising.[2] Lived citizenship refers to the differentiated experiences of the rights and responsibilities of protection, provision, participation and legitimation, while imagined citizenship concerns the representations of political values and identities that give meaning to the relationship of subjects to their polity (Introduction chapter). In this chapter, I develop the overarching arguments emerging from the analysis. I elaborate first on how the production of lived citizenship in schools illustrates a mode of governance that I call "permissive-repressive neoliberalism" – selective deinstitutionalization and intensification of violence in the context of privatization and austerity. I then enquire into how far these trends can be considered a reflection of neoliberalism as a global phenomenon and unpack their implications for the functioning of schools as disciplinary institutions. In the second part of the chapter, I underline what school textbooks, rituals and narratives bring to focus about the production of imagined citizenship before and after 2011.

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[1] The complete statement was: "What use is education for a lost/failed nation, or one that is failing or that we are failing": *Yinfa' il-ta'lim fi- aih ma' watan dayi', aw bidi', aw ihna nidaya'uh*. Some of the key terms in the intervention were: *insan wa'i* (committed human being), *al-wada'a wal-iltizam* (docility and compliance), *al-tawafuq ma' zamayelha* (consensus with colleagues) and *al-insiya' lil-qiyada* (deference to leadership). For a video of the full intervention, see Al-Sisi al-Ta'lim la Yufid 2016.

[2] As detailed in Chapter 1, I conducted most of the ethnographic research from 2008 to 2010 inside six boys' and girls' secondary schools across different neighborhoods in Greater Cairo. I revisited the main research themes after the uprising through rounds of interviews from 2016 to 2018. I analyzed the relevant school textbooks from the late Mubarak era to the present.

Lived Citizenship under Permissive-Repressive Neoliberalism

About a year before the 2011 uprising, the Minister of Education at the time, Ahmad Zaki Badr, stated in a parliamentary address that the banning of corporal punishment in schools had led to teachers losing the respect of students and effectively becoming "doormats."[3] He went as far as to claim that the filing of police reports by parents when their children were beaten had "led to the destruction of the educational process." These comments were so outrageous that a few days later, Badr had to retract them. He asserted that he had been misunderstood, and emphasized that beating is prohibited and unacceptable in all its forms. Only a few months earlier, Badr made another controversial statement when he declared that he had received private tutoring as a student and that "there has to be a way for the teacher to improve his income" (ECER 2010a). In contrast to the public statements of previous education ministers, which had attacked the pervasive growth of private tutoring and its violation of the constitutional right to free public education, Badr presented the extralegal marketization of education as a legitimate means for teachers to make up for their poor pay. As such, he was implicitly legitimizing the forms of shirking, absenteeism and coercion that allow teachers to engage in and create demand for the private tutoring that had increasingly replaced school instruction.

Representing a more candid expression of attitudes and policies that had been obfuscated by previous ministers, Badr epitomized the intensification of the neoliberal and securitized direction of the late Mubarak era. He was nicknamed the "Minister of Interior of Education" in opposition media, as he had already exercised his repressive mode of governance as head of one of the nation's largest universities, reportedly releasing thugs onto the university campus to assault politically active students. His selection as education minister reflects the approach and credentials favored by the Mubarak regime (1981–2011) in its final years. Badr's preference appears to have been for students as docile consumers in a privatized system where the market can be enforced, and contestation deterred, by extralegal and violent means. His comments sought to legitimize a status quo where teachers can shirk their duties in school, provide privatized services within the public system and beat students with impunity, while citizens are maligned for demanding protection under the law and repressed for attempting to exercise their right to participation. Badr's statements offer clues into how both repression and permissiveness were critical to sustaining crony neoliberalism and the neglect of public services on the eve of the Revolution. However, his contested justifications, subsequent retractions and his references to contestation by families, all reflect the regime's crisis of governance and legitimacy. Indeed, one of the most notable waves of school protest occurred, and was repressed, during his tenure, only a few weeks before the uprising.[4]

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[3] The terms Badr used were that teachers had lost their *haiba* and became *maltasha*. *Haiba* is a quality attributed to someone who has a natural claim to respect, and commands authority and a measure of deference. Someone who is a *maltasha*, on the other hand, is a regular and easy target for abuse.

While political repression and contestation are highlighted in recent literature on Egyptian politics, this book shifts the focus to everyday repression, contestation and legitimation and emphasizes permissiveness as an essential tool of everyday governance. I use permissiveness to refer to the selective de jure and de facto retraction of legal and institutional protections and regulatory enforcement, and the nurturing of these patterns in a process of de-stating the state. While I touch upon the repression of political contestation, my focus is rather on the everyday forms of physical and emotional violence to which young people are subjected, especially as administered or tolerated by agents of the state. I argue that schools offer particularly illuminating insights into the constellations of privatization, permissiveness and repression that have become the hallmarks of everyday governance in contemporary Egypt. They demonstrate the pronounced differentiation embedded in this mode of governance.

Relations in the three tracks of technical, general and private schools indicate the parameters of lived citizenship for differentially positioned segments of society. While the general secondary track (*thanawiya amma*) is at the center of public discourse and policy concerns, I have given equal attention to the neglected technical education track that enrolls a greater proportion of young people, and to private language schools that enroll the country's elite (about 2 percent of the population cohort at the secondary stage).[5] By analyzing repertoires of cheating and bribery, millionaire tutors and precarious teachers, pervasive truancy and humiliating punishment, I illustrate the ways that privatization, permissiveness and violence operate in each track of schooling. The key elements of "permissive-repressive neoliberalism" are privatization and austerity, permissiveness, repression, differentiation and contestation.

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[4] Students in a number of semiprivate national institutes and their parents initiated a wave of demonstrations and sit-ins, particularly in Alexandria, against a ministerial decision to convert their (formally nationalized but largely independent) schools into public experimental schools. While the formal justification for the decision was allegations of corruption in the schools' management, there were claims that the real motivation was to divide the schools' assets, including large plots of land, and allocate them to cronies of the ruling party. Like other protests by teachers, students and parents, it was met with police repression.

Privatization and Austerity

Privatization and austerity – the defining features of neoliberalism – have transformed education systems across the globe. Few educational systems however exhibit similar levels of de facto privatization to those in Egyptian secondary schools, where most students are compelled to obtain their education through paying for private tutoring (Chapter 2). The uncontrolled spread of private tutoring has been facilitated by an institutional context that determines the material conditions of teachers, fails to prevent related extralegal practices and has reduced investment in education to the point that the market has radically transformed and displaced public schooling. Most public schools in Egypt have become institutions that provide service of little value and public provision of education has become no more than a source of ridicule. Confirming the common refrain that there is "no education" (*mafish ta'lim*) in Egypt, the country was recently ranked the second worst in the world in terms of students' reading abilities (Mullis et al. 2017). Combined with reduced public spending on education, this perverse form of privatization through private tutoring has led to the collapse of quality and widening gulfs of inequality for both students and teachers (Chapters 1 and 2). An educational reform announced in 2018 was accompanied by further decline in public expenditures on education to half its preuprising level (when adjusting for purchasing power parity), reversing the improvements that came with the uprising (Chapter 7). The case of Egypt indicates how informal privatization that started in the 1980s as targeted additional support in the final year of schooling can morph, through austerity, permissiveness and repression, into a parallel system that displaces school and transforms its functions across educational tracks.

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[5] For the three types of schools covered by the study, in 2020, technical secondary schools enrolled 35.5 percent of the population cohort, public general schools (*thanawiya amma*) teaching in Arabic enrolled 25% percent, and private general secondary schools teaching in foreign languages enrolled less than 2% of the cohort. As for the categories not addressed by this study: about 6 percent of the age cohort enrolled in Al-Azhar religious secondary schools, 27% of youth were not enrolled in any type of secondary schooling (drop outs), and about 0.5 percent of all students in Egypt are enrolled in international schools (see Chapter 1). Gross enrollment in the secondary stage is calculated based on official enrollment data for the school year 2019/2020 (MOE 2020c and MOE 2020b for MOE enrollment and CAPMAS 2021 for Azhar enrollment).

Neoliberalism here spells widespread institutional collapse that takes different forms across the tiers of schooling. The two tracks of public schooling show us the differentiated workings of the privatized state. The technical track indicates educational markets where the least advantaged students are coerced by underpaid teachers to enroll in private tutoring, in which they obtain little more than the possibility of passing their exams through systematic cheating.[6] The public general track, where private tutoring is almost universal, is served by markets in which middle-income youth do not have credible prospects of achieving the ideal middle-class trajectory of university enrollment, formal employment and a professional career. The third type of school is formally private but private tutoring enrollment is paradoxically almost universal in high-stakes markets where more affluent families make a heavy financial and emotional investment in learning and memorizing vast amounts of material, while developing few skills they consider of value. This kind of privatization has increased households' reliance on the market, as well as on charitable (religious) networks, while deepening their disengagement from the state. As key state functions are abandoned, the influence of conservative forces grows as they step in to provide various actors with not only the resources to face rising costs but also the frameworks to understand and retain a sense of control over their realities.

Permissiveness

The kind of informal privatization seen in Egypt is made possible by the pervasive corrosion of the normal functioning of schools. On the part of teachers, this includes shirking their duties, absenteeism, carrying out illegal forms of punishment, involvement in extralegal tutoring markets, the facilitation of cheating and the presentation of inaccurate data about student grades, attendance and various school activities. On the part of students, it includes engagement in exam cheating and noncompliance with rules regarding uniforms, school attendance, behavior toward peers and staff, and participation in school activities such as the morning assembly. Indeed, codes of conduct were scarcely observed in any of the schools in this study, especially in public schools. Student noncompliance is not altogether surprising given that most students receive their education beyond the school gates. Many construe this as an unjust situation for which the state and teachers are primarily responsible, adding to their grievances about the fairness of the examination (in light of unequal access to high-quality private tutoring and perceptions of illegal access to exam questions) and the decreasing returns to education. Violent punishment critically fuels noncompliance. Indeed, the dynamics around discipline in schools bring to the fore the pervasive, gendered noncompliance and contestation among young people in such contexts (Chapter 4). The culture of bullying fostered in schools through an almost complete absence of deterrence, is another element of permissiveness and a critical feature of the withdrawal of the rights to protection that should be guaranteed by the state.[7] Since 2011, despite ministerial pronouncements on promoting "discipline" in schools, noncompliance has only increased on all fronts, from truancy to a greater sense of entitlement to exam-cheating, even among general secondary students, where the integrity of the *thanawiya amma* exam had long been guarded as a matter of national security (Chapter 7).

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[6] Tutoring may be less prominent in rural technical schools than in these Cairene schools, but the realities of "no education" and systematic cheating are shared (Chapters 1 and 2).

Noncompliance in schools is an indication of the progressive decline of the authority of the state and its institutions, and the extent to which this decline is experienced and expressed across different social classes. Like de facto privatization, permissiveness in schools is a reflection of wider trends in the state apparatus. Permissiveness in Egypt indicates cronyism, corruption, deregulation, precarity and informality, but importantly encompasses weak and uneven regulatory enforcement across key institutions (Chapter 1).[8] It indicates the deployment of the breakdown of the rule of law as integral to modes of everyday governance. Such permissiveness has led to a sense of generalized complicity in illegitimate practices, where the citizen must engage in illegal or extralegal activity to make a living or access public services. This complicity, which is fundamental to the reproduction of the system, is also critical to discourses that malign, silence and disentitle the citizen. In schools, the context of permissiveness fuels the contentious atmosphere of moral blame and negative labeling. Students are belittled as cheats or failures even if they have not received adequate training in their formative years, while teachers are cast as immoral for shirking their duties in order to create demand for private tutoring (Chapter 2). However, not only permissiveness but also violence is critical to the prevailing mode of governance.

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[7] My focus was on hierarchical relations of punishment rather than on practices of retaliation and violence by students toward teachers and even less on horizontal violence among students. I discuss sexual harassment by male students, however, because it was a recurrent theme in citizenship discourses of female students in terms of rights to protection and public safety (Chapters 4 and 6). The forms of violence in boys' schools, including bullying, destroying school property and bringing drugs and weapons into school, are occasionally highlighted in the media. They are also explored in a study by Kamal Naguib (2006) and in a recent feature film *La Mu'akhza* (2014).

[8] Egypt has recently ranked very close to the bottom of the global Rule of Law Index (WJP 2021). Egypt ranked low on corruption, regulatory enforcement, civil justice and criminal justice, including in comparison to the region and to lower middle-income countries.

Repression and Everyday Violence

Violent and humiliating punishment is a key feature of classroom relations in Egypt's public schools. From the first pages of this book, I have recounted my observations of students being slapped; kicked; beaten with hoses and sticks; addressed as scum, animals and failures; and insulted in obscene language, even if such violence was actually reduced in my presence and is more intense for younger students in lower grades. Harsh punishment is deployed as a means for facilitating extralegal practices in schools and coping with their multifaceted impoverishment and institutional collapse (Chapter 3). It facilitates extralegal extraction of labor and income where students are compelled to pay for additional tutoring, selectively forced to clean the classroom floors, sweep the playground or make tea for teachers in exchange for marks or being spared physical punishment. Violent punishment is therefore implicated in the distorted informal privatization of education. Its severity is however correlated with the social class background of students. Technical school students receive the harshest forms of punishment, followed by general school students, while punishment in private schools is far less severe (Chapter 3). Physical beating and humiliation are also disproportionately applied to boys and the policing of sexuality to girls (Chapter 4). (Male) students reproduce the violence in interactions with their peers, with teachers who are perceived as weak, and through intimidation and sexual harassment of female students (Chapter 3). The reproduction or conservation of violence (Bourdieu 1998) is therefore mediated by class, gender, age and key contextual parameters in schools. Extralegal punishment, bullying and harassment in schools illustrate the ways in which access to protection under the law is classed and gendered. If authoritarian Arab schools have long been assumed to cultivate docile subjects, Egypt's violent and dysfunctional schools now cultivate contestation, cycles of violence, a culture of noncompliance and negative self-esteem, with a variety of damaging implications for children and adolescents (Chapter 4).

The extralegal practices undermining students' entitlement to free public education necessitated the continuous silencing, belittling and contempt of students, physical intimidation and repression of contestation. One of the key functions of everyday repression is to contain contestation of the extralegal practices pervading schools. The repression of expression, participation and representation is also applied to more politicized expression or organization. Censorship, securitization and surveillance, as well as the Islamization of permitted forms of participation, are evident in various aspects of the life of schools (Chapters 1 and 6). These forms of securitization and surveillance are classed, gendered and legitimized through a variety of nationalist and religious tropes.

Above all, violent punishment in schools has been de facto permitted by the state: Public-school teachers know that they can practice it with impunity. The forms of mistreatment and poor conditions to which teachers themselves are subjected partly inform these dynamics (Chapter 3). Violence in schools is part of the structural stresses of poverty, precarity and austerity. The forms of punishment that predominate in Egyptian schools are therefore less an expression of child-rearing practices among the poor, or a masculinity training among men and boys, than the result of the negligence of a weak privatized state (Chapter 3). This is not the kind of harsh punishment that accompanies a strict disciplinary process, but one that attempts to mask the absence of such a project and facilitates the establishment of parallel privatized schooling. Violent and humiliating punishment has been increasing in Egyptian schools precisely because of the absence of an official well-resourced disciplinary project. However, across the tracks of schooling, the uprising catalyzed changes in these patterns in terms of greater assertiveness on the part of students and a decline in harsh punishment, with possibly enduring effects (Chapter 7).

Differentiation and Contestation

The patterns of lived citizenship implied in permissive-repressive neoliberalism are necessarily differentiated and are experienced according to class position, gender, age and other salient forms of social difference. Given the focus on urban schools and the dimensions of class and gender, I do not fully address other facets of social difference, like religion, disability or sexuality or the experiences of rural youth and those who do not reach the secondary stage of schooling. However, comparing different tiers of urban schools provides a vivid illustration of the extent and nature of differentiation in access to citizenship rights understood along the parameters of protection, provision, participation and legitimation (Introduction chapter). Just as privatization takes place differently and has varied implications for learning across the tiers of schooling, permissiveness and repression are also differentiated. Schools show the extent to which the rule of law, institutional functioning and the perks of informality, cronyism and petty corruption are unevenly distributed. While teachers are often portrayed in the Egyptian media as making massive profits, I underline the very unequal distribution of tutoring income among teachers. Informal privatization in the form of tutoring is less pervasive and lucrative in primary and preparatory education, the technical secondary track, lower income neighborhoods, rural areas and in subjects that do not affect student grades (Chapters 1 and 2). In addition, women are some of the biggest losers of the decline in decent public-sector jobs in general and the informal marketization of education in particular, given that after-school tutoring markets are harder for them to access due to gendered social norms. Educated young people today are more likely than previous cohorts to suffer from informal precarious employment (Chapter 1), and express profound frustration and insecurity in relation to employment prospects (Chapter 6). Permissiveness with regard to exam cheating is highly differentiated in that open cheating and lax assessment in technical schools look very different from the forms of cheating in either public or private general secondary *thanawiya amma* (Chapter 2). The forms of oversight and support that are part of the regular functioning of educational authorities are variably applied to schools in different times of the year and in relation to certain activities, but also with more privileged schools in urban areas receiving more rigorous inspection. Permissiveness with regard to attendance and skipping school are applied differently to boys than girls, whose mobility is controlled in relation to ideals of modesty. The deteriorating conditions of schooling also elicit forms of 'gender traditionalism', where boys tend to adopt more intimidating and confrontational behavior, while girls' noncompliance with school rules center on expressions of femininity (Chapter 4).

In terms of repression and everyday violence, parents in private schools can expect that their children will not be beaten or humiliated. Meanwhile, parents of technical school students, and even general secondary school students, have little access to their rights to protection under the law and are likely to face humiliating treatment if they attempt to intervene or report violations of their rights. Patrimonial relations and even physical strength and intimidation add further layers of differentiation. A less-advantaged student might be able to avoid violent punishment based on the threat of physical retaliation by a committed family member or protection by a patron. The existence of such possibilities of avoiding repression and accessing permissiveness is in fact critical for the sustainability of this mode of governance. More pronounced forms of both permissiveness and repression therefore define the relation of the state with citizens outside the more privileged middle and higher income groups and affect men and women differently.

Permissive-repressive neoliberalism is also highly contested. The extralegal practices, both permissive and repressive, that pervade schools are not accepted by docile students without contestation. Although most avenues of participation and expression are effectively blocked, students and parents have indeed become more assertive, making complaints to schools, threatening escalation to higher educational authorities and filing police complaints against school actors. The dynamics of permissiveness and repression associated with private tutoring drive and define the contested nature of these forms of marketization (Chapter 2). Critically, school dynamics also reveal differences in the means students employ to oppose dominant practices. Individualized retaliation and counterviolence against teachers are more prevalent among disadvantaged students and boys, while more affluent students were more likely to deploy modes of collective action such as protests and petitions, especially after the uprising (Chapter 7).

Is This Mode of Governance Really Neoliberal?

Permissive-repressive neoliberalism is intimately linked to but quite distinct from neoliberalism as studied in the Global North. On the one hand, neoliberalism is often used as shorthand to refer to the two key global trends of austerity and privatization, which are clearly prominent in the Egyptian case. On the other hand, formal and informal privatization take different forms in this context. Private tutoring has certainly become a global phenomenon, but remains in many parts of the world an auxiliary activity that has not effectively replaced schools or led to the disintegration of the normal functioning of public education. Despite austerity and privatization, preuniversity education remains a public good provided predominantly by the state. Furthermore, the extralegality and informality of forms of punishment and control in Egyptian schools are far removed from experiences in schools of the Global North where corporal punishment is hardly practiced and schools broadly function according to their formal rules and regulations. Neoliberalism has been further conceptualized in terms of its associated technologies of governance, especially those that seek to forge enterprising self-managing citizens. A key element of neoliberal governmentality is "governing from a distance" through layers of codified techniques that include a constellation of market mechanisms which entail ongoing processes of responsibilization (Rose 1993, 1999). Although discourses of responsibilization and the effort to promote "active citizenship" are prominent in the Egyptian case, other elements of this aspect of neoliberal governmentality remain more limited.

While these differences are critical, a growing body of literature challenges the notion that there is any one monolithic formulation or practice of neoliberalism. To begin with, the geographical development of neoliberalism has been uneven in different parts of the world (Harvey 2005). The literature around the Washington Consensus shows how neoliberal policies have been differently applied and promoted across the world (Sera and Steglitz 2004). Neoliberalism is an extraordinarily malleable technology of governing that is taken up in different ways by various regimes, whether authoritarian, democratic or communist (Ong 2006b). It "is inflected by local meanings, discourses, and histories" (Kanna 2010, 102). In this view, neoliberalism is an important point of reference "in dealing with phenomena such as the de-statization of governmental activity [and] the marketization of labor and budgetary austerity policies," yet these phenomena are found in configurations that do not necessarily correspond to the picture of a standard "neoliberal package" (Hoffman, DeHart and Collier 2006, 10). In the same vein, the ways that neoliberal values of self-management and self-enterprise shape citizenship depend fundamentally on their interactions with particular political environments (Ong 2006a, 502). This body of literature shifts the focus to examining the local inflections of neoliberal policies, including their specificities, diversions and subversions. Therefore, while taking seriously the dangers of too wide a definition of neoliberalism (Wacquant 2012), the dynamics in Egypt can nevertheless reveal how neoliberalism as a differentiated global phenomenon takes form in a particular context in the Global South at a particular historical juncture. De-stating, precarization, reduced public spending, privatization and attempts to promote responsible enterprising active citizenship are elements that make neoliberalism an inescapable point of reference in the Egyptian case.

Repression (the intensification of institutional punishment and extralegal violence) and permissiveness (selective deinstitutionalization and deregulation) can also be considered features of neoliberalism as a necessarily variegated global phenomenon. Scholars such as Loïc Wacquant (2009, 2010) show how changes in welfare and justice politics are interlinked and how neoliberalism has been accompanied by rising levels of incarceration and a host of often racialized punitive measures against the poor. As housing and social and health services are withdrawn and marketized, more funding has been channeled to the police to contain and (mis)manage the social consequences of these disentitlements. The increasing power of the police and their centrality to the reproduction of the neoliberal global order has been analyzed with particular reference to Egypt (Abdelrahman 2017). Scholarship on the Global South has explored everyday violence and failure to invest in the rule of law as deliberate tools of governance (Pearce 2018). In terms of permissiveness, a range of phenomena including deregulation, employment precarity, informality, tax evasion and cronyism have all been linked to neoliberalism, although more work is needed on everyday permissiveness as a means of governing the poor.

The point is that there is a symbiotic relationship between violence, permissiveness and neoliberalism even if their forms and intensities vary. The weakening of the welfare function of the state is compensated for by the (formal or informal) strengthening of punitive powers and the weakening of regulatory functions. Oversight of corporations and legal (employment, environmental) protections are reduced, while policing and incarceration of the poor increase. As such, the protection function of the state is transformed when its provision function is weakened: It becomes selectively more punitive and less regulatory. It is in this sense that I argue that forms of repression and permissiveness result from, accompany and facilitate the implementation of neoliberal policies.

The Transformation of the School as a Disciplinary Institution

Permissive-repressive neoliberalism has implications for the functioning of the school as a disciplinary institution that is meant to observe, normalize and examine, and ultimately to create docile subjects in the Foucauldian sense. It is not straightforward to talk about discipline in the Foucauldian sense in the absence of effective enforcement of school rules and pervasive physical punishment. It is difficult to think of schools as disciplinary institutions when they function as (privatized) soccer fields that boys rent for money (the losing team pays), meeting points to gather before jumping the fence, social clubs and beauty salons for girls, spaces of extralegal labor and income extraction, or locations to listen to a religious sermon that is not part of the official curriculum.

Violent punishment in particular has little place in Foucauldian notions of disciplinary power. For Foucault, discipline is distinct from repression and violent punishment in ways that are important for the production of subjects. Foucault argues that "disciplinary mechanisms" began to displace sovereign power in the modern era, and that the former extract time and labor, not wealth and commodities from bodies (Foucault 1977, 239). The distinction is between repression and violent punishment on the one hand, and, on the other, institutionalized power relations that deploy measured (and typically codified) punishment as part of a disciplinary project. Punishment within a disciplinary power relationship aims neither at expiation nor repression but "brings five quite distinct operations into play: … [it] compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it normalizes" (Foucault 1977, 182–3). The "regimes of power" that Foucault identifies are however less than hegemonic in their scope, especially in non-Western societies (Weslund 1999, Ismail 2006, Deacon 2002).[9] The appealing distinction between violence that breaks and destroys (sovereign power) and a relationship of power in which a field of responses and inventions open up (disciplinary power) is difficult to observe in many contexts. Violent punishment also compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes and excludes – that is, it normalizes, and it does not eliminate possibilities of response and inventions.

The absence of a neat distinction between repression and discipline should not prevent an exploration of the production of subjectivities in institutions that do not effectively observe, normalize and examine. Instead of thinking in terms of docility and panopticons or modern and premodern punishment, it is more productive to consider how different constellations of disciplinary techniques function and what subjectivating role they perform within the institution. The operation of the three techniques of observation, normalization and examination can illustrate the differentiated manner in which disciplinary institutions operate.

For Foucault, the superimposition of relationships of power and knowledge assumes all its visible brilliance in the examination (Foucault 1977, 185). However, the schools studied here show just how divergent and ambiguous the disciplining role of the examination can be. Widespread cheating in technical schools means that the examination does not do the work of normalization and judgment for disadvantaged youth. However, the functioning of this kind of examination indeed renders the schooling experience behind it visible, bringing to light the negligence and permissiveness that shape classed and gendered subjectivities. In the same school system, the examination can be an intense national event with high material and symbolic returns for more privileged students. It can also have an ambiguous position in the disciplining of middle-income students facing low and uncertain prospects for social advancement. This differentiated (mal)functioning of disciplinary techniques therefore reflects divergent realities and resources, and is productive of different subjectivities, discourses and practices.

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[9] "Strands of so-called pre-modern power coexist with modern, disciplinary techniques and interact with them in complex and varied ways in the lives of many people" (Westlund 1999, 1055). As Deacon notes, "[n]ot only are power relations not reducible to the disciplines, or the latter to the apparatuses of the state, but it would also be wrong to see the disciplines as replacing or transcending sovereignty, as if Foucault had merely reversed Enlightenment histories of progress in order to relate the story of the rise of unfreedom" (2002, 112). Ismail has also pointed to the difficulty in drawing "a definite line separating the modern and the traditional" with regard to "Foucault's genealogy of disciplinary regimes in the context of historical practices of control in non-Western societies" (2006, xxix).

The work of surveillance can be similarly differentiated and distorted. Instead of a codified system of surveillance, forms of control can break down and become more informal and personalized. They can also become reduced and intensified into particular domains like controlling female sexuality and political opposition, thereby reflecting wider modes of governance. The principal's office as a key locus of surveillance can be reduced to a tearoom for facilitating privatized extralegal practices, a checkpoint for controlling paper trails that attest to the supposed order and activities in the school, and a space of higher punishment, where noncompliant students (and their parents) are subject to additional extralegal forms of emotional and physical violence. In other words, rather than functioning like a Foucauldian panopticon of disciplinary governance, it can become the locus for permissive-repressive governance. The third element of discipline, normalizing judgment, never ceases to operate even if it functions in less formal and codified ways. Even when they are mired in permissiveness and violence, classed and gendered practices in schools normalize, differentiate and hierarchize by teaching students the parameters of acceptable behavior and offering them lessons about their place in society. The school plays a critical role in the production of differentiated subjectivities, whether it is a violent and dysfunctional technical school or a laid-back and dysfunctional private school displaced by private tutoring. It always normalizes and judges, even if it does not always examine.

The role of resources is critical for appreciating the functioning of disciplinary institutions. Relations dominated by repression and those that are more disciplinary in nature are embedded in different motivations and implications, but also in different resources and capacities. Starved of essential resources, schools are unable to perform their disciplinary role. The modern school is designed to function as a disciplinary institution aimed at the creation of useful subjectivities, endowing citizens with appropriate cultural capital for the reproduction of their class status. When this process of capital accumulation is seriously impaired, the institution may be forced to resort to a mixture of repressive and permissive measures. In this version of neoliberalism, forms of violence and permissiveness are integral to the fragmented disciplining by the market.

The decline in the authoritative disciplinary role of the school also undermines its power to perform its other historic functions of political legitimation and the promotion of national belonging.

Official Narratives and Rituals of Legitimation

Schools are not only spaces where citizenship is lived, but also where it is legitimized and contested. Schools are key arenas for examining narratives of imagined citizenship and the everyday production of hegemony. Textbooks reflect the key parameters of official narratives, nationalist rituals in school embody key tropes of citizenship and their contestation, while everyday discourses of students and teachers point to modes of appropriation and negotiation of these official narratives. Analysis of novels, assigned readings and exam questions across a range of key subjects can draw out the ways in which official narratives portray the citizen, articulate the route to national progress and construct national identity and belonging.

Although not always articulated with either clarity or force, nationalism, Islamism and neoliberalism are the key tropes presented to Egyptian secondary students in official textbooks since the late Mubarak era. The textbooks emphasize love and sacrifice for the nation, pride in ancient Egyptian civilization and the role of the army in national progress. Muslim identity, history and piety occupy a central position in textbook articulations of both nationalism and citizenship, seen in the consistent invocation of Islamic references to legitimize the key narratives of national devotion and good citizenship (Chapters 1 and 5). Official textbooks therefore reveal the extent to which regimes since the 1970s arrived at an accommodation with Islamist forces whereby the latter gained increasing control of cultural spheres with direct influence on young people. National renaissance is not to be achieved by establishing social justice, eradicating poverty or gaining full independence from foreign exploitation as articulated in postcolonial era textbooks, but rather through pious charitable neoliberalism. Charity, entrepreneurialism and sacrifice for the nation are valorized as the solutions to the nation's challenges, and the textbooks lament the citizen's engagement in un-civic or illegal acts and the lack of patriotism among the young.

The textbooks in use throughout the late Mubarak era reflect the lack of clear ideological legitimation. The postindependence narratives presented under Nasser (1952–70) have been erased since Sadat (1970–81), while everything under Mubarak seems to have been written with a shaky hand. The major ideological and political changes since the 1970s – the shift toward liberalization, the switch to the Western camp in the middle of the Cold War and the steps toward peace and normalization with Israel – find little resonance in school textbooks. The austerity, liberalization and privatization adopted under Mubarak are hardly propagated or defended. Instead, the textbooks highlight supposed achievements in the social sphere that have little credibility, including "the declaration of education as Egypt's national project." They make little reference to realities of everyday violence, poverty, exclusion, inequality and permissiveness, except to discuss corruption in moralizing terms. Democracy and participation are frequently referenced, but are cast within religious, authoritarian and paternalistic tropes. The textbooks rely heavily on Islamic legitimation and condemn extremism, but hardly present a coherent alternative Islamic vision. Under the military command that took over after Mubarak, textbook changes remained limited, although references to the Mubaraks were purged, the 2011 Revolution was praised, and the continuation of protests was rejected. Changes under the one-year rule of Brotherhood indicate the different (exclusionary, Islamizing and inclusionary) possibilities that their reign might have entailed. Since 2013, changes to textbooks reflect the continuity (and fragility) of ambiguous legitimation. The most notable deletions, additions and retractions revolved around participation and legitimation (protest, Revolution, characterizing the old and new regimes) but not to concerns around protection and provision central to student notions of imagined citizenship (Chapter 7).

Beyond textbooks, nationalist rituals in schools capture critical patterns around the lived performance of national belonging, citizenship and legitimation before and after the uprising (Chapters 6 and 7). The daily morning assembly/ *tabur* is the primary site for nationalist rituals in Egyptian schools, explicitly delineated by the ministry and subject to periodic inspection. Like other school activities, however, *tabur* is fundamentally undermined by the lack of resources and absenteeism caused by de facto privatization. The sanctified performance of the nation as decreed by the state is frequently cancelled, altered, unattended or mired in chaos and violence. Instead of representing the state's authority, teachers often collude in the cancellation and alteration of the ritual, indicating the lack of commitment among all school actors to the institution – and in part, to the nation. If the assembly becomes noisy and disorderly, as it often does, teachers resort to physical and emotional violence to restore some measure of order. When the national anthem is actually performed during *tabur*, and when secondary students are actually present, they often either avoid chanting it or mutter inappropriate variations that involve ridicule and obscenity. Instead of love, belonging and commitment to the nation, it is discourses of violation, humiliation, indignation and disentitlement that dominate this subversion of school rituals, especially by male students. These subversive performances create and foster oppositional identities, emotions and meanings. Again, if it is actually performed, *tabur* narratives are often appropriated by contesting Islamist forces. Many schools (extralegally) replace or supplement elements of *tabur* with more Islamist elements and chants, although this does little to reduce student avoidance of the ritual. The ritual becomes a representation of a weak state whose dictates are under-resourced, ignored and altered.

Tabur thus becomes less a ritual of national devotion or an authoritarian disciplinary tool than a site of alienation, withdrawal and contestation. If rituals can be thought of as models both of and for society (Geertz 1965, Kapferer 1981), the lack of attendance at the morning ritual and its breakdown into chaos and violence are symbolic of the loss of sanctity of the nation, the state and its institutions. *Tabur*, as a lived reality, is a powerful representation of the regime's permissive-repressive everyday governance and its contested narratives of legitimation. It is a physical embodiment of the antagonism and mutual disengagement between young people and the state at this historical juncture. The uprising represented a momentary rupture in these trends: Teachers describe a surge of commitment and respect for the nationalist rituals of *tabur* in the period after the Revolution. A few years later, most students had little participation or knowledge of *tabur* and its components, describing it as "just noise," with little enforcement or enthusiasm from teachers, while Islamic chants continued to complement or replace mandated nationalist ones. Some students and teachers also criticized the introduction of pro-army songs into the ritual, as too political, not really patriotic, unwelcome in their implicit glorification of the removal of the Muslim Brotherhood regime or at least for being divisive of the school community (Chapter 7).

Official narratives and rituals of imagined citizenship therefore amount to a thin veil of legitimation as opposed to a sustained use of schools as tools for the production of hegemony. Rather than directly addressing and legitimizing the ideological orientations and choices of the regime, they are concealed beneath nationalist and religious narratives. Such disengagement from legitimation can be seen as intentional and guided by the goal of depoliticizing the young. It parallels the inculcating of political passivity and complacency associated with neoliberal "active citizenship" (Brown 2005). However, the trajectory and rhetoric of the "depoliticization of education" since Sadat has had the distinct outcome of a thorough Islamization of education with enduring effects on Egyptian politics and society. If the Nasser regime planted the seeds of the opposition Sadat had to confront by instructing students in the ideals of social justice and Arab nationalism, so too the Sadat regime planted the seeds of the varieties of the religious opposition Mubarak confronted. The depoliticization of poverty, social justice and geostrategic decisions was accompanied by the politicization of religion in official textbooks as well as school rituals and activities. Creating Islamist opposition might however be advantageous, as it is easier to justify the repression of Islamists in the current global geopolitical context than a liberal or social democratic opposition. Discourses of imagined citizenship among educated youth cannot, however, be considered depoliticized, neoliberal, or in fact as Islamized as those of older generations.

Student Narratives of Imagined Citizenship and National Belonging

Our dignity is violated	كرامتنا متهانة
And our sustenance with humiliation	واللقمة بإهانة
Why do you bring us to the world if you hate us?	بتخلفينا ليه لما انتي كارهانا؟
…	…
Love means two people giving	الحب يعني اتنين بيدوا
Not one hand building and 600 bleep-bleeps tearing down	مش إيد بتبني وستميت تيت تيت يهدو
…	…
Love is a state	الحب حالة
Love is not poetry and talk	الحب مش شعر وقوالة
Love is something that cannot exist among people who	الحب حاجة ما تتوجدش في وسط ناس
collect their lunch from garbage bins	بتجيب غداها من صناديق الزبالة
Love inside you	الحب جواكي
Is an impossibility	استحالة

From the poem *Juha*, by Hisham Al-Gakh[10]

These verses by Egyptian poet Hisham Al-Gakh reflect many of the themes articulated by young people across the schools: humiliation, economic exclusion and dilemmas of national belonging. The striking statement of the impossibility of loving the nation echoes the narratives of non-belonging among students (Chapters 6 and 7). Students seized on questions around love and belonging to the nation to elaborate oppositional discourses weaved around critiques of their lived realities. Discussions around national belonging were channeled into a construction of Egypt as a state that does not provide adequate services, job opportunities, access to the law or dignified treatment and is therefore not a subject of love or belonging. To describe their realities of lived citizenship, public-school students used the language and imagery of poverty, injustice and inequality: terms and images that had effectively been eliminated from textbook discourses. Their narratives show how little students appropriated the neoliberal ideals referenced in the textbooks. In middle-income general secondary schools in particular, students constructed the country as corrupt and not worthy of allegiance, service or domicile. This indignant rejection of national devotion was more pronounced among boys, and was constructed as more justified due to their exclusion from economic opportunities – in light of normative understandings of their roles as primary breadwinners (Chapter 6). Constructions of Egypt as "violated" and "violating," as (male) students had put forward in their alternative lyrics to the national anthem, reflect the ways in which pride in the nation had been destabilized through practices perceived as undermining of human dignity and ideals of masculinity.

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[10] The poem has had significant popularity. One YouTube version of its recital (Al-Gakh 2010) had been viewed about 4.5 million times by October 2017. Translations to English are my own.

Students also did not employ the Islamic notions of justice that occupied a prominent place in textbooks, suggesting important generational differences with teachers on this front. Students located the legitimacy of the regime primarily in relation to the socioeconomic sphere, not around issues of identity, morality or cultural authenticity. They did, however, reproduce the textbook construction of the "bad Muslim," where a host of negative social realities, from the proliferation of uncollected garbage on the streets to petty corruption and civilizational decline, is attributed to lazy, immoral, impious and uncivil behavior condemned by Islam (Chapter 6). Notably, school actors shifted between alternative discursive repertoires and modes of action, moving almost seamlessly between Islamist responsibilizing, enactments of entitled citizenship[11] and reliance on clientelistic networks to address problems such as garbage collection, drug dealing and sexual harassment in the vicinity of the schools. That none of these narratives became hegemonic, and none of their strategies succeeded, points to the deep impasse facing young people at this historical juncture. This fluidity challenges any neat division between secular and religious frames, entitlement and responsibilizing narratives, or citizenship entitlement as contrasted to clientelism and patrimonialism (Chapter 6).

As reflected in narratives around *tabur*, teachers described a sense of pride, ownership and empowerment among students in the period following the Revolution. With the hope of meaningful political change, nationalist feelings could be more comfortably experienced and expressed. The prominent place of nationalist symbols, especially the national flag, from the very first days of the uprising was not only an expression of newfound national pride but also a deliberate strategy that mobilized latent themes of national devotion propagated in official discourses. It also sought to bypass the regime's maligning of oppositional forces as traitors to the nation (see Pratt 2005, Abdelrahman 2007).[12] The protests made the critical move of redefining nationalist expression around the struggle for the rights and demands of "the people," not around defending the nation from foreign aggression, as propagated by school textbooks.

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[11] Enactments or acts of citizenship are instances where subjects constitute themselves as those to whom the right to have rights is due (Isin and Nielsen 2008).

The striking expressions of lack of national belonging among students can therefore be seen as oppositional narratives that are contextual, fluid and changeable. They are evidence of the failure of official narratives of legitimation and dominant projects of governance. After the passing of the exceptional moment of the uprising, student narratives reflected very similar themes as those voiced before the uprising.[13] One of the most notable changes was the weaving of political repression in their narratives of exclusionary citizenship, a theme that was far less prominent before the uprising. In sum, despite the renewed securitization of education since the uprising, hesitant textbook changes and everyday rituals and discourses in schools demonstrate the continued inability and lack of interest in propagating regime narratives in schools (Chapter 7).

Conclusion

It is sometimes argued that the neglect of education in Egypt is the result of a deliberate strategy to keep the population uneducated, or, as one teacher put it, to destroy young people. Expanding the ranks of the better educated could indeed be detrimental to ruling regimes in the medium term. Younger, better educated and more affluent Egyptians were at the forefront of the 2011 protests,[14] and the results of the relatively free voting episodes in 2011 and 2012 indicate that oppositional forces – secular and

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[12] Incidentally, in the first days of the Revolution, Al-Gakh explicitly renounced the verse declaring the death of the beloved Egypt in his poem *Mikamilin*. He recited in *Mikamilin* (Al-Gakh 2011): *Ten'iti' idi ama 'ult habibti matit* [roughly translated: Cursed is my hand when it wrote that my beloved is dead].

[13] The ways in which pro-regime media have appropriated nationalist symbols since 2013, including the iconic phrase *Tahya Masr* (Long Live Egypt), and associated them with support for the current regime, might be creating greater alienation from these nationalist tropes for some young people.

[14] The Arab Barometer dataset shows that 84.5 percent of the participants had at least a high-school education (Beissinger et al. 2015, 6).

Islamist alike – find it far easier to recruit among better educated urban constituencies. On the other hand, an intentional strategy of keeping the population uneducated would not explain similarly poor investment in health, transportation or basic infrastructure for the majority of citizens. Rather, the condition of education is the result of permissive-repressive neoliberalism as the designated mode for coping with the economic and political crises facing successive regimes. Schools nonetheless reveal these configurations of permissive-repressive governance as tenuous and contested, indicating that the overturning of the postcolonial social contract is far from hegemonic.

Starving schools of resources and stripping down their disciplinary role gives rise to the failure of education in one of its central mandates – that of creating loyal patriotic citizens. Today's schools do not reproduce authoritarianism in the sense of schooling youth in the authority of the textbook as the sole source of truth or the teacher as a venerable source of authority. Narratives and rituals of legitimation primarily serve to signal the correct parameters of public discourse that youth can deploy without risking repression. Egyptian schools are no longer capable of nurturing faith in the leader, a governing ideology, or even nationalism. What emerges is a mode of governance that is legitimized, not by instilling devotion to the nation or loyalty to the regime, but by degrading the citizen. The most consistently repressed behavior among the majority of less-privileged young people is anything that resembles enactments of citizenship. The clearest message delivered to the majority of youth by the lived realities of public schooling is about their unworthiness and lack of ability and potential, ritualistically repeated in violent and humiliating practices.

Schools function to deter any aspiration of citizenship among young people. They illustrate the denial, erosion and differentiation of citizenship, in its four parameters of protection, provision, participation and legitimation. Disadvantaged youth may act as bad citizens engaged in extralegal practices, passive and hardworking Muslims, or clients seeking the protection of patrons, but not as entitled citizens. Above all, they are not entitled to the very service for which the school is designed. Middle-income youth experience another form of degraded citizenship. They may suffer from less severe forms of everyday violence, but they see the rights their parents had secured in previous decades being stripped away and marketized. They can hope to access meaningful services, but only as far as their diminishing means allow. More affluent youth are schooled in yet another form of degraded citizenship. They might have greater access to protection under the law and acceptable basic infrastructure, but they must pay for everything else. Even if the most privileged can expect new highways linking their gated communities to their beach resorts, like other subjects, they are schooled not to expect economic, social or political rights from the state. Egyptian schools produce not entitled citizens, nor docile subjects, but rather varieties of clients, consumers and quasi-citizens. Above all, they offer an education in degraded citizenship.

Apart from the education reform program announced in 2018, steps have been taken to implement the vision for national character building inspired by the observations on Japanese education discussed in the beginning of this chapter. In 2017, an agreement was concluded to set up Egyptian–Japanese schools across the country, heralded in the media as aiming to promote values and positive behavior, reinforce belonging to the nation, instill an ethos of collective cooperation and problem-solving and create good learning environments. The new schools are, however, very small in number and charge considerable fees. The new experiment for the production of the good citizen is targeted at a slim stratum of students. Rather than a national project of character building, what emerges is another form of privatization targeted at those able to pay for a measure of distinction from the neglect and violence on offer in the systematically destroyed institutions of the state.

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