

Copyright

By

Sherief A. Gaber

2011

The Thesis Committee for Sherief A. Gaber

Certifies that this is the approved version of the following thesis:

**The Production of an Urban Revolution: Tactics,
Police and Public Space in Cairo's Uprising**

APPROVED BY

SUPERVISING COMMITTEE

Supervisor: _____

Sarah Dooling

Co-Supervisor: _____

Julius Getman

**The Production of an Urban Revolution: Tactics,
Police and Public Space in Cairo's Uprising**

by

Sherief A. Gaber, B.A.

Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of the University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Science in Community and Regional Planning

and

Doctor of Jurisprudence

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2011

“THE PEOPLE DEMAND REMOVAL OF THE REGIME”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must first thank my parents, for encouraging me to follow through with my decision to go to Egypt, even as parental panic set in for my safety. My uncles, Waleed, Tarek Hisham and Magdy all were instrumental here, not only in the ways that they expressed such pride in what we were doing in Egypt, but because they tempered my parents' worry and encouraged me to simply do what needed to be done, confident that I would be safe. Growing up, my whole family bred in me a love for Egypt and its people; that strong connection drew me to Egypt to take part and gave me reasons that I could hardly understand and didn't even know I had to be there.

I would also like to thank Andrea for her support while I was in Egypt, and for keeping up to date the many people who had no idea of my whereabouts, as I was of characteristically erratic with communicating with people. I also would like to thank my professors, Jack Getman and Philip Bobbitt, for allowing me to leave mid-semester at the drop of the hat with no negative consequences. My advisor, Sarah Dooling, was instrumental in helping bring this project together in such short time, and even though she is one of the busiest people I know still had time to give advice, assistance and helpful comments as I wrote. As far as editors go as well, I would not have been able to clean-up and fix my sleep-deprived ramblings without the consultation and gracious hard work of my sister Nadia.

My cousin Yassin, who I grew up with and who has always been a brother to me, was also a strong pull and an inspiration even as I went to Egypt, and first being beside him and even having him support me was wonderful. To Louis, Salma, Sarah, Mostafa, Shadi, Youssef, Philip, Jasmina, Matthew, Noov, Mona, Sherif, Lobna, Amr, Haydar,

Wael, Abdelrahman, Khaled and all the others who I spent time with, worked beside and even spoke with as part of writing this work, thank you for the solidarity, the fun, the protection, the help and the food.

Finally, to the Egyptians themselves who took to the streets, who took me in and let me march alongside them—despite my Arabic accent and time away—who defended me, fed me, supported me and inspired me beyond words. The topic of this thesis is their victory, and as such I hope that they, along with the others mentioned above, will forgive me for any mistakes here, which are surely my own and not theirs.

The Production of an Urban Revolution: Tactics, Police and Public Space in Cairo

by

Sherief A. Gaber (J.D., M.S.C.R.P.)

The University of Texas at Austin, 2011

SUPERVISORS: Sarah Dooling and Julius Getman

The following thesis presents a narrative of the uprisings that took place in Cairo, Egypt between 25 January, 2011 and 11 February, 2011 as they relate to notions of cities, the state and citizenship in spatial terms. I do so by looking at different series of events that took place during those 18 days of revolution: spatial tactics that protestors used against police, popular committees set up by neighborhoods to defend the streets after the withdrawal of the Egyptian police, the sudden participation of nonpolitical actors and groups, and ultimately the occupation of Cairo's Tahrir Square and the production of public space and new notions of citizenship that occurred within the square during this period. These various narratives are used to argue that sovereignty is ultimately very spatially limited (ontologically, not necessarily territorially), how the "informal" city and modes of urban existence produced not just resistance to the state but were transformed into tools of provocation and insurrection, and how public space—devalored and heavily policed by the Egyptian state—was produced through the actions of protestors occupying Tahrir Square.

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	1
2. A METHODOLOGICAL NOTE	10
3. CITY/STATES ENTERING THE 21ST CENTURY.....	16
The Perforated State & the Global City.....	17
The Peripheries of the Center	20
Tactics of the Informal City.....	25
Citizenship in the City, Cities and Sovereigns	28
Spaces of the “State of Exception”	30
Counter-Moves to the State in the City	36
4. A CRASH COURSE IN CONTEMPORARY CAIRO.....	41
Informality in an Urban Triptych.....	43
Sites of Structural Adjustment in Egypt and Cairo	52
Government and Governmentality in the City Victorious.....	55
Sanitization of the Formal City.....	58
New Towns, the End of Space in the City	62
Recap: Citizenship, Opportunities for Mobilization and the Disappearance of Spatial Grounds	69
5. PROTESTS IN THE CITY.....	74
Chocolates, Flowers and Tear Gas	75
Friday: The Day of Rage.....	85
6. HADA’A AND REVOLUTIONARY “STUFF”: READING THE MANUAL	92
6. POPULAR COMMITTEES	103
7. YOUNG MEN AT WORK AND PLAY	111
Politicized Hooligans	112
Reconfiguring Informal Activities.....	116
8. AFTER THE ANGER.....	123
The State Embodied	124
9. “THE REPUBLIC OF TAHRIR”	129
Performing Public Space.....	142
10. CONCLUSION	152
11. REFERENCES	158

I. INTRODUCTION

The outcomes of what happened in Egypt beginning the 25th of January, 2011 are incredibly uncertain; the situation still has a fluidity to it that belies both the most optimistic proclamations of a “New Egypt” and the upset felt by many of those activists and ordinary people who went to Tahrir square only to see the Egyptian army take control of and even co-opt processes of transition and transformation within the country. Neither of these stories is entirely true, and processes of change and transformation are occurring at all scales of the country, along with myriad contestations involving political, cultural, religious and economic forces. Egypt is ultimately already a much different place than it was coming into the New Year, and if nothing else there remains a sense of potentiality and possibility amongst even the most cynical that had been lacking in Egypt for a long time, or perhaps had never before existed as it does now. On January 25 the old Orientalist narratives of Egypt’s stable timelessness and passivity—enjoyed equally by foreign commentators and Egypt’s own elites and ruling class—were thoroughly embarrassed when millions took to the streets demanding change.

Commentators and scholars will spend years attempting to divine the causes, triggers and roots of the revolutionary protests that went out onto the streets on January 25 and subsequent days; that is not the intent of this exploration. Any number of causes may be sufficient and simultaneously present after the fact to explain why Egypt was “ready” for such events, but as with most historical ruptures or popular upheavals no single explanation or even group of explanations will seem satisfying in capturing the profound disconnect between before and after. The modest goals aimed at here, in the narrow period of reflection allowed since the first 18 days that upended the Mubarak regime, are to explore some of the tactics, movements and modes of organization created

and employed by the Egyptian people—first as they fought the police and paramilitaries throughout the streets of cities in 29 different governorates and then as they produced a space of occupation perhaps unique in the history of the world, drawing not unwarranted comparisons only to other historical singularities such as the Paris Commune or the Orwell's descriptions of the Spanish Rebellion.

Despite the absolutely unique nature of the Events in Egypt, and regardless of the fact that causes may be difficult to discern, the situations that occurred during the 18 day uprising did not occur *ex nihilo*, and what went on in Cairo and throughout all of Egypt had a deep basis in not just the history of the country, its politics and its economy but perhaps more than anything in the experience of everyday life of the Egyptian people, which provided not just the basis for revolt but the means of making it successful, of enacting the uprising and of producing the arrangements and the spaces seen. This was undoubtedly an urban revolution, focused on one of the world's largest and densest metropolitan regions and taking place in cities across the entire country, as inhabitants took to the streets, occupied spaces and made claims to the city that had on the one hand never been made before and on the other were the political assertion of processes of urban occupation and use of the city spaces that had been occurring silently and quietly for years. They did so in ways that evolved even over the course of only a few days or weeks, as each new victory or occupation created an expanded horizon of possibility, and as new experiences of the city space created new sets and series of political possibilities.

Consequently, what should hopefully be clear in this thesis, if I have managed to illustrate nothing else, is a particular instantiation of Lefebvre's maxim: "There is a politics of space because space is political" In the case of the protests in Cairo, I take this to show how the political space of the city, governed by the state on the one hand through police, and on the other hand by the various multiplicities of informal arrangements and

associations, exploded into a political dimension that no one could have predicted, and produced a sequence of new spatial practices and territories within the city that were not just unique in Egyptian experience but perhaps just unique, period.

In attempting to connect these irruptions in the city space to the discrete characteristics of the "everyday state" in Egypt and to the forms of sociability engendered by an informal mode of urbanization, I seek to show that there is often perhaps a much finer line than we think between the everyday and the revolutionary, and that the relationships to the state and to the city engendered in the everyday experiences of Cairenes, conditioned by urban informality, had a profound effect on the uprising's course.

This discussion will begin with an overview of the changing relationship between cities and nation states under contemporary conditions of globalization, demonstrating the changing lines of sovereignty between the national and the urban, and the reciprocal importance of each of these scales in contemporary urban life; cities are increasingly sites of the production of sovereignty, and increasingly the direct targets of national-level policy and transnational capital; to understand how the contemporary city may contribute to a revolution in the state and citizenship it must first be shown how cities connect to both the state and the greater world system as it exists and as it develops. Within cities in the Global South, which are in many ways more susceptible to many of the (often negative) impacts of the "retreat of the state" and policies privileging the attraction of global capital flows over the ordinary concerns of inhabitants, these scales of sovereignty become brought into heavy relief. These transformations have caused significant structural shocks in Southern cities, leading to a proliferation of informal settlement and economies that reflect their own contestations over urban resources and the ability or right of inhabitants to live dignified, flourishing lives, calling into question the accessibility of citizenship and

the means of its appropriation. This section will also explore how both the power of the state to control citizens and the possibility of emergent, more democratic forms of citizenship are heavily dependent on discrete spaces within, and that rights to and in the city are contingent on the configuration of particular spaces—whether of sovereignty or public space.

I then describe Contemporary Cairo as it relates or does not relate to these concepts. While Cairo has been host to many of the same processes of transformation as other Southern cities, the elaboration of how the informal city has arisen and what shape it has taken create the basis for understanding the role it plays in formation of urban citizenship and the tactics of the uprising. The spatial policies and policing practices of the Egyptian state—focused on the near-total annihilation of public spaces or any notion of urban citizenship—will be also described. The uprising was surely, intimately related to the state's neglect of and even attempted destruction of the city and public spaces, and the contradictions inherent in the Egyptian state's policies of urban development and policing were fully exploited by Egyptians.

Following this, through looking at several sequences within the uprising in Cairo—the first few days of marches and battles with police, leading up to the occupation of Tahrir Square in the center of Downtown Cairo, the response of ordinary Egyptians to the planned withdrawal of police and releasing of looters on the city, and then the occupation of the square and the formations and arrangements that occurred within it. In all of these cases I will focus on aspects of the 'urban-ness' of the Egyptian revolution, the ways in which the uprisings not only took place within the city but how they drew on unique aspects of urban life, found in Cairo and elsewhere.

The first sequence focuses on tactics used by protestors, how they assembled and moved, how they dealt with police and asserted their presence in the streets and their right

to occupy them and almost as importantly to remove the ability of the police to control them. To describe this sequence I look at how the tactics of protestors on the streets related to their normal interactions with the state and police, and how in many ways the protests were merely a transformation of the tactics of everyday life into weapons of dissent and overt engagement. I also conceptualize the Egyptian Arabic word *hada'a*, found in a "manual" that circulated some before the protests and which encapsulates some of the canny, flexibility and even cleverness of protestors as they took to the streets. The success of these early marches seemed tied—in addition to the fervor and commitment caused by peoples' rage at the police apparatus—the incredible use of the spaces of the city and its materials as they were found at-hand. During these days as well, the protestors managed to transform the police from objects of fear and fetish to bodies and corporeal opponents, changing the spaces of and rules engagement against these newly deflated opponents. The gains of these days, spatial and even psychogeographic, created new understandings of both city and state as occupation of the city began.

Informed by the way that the successes of the demonstrations and battles with police had already transformed individuals' subjective relations with the state and police, I then explore what happened as the demonstrations turned from protests against corruption and police brutality to a putative revolution with an almost utopian extent. Citizens themselves became the source of order and security for the city as police protection to the whole city was withheld as collective punishment for the protests, resisting the fear tactics and intimidation of the state by asserting direct, neighborhood level control over streets and city spaces, coordinating them and creating new methods of governance at a level that was both intensely local but avoiding the parochialism of the neighborhood for a public, civil defense of the city. At the same time as the streets were being taken over by ordinary citizens, the "Republic of Tahrir" itself was produced on the

seizure of opportunity provided by the state's own security policies and policing which, having been displaced and disrupted, could be driven out of a space now made radically public. This space became dedicated to the performance of a linkage between everyday life (real and utopian) with the political changes that made it possible and could become possible through the persistence of that space. It became a 'virtual' representation of a new possible society, real insofar as it existed and was open to anyone who sought to enter and experience it, but opposed to "actual," the negativity of the state that it had barred from entry with barricades

And now, a series of caveats and apologies.

What will come out of this is surely an incomplete picture, due in part to the limitations of the focus of this thesis, the fact that much of what happened may remain the anonymous work of thousands of ordinary people, and that there is so much that could and likely should be discussed but will not unfortunately find space here. The efforts of Egyptians in every city and town in the entire country forced the regime to fight on so many fronts that they were surely spread thin, and the fixation of the media on Tahrir, as much as it was a focal point and in many ways essential piece of the uprising, only makes this omission on my part more upsetting to me. To even restrict my focus to Cairo seems difficult, if not inappropriate given the fervor with which people in Alexandria, Suez, and elsewhere took to the streets to demand change, suffering greatly in their efforts in the darkness of a lack or even absence of media coverage. Perhaps soon their efforts can be given the credit they deserve as well. Nevertheless I hope that in describing the events in Cairo, I manage to touch on some of the experiences, the bravery and civility that Egyptians in all cities showed.

Additionally, I have given short shrift here to so many of the different groups that took part in those 18 days favor of presenting a general picture, as if any generalities can be said of urban experience in Cairo. The role of women, Copts, Muslims, and striking laborers among others do not receive the attention they surely warrant. Presenting the stories of all of these would require an infinitely longer space, and even then any attempt at making a picture of what when on “comprehensive” would surely miss out on other details elsewhere. Furthermore, I was given the opportunity, the honor, to be alongside friends—old and new—and activists whose work during those 18 days was the result of years of organizing and countless repressions, arrests and disappointments; that I was witness to one of the few great successes of protest in Egypt while missing much of the hard work and struggle that came before as a work of years and generations is something I am eternally thankful for but aware of as I attempt to write this story. I hope that in what I have written here I capture elements that apply to all of these fighting groups, even if I cannot name them individually here and tell their stories.

The reader will note that I do not talk about the Internet or the role of social networking tools. While these tools were useful for certain organizing and activist activities no doubt, the body of users of these technologies is incredibly, infinitesimally small compared to the millions who took to the streets, and only a portion even of all the activists, neighborhood leaders and others who protested. What makes for a good story in the international media, allowing some vicarious sense of participation or even claim to having helped bring about this revolution by developing these websites, simply did not have such a reality on the ground. If anything, we should be impressed with the ability of activists and organizers to take sites dedicated more to memorializing long coffee-shop lines and photographs of inebriated college students and forcing these websites to serve more political purposes. There is nothing natural in this appropriation, and nothing

inherent in these softwares that makes this as easy as it seems in retrospect. Just as mustard gas was—through nearly accidental discovery—transformed into modern chemotherapy, so in this case have activists transformed these software technologies into activist tools. I am also unwilling to rush to laud these technologies as some of the same activists and others have been censored and blocked by these same supposedly democratizing websites, revealing the ultimate apathy or antipathy of the corporate entities that own them to the types of change these activists seek to achieve. A sociotechnical history of the revolution could be written, attempting to seriously understand how technology fit into the Revolution, but it would have to occur in a critical context, one that recognized as well the importance of landline phones, photocopiers, taxi cabs, “traditional” text messages, coffee shops and all the other real social networking tools and technologies used perhaps more extensively, if not as attractive and new to foreign audiences.

Finally, as this “Arab Spring” continues and revolutions and popular uprisings spring up in other countries around the Middle East, I am constantly reminded of the relative ease with which Egypt’s uprising took place. Looking at the easy turn of many of these dictators and autocrats to bloodshed in Libya, Bahrain, Syria and other countries, I experience, as many Egyptians do, the heart wrenching combination of feeling lucky and somewhat guilty that we did not reach the point of having to fight tanks, artillery and death squads, that Mubarak’s fall came, as it seems, relatively easily. This is not to say that the Egyptians did not fight; the discussion of a “non-violent” revolution obscures the fact that protestors were fighting, often for their lives, first against police and then against the contracted thugs of the regime, and latest estimates show 864 deaths and thousands wounded, a number that is still likely low in a country where the even the official census undercounts millions of invisible citizens. Police had to be beaten and thugs had to be

driven back, and this had to occur by force and pressure even if most of the uprising was strategically and intentionally peaceable. It is to the credit of the Egyptian people, even the low-level army officers and soldiers who disobeyed orders and refused to fire on protestors in Tahrir square, that they rose to such amazing levels of humanity and civility amidst the specter of violence and their desperateness for change.

2. A METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

I arrived in Egypt the afternoon of the 1st of February. I had decided after watching the first few days of the protests on television and receiving updates from friends over the phone and internet that I had to go and stand beside them, my friends, family and the thousands of other Egyptians whom I felt more connected to than ever before. Of Egyptian extraction, but raised in the United States, I had lived in Cairo briefly after finishing my undergraduate degree and the whole time felt, for better or worse, in-between Egyptian and American. This being in-between did not disappear when I went to Cairo for the uprising, and just about everyone I spoke to noted my accent and the other small, telling cues in dress and gait that picked me out as not quite the same as the rest of the Egyptians. Nonetheless I was welcomed "back" or simply laughed at for the foolishness of returning at this time (this of course, when I wasn't being accused of being a spy by wandering thugs. But then again, who wasn't?). I took part in the protests and took in the sights, sounds smells and even horrors of some of the events that took place, keenly aware the whole time that I was a late comer (if not the only one) but eager to observe, to talk to people and to be talked to, and to make what small efforts I could to help, to chant, to fight and to tell the story of these brave Egyptians I parachuted in to (re)join.

This thesis is perhaps a continuation of that desire to understand the situation and tell these stories. It is also an attempt to find some semblance of a general understanding of events, one that goes past the singularity of the uprising and attempts to connect it with the other social struggles that are happening around the world, and to find knowledge and understandings can be shared. The goal is in part to narrate the events of the uprisings from the perspective of the city and its inhabitants, but also to allow the

Egyptian experience to perhaps find further resonance in how we look more generally at cities or how we think of tactics of protest and the claiming of rights.

The narratives presented below are in part my own recollections and observations that I made when I was in Egypt, spending my time between Tahrir Square and sites of protest and the apartments of several friends that became ad-hoc barracks for groups of activists taking a break from the tent encampments or busy sending missives off to the media to get the story out. This impromptu participant-observer research did not come about from an intent to go to Cairo to study the situation; I went, as I mentioned, to participate and to stand beside those I knew and those I did not. At the same time, however, these events I participated in were in many cases incredibly significant, and I watched the situation in the square change from the night of the first jubilant *milyoneyyah*, to the horrendous battles of the next night, and ultimately into what became the “Republic of Tahrir.” Watching these transformations from celebration of the first victories, to defense, to worry and then ultimately to an astonishing mix of festival and political movement I could not help but be struck by the way that this space that I had walked through so many times, now barricaded and occupied, played a direct role in the events of the uprising.

In the days when I was not present (notably the battles against police on the 25th-28th) much of the narrative is drawn from informal, unstructured interviews—as much conversations—conducted with friends and other activists asking them to describe the events of those days, focusing on what they saw, how people acted and reacted in the face of police, what they were chanting or doing and how they assembled for the marches. These discussions with these activists and participants perhaps resembled an open-ended interview; I knew that I wanted to have them tell me about the days of protests that I was not there to see myself, what they did and saw, and what they observed others doing. The

activists, hoping for if not expecting serious political transformation, went out possessed of an awareness of tactics; they had thought long and hard about police, had been to protests before, and were aware of the changes in tactics planned for the 25th.

These conversations, conducted via telephone after I had returned to the States to begin my writing, were an opportunity at the same time to reconnect with these people after we had been together during other good and bad times during the uprisings, and as such the conversation moved back and forth between the direct narration to digressions about the political events of the day, to earlier and more recent happenings as well as what I was ostensibly interviewing them for. I find that this allowed my interlocutors to better relate events to me, drawing on analogies and similarities with things that perhaps I had seen or experienced either in years past or in my time in Egypt, and it allowed me to better inhabit the story as it created such points of reference.

In addition to these interviews, though, a great deal of what I learned about the days I was not present for was from sitting around listening to discussions and stories already being told by these same people, a third, somewhat ethnographic method. This narrative also comes from the myriad conversations I had with strangers in the square and around the City. These ad-hoc conversations were at times unsolicited (but welcomed) and at other times I directly asked people about these earlier days and the part they played in them, curious to learn more about what they did and what they saw, where they were when such-and-such event was happening. These conversations and descriptions also were always of spaces, streets, buildings, neighborhoods; whether the huge fight against police on Qasr al-Nil bridge on the 28th, the burning of the nearby NDP building, the protest routes that any given person marched on in previous days, all of these details came pre-oriented towards the city and the places they happened in. Also, all of these people in

Tahrir had come from different neighborhoods, different parts of the city and the country each of which had their own individual stories about how protests there started.

None of these interviews were recorded or transcribed, I took notes on paper during my phone conversations, and when I had pen and pad available during calm moments in the square or at night I wrote myself some reminders and other notes as well of the things I had heard. The informality of this note taking and format here relates, I think, back to a desire to attempt to understand what happened as a series of images, of moments that were deemed significant, interesting or unique by the people I was speaking with as they would get excited in telling— and, often, excite me as well.

In drawing the narrative below, I have both tried to create a general chronology by synthesizing these stories, pulling out the large events and descriptions that just about everyone mentioned, already in their telling naturally about the city, key streets, buildings and neighborhoods. At the same time I have been able to keep some of the smaller details, the idiosyncratic events that may not have found the same place in one story versus another but were nonetheless sources of excitement for a particular interlocutor. I have also decided not to quote from the specific individuals that I spoke with, to respect their privacy but also because they among all else emphasized the size of these protests, how regardless of what roles they may have played there were happily one of thousands or millions. They may have had specific roles in documenting events, recording abuses by the police or serving as conduits for the international media, but as they told their version of events they focused on those around them, the crowds and the marches as groups of which they were no particularly special part as everyone marched for the same ends and fought the same enemies those days.

The situation in Cairo was surely singular in many ways; not only were the events that took place a watershed following a similar revolution in Tunisia, but the conditions

of spatial policing by the Egyptian state of Cairo perhaps represent an exceptional case of the state's neglect of the city and the policing of public space. At the same time, however, Flyvbjerg notes that studying extreme cases may be useful to get a simpler, more generalizable point across in "an especially dramatic way." Such cases may be able to produce types of data and knowledge that large, scientific sampling may not:

Atypical or extreme cases often reveal more information because they activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied. In addition, from both an understanding-oriented and an action oriented perspective, it is often more important to clarify the deeper causes behind a given problem and its consequences than to describe the symptoms of the problem and how frequently they occur. (2001, 78)

Here, the enormous size of the protests in Cairo, the magnitude of the police and paramilitary forces faced by protestors, and the extent to which the Egyptian state had promoted market fundamentalist controls over space to the neglect of the city and its inhabitants were all such factors. However, at the same time as Egypt may represent an extreme case, we have already begun to see protestors in other Arab states waving Egyptian and Tunisian flags, seeking out symbolic public squares and chanting the same chants. Furthermore we have seen protestors in Wisconsin and London, working against similar if not as intense deprivations of the welfare state and liberalisation, calling to mind the example of Egypt and Tahrir. By studying this extreme event I hope that the knowledge, the experiences and the clever tactics of the Egyptian people can be understood and perhaps even transferred in solidarity with such other struggles: just as people in Wisconsin called to "fight like an Egyptian," Egyptians themselves were holding up signs in support of Wisconsin's demonstrators, even buying pizza for occupiers of the state capitol there.

The work of the case study is already being done then, people committed to change, to resisting the policing of their lives from above and the rollback of the state from its role in carrying out the will of its people. In this thesis then I hope to bring some additional nuance to these popular studies, and to emphasize the importance of these spaces and occupations to cities and to citizenship as they are directly related.

3. CITY/STATES ENTERING THE 21ST CENTURY

As we will see, Cairo is a city deeply connected with the Egyptian national-state apparatus, and similarly subject with processes of globalization—both good and bad—linking it to changing modes of sovereignty, different relationships with globalized capital markets and the production of new types of urban spaces. Cities marked or even defined by the propagation of urban informality are globally relevant, as informality both represents developments in the deployment of the world market and marks sites of resistance to or transformation of these world markets as they operationalizes themselves. The city space is where both the market and the state come to the ground, and despite our tendency to speak of them both as abstractions their necessary materialization in cities conditions and defines the way that they are to be thought of and where their limits may in fact manifest themselves.

The following general and theoretical discussion of reorganizations of both capital and national sovereignty in cities seeks to foreground how an urban uprising such as occurred in Egypt was both related to international and national processes, but also how cities themselves may be privileged sites of political transformation on scales that far exceed the local or the urban. Sovereignty, policing and counter-modes of citizenship, contingent on and produced often in small, local spaces may also “jump scales” (Smith 1992) in profound ways as globalization and state transformation continually reorganize and perforate these various geographic scales, allowing urban transformations to resonate far beyond the city streets and allowing the informal city to redefine objects far beyond it.

THE PERFORATED STATE & THE GLOBAL CITY

Beyond the glamorous images of an almost disembodied, cybernetic jet-setting business class traversing the globe while remaining constantly connected, occupying the fantasy-life of Tom Friedman's "flat world", the realities of the distribution of capital, wealth and prestige take on a highly stratified quality both within the world and in the geography of cities. The state takes on the role of managing these sites of global capital, allowing for their smooth function even as it retreats from traditional welfare and social functions characterizing the modernist ideal of the nation-state.

Contemporary literature on globalization and its effects on the state have, in attempting to dispel simplistic explanations that the post-1989 consensus on market-driven capitalism represent the "death of the state," have increasingly focused on how transformations in the world economy and sovereignty have not brought about the demise of the state, rather its disarticulation and the distribution of sovereignty in the global system amongst different actors across varied scales and sites. Shaw notes that "globalization does not undermine the state but includes the transformation of state forms. It is both predicated on and produces such transformations," (2003) describing state sovereignty as increasingly distributed between traditional nation-state containers and emergent global forms of sovereignty and government. In addition to the production of supra-national governmental organizations under globalization, many of the sites and scales of globalization are decidedly sub-national and urban. The relationship of the city with globalization is in many ways tied with the "space-time compression" (David Harvey 1991) produced by contemporary finance capital, whereby information and communication technologies and other forms of high speed infrastructure linkages have proliferated expressing a desire for frictionless exchange and "a spaceless world" (Graham

and Marvin 2001) to reduce the temporal distance between the spaces of the global economy.

This time-space compression paradoxically obviates the needs for fixed locations for many types of production at the same time as proximity and place become essential for competitiveness and human intelligence (Bobbitt 2008) and for the physical and human infrastructures necessary to undertake these forms of production (Sassen 2000). This recent turn towards “global cities” or “world cities” as sites of analysis emphasizes the role that cities and urbanized areas play in concentrating capital and constituting the actual sites of globalization. World cities, as they play an increasingly more direct and interconnected role in systems of finance and production are increasingly perceived as not only a site of economy, labor and culture but increasingly takes a constitutive role in political sovereignty through controlling and capturing these flows: “Global flows of capital and labor move through world cities and are controlled from there. This gives civil society and politics in such places a specific role: they are not just products but also producers of these seats of seemingly universal power.” (Keil 2003, 278) The production of this nascent world system within cities means that it is not simply the nation state that is involved in the creation of this new sovereignty but various subnational actors, nongovernmental organizations and civil society that participate in these processes. The interaction between the state and the city is a reciprocal one, with the state directing the course of economic development and often a host of other social and economic policies in cities. Yet, at the same time, due either to forces of globalization and transnational capital or to the productive forces within cities and among city dwellers—cities influence the production of sovereignty as often as they are a target of it.

Cities are at the same time agglomerations of socio-technical processes, combining landscapes, physical infrastructures and architecture with systems of

governance, societies, and culture with systems of governance. Sassen notes how these processes of globalization become accompanied by new rooted physical spaces. “Once these processes are brought into the analysis,” says Sassen, “funny things happen; secretaries become part of it, and so do the cleaners of the buildings where professionals work.” (2000, 14) Similarly, streets, water pipes houses and telephone lines may both be relevant to these global economic processes yet at the same time are distinctly rooted in the city and are often politically much more local than the broad abstractions of globalization rhetoric.

Thus the processes of globalization are neither the end of the state nor its triumph, but find themselves located often within cities and always within discrete spaces possessing infrastructures and requiring inputs far greater than the self-enclosed financial centers in New York or London would appear. The nation state, under these transformations, becomes on the one hand much more concerned with its own cities, but also, as cities take an increasing part in the direct production of the economy and culture they take on many of the aspects of sovereignty that the state had once held in sole domain. Governance, national and global, is rapidly becoming urbanized and a matter of urban concern, whether it is in those concentrations of political and economic power or in those producer or peripheral cities where management of the city becomes an issue of coordinating development and inducing transnational capital. This happens as new “glocalized” operations of capital often use scale and geography to circumvent or denigrate traditional democratic politics and the hierarchically scaled “social contract” between nation state and citizen (Swyngedouw 2004).

Particularly in the cities of the South, which have by and large been left out of the benefits of globalization and find themselves very often the subject of Structural Adjustment or other global economic policies constraining their local economies, urban

governance tends to be as much about management and policing as it is cities' independence from the nation. Southern states, more and more concerned with coordinating these flows of globalization and competing for economic development, transnational capital and tourism, find themselves embroiled in urban governance and the policing and regulation of urban populations. The deployment of neoliberalism and the globalized economy in southern cities then takes on an intensive quality, as governments increasingly attempt to deploy infrastructures and spaces attractive to transnational firms often around or on top of existing urban fabrics (Pieterse 2008). As Swyngedouw describes it: "in light of the real or imagined threat of owners of presumed (hyper)mobile capital relocating their activities, regional and national states feel increasingly under pressure to assure the restoration of a fertile entrepreneurial culture" (2004, 29). These "premium network spaces" (Graham and Marvin 2001) of new infrastructure and access points to the global economy are often highly segregated from the preexisting cities, either by necessity—when entirely new systems must be made to accommodate the needs of business—or, more often than not, by design to circumvent or avoid the impoverished and disinvested city, separated by distance, gated communities or physical policing.

THE PERIPHERIES OF THE CENTER

The same systems of production that have brought global cities to the forefront of the world economy also require linkages to and management of a host of other sites of production, labor and resources that are not located within the North. The requirements of growth of the capitalist system and the maintenance or increase of levels of wealth and influence within the global city requires a large apparatus "beneath" it in order to provide sufficient inputs to perpetuate its functioning. Wallerstein notes that the increasing ease

of flows of goods and resources compared with the relative immobility of labor across national boundaries has created systems of unequal exchange as a consequence of the integration of peripheral states into the global system, leading to “the uneven distribution of the bourgeoisie and proletariat in different states, core states containing a higher percentage nationally of bourgeois than peripheral states.” (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, 123) The cities of the Global South are increasingly home to this proletariat, connected to global cities of the North through processes of production and extraction that have created a “new international division of labor” where low-value components of production are exported to the South as high value components are concentrated in the North (Pieterse 2008, 21).

David Harvey describes this process, whereby capitalism seeks to find new mechanisms for profit and expansion in the face of market failure through the term “accumulation by dispossession.” This mechanism, an expanded understanding of Marx’s notion of “primitive accumulation,” refers to the means by which objects outside of capital are brought into the system, generally through mechanisms of force (if not outright violence) and almost zero cost and at a substantial profit. (David Harvey 2003, 149) The rampant deployment of Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) by the IMF/World Bank and the United States beginning in the mid 1970s provided just such a mechanism, leveraging the “crises” of foreign debt to push for intensive privatization, austerity and opening of markets to give Northern capitalist economies new arenas to produce these surpluses. These areas, particularly Africa and Latin America where SAPs were most used, became fully incorporated into the capitalist economy, if only under conditions of guaranteed proletarianization and capital extraction.

Particularly because the SAPs were in nature “spatio-temporal fixes...a particular kind of solution to capitalist crises through temporal deferral and geographical

expansion,” (David Harvey 2003, 115) their effects within cities and on the economic and social geographies of cities in the Global South has been incredibly pronounced. In fact, the *Challenge of Slums*, an expansive UN-HABITAT report on urban poverty and slums, notes that the "main single cause of increases in poverty and inequality during the 1980s and 1990s was the retreat of the state." (qtd. in Davis 2007, 154) A retreat promoted by SAPs as mechanisms through combined pressures on target states to privatize industry, infrastructure and services, remove price controls, welfare systems and other forms of subsidy and the delegation and devolution of governmental services to international NGOs and aid organizations. In most cases where SAPs were deployed, the rapid imposition of the global market and simultaneous removal of social safety nets created huge structural shocks in national economies that reproduced themselves as the complete immiseration and disarticulation of people's everyday lives.

This uneven economic development, where Southern nations were either held hostage by debt restructuring policies from the IMF/World Bank or where the state willingly chose to liberalize their economies has led to a series of serious structural shocks to cities in the South, vastly reconfiguring their geography, social structures and governments. As local markets have been opened up to cheap imports, state industries have been scaled back and labor rights diminished have created significant declines in the formal employment markets in most countries in the South, leading to significant moves to the informal economy or forms of underemployment produced by the de-skilling or parceling of jobs in the formal sector amongst multiple workers. Workers under conditions of glocalized capital are generally cut out from traditional guarantees of labor fought for by workers' movements, as transnational companies increasingly exert power not through the regulation of the nation state but directly on the individual bodies of laborers (Swyngedouw 2004) At the same time, much of the new development of

factories or other employment centers in the south have been in Free Trade Zones or other areas located away from traditional urban centers, meaning that even new employment opportunities still leave many cities untouched. Furthermore, just as liberalization in the economy has led to informalization, urbanization has rapidly accelerated as agriculture “went through the floor” (Pieterse 2008, 29) in most countries, drawing people into cities to seek out employment that just as quickly vanished.

A concomitant abandonment of public-sector housing in many Southern nations, following the neoliberal consensus on the inefficiency and failure of public housing, has occurred at the same time, creating an explosion of informal housing settlements. These settlements, a mix of squatter settlements, unpermitted or illegally built structures and autoconstructed housing have sprung up to meet demand for housing where formal housing markets are either too expensive or undersupplied (Ward 2004) UN estimates for 2001 showed that as much as 31.6 percent of the entire world population lived in inadequate housing conditions (UN-Habitat (Nairobi). 2003), largely in periurban areas far away from centers of employment and lacking basic public utility services, effectively further increasing the relative cost of living for these residents. Trucked-in water alone, for instance, is orders of magnitude more expensive (by volume) than piped water (Graham and Marvin 2001, 297), and, generally, the seeming accessibility of the informal market brings with it many additional costs on residents. Entitlement programs, touted by Hernando DeSoto and his followers in Washington and the World Bank, instead of being the solution to informality, in many cases aggravate conditions of insecure tenure (for the large, largely ignored, proportion of renters in informal settlements) by pricing out residents (Ward in Davis 2007, 80-81). Even after entitlement, credit is not necessarily more accessible for residents than before, notwithstanding the potential problems of default, and generally fails to cure poverty in practice (Bromley 2004). Informality in

housing is a series of intensive trade-offs, where relative affordability of squatting, renting or illegally constructing may be offset by additional costs in securing tenure (either title or simply ensuring against eviction), accessing utilities and infrastructure and the distance from or unavailability of basic public services such as education, recreation or health care.

Ultimately, it should be noted that the production of urban informality and the formal city and economy are linked (Roy 2005). The transformation and liberalization of the Southern state, with new and drastically different imperatives with respect to urban governance, is in many ways directly linked to processes of informalization in both housing and economy (Glibert 2004). The accelerated and rapid production of urban informality as a consequence of the “roll-back” of the state is intrinsically related to the “roll-out” of the state (Peck and Tickell 2002) in the production of new spatial forms that are produced directly for participation and competition in the global market but usually isolated from the city itself. The deployment and production of these fortress enclaves (Caldeira 1996) often heavily invested in by a state transitioned from a modernist universalist notion of development (however disciplinary it may have been) to a postmodernist ideal that connects development to competitiveness of individual firms and actors in a global market. Lavish subsidy of or direct government spending on locally apartheid-producing environments tied to finance and consumption—simultaneous to and often synonymous with disinvestment in or even destruction of poorer, less connected areas and neighborhoods—can thus be justified in the language of national or regional ‘net benefit’. These decisions are then supported by abstract statistical information that often masks processes of political dispossession and greater poverty (Mitchell 2002) among citizens consigned to seeking housing in informal neighborhoods or slums, forced to enter into conditions of underemployment or marginal employment at the fringes of

the economy, in many cases within the new informal service economy catering to the maintenance and upkeep of these high-input formal environments.

States' role in the informal city is diverse, but generally we may describe it as a mix of aggression towards the informal city and its residents alongside varying degrees of permissiveness and potentially even reliance on, if not the informal city, then the huge globalized proletariat that inhabit it, whether they are supplying labor for factories or cleaning office buildings. In these cases, with respect to sovereignty or the state—the character of its authority and the processes by which it makes decisions—in the 'informalized' city, the state acts as a manager of capital flows, disengaged from social services and the population at the same time as it nonetheless creates heavily policed boundaries between valuable and devalorized, global and local, formal and informal.

TACTICS OF THE INFORMAL CITY

At the same time as these conditions of immiseration proliferate through informalization, informal and slum communities have been increasingly studied and their inhabitants lauded for their ability to go beyond mere “survival strategies” or “coping” with adverse conditions to actually exercising high degrees of flexibility, creativity, and novelty through their use and reconfiguration of the urban environment, making for a longstanding critical engagement with the political potential of “everyday life”. Beginning from Lefebvre's understandings of spatial practices of individuals and groups as a primary source of political activity (2002) and poststructuralist notions of disciplinary power emphasizing its omnipresence and horizontality throughout society (Foucault 1990), theories of everyday life recognized the “tactics” that people use to displace and resist the “strategies” of structural power that function to maintain state authority and discipline

individuals (De Certeau 1984). This notion of “resisting poor” has become one of the primary lenses by which to understand urban politics and the mobilization of marginalized populations, yet has also been criticized for the way in which, by totalizing resistance in everyday acts, has lost the ability to distinguish between politics and survival, or between a politics of resistance to power and one of “redress...a struggle for immediate outcomes largely through individual direct action” (Bayat 2009, 10).

Nonetheless, notions of “everyday life” politics are an important and primary realm for understanding the multiple sites and levels of visibility of agency of the poor. Although restricted in their access to much of the city and having their life chances heavily circumscribed by poverty and increasingly anti-poor measures of the state, these theories all stress that the urban poor are not helpless victims of global transformations and state power. Asef Bayat has called the processes by which the urban poor secure a more dignified existence for themselves the “quiet encroachment of the ordinary,” (1997b), representing the techniques by which individuals, in a generally isolated fashion, take over land, illegally tap into municipal utilities, or make active use of public spaces such as streets and sidewalks for vending, “encroaching” on the property of the state or the wealthy. These apolitical actions tend to only become political at times of challenge or pushback from the state, where these gains are threatened, at which point individual actors with a shared stake in these gains may activate “passive networks” built on shared associations with these spaces. In other situations, members of informal communities may rally around issues such as service provision, making disruptive claims of rights to these resources by reappropriating the egalitarian rhetoric of the state (Holston 2009; Caldeira 1996). These modes of informality do not just revolve around material issues, as informal modes of organization often operate on the level of culture and representation, even the arts (Simone 2004). Informality may also involve the remaking of state spaces,

resignifying and reappropriating formal architectures such as public housing to compensate for its inflexibility or to make it more culturally and individually meaningful (Florin 2009; Ghannam 2002; Turner 1976) or taking advantage of development schemes to achieve individual or communitarian goals outside of the market rationalities of these formal programs (Mitchell 2002; Elyachar 2005).

While this literature is not apologetics for poverty or the forces that cause it, it is important to avoid the temptation of being swept into the “romance of resistance,” underestimating all the ways in which power of the state and capital do directly affect and transfigure the lives of the urban poor, particularly as power may be operating from different sources and scales simultaneously, and “resisting at one level may catch people up at other levels.” (Abu-Lughod 1990, 53) Most of this literature on resistance tends to focus on power outside of a formal conception of the state or on the disaggregated institutions or operations of the state at local levels. While such focus is essential insofar as it allows us to “come to understand how the state is constructed, at a specific historical moment, out of the practices and representations of government and its subjects,” (Ismail 2006, xxxii), it should not obscure a concurrent focus on the state in its ideological, unified existence. As LeFebvre notes, “Someone who does not begin with this critique of the existing State apparatus is simply someone who operates within the framework of existing reality, who does not propose to change it” will not be able to challenge the ultimate grounds on which it rests (2009, 55). It seems important to maintain a critical engagement with the state *qua* state, to better understand the conditions of its possible transformation and to find those situations in which the state itself or discourses of the state may be taken up or targeted as positions of leverage.¹ As one such instance of taking

¹ Indeed, the current Egyptian example is illustrative as it provides a rather rare moment to look at such engagements in the context of a potentially radical transformation of the State. Many important

up this problematic, citizenship provides an important mechanism to compare the transformations of the state, the potentials of a politics of informality, and the relationship between inhabitant, city, and state.

CITIZENSHIP IN THE CITY, CITIES AND SOVEREIGNS

Many of the tactics the urban poor and other urban inhabitants use to better their lives reach their political limit at the state; citizenship represents a means, sometimes just an ideal, whereby state power can be transformed, exceeding the bounds of “resistance.” Citizenship, even as it relates to the nation-state, is increasingly tied to cities, as the city is as much a space of associations and sociability as it is a space of surveillance, management and extraction by the state, marked by both inclusion and exclusion. The operations of “glocalization” are making the urban an increasingly important scale for the formulation of claims about and around citizenship (Holston and Appadurai 1996; Keil 2003; Sassen 1996), even as transformations in the nation state and increasing balkanization and apartheid forms within cities and the situatedness of residents challenge the universality and applicability of citizenship. How then is citizenship produced in the city, and what sorts of spaces does the disciplinary state occupy and how and where might counter-strategies arise? Considering these questions allows us to examine how the dialectic between macro and micro-scales of sovereignty is produced, how certain urban appropriations of citizenship may push back against the macro state and other larger sovereigns and how—despite our tendency to think of the state as omniscient or

commentators and political figures on the Egyptian scene have proved particularly disappointing in this regard, failing to call the State and its structure into question and conceiving only of various reforms to its parts.

continuous through space—it may at times have gaps or lacunae that allow for such appropriations to avoid surveillance and disciplinary control.

The city has long been caught between the forces of associational ties among individual residents and the relationship to a state or sovereign. Several theorists trace parallels between modern urban forms of citizenship back to the medieval city as a means of representing these contrasting modes of political community, not as a means of creating a direct historical lineage but rather as a series of congruencies that may both persist in the contemporary city or analogously reappear under the restructuring forces of globalization. Roy and AlSayyad note that this approach allows for seeing the city as a “fragmented domain of multiple and competing sovereignties” (2006, 12) wherein the city is at the same time governed by the rules of the sovereign under figures of law as it possesses its own set of organization rules, laws, and associational customs, often private. This “medieval body” (Holston and Appadurai 1996, 200) creates systems of “overlapping, heterogeneous, nonuniform, and increasingly private memberships.” Indeed, particularly as we witness the production of various forms of “spatial apartheid” and the use of infrastructure, gated communities and other environmental enclaves to separate populations (Caldeira 1996), many of the rigid associational ties that characterized the medieval city, complete with their perks to members, come into view (Frug 2001). Similarly, the various NGOs, religious and charity organizations, civil society groups and development institutions that populate the city, and in many cases may have even supplanted the government (Karim 2008), create their own targets, groups and subjects seemingly party to various rules, benefits and obligations.

These various forms of sovereignty and association, illustrated through the medieval city and present in the modern city, function on a rule of exclusion, creating differences between the citizen and noncitizen where the two are “distinguished in terms

of rights and obligations in a given space” (Balibar 1996, 358). Translated to the modern city, this exclusion is not necessarily a physical one (although in practice it increasingly and often is) but rather one of distribution: of spaces, of resources, of opportunities. Contemporary citizenship in many respects is “inclusively inegalitarian,” (Holston 2009) wherein the physical boundaries of the medieval city have been superseded by a formally universal “imagined community” of the nation state, but still marked by exclusion both between nation states and also, internally, in the massively inegalitarian distributions of resources, rights and political inclusion. These inequalities and boundaries are distributed across neighborhoods, between cities and among cultural, class religious and ethnic grounds.

SPACES OF THE “STATE OF EXCEPTION”

In discussing how these forms of exclusion and membership are produced in the city, many contemporary thinkers have drawn on the work of Giorgio Agamben and his notion of the state of exception to describe these exclusionary processes: “spaces of exception are the ‘constitutive inside’ of cities.” (Alsayyad and Roy 2006) Before we continue further, we should discuss Agamben’s conception of sovereignty, for although it has often been applied to cities and urban politics, his theory is rarely fully theorized as it relates to space and the seemingly totalizing narrative it produces may in warrant greater nuance when examining how sovereignty propagates itself in and controls spaces, particularly as we consider the ambivalent relationship of informal urban spaces to the state and sovereignty.

Agamben, borrowing Carl Schmidt’s notion of the sovereign as “he who decides on the exception” to understand the management of citizenry and power in the

contemporary state. Law constitutes its authority not in its normal functioning but in its ability to define exceptions and create extreme cases that, somewhat paradoxically, lie outside of the law: “The exception does not subtract itself from the rule; rather, the rule, suspending itself, gives rise to the exception and, maintaining itself in relation to the exception, first constitutes itself as a rule.” (Agamben 1998, 18) These exceptions, then, give the normal function of the law its force and constitute the power of the sovereign as the violent ability of the state always lies in *potential* as a background of the normal law, contingent on its power to create these states of exception. Through the ambivalence and indistinction of these boundaries, sovereign power always lies in a state of potential force, able to act in a near total fashion in a juridical space where “life and law, outside and inside, become indistinguishable” (Agamben 1998, 29).

Even in contemporary Western societies, political sovereignty remains defined by these powers of exception, perpetually creating and recreating boundaries between the citizen and the foreigner, the law abiding and the criminal, the normal and the deviant, orderly and disorderly. The ability of the state not only to exclude these undesirable categories but to perpetually suspend the final line of distinction between them causes a near-perpetual state of emergency and uncertainty, justifying violence and the force of law as the ability to rule becomes all too often elided with the right to kill. Mbembe (2003) has gone as far as to posit that by making this subjugation of bare life its primary focus (through war, operations of genocide, forms of racism or violent humanitarian intervention), contemporary sovereignty is more a form of “necropolitics” wherein the primary characteristic of sovereignty is the demarcation of those subjects whose life and death do not matter and the creation of a “living dead” marked by their expendability.

However, we should be cautious in too readily presuming that Agamben’s theory of the state of exception is spatial in nature or is immediately applicable to questions of

geography or spatial distribution of sovereignty. This is a somewhat simplistic reading that ignores some important details of Agamben's own theory, and may in part be related to unclarity on his part. While Agamben does use certain spatial metaphors or spatial examples in his genealogical explanation of the development of modern sovereignty (namely that of the city and the outlaw), it is clear that ultimately when Agamben talks about inside and outside he is speaking of a nomological landscape, one that is not representative of an actual topology but of a juridical plane of understanding. All too often people have taken the discussion of inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion and immediately applied them to situations of space or *topos* without considering that they are primarily juridical constructs; in order to properly apply Agamben to the cityscape, we must attach his theory of sovereignty to an understanding of how states use actually existing geography and space, which then allows us to look at how this nomological relationship of inclusion and exclusion manifests itself in the spaces of the city.

Agamben's two primary spatial metaphors, that of the bandit/werewolf and that of the camp, do describe historical, actually existing spaces of the medieval city and the concentration camp, however at the same time they ultimately relate to juridical or nomological distinctions. The bandit, a figure equated with wolf-men in Anglo-Saxon tradition, represents the "threshold of indistinction and of passage between animal and man," (1998, 105) to emphasize that this bandit or wolfman is not animal without any relationship to political society, rather that his existence has been qualified, by law, to expose him to potential harm from all sides. The outlaw's banishment from the medieval city, cast to its outskirts, is only spatially significant, however, insofar as the associational character of medieval citizenship was necessarily related to territorial boundaries; expulsion from the city was a condition of the stripping away of citizenship within the communitarian apparatus of the city. Thus the bandit's expulsion from the city was the

mechanism of carrying out the juridical stripping away of political subjecthood, but it is not tantamount to drawing an absolute distinction between the city and its exterior, as Agamben himself even notes that this banishment or ban was “a zone of indistinction and *continuous transition* between man and beast, nature and culture.” (1998, 109 emphasis added)

Similarly, the camp, Agamben’s other primary spatial condition, although it was a creation in space, walled and bounded off from the national space, was primarily a legal framework that had to be created in order to perform certain operations on its subjects. Particularly as Agamben notes the importance of the fact that subjects had to be “denationalized” before they entering the camps, it seems that the camp relates not as much to a space within itself as it does to a space created “outside” of the nation-state container, important here not so much as a territory but with regard to that territory being the juridical expression of the limits of sovereignty. The camp, Agamben notes, “delimits instead a space in which, for all intents and purposes, the normal rule of law is suspended and in which the fact that atrocities may or may not be committed does not depend on the law but rather on the civility and ethical sense of the police that act temporarily as sovereign.” (2000, 42) Suspension of the law and its substitution with sovereign power acting over bare life is the primary operation of the camp. The nation state needs the camp only insofar as national sovereignty is based on the triad of territory, order and birth, and consequently the spatial significance of the camp cannot be separated from the spatial basis of the sovereignty of the nation state. The operations of the camp, then, are not purely spatial but do require a spatial substrate insofar as they still rely on the nation state.

These spatial metaphors become particularly problematic once we recognize that the conditions of sovereignty as citizenship defined by Agamben become universalized

under the juridical order of human rights, whose post-War hegemony effectively despatializes the conditions Agamben has described since all subjects are equally considered to be bearers of rights under this universal legal order, and consequently the state or sovereign does not need the particular spaces of exception to enact a state of exception. In a globalized or increasingly globalizing world order, where the “rights of man” are no longer solely attached to the territorial nation-state (evidenced most violently by instances of “humanitarian intervention” outside of the traditional legal framework of wars between states), Agamben locates the central figure of sovereign power in that of the refugee—or denizen—who is neither a citizen of a state nor can she be repatriated, a new category that supersedes the citizen in illustrating “how the concept of ‘citizen’ is no longer adequate for describing the political reality of modern states (2000, 23). Agamben explicitly notes how the concept of refugee subsequently “perforates” territorial or topological issues of sovereignty, rendering inside and outside spatially indistinct. Even if the sovereign required particular spaces in previous eras to enact the state of exception (as with the outlaw and the camp), in its current development and deployment sovereignty is increasingly if not primarily determined by despatialized categories or subjects of equivocal or undefined spatial relationships.

Hannah (2008) makes a similar point, noting that “Agamben’s theorization of sovereignty must take into account concrete geographical conditions” and that even in the case of intra-national sovereignty “there are geographical limits to the population’s vulnerability as virtual *homines sacri*.” (2008, 66) Through illustrating examples of the Red Army Faction’s tactics of evasion of West German policing apparatuses, Hannah concludes that even in advanced modern nation-states:

the main obstacle facing the organs of the state, and hence the main qualification to the assumption of sovereignty, is the lack of knowledge about the people who

threaten social order and where they are to be found... the search for knowledge must itself be seen as a distinct element of sovereignty and an inherently geographical exercise. The obstacles to epistemological sovereignty include the general anonymity of movement in public space and the use of other public infrastructures, collective living arrangements, and the commandeering of spaces beyond the limits of the registered world. (2010, 71)

Thus even if we accept the biopolitical or 'exceptional' framework of sovereignty that Agamben has provided for us, we nonetheless need to recognize that the state itself does not act uniformly over territory. Particularly within the dense, irregular texture of the city, areas of the city may be left out of the gaze of the sovereign, or that gaze and control may be differentially or unequally applied. In this regard, looking at the informalization of sovereignty and its distribution, particularly within the informal city, we can see that citizenship may have already been developing outside of the mode of capture/inclusion that constitute modern political sovereignty for Agamben. While not totally outside of this system, and at times subject to its most violent and damaging outbreaks (cf. Mbembé 2003) in situations of policing, various "insurgent" activities, types of "quiet encroachment", "cultural citizenship", passive networks or other forms of associational or cultural citizenship may be able to develop spatially *where* they might not otherwise be entirely caught in the cycle of capture by sovereignty and reduction to mere biopolitical "bare life".

This raises contemporary citizenship then as a question of the extent of interface between the formal and the informal, and the extent to which informality as it is geographically deployed through the city (informal housing settlements) and the extent to which state mechanisms of surveillance or regulation (in informal economic practices) lack the reach to fully capture these mechanisms. The additional presence of various forms and levels of sovereignty (hierarchical levels of government, NGOs and economic institutions, to name only three possibilities) within the contemporary city further

complicate the question of where and to what extent subjects are captured under the production of bare life. There is no state without the spaces it occupies and acts in, and these spaces are highly differentiated. Parallel modes of sovereignty and citizenship then seem possible as emergent phenomena, not entirely exempt from the risk of quick reduction to bare life through violence, but often operating with varying degrees of relative autonomy or anonymity. Citizenship is split; there is the formal mode or modes that we are to understand as produced in the relationship of sovereignty to the individual, but also emergent modes that may coexist uneasily with formal conceptions of citizenship, not necessarily resistances but not reducible to the questions of the “rule of exclusion” (Balibar 1996) or “state of exception” produced by modes of sovereignty. These emergent modes tend to be heavily dependent on space, particular since spaces are often disruptive of processes of subjectivization.

COUNTER-MOVES TO THE STATE IN THE CITY

Holston & Appadurai describe this as the fact that “citizenship concerns more than rights to participate in politics. It also includes other kinds of rights in the public sphere, namely, civil, socio-economic, and cultural. Moreover, in addition to the legal, it concerns the moral and performative dimensions of membership which define the meanings and practices of belonging in society.” (Holston and Appadurai 1996, 200) The idea of disjuncture between the totalizing, formal discourses we have inherited from modernism and their actual existence as sites of extreme inequality and exclusion grounds the possibility for much mobilization around new modes of citizenship. Balibar (1996), speaking in terms of the question of European citizenship and the exclusion of the foreigner or migrant stresses the need not just to avoid the problematic contradictions of

state universalism, but to push against this “autonomization”—not through the withdrawal into “hypothetically autonomous civil society” but through the production of strong “counterpowers” that constrain, supervise, or repress the power of the state, tending towards a dialectic of challenging the (national and ontological) boundaries of inclusion to introduce new elements disruptive of the homogeneity of the old. These counterpowers in the city may take the form of organizations that, opposed to traditional mobilization and political organizing, produce a “refutation of modern modes of political framing...[creating] a new sociability contradictory to the norms” of postcolonial modernity or spatial planning (Diouf 1996), or contest or metamorphose those norms through the interjection of nonhegemonic, transnational cultural and social forms. (Ong et al. 1996)

At the same time, processes within the city that create exclusion and marginality may also produce certain spaces where sovereignty lacks the surveillance, power or care to exert itself, giving rise to the possibility of mobilizations. Caldeira (1996) notes the mobilization of marginalized communities in walled Sao Paulo for the extension of services demonstrates that “Where excluded residents discover that they have rights to the city, they manage to transform their neighborhoods and to improve the quality of their lives.” Holston (2009), similarly, describes how Brazilian residents of informal communities mobilized within the peripheral and marginal areas of the city to create organizational movements that challenged the formal inclusion of Brazilian national citizenship to push back against abstract formulations and expand the actual distributions of rights from their narrow, exclusionary bases in privileged communities and sites of commerce and capital. He notes that the same peripheries that the state maintains to reduce individuals to “bare life” provide locations for the reconsideration of citizenship by

these marginals, giving them space to mobilize outside the gaze of the state and stage claims for their inclusion. (Holston 2009, 313)

These forms of mobilization loosely tend towards an idea of a “right to the city”; Harvey (2003) argues that “the right to remake ourselves by creating a qualitatively different kind of urban sociality is one of the most precious of all human rights.” And many scholars have considered the question of the right to the city as a possible form of the mobilization of citizenship particularly within the informal city (Caldeira 1996; Friedmann 1995; Simone 2005). The right to the city in this regard “calls into question the relationship between spatiality and the formation of rights claims and their practice.” (Dikeç 2002) and that fundamentally these rights apply to not just the “right to visit” but a fundamental reordering of public and private spaces, economic and property relations. These sorts of claims, consequently, are a powerful source of mobilization for historically marginalized and informal communities, particularly in Latin America, Europe and the United States.

The “right to the city” nonetheless, must also be tempered by a recognition that the local context is intertwined with larger scales and sites of sovereignty as well, and these too must be at times contested. Purcell notes that the right to the city, because it is contingent with multiple agendas at various scales and social forces, is “*not inherently liberatory*” and that considering the city and its spaces in isolation of calling into question larger structures of domination and inegalitarian distribution can create empowered conservative and reactionary countermovements just as well. He says: “the promise of the right to the city must be tempered by important and unanswerable questions about what social and spatial outcomes the right to the city would have” making even consideration of this right a question of contingency, negotiation and agonism. (Purcell 2002, 106)

The right to the city also may remain an elusive concept in attempting to comprehend the transformations of citizenship in Cairo, or to ground a frame of thinking for Middle Eastern urbanism generally, for two reasons: on the one hand, as we will see, the spatial policies of governance in the Egyptian city, particularly Cairo, were fundamentally structured so as to prevent the consideration of any form of urban governance—the Egyptian central government’s direct control over cities through a police logic far superceding any administrative considerations (on which many right to the city arguments are based, centering around housing, the right to make a living, devolution of power to certain spaces) made it such that cities did not necessarily have spaces in which *rights themselves* could be meaningfully expressed or claimed. Second, the formulations of the right to the city or the other means of mobilization and insurgency described above tend to focus on distributional issues that, while essential to the construction of a dignified life, and often gained at the expense of state power or property, do not necessarily implicate the question of citizenship as a participation in and even control of the various associational forms of the city, formal or informal.

Additionally, in Cairo, as will be discussed, the successes of the informal community and the incredibly high prevalence of informality has created a (relatively) accessible housing supply in central and greater Cairo, and most of these communities are connected to formal infrastructures such as electricity and piped water (through the quiet encroachment of residents, or through bribes or clientism towards local representatives, not necessarily through the formation of political groups or mobilization). It is also the case that many of the same issues of public space and access in Cairo that might call to question the right to the city are also just as applicable to even the very rich as they are to the marginalized poor. While the poor may be more often the brunt of police suppression or harassment, even well-to do university students are restricted in their ability to occupy

public space or hold demonstrations.² Thus, the mode of creating a new citizenship in Cairo, although it will be related to these notions of Insurgent citizenship or a right to the city, will have fundamentally different coordinates.

² All Egyptian universities, for instance, have for years had a significant State Security presence on campus, and these secret police monitored not only political participation but even the content of lectures and visiting guests. Student protests following Mubarak's ouster have managed to evict police from campuses, but at this point it seems that this struggle for the university is still incomplete.

4. A CRASH COURSE IN CONTEMPORARY CAIRO

Seeing Cairo as a city marked by such high degrees of informality, in the context of these potentially differential modes of citizenship or the incomplete reach of sovereignty, points to many of the building blocks of the urban uprising and revolution that came out of it. Understanding the nature of Cairo's informality and geography becomes a means of understanding what forms of alternatives were already present within the metropolis, being formed and created, and how their coming into conflict with the state played out. Many of the associational forms and modes of sociability expressed during this uprising were in many ways latent in the city prior to the revolution (indeed, judging by the relative lack of formal political and social mobilization in Egypt, one must almost presume them to have been). At the same time, however, it is uncertain that they were politically efficacious on their own, and Cairo did not see the same sorts of "insurgent citizenship" as Holston describes or other rights-claims to urban space or citizenship as such.

In this regard, Cairo is paradigmatic of many of these generalized tendencies of cities under globalization and state transformation, but was nevertheless host to a confluence of governmental and urban processes that call into question its consideration under the same lines as other cities and social movements. The Egyptian state treated the development and policing of space in ways that were not completely unique, but were deployed in particular configurations and combinations such that local and national scales of sovereignty would have to be simultaneously challenged. The Egyptian government's policies towards the city and public space, as will be discussed, tended towards the near

total annihilation of public spaces as possible sites not just for protest and politics, but even social gathering and other forms of urban conviviality. The state pursued a relentless policy of exurbanization that sought to withdraw entirely from the city, leaving it unsupported and unconnected to both government and the economy, if not heavily policed. Looking at how these scales of governance and these policies of abandonment and policing were intermingled in Cairo may help us understand how this “jumping” of scales would later occur, and how public space and national politics would come together.

At the point of uprising the relatively apolitical means that individuals used to live, work and play in the city were in a sense “weaponized”; the tools and techniques of everyday life, those constituted by the city and its exigencies, were to be used as intentional, strategic tools for overcoming police and state repression. These other manifestations of citizenship would also then be used to directly assert a right to the state and to the city that was not merely a demand for greater representation within the political apparatus, but a right that claimed the primacy of many of these alternative types of citizenship and sociability against the state and its machinery. Even if these mechanisms were ultimately temporary in their full, explicit form (when the situation after the occupation of Tahrir was dispersed by the army largely “normalizing” by a return to formal questions of governmental politics). The expression they achieved during the initial uprising was a key factor in its success and influences both the form and content of the political demands stated. Furthermore, insofar as these latent forms of association and citizenship were not destroyed, they provide the prospect of continuing alternatives to the politics of the formal city.

The Egyptian state, as it participated in processes of globalization and the production of a certain political and economic order, used a specific and perhaps crude

set of police tactics to deploy and enforce this order. These strategies were linked to certain notions of orderliness or normative behavior that compelled the state to heavily stigmatize any public spaces or public modes of appearance by citizens, seeking the abandonment of the city for new more rational, orderly towns in the desert that could be more easily controlled. At the same time, these strategies created gaps or openings in which inhabitants of the city developed modes of living and working without or outside of the state, compensating for its abandonment and circumventing police as best they could. These ways of being in the city were eventually used not just to combat this police apparatus but to provide the grounds for a different notion of the public and the state and an inclusive, performative notion of urban citizenship. The triumph of the informal over the state, if only temporary, represented in the discourse of the “republic of Tahrir” and a potential non-sovereign social body located in spaces *made public*.

INFORMALITY IN AN URBAN TRIPTYCH

David Sims’ recent *Understanding Cairo* (2011) provides a comprehensive and critical perspective on modern Cairo, drawing on difficult-to obtain technical sources and a wealth of experience with the city. The book also provides a relevant and at times contrapuntal view of Cairo’s informal development, processes overwhelmingly central to the contemporary city.³ In describing the background and recent history of Cairo as a city, Sims’ account does not describe two factors relevant to our inquiry here, discussed below, as it is out of the scope of his own ambitions to explain the logics or mechanisms that

³ His first chapter, “Imagining Cairo” lists and criticizes the following tropes: Cairo as History (fixation on Fatimid Islamic Cairo), Cairo as Nostalgia (myopic obsession with the belle époque of 1870-1925), Cairo as Monster and Unmitigated Mess (the government’s unfounded obsession with the notion that rural immigrants are destroying the city), Cairo as Part of the World of Slums (a nonstarter generalization), The Imperative to Refer to the Global (an academic fixation, relevant but often overemphasized in terms of its novelty and depth), Tomb Dwellers (a favorite trope of journalists, grossly exaggerated)

contribute to the city and the informal city's functioning. Those mechanisms are the effects of neoliberalism on the state and related state (and corporate) interventions in the city and on its citizens, and the second related issue being the policing of spaces, formal and informal, and people. Nonetheless, I will draw heavily on this work in this section, except where otherwise cited or mentioned.

Cairo is not all of Egypt, but in many respects, due to its huge share of the country's population, its role as a center of employment, and its position as the seat of the central government, Cairo is arguably Egypt's most important city. Considered a "primate city," having more than twice the population of the country's second largest city (Alexandria) and at least double the importance, Cairo, furthermore, is itself a paradigmatic, if not extreme reflection of many urban processes found in Egypt as a whole. Egypt is at least 67 percent urban (well over 90 percent if US census definitions of urbanized areas are used as a reference) and growing rapidly, and Cairo, with its centrality to Egyptian political life and mirroring of the country as a whole, exists "more in symbiosis than in tension with the rest of the national economic space" (Sims 2011, 36). Consequently, Cairo finds itself as a privileged site of analysis occupying a special—if not formally unique—place in the Egyptian state. Furthermore, because of its centrality it becomes not just the primary site of state power but also the primary target of state expression and policing of that power.

Sims describes the modern city of greater Cairo as "three cities in one"; the formal city (those areas within the recognized municipal boundaries of Cairo), the informal city (sites of unpermitted or unregulated growth surrounding the formal city), and the desert city (ambitious "new town" schemes in the periurban deserts). The formal and desert cities receive the lion's share of the government's resources and revenue in terms of investment, but also in terms of policing, regulation and attention, while the informal city

accounts for an overwhelming proportion of the city's population and economy surviving with only "minimalist" attention from the government, if in spite of not outright contempt.

The formal city, a mix of historic neighborhoods and Cairo's planned expansions, continues to grow at a steady rate, with relatively continuous infrastructural investment (the most striking being the creating of a massive if not completely ad-hoc flyover and highway system serving the increasingly car-obsessed upper classes), moderate construction of new housing units by the government, although it seems that Cairo's formal quarters may be nearing their absorption capacity (notwithstanding the significant number of vacancies in apartments in downtown and other formal areas). The government's preoccupation with the perceived overcrowding of the formal city, along with a continuous—even perverse—emphasis on modernization and order have had two major consequences for the formal city: the first is the continuous, if only nominally successful to date, attempts to relocate the offices and sites of government and administration outside of the bustling formal city into the planned new towns on the peripheries (Sims 2011, 56); and the second is the irregular history of slum clearing or the eviction of small workshops or informal businesses from these areas (Sims 2011, 57-58; Elyachar 2005). Even in this latter case, however, the government has been restricted in its ability to undertake any significant slum clearing projects or totally succeed in evicting undesirable businesses, as strong cultural and legal barriers to putting a family out combine with the general malaise or limited capacity of authorities to undertake such projects.⁴

⁴ Notable exceptions to this are, however, the clearing of Bulaq and Rod al-Farag for "prestige projects" like Cairo's "World Trade Center," also notable for the fact that the state has no qualms in relocating displaced individuals on agricultural land far from the City they lived in or poorly maintained housing projects in peripheral areas (See, e.g. Ghannam 1996; Florin 2009).

The present engagement with the formal city by the state, however, is heavily conditioned by their longstanding fixation with the creation of new towns in the desert.⁵ From the early days of Sadat's *Infitah* policy, the first wave of neoliberal economic reforms in post-Nasser Egypt, the perceived path towards a "modern" future for Egypt's cities was considered lateral expansion into the desert that lies to either side of the narrow band of habitation around the Nile. Several of the early new towns of the 1970s, including Tenth of Ramadan and 6th of October cities, have had success as industrial and manufacturing towns at the edges of Cairo but not as centers of population (Sims 2011, 78-79), nor have any of the other new towns—the most recent of them eschewing affordability and shooting for luxury and exclusivity—seen any real significant absorption of the City's population and plagued by high vacancy rates and incomplete build-out. Despite their extreme dependence on speculation—whether the imaginative longings of central planners or that of developers and investors—Cairo's new towns are in many ways the primary focus of the central government. The planning and development of these new desert cities has only accelerated in the wake of Egypt's 1991 IMF/World Bank lead structural adjustment, yet they are increasingly less a comprehensive population solution and more a transparent attempt to create gated refuge for the elites of the city, part of the state's continual "preoccupation with the high end of the housing market and the level just below it" irrespective of actual demand drivers. Significant government investment has nonetheless been piped into these new towns, and even private developments have benefitted from sale of government land for literally pennies, well below their market price

⁵ This fascination and obsession, and the relationship between the "fortress enclaves" of the new towns compared with the old city are worth discussing further below, particularly as it relates to the mobility and mobilization of the state out of central Cairo, and both the planning and policing of the older city.

as the Egyptian government continues to survive on the notion that these new towns are a total solution to issues of congestion and overcrowding.

In contrast to the sanitization of the formal city and the irrational exuberance of the desert cities, the majority of Cairo's population growth and its determining form lies in the informal city, a city which has since the 1970s exploded in terms of population and built area, housing the majority of Cairenes, 63.6 percent (Sims 2011, 96), and hosting a large proportion of the city's economic activities. The course of informal development in Cairo is neither a story of unmitigated slum development or the bootstrapping of the "entrepreneurial" poor, but tends to provide reasonably affordable, acceptable quality housing for the majority of the city's residents. The primary drivers for the development of informal housing throughout Cairo seem to be the increasing unaffordability of existing housing stock combined with the insufficient production of new affordable housing or placement of such housing in incredibly undesirable locations. Additionally informality is accelerated by the relative neglect of the state on such issues and fairly draconian bureaucratic restrictions on permitting new construction and subdivision of properties (as part of the government's attempt to limit and restrict development in the city and "encourage" the development of formal new towns).

Development and expansion of the informal city tends to expand organically from the existing urban peripheries, as neighboring agricultural land is informally subdivided and parceled out to small-scale developers or families pooling resources to construct low-to-mid rise apartment buildings, with the occasional speculative tower perhaps reaching up to fifteen stories. Informal land markets and titling mechanisms seem to be fairly effective as well, providing relatively stable grounds for investment by owners if not access to formal credit and collateral. The general pattern of development seems to be relatively quick development of an area and habitation of the first floor of buildings to prevent

against the possibility of demolition or eviction until further resources can be marshaled to finish out construction. Middlemen, contractors in the informal market or others may also have a hand in bribing local officials and coordinating construction so as to avoid unwanted attention.

It should also be said that the informal sector is not entirely relegated to Cairo's urban poor—with the income band in informal areas in fact lying fairly close to that of greater Cairo as a whole, and with social development indices showing similar parity (Sims 2011, 111-112). Moreover, construction quality is acceptable if not of professional grade, and Sims notes by way of example that after the 1992 earthquake practically none of the collapsed buildings were to be found in informal areas. One of the major problems in these buildings is their generally tight layout along narrow streets, causing some problems with light and ventilation and creating difficulties for the circulation of automobiles (although car ownership rates in the city as a whole are still rather low). Infrastructural connectivity to these neighborhoods is surprisingly high, with rates of piped water and electrical connectivity well above 90 percent (Sims 2011, 106), although quality of service is varied and not as high as in the formal city, particularly with respect to solid waste collection. Deboulet (Singerman 2009) has noted that informality in Cairo spans the entire housing sector, from transitional or temporary low-quality housing to huge villas and McMansions at the edges of the city.

Much of the “slum” condition housing is not in the informal areas but rather in the historically poor neighborhoods within the formal city, suffering from land tenure issues that older, more dilapidated housing stock in many cases and general disinvestment. Other slum areas may be part of emergency housing built by the government, where squatters produced informal infill within these areas; however even in these cases it is often only a matter of time before they are themselves upgraded by residents or people

move on to other housing. Settlements (whether informal or formal) in periurban areas further from the city center—as even available desert land nearby is diminishing—also tend to be poorer. The major disadvantages found in informal settlements in Cairo tend to be a complete lack of any public space or greenery, irregularities in refuse-collection, microenvironmental problems related to daylighting, circulation and unreliable utilities, and—perhaps most damning of the state’s neglectful attitude—the almost complete lack of schools and other population services.

The informal city perhaps represents the average or median existence of the average Cairene, as the largely anonymous and individualistic processes of informality have created relatively cohesive neighborhoods with a housing stock that is relatively affordable and structurally adequate, and located reasonably advantageously with the rest of the city. Problems do exist within the informal city, and the stigma of these areas leads to both disparately low investment in them by the government and the ever-present, although uncommon or unlikely prospect of demolition or clearance. Cairo then is, in many ways, simply a city which has been produced informally, with many of the other monikers and epithets that usually attach to informal housing often falling short. Ultimately, outside of the normative notions often held about it, informality is merely another type of urbanization, a process by which cities are built (cf. Turner 1976; Ward 1999); this does not mean that there are not certain unique causes, characteristics and effects of informalization, but that these do not necessarily attach to informality considered as a mode of development and expansion. These conditions and the effects of informality, good or bad, are always the byproduct of the specific reactions by the state and the economy or the specific history of drivers of informalization.

Parallel to the spread of a large informal city, the informal economy in Egypt has similarly proliferated, tied often to the geographies of the informal city but also dispersed

through the entire City; this informal economy is dependent on space, very often public space, for its operation. By one estimate using OECD figures 35.1 percent of the entire Egyptian economy is informal (Schneider 2002). The small and micro-enterprises (SME), units employing one to four employees and often taken as a rough proxy of the informal economy, constituted over 90 percent of all of Cairo's private establishments in 1996 and the number of such establishments by 2006 estimates is 348,000 employing over 1.05 million workers (Sims 2011, 218). Many of these SMEs may be small workshops or manufacturing firms producing goods for sale in the local market, a substitute for the import substitution policies done away with during Egypt's liberalization. Additionally, it is estimated that Cairo has over 200,000 street vendors (Bayat 1997a) hawking goods without permits, often paying irregular bribes to policemen for the ability to operate on the streets, and many others working on the streets parking cars, selling tissues, wiping windows or engaged in other forms of marginal employment. Employment in the informal economy is largely at subsistence wages if that, and without what protections there might be in the formal sector or in highly-coveted government jobs (nonetheless many in formal sector employment may moonlight or work other jobs in the informal sector to compensate desultory incomes). It is also worth mention also that in larger informal areas up to 50 percent of residents may be employed in informal work within their own neighborhoods.

Thus, the current situation of the informal city, materially is one of nominally adequate construction and an economy servicing local needs (and, with its relationship to the tourism industry, some global) that is growing; through the efforts of Cairenes, working individually and collectively, they have achieved relative success at maintaining a basic standard of living even in conditions of almost no support from public institutions and the formal economy. This is not to say that the situation is easy, however, as it is clear

that real wages (in formal and informal sectors), purchasing power and standards of living have been falling since the late 1980s, stretching people progressively thinner and thinner. Furthermore, the fact that people have managed to eke out livings or even succeed within the informal city does not absolve the state of responsibility in the extreme actions of privatization, policing and abandonment of public programs that have pushed people into these organizational modes. It is clear that however residents of the city succeeded in producing their own modes of urbanization and markets, these transformations did not occur in a vacuum, being largely responses to the heavy-handed, even violent liberalization of the Egyptian state, and continually conditioned by its subsequent further deterritorialization, from the public sector and from public space.

In the case of both housing and the economy the term 'informal' is again misleading, as many of the jobs, workshops and industries of the informal economy are themselves directly or indirectly tied to the formal economy and even global circuits of capital, and much of the housing produced is responding to changes in the national economy as it effects employment opportunities and housing affordability. These connections in the informal economy may be linkages with NGOs, development programs and microfinance or they may be connected directly, filling in the gaps between the abstraction of the formal market and the means of production, distribution and trade by which it happens. The connection between the formal and informal economy in Egypt and Cairo is also causal, as the creation of the formal market in Egypt has required significant displacements, dispossessions, entitlements and mobilizations that produce supply and demand drivers for informality just as they provide the discrete instances where these abstract markets are made or avoided (Mitchell 2002; Elyachar 2005; Karim 2008).

SITES OF STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT IN EGYPT AND CAIRO

There is almost no literature on contemporary political and economic transformations in Egypt that does not discuss or at least mention the Structural Adjustment policies and increasingly neoliberal practices of the Egyptian state with respect to the management of the economy and its populations. While, as Sims notes in the introduction to his book, this focus on the global may at times obscure the actually existing processes and situation on the ground in favor of a narrative of globalization, it is no doubt true that global forces have thoroughly perforated the Egyptian nation state and that the state itself has openly ascribed to market fundamentalist ideologies, effecting transformations on the political and the economic spheres that have been deeply felt in the city and the interconnected countryside.

Mitchell (2005) shows how development organizations such as the IMF, World Bank and USAID, working in Egypt, placed the “object of development” outside of their own functioning and the political questions intrinsic to the Egyptian state. Using a series of arguably dubious figures and historiography, these organizations created a picture of Egypt that neutralized its political situation and instead incorporated it into the market as a natural, neutral “object of development,” to which only technical fixes needed to be applied (from the outside). This image of Egypt, one of an ancient, unchanging civilization now with too many people, too crowded, not enough food, and stuck in cycles of inefficiency and atavism has underpinned structural adjustment: “This image of a traditional rural world implies a static agricultural system that cannot change itself.” (Mitchell 2002, 223) These ideological constructions, separating the objects of transformation from those entities intervening, allowed for the portrayal of Egypt’s situation as natural and normative, and the application of violent adjustments as merely a rational, scientific solution to these depoliticized “problems,” while at the same time

allowing for a “continuous narrowing of...limited opportunities for dissent.” (2002, 296) The global market was created and produced in Egypt as an authoritarian, political extension of policies that worked through dispossession of Egyptian workers, peasants and tradespeople guised in the trappings of science and the active unraveling or destruction of noncapitalist markets and ways of work and trade (Elyachar 2005).

Egypt's incorporation into the global market thus came at the costs of, indeed required, significant dispossession of local farmer and concentration of wealth in large landowners through exposing Egyptian agricultural prices to subsidized American “aid” imports and through relaxing land tenure laws that had allowed small landowners some competitive advantage, allowing for and even encouraging the accumulation of large agribusiness companies that further distorted local markets. Protests by farmers and others against this were violently put down by Central Security forces, as the police effectively ensured the successful implementation of this free market. Protests, negotiations and the persistence of nonmarket ways of working, “captivist arrangements,” all played a direct role in the shape that the new market took, and Mitchell emphasizes that these processes and the resultant inequities of this new market were not the result of improper implementation or atavism external to the workings of the market, but processes intrinsic to its creation and function (2002, 271).

As many in this newly pauperized class sought opportunity in the cities, these processes of negotiation and deployment of the market continued. At the same time, Mitchell reports that a conference of American and Egyptian governmental and private actors interpreted this as a “release [of] additional labor for industrial employment...[to] ‘help keep real urban wages low and industry more profitable.’” (2002, 266) Industrial policies were no less sites of contestation and dispossession, as dogma about the inefficiencies of state owned enterprises, which were in fact almost all profitable

businesses, lead to the large-scale privatization of firms (which were often shuttered after being sold) and, more recently, the establishment of “Special Economic Zones” and “Qualified Industrial Zones” spaces of tax-free industry that were given flexibility outside of already loosened national labor protections and oriented towards direct duty-free export to the United States (Beinin 2009)⁶. These sites, only nominally within the national borders, were an attempted spatial fix to avoid the necessity of confronting opposition from nonmarket laws and labor organizations, as again the police were used to ensure the security of these transitions, continually putting down workers’ strikes and protests violently.

These people that were “freed” from the supposed bonds of bureaucracy, inefficiency and atavism by neoliberal reforms were pushed into informality, which was not a “traditional” or “old” way of working but is in fact a highly modern series of undertakings, created with and around the contemporary interventions of the Egyptian state as individuals seek niches through which they can establish their livelihoods. The greater irony, perhaps, is that even these informal markets, increasingly primary sites of value in Egypt as the national economy makes itself more and more unavailable to the average citizen, are now the target of International and local NGOs and development programs that seek to incorporate them into the formal market through “empowerment debt” and other mechanisms that seek to capture this value for the formal, neoliberal market (Elyachar 2005). These contestations within the economy continue in a dialectic of neoliberal and informal markets as this neoliberal economy attempts to expand into all

⁶ Part of the conditions placed on the Qualified Industrial Zones, moreover, is that in order to qualify for tax-exemption a percentage of the manufacturing inputs must be Israeli, an imposition established by trade agreements between the US and Egyptian government, which many workers and others in Egypt have considered an insult to their political desires to boycott Israeli goods and products. It should be noted as well that the tax benefit of the QIZ exists primarily because of the high tariffs that the US puts on the goods to be produced and imported by these factories.

aspects of Egyptian social life while individuals simultaneously seek to mitigate against such dispossession and engage in economic activities that serve their own needs—not necessarily those of the market ideology.

We can see, then, that the market does not come spontaneously or easily, with the process of neoliberal reform and development in Egypt taking place in such a dialectical and contested fashion, political and spatial mechanisms were developed to create the proper environment for the market to take its place.

GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENTALITY IN THE CITY VICTORIOUS

At the same time as the Egyptian government withdraws from centralized public administration and service provision and intensively promotes market liberalization and privatization, both of which have caused significant deprivation and immiseration of the Egyptian people, there has been no consequent liberalization in modes of political participation or bureaucracy, denying citizens the very means by which to challenge these policies. The Egyptian government has doggedly refused to accord political power even to local governments, much less allow direct citizen participation in urban affairs. The questions of development—urban and economic—are withheld from discussion in the political sphere, left to a small group of “experts” (or thieves) to make these decisions and the police to carry them out in Egypt’s cities.

This command-control logic exerted over cities is epitomized and reinforced by the custom of appointing governors almost universally from the ranks of police or military generals. Lower levels of municipal governance lack a “stable policy” (Sawy 2002) and are either hamstrung by systems of clientism and cronyism practiced by local elected officials or insufficient budgets, leading to further confusion, avoidance and ineffectiveness (Ben

Nefissa 2009). The “militarization” of the governorates by appointing governors out of the Army or police apparatus compounds the paranoid obsession with security of the Egyptian state, leading to the treatment of neighborhoods, particularly informal neighborhoods, in terms of their potential risks. Policing very often comes to substitute for planning or development, as marginally tolerated informal settlements are generally ignored outside of spectacular police actions such as the military’s 1992 siege and raid of the informal neighborhood of Imbaba (Singerman 2009). These general weaknesses of and opposition to decentralized or municipal government are only amplified in Cairo, which—housing the apparatuses of the central government and economy—experiences near total administration by the state (Vignal and Denis 2009).

This obsession with security is itself tied to a peculiar and intensely ideological vision of modernity and modern lifestyles that is hardly a new phenomenon in Egypt, in many ways a continuing legacy of colonial administration and the management of “other” populations (Adham 2004; Mitchell 1991; Çelik 1997). In this current incarnation, related to the neoliberal state’s attempts to deploy a rational, autonomous free market the state has effectively produced this other out of all those nonmarket forces (the poor, the informal, religion) that disrupt this utopian vision of the market, and in doing so allows for the sites of resistance to or interruption of market processes to become targets for change or suppression instead of participants in political and economic processes. Consequently, both the state and the “paranoid upper classes” of Cairo deploy a “denigrating language [that] borrows, reinforces, and fuses together a system of negative social signifiers, linking, for example, informality and marginality, informality and disorder, informality and poverty, and informality and rural origins or provincialism” (Deboulet 2009, 206).

This stigmatization and targeting of informal neighborhoods has at times involved developmental efforts targeting informal neighborhoods to attempt to bring these backwards “others” into line with modern subjectivity through the deployment of improvements to the built environment and other pedagogical or disciplinary mechanisms. Imbaba, for instance, after its besieging was the subject of a sudden attention that involved upgrading the neighborhood precisely by deploying formal infrastructures, markets and schools, backed by USAID and other international development groups; these mechanisms were subsequently credited with loosening the Islamic Group’s presence in the neighborhood, not the siege and attack, allowing the narrative of the curative power of the formal market to cover up both the violence that preceded it and the subsequently increased cost of living in the neighborhood (Singerman 2009).

Outside of such occasional sensational and vanity projects, however, the state plays a surprisingly small role in actually attempting to inculcate well behaved, modern subjects through pedagogy or investment in physical environments, which cannot all be explained by lack of financial or planning capacity. Dorman (2009) has proposed that the Egyptian state follows a “logic of neglectful rule,” whereby despite the fact that it has sufficient power to act by fiat, the state’s “capacity to penetrate and mobilize Egyptian society is consequently circumscribed” as it exhausts itself in a mix of “regime reproduction, clientelism, and top down distribution” while simultaneously its refusal to decentralize any power leads to state-society disengagement and weakens its regulatory authoritativeness. The Egyptian state is consequently both incredibly strong and incredibly weak, able to deploy spectacular force in the face of direct political threats to it but generally inactive in other realms, even preferring to reserve action to maintain the patronage and client relationships suiting its top-down order. This weakness will be

further explored below, as it quickly became a source of incredible strength for protestors once the knot between this policing and control over space was cut.

SANITIZATION OF THE FORMAL CITY

It is not just the informal that disturbs the Egyptian state, but the appearance of any political presence in public space at all, even within the formal city and in many of the grand modernist public spaces, heavy policing exists both to ensure against any sort of demonstration or political moves by individuals, but also as a means of keeping out any individuals who do not appear to belong as police will often hassle, drive off or even arrest poor citizens in public squares or more well to do neighborhoods. Since the mid-1970s, particularly after the Camp David Accords limited Egyptian military deployment into the Sinai, the internal paramilitary Central Security Forces (CSF) have been growing at an astonishing rate. As Egypt moved into a period of normalized relations with neighboring Israel and sought to project an image of stability abroad to secure its liberalization, the Egyptian government significantly rerouted its military strength back at its citizenry. Particularly as Mubarak took to power on the wake of the assassination of Anwar Sadat, the CSF jumped from roughly 50,000 troops to its current size of at least 325,000 troops (compared to the standing army's 340,000); estimates of the size of the CSF may even be much higher, between 400,000 to more than one million.

These paramilitaries are rather unapologetically organized to quell protests, riots or any other public gathering threatening the "public order," and in addition to substantial deployments during any such event it is not uncommon to see several hundred garrisoned at any given time in box trucks behind the Mugamma' building in Tahrir square. Typifying the other hand of the "neglectful" state, while the government has been

relatively passive about its dealings with the informal city, it has had no such reservations in policing public spaces, extending its the logic of orderliness to an extreme degree and effectively criminalizing any appearing of bodies in public. The police logic of Egypt is not limited to political disorder either, and control of public space takes on a comprehensive character. Samuli Schielke, describing the policing of Cairo's *Mulids*, Sufi saints' festivals, is worth quoting at length here:

Control of public space in present day administrative practice is a complex form of power that extends not only to the movement of citizens but also to the meaning and the representative image of that space. It implies anti-insurgency planning designed to prevent the uncontrollable movement of crowds even at the cost of everyday functionality, but it also involves a more profound power over the use and appearance of space. This power of definition is conceived of in aesthetic terms, along oppositions such as cleanliness and filth, order and chaos, or calm and noise...A public place that falls short of these aesthetic criteria is out of control because it is not functional in the imagery and structure of the hegemonic modern city. (2009, 98)

The *mulids*, popular celebrations usually taking place in Cairo's older Islamic quarter, conflict not only with the state and upper classes' notions of modernity, cleanliness and order, but with their ecstatic, carnivalesque atmosphere and emphasis on suspension of everyday life and the temporal inversion of social roles, the *mulids* represent a use of the street and public space that does not fit into any productive economic activity or formal modes of appearance or circulation.

In addition to direct mechanisms of policing public space to create the aesthetic appearance of order and rationality, the Egyptian government seemed continually dedicated towards the transformation of public spaces into disneyfied, theme-park environments. Sorkin defines the theme park city by three characteristics: the dissipation of all stable relations to local geography and specificity, an obsession with security, surveillance and segregation, and a reliance on simulation and semiotics to produce

impressions of a particular lifestyle (1992, xiii-xiv). Islamic Cairo, home to both many of the city's cultural sites and the city's older 'popular' neighborhoods, has been the site of extensive historic preservation work segregating traditional public spaces from local users (Elsheshtawy 2009) as well as attempts to turn the traditional markets and streets into an open air museum sanitized of its local commercial activities (Williams 2009) or undertake rehabilitation projects on historic buildings without consideration of the socioeconomic contexts of the neighborhoods (Ibrahim 2009). The recent construction of the Al-Azhar Park in the area, a huge walled park funded by the Aga Khan Trust, has been a centerpiece of this sort of development, and while it may also be intended for the people of Cairo, it is difficult to access and the entry fee quickly becomes prohibitive for an average Cairene family. (El-Amrani 2008)

Finally, in downtown Cairo there has been a series of plans aimed at revitalization and repackaging of the area as a heritage site for tourists and upper-class Egyptians. Partially built on similar narratives of returning orderliness to space through rehabilitation and sanitization, the Downtown redevelopment efforts in particular partake in a nostalgia mode that romanticizes the monarchic past for many of the same exclusionary and normative reasons. Within the past few years, various schemes have been floated to give downtown a "makeover" or "facelift". Most of these schemes were spearheaded by Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif, appointed in 2004 and behind an intensive second-wave of privatization of many remaining state owned industries (Beinin 2009), supported by the Ministry of Housing and their urban-planning department. These various plans have been filled with the same logic and rhetoric of spatial control and the fetishization of the Haussman-esque planned orderliness of the Khedivite city coloured with a rhetoric of decay and disorder that is entirely comfortable with displacement of "uninhabitable" homes and "not productive" businesses (Wood 2010). The National

Organization for Urban Harmony (NOUH)⁷, backed by the ministry of Culture and first lady Suzanne Mubarak herself, set out a mission that “embraces all activities that aim at improving the visual image of cities, villages and new urban societies” and explicitly aimed at having “values of beauty prevail all over the Egyptian urban space.” No populations or even economic activities are mentioned, much less considered (except as they are targeted for removal), in the clearly aestheticized vision of the city presented by NOUH, which has approached the city in its projects as a series of historic buildings reflecting nationalist nostalgia faced with the “problem” of any number of things which actually constitute urban life in the city decried as “noise,” “visual pollution” and “sprawl of informal activities and land uses” (National Organization for Urban Harmony 2010).⁸

Furthermore, these plans not only seek the creation of aestheticized heritage sites amenable to the tourists staying in downtown hotels, but also the creation of upscale and luxury living within a pedestrianized the city center (as opposed to the currently “unsightly” traffic), as development firms usually associated with new town construction have begun buying properties in downtown. None of these missions even seem to take into account existing populations or inhabitants of the city, at best dismissive of them. Finally, the “Cairo 2050” plan, an optimistic if not totally absurd vision of the city 40 years into the future, presented spectacular claims and images for the development of the city,

⁷ A strange enough name in itself, the acronym NOUH spells the Arabic for Noah, presumably showing the naked desire to create an ark and flood out all the riffraff and decay. See: http://www.urbanharmony.org/en/en_defintion.htm

⁸ NOUH appears not to have skipped a beat in the post-January 25th era, rehashing some of its old renderings of plans for an aestheticized Tahrir square (all devoid of people). More amazingly, perhaps, the organization has posted a document to its website decrying the burning of historic or culturally significant police stations by “thugs”, adamant that the “youth” would never burn or destroy anything. The lack of context and single-minded focus on preservation as a question of aesthetics is brought into almost comic relief here.

hardly concealing the demolition of large swaths of the city and displacement of hundreds of thousands of low to middle income residents necessary to achieve it.

In all of these treatments of the formal city, government action moves hand-in-hand with private real estate development and commercialization, replacing homes and businesses serving the city's population but not according with ideologically charged representations of modernity and development with their globalized, corporate equivalents. The transformation of streets in particular, whether as outdoor museums, shopping centers or pedestrianized leisure zones, is a common factor in all these different deployments, replacing the heterogeneity of the Egyptian street with sanctioned, surveilled uses oriented around conspicuous consumption or leisure. As Sorkin notes: "The new city has the power simply not only to bypass the traditional scenes of urbanity but to co-opt them, to relegate them to mere intersections on a global grid for which time and space are indeed obsolete." (1992, xv)

NEW TOWNS, THE END OF SPACE IN THE CITY

Complementing these deployments within the city, the development of new towns represented a further spatial reorganization of state power, the economy and public space that would complete this desire for a rational, ordered city insulated from the "internal other" and amenable to private capital investment, "project to reformulate the paradoxical neo-liberal, neo-monarchical appearance of an alliance between entrepreneurs and public elites" in support of an industrial engine that serves the advantage of a small cadre of politically well connected elites within the space of a "new hybrid, globalized Americano-Mediterranean life-style" (Denis 2009). Their development and construction, heavily subsidized by the state, has also allowed developers to make windfall profits that,

despite their speculative and ephemeral footings, allow the State to further tout and justify the economic boon of its policies (Sims 2011; Mitchell 1999a). While the new towns generally— proposed as a “solution” to Cairo’s lack of planning and perceived overcrowding since Sadat—have always represented attempts by the state to exert greater control over the spatial environment and the population and economy of the city contemporary production of almost exclusively upper-class environments along with “high-tech” business and financial enclaves and the relocation of much if not all of the State’s administrative and bureaucratic organs represents a much more dangerous, if not sinister, precedent.

These new luxury towns clearly attempt to create semiotic references to a global leisure class, often using luxurious foreign or English names, featuring American/European retail and restaurant chains, and employing eclectic, neotraditionalist motifs that reference American and European culture as much as they point to nowhere at all (Denis 2009; Mitchell 1999b). These symbols of global consumption and prestige are bolstered by reassurances of exclusivity, as a common theme in advertising materials make tacit but strong references to their “safety,” security and surveillance measures and gated defenses (Kuppinger 2004). At the same time, a growing network of highways, whose logic is unclear from a planning perspective (although likely planned collusion between traffic engineers and speculators looking to “leapfrog” development), have been built primarily to service these new commuters with little or no access to intermediate neighborhoods, and combined with significant investment in high speed, specialized broadband and telecommunications networks have created a system of “tunnel effects” (Graham and Marvin 2001, 201) across the city to link these new exclusivities without the interruption of potentially risky spaces or populations.

In its current incarnation, exurban development in Cairo, despite being a relative failure in terms of actually redistributing the population of the city (Sims 2011; Fahmi and Sutton 2008), nonetheless accomplishes two goals. First, the inability, described above, of the “neglectful state” to achieve substantial social or disciplinary penetration of the city spaces of Cairo is circumvented by the production of new spaces where panoptic urban design and technological surveillance create a backdrop for the production of a spatial governmentality tied to “modern” behaviors of consumption and participation in global capitalism: “this economy works by developing places, within Cairo or at its outskirts, as urban oases for visual and cultural consumption.” (Adham 2004, 162) The Egyptian state is thus able to use these new towns to project the image that it was unable or unwilling to inculcate within the city. Similar to the token reinvestment in Imbaba after the siege but on a massive, more exclusive scale, the state believes that proper spaces will lead to proper behaviors. Creating spaces in line with the calculable, rational logic of the market also compels that the behaviors undertaken in those spaces will similarly conform to those logics, or when they do not conform they will be immediately apparent and easily suppressed (MacCannell 1999).⁹

Whereas it is ultimately uncertain to what extent these aspirational forms of environmental determinism might take hold on the residents (and perhaps unimportant, as both the costs of living in these new communities and their social selectivity make for a rather small, homogenous population already), the production of these new towns represented another set of spatial strategies that the state was already well on its way

⁹ Elyachar’s study area of El-Hirafiyeen, a new town built to relocate those craftsman displaced by government regulations prohibiting the operation of their businesses downtown, shows how these new spaces conditioned and affected the work of the various craftsman as well as their social lives. Elyachar also notes, however, that many of the residents of El Hirafiyeen nonetheless were able to a certain extent to adapt around their new environmental conditions and use the spaces to suit themselves, even when these desires contradicted their formal logic.

towards achieving. Caldeira describes how the production of fortified spaces in the neoliberal city represents the retreat of elites from public space and the creation of an alternative, homogenous and exclusive public sphere, combining status and security in a “process which elaborates social distance and creates means for the assertion of social difference and inequality” (1996).

Beyond the obvious dangers of the constitution of an imitation, choreographed public and the simulacrum of social life for the wealthy in these periurban enclaves, however, we should also note that in Cairo these techniques have been accompanied by placement of all new major commercial, business and financial projects in similarly isolated (with respect to the city center) non-places, along with attempts to relocate the offices of government itself to the desert towns in the name of easing up the “inefficiencies” of the central bureaucracy building. The incorporation of all privileged political and economic sites of the city alongside exurban luxury development is not just the production of spatial inequality or the normalization of space against the risk of an “internal other,” it is the absolute deterritorialization of the state in city, aimed at the production of a nonspace populated only by the an abstract, national sovereignty and its connections to the global market, effectively leaving behind only police and paramilitary riot police in the city. Especially considering the direct control of the central government over Cairo, where municipal governance had already effectively been dissolved into the state, this deterritorialization becomes more acute and its outcomes more deeply resonant.

This in many ways represents the apex of the neoliberal/authoritarian project in Egypt, the use of a spatial fix to eliminate or efface the state and the market from the space of the city. This production of sovereignty with almost no spatial referent left within the terrain of the city, were it to be completed, could conceivably cut off the entire city from

any means of political contestation. The central city, informal and formal, was in fact being left to decay as new fortunes were being sought by a state concerned solely with its own reproduction and the aggrandizement of a handful of cronies in the name of the market. This city would no longer have any public space to speak of, as the state tended long ago to completely abandon any such spaces leaving only police to ensure that they could not be used to mount protest. Similarly, the meaning of public space with respect to the state, as a possible realm for claiming rights or appearing as citizens, would be inconsequential as the constitution of sovereignty would at that point lie entirely outside of a city reduced to the desultory existence of an enormous camp, kept functioning at minimal levels by “development” efforts from the state yet entirely isolated from it.

Where the informal city in Cairo—unplanned and subject to the peculiar logic of the “neglectful” state—experienced a surprising degree of spatial independence from sovereignty and policing. Unwilling and unable to different degrees, the state did not penetrate the vast majority of the city spaces with any level of success, and with most individuals acting with a casual disregard for the government as they produced accommodating social arrangements, habitation, and livelihoods within the confines of the transformed, neoliberal city. The state, on the other hand, choosing to simply deem the problems of the city as insoluble, continued a consolidation of its own control over power and wealth in a fashion that increasingly attempted to avoid space entirely or to situate its activities in high-security enclaves far from the risk of these unpredictable others who did not conform to the modes of behavior it required to capitalize on. This tactic of displacement and othering, however it may have minimized policing (except in formal public places or other instances of protest) and allowed for a great deal of flexible social arrangements to arise, notably created a limit at the point of citizenship. This limit was produced first by the state’s assertion of direct control over the city and its public

spaces, then subsequently in the form of the spatial relocation of economic and political spaces tied both to the nation and the global order outside of the boundaries of the city, behind walls and lines of police and security guard.

Through the combination of intensive, violent policing of streets and other public spaces to prevent any direct claims to citizenship or alternative sovereignty, alongside the retreat of all other spatial instantiations of sovereignty, Cairo would be effectively effaced from the national order. Were the uprising of January 25 to have happened under conditions, perhaps several years later, where these state tactics had been fully carried out, it is uncertain whether a popular protests in the streets would have even been able to achieve anything, as those same streets square and spaces that would be used to make claims would at that point have absolutely no relationship to the state. It was under these conditions of urgency and the possible foreclosure of a future political potential for the city and the streets that people then did rise up.

Salma Ismail, in an ethnography of residents in one of Cairo's informal quarters, notes an oft-repeated phrase: "Here there is no state, here, the people live in a state other than the state" (*hina ma fish dawla, hina nas 'aysha fi dawla ghayr al-dawla*). Similarly, other informants of hers described the state broken in to bits, "*dawla mafakaka*" (Ismail 2006, 165). Her informants' experience was simultaneously one of people living without a state, but subject to the "state within a state" of an irrational, corrupt, and violent police order. Another of her informants noted "Things were better when there was no government," referring to the situation in the neighborhood before any attempts at regularization and policing were made there. In Ismail's descriptions of life in the quarter we see that residents had substantial informal methods of dispute resolution and other forms of negotiation through and in the city. These individuals had little desire for or need of a state that had completely disengaged itself from any social purpose, remaining

only in its capacity of extracting profit out of the city and heavy handed policing that used violence and fear for the sole end of “neutraliz[ing] the population” (2006, 154). She compares the nature of this “state that does not exist, but is everywhere” to Navaro-Yashin’s formulation of Zizek’s “cynical agent” who “knows that the state is not all powerful but acts as if it is. Long after recognizing the fakeness of the state, the subject continues to act as if he/she believes in its existence as such.” The spectacular corruption of the police, in this case, allowed for the constitution of this doubling, wherein Ismail’s informants could recognize the paltry weakness of the state’s powers to surveil, to discipline or to order space, at the same time as they were held in constant thrall by the potential of random police harassment, arrest or torture. (2006, 168)

This fear set an upper limit on bottom-up collective action in Egypt. In the aftermath of the withdrawal of the social state (both in terms of social welfare and social control or discipline), Egyptians created informal mechanisms to meet the needs of daily life and produce meaning around the neglect of the state that did not exist. However, what understanding of the “nonexistence” of the state that people possessed remained a negative proposition, an affirmation only of a void or a lack, maintained by police whose primary, even sole role was to prevent the public appearance of citizens or their free expression and interaction in public. Informal life in Cairo, as robust and vibrant as it is, was limited to essentially private relationships of family, religion, contract, and leisure (although these too were limited in scope and location). During the protests, however, there would come a moment where this negative proposition would change, and instead of the city being marked by lack, a new proposition would emerge. The very same words of Ismail’s informants, “there is no state” were heard, but instead of there being nothing else said on the matter protestors chanted “we are the state” and “we are the government.”

This shift represents the fundamental if incredibly thin line between informal life and a revolutionary moment. The recognition of the absence of the state is transformed from a point of cynical finality to the beginning of something else, produced by the exact same means of informal life that had apolitically organized the spaces of the city and peoples' relationships to and knowledge of those spaces. Through the accrual of these spatial tactics over the course of days of protesting, chiseling away at what was left of fearfulness, forcing the state to expose how deterritorialized and spatially weak it was, literally exhausting it, and occupying the same spaces it had hollowed out, a discursive switch occurred and an immanent concept of citizenship began to emerge, produced not on lines of membership (an ontological or virtual category) but participation (produces new definition), and whose legitimacy came from presence in the city and in public.

RECAP: CITIZENSHIP, OPPORTUNITIES FOR MOBILIZATION AND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF SPATIAL GROUNDS

The modes of insurgent citizenship discussed above in many ways presume an urban geography which still maintains the trappings of universalism, as in Holston's study of Brazil's inegalitarian universalist disjunction, or as Balibar describes it, the latent possibility of "a universal right to politics, *wherever* one is 'thrown' by history." (2004, 321) The dual moves of the Egyptian government to ossify Egypt as a timeless, stable civilization by the Nile and their harsh removal of urban governance from the city, however, make these types of formulations seem difficult to obtain. It is uncertain how the "law talk" that Holston describes, for instance, would translate into an Egyptian context wherein there was effectively not even a legal framework to draw upon, rendered irrational and Kafkaesque by sixty years of cronyism, emergency laws and police abuses

and thirty years of lawless managerialism.¹⁰ At the moment where an Egyptian citizenship was to be claimed then, it would have to come not just into contact with the spatial distributions of power in the neoliberal city (which is the primary analytic concern of the right to the city literature) but with the nation state itself; national power was a prerequisite to any potential right to the city. This in turn would have to be claimed through the taking and occupation of space and its production as a politically relevant quantity once again. The city had to be swept clear of the state and reconstituted as public space before a right to it could be claimed.

At the same time as the authors discussed above propose mechanisms by which alternative modes of citizenship can be performed or produced through various modes of practice that subvert the state's processes of governmentality or challenge exclusionary definitions of citizenship, they have left relatively unresolved the *contribution of the actual spaces in which these modes of subjectivity are produced*. Asef Bayat (2007), asking "does Islamic militancy have an urban ecology?", largely refutes the notion that Islamism thrives in informal areas and poorer neighborhoods in Egypt. He notes that ideology and politicization are time, risk and money intensive and distant from the practical ability and

¹⁰ In a telling, albeit anecdotal, example, I was once travelling in a Taxi with a group of friends, all of them young Egyptian men in their twenties, when we were stopped at a police checkpoint. Told to step out of the car, officers began to search our bags. One of my companions, when an officer made a move to frisk him to see if he had "something" on him, told the officer "That's not your right." The officer, merely laughed, and called his superior over and asked my friend to repeat this. The irony, however, goes further as my friend when he first said these words said them in English, not in Arabic; a native speaker who had not spent significant time outside of Egypt and whom I had never heard casually use Arabic as many educated Egyptians are fond of doing, did not use the Arabic to phrase his claim, even though the phrase "Da mish min haqak" was a common idiom. In Egypt, however, the phrase was sparingly if never used to refer to actions of government or authorities but in interpersonal exchanges, where right was construed not as a question of political rights but in the framework of social obligations and even neighborliness. To tap into the political meaning of the term, my friend had to resort to a totally different language. This is not to mean that Egyptians did not have concepts of political rights, social justice and like, to be learned from Americans and other Northern nations, but rather that these concepts were so alien in the face of the state that they could not be used in that valence.

daily lives of the urban poor, whose politics are defined by the localized struggles of informal life, a politics not of protest but of redress (2009, 59). Informal life in Cairo is marked by a high degree of informality, not just in terms of the significant majority of the population who live within informal areas, but even formal neighborhoods are permeated and perforated with informal activities of the poor such as street vending, begging, or informal service work, but also among the middle and upper classes even informality is a necessary tool. The spatial departure of the state from the city affects even formal interactions and economies within the city, as negotiation, reciprocity and other forms of particularized, local relationships were much more accessible and stable even than the abstract formal alternatives, oriented outwards and far from where over 90 percent of the population of Cairo (rich and poor alike) actually lived, formal and informal (Sims 2011, 83).

Combining a notion of the “neglectful state” with a geographic limitation of Agamben’s notion of sovereign biopolitics, we can begin to see how conditions in Egypt were available for different, even radically independent modes of subjectivity to arise, even if routes to citizenship—in terms of a right to the city—had been closed off by the absence of any public spaces to base them in, given the disappearance of urban targets to mobilize against or with respect to; one should not underestimate the presence of a large architectural or institutional symbol of the state for protest.

The absolute deterritorialization of the Egyptian state from the cityspace created an incredibly effective mechanism for the deployment of intensive neoliberal reforms and the reproduction of the regime safe from spaces of risk (it is in this light perhaps that we should see the many discussions of commentators about the relative unlikelihood or even impossibility of a revolution in Egypt). This deterritorialization was at the same time perhaps the most stark abandonment by the state of the political realm—as embodied in

public spaces and the urban environment. This was moreover made even more extreme as the centrality of the state to municipal governance in Cairo left almost no vestiges of the state to be found in the city besides the reservation of substantial police force to prevent the constitution of alternative oppositional political sovereignties (as was the case in Imbaba). At the same time, however, the Egyptian people, clearly aware of the desultory nature of urban government and the uncaring, almost worthless quality of the state, had developed incredibly robust means of working in the absence of its services and through the quiet encroachment on its material basis.

The zealous, even fanatical fixation on the desert cities as the key to development meant that such quiet encroachment effectively covered the entire city, as the policies of disinvestment in the urban core meant that the only limits on encroachment activities would be the those set by the police, concerned essentially only with political activity and willing to take the occasional bribe in order to not be bothered with dealing with anything else. The result of this almost total encroachment over the city, as it would be seen, meant there was no space in the city that protestors did not know more intimately than police, where they were not able to draw on these modes of living and experience that they had in those places to defeat forces that had for years only considered these spaces for the purposes of getting rid of them.

Put lightly in retrospect, if not unseriously, it seems that the only things that were missing to constitute this new state as the legitimate body of the Egyptian people and usurp the existing state's legitimacy were a trigger to set events in motion and enough bodies to defeat the Central Security Forces. The Egyptians who went out into the streets on the 25th absolutely did not know this at the time, but as events came together in a mix of serendipity and necessity, through both tactics and sheer determination, hopelessness even, the recognition of this fact began to dawn on the protestors. The state,

materialized and shown conclusively in its weakness, began only within a few days to be spoken about as if it had already or long ago disappeared. The ability of Egyptians to claim this dissolution, and their own direct legitimacy as a ruling body constituted in the spaces of the city, was the claiming of the city as a space of potential political legitimacy and the rejection of an administrative military, market state that only sought to bury these spaces of heterogeneity, interaction and even agonism.

5. PROTESTS IN THE CITY

The forces that it would take to upset this spatial order, to dislodge the hold of police over the city and reclaim public spaces of the city as spaces of protest and urban life, would thus require a linkage of insurgent practices or the encroachment on the state and its urban institutions and infrastructures with more overt political action, particularly as the Egyptian state functioned primarily not through administrative and institutional arrangements but on the basis of a policing apparatus that negated even basic propositions of urban citizenship and political life in the city. Also, due to the linkage between the national government and Cairo, the claims and contestations that would be made would require—and did indeed see—the combination of a national politics with an urban politics. Even as these types of claims were perhaps not the explicit goals of the protests as they first began, the sequence of events saw the coextensive development of both macropolitical demands for system transformation and significant changes to the way Cairenes treated public space, moved through it and inhabited their city.

These new formations were nonetheless based on existing modes of practice and everyday life, as the state's police tactics in the city had played a part in shaping the informal city and as Cairenes had already developed latent modes of organization and management of the space learned from in many cases literally building the city themselves. In the following narrative of the protests beginning on the 25th of January, it should become evident how the sovereignty of the state over the city, as much as it relied on the suspension of law and constant threat of police violence, was nonetheless far from totalizing over city spaces. As the inhabitants of the city seized the opportunity to disrupt the state's functioning and retake the streets they profoundly transformed their

relationship with the city, their relationships among one another as inhabitants and as citizens, and the relationship of the city and its spaces with the conditions of any possible or real Egyptian political community.

CHOCOLATES, FLOWERS AND TEAR GAS

January 25th was Police Day in Egypt, commemorating an event in 1952 where Egyptian police officers in the Ismaïliyya province, refusing to give up their weapons and evacuate the station, were besieged the British army. Fifty officers died that day, leading to riots and protests against the British. Made an official holiday in 2009 by President Hosni Mubarak, Police Day was promoted by state media as an occasion to show thanks to the Egyptian police forces and to 'bring them chocolates and flowers'. In 2011, however, the particular ironies of these invitations were palpable, as it had been less than a year since a young Alexandrian by the name of Khaled Said was publicly beaten to death outside an internet café by Egyptian police after refusing to give them a bribe. State media coverage, particularly that in the government-run Al-Gomhoureyyah newspaper, was particularly vitriolic, vile even, falsely claiming without basis other than the Ministry of Interior's own word that the young man had been involved in drug dealing and had avoided his compulsory military service. Two side-by-side photographs quickly circulated: the first, Khaled's portrait, the second a photograph taken from the morgue of his body showing the extent of the horrific brutality visited on him. Public outrage was palpable, and protests rippled through Alexandria for weeks denouncing the police and demanding the fall of Mubarak for his culpability in the police state.

Police Day also came within a month of two other events that sat heavily on the minds of Egyptians. The first was the horrific bombing of a Coptic Christian church in

Alexandria on New Year's Day, which killed 23 and wounded over 90 people attending mass that day. These events raised the dreaded specter of sectarianism and the status of the Copts in the Egyptian state, a subject uneasy to Egyptians even as they would profess their belief in equal rights for all citizens regardless of religion. The Coptic population in Egypt, a minority hovering around ten percent of the population, has long been treated as second-class to the majority Muslims, particularly in matters such as employment (state and private sector) and the permitting and construction of new churches (which has been for years effectively impossible). Generally, these grievances have been silenced as the state spoke in terms of empty platitudes of national unity and harmony between Muslims and their "Coptic brothers," and ordinary Egyptians—many if not most of whom generally have good relations between Copts and Muslims and believe in equal rights and privileges before the state¹¹—feared the potential divisiveness of publicly discussing the Coptic issue and the potential existence and emboldening of Islamist elements within the society.

The bombing shocked the conscience of the Egyptian people, as their aspirational ideas of interfaith relations was called into question and their denial of any problems between the faiths was faced with a gruesome reality. The situation became worse as the Mubarak government, instead of attempting to seriously deal with the issue, repeated the same tired script that they always had and, advised people not to talk about sensitive issues and, perhaps most insultingly, filled the airwaves with patriotic songs and maudlin video clips of Muslim-Coptic unity and Egyptian nationalist imagery. In the days following the bombing, Copts in Alexandria took to the streets in large numbers in

¹¹ For an illustrative and frank discussion on the everyday relationships between the two confessional groups, see "Everyday Cosmopolitanism" in Bayat (2009)

protest against sectarianism, unjust treatment and anger at the gross mismanagement of the situation by the government.

Moreover, the days before Police Day saw the initial success of the Tunisian revolution, as Zine el Abedine Ben Ali, dictatorial president of Tunisia, fled the country to Saudi Arabia after massive protests against his rule sparked by the self-immolation and death of a young fruit vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi. Egypt saw at least six such self-immolations in the following weeks protesting immiseration by the government's economic policies and the injustice of the state generally. The Police Day protests had been planned in advance of these events, but to see the success of the Tunisians in overthrowing their dictatorship created an additional energy and anticipation around the planned demonstrations, even as Egyptians dismissed the possibility of a SidiAbouزيد in their own country.

Few people, consequently, expected Police Day to be a celebration of the service and virtues of the Egyptian police. Protests had been planned months ahead of time on the internet on sites such as the 700,000 member-strong "We are all Khaled Said" Facebook page and the page for the large April 6 Youth Movement (A group commemorating police killings of three workers during a minimum wage strike in 2008), and through small meetings and discussions between activists of all different political persuasions in Cairo, Alexandria and other Egyptian cities. The goal would be to march to the Ministry of the Interior building and stage a demonstration against police violence. The government, as well, surely knew about the planned protests as Central Security forces had been deployed in numbers throughout the Country, preemptively closing off streets near key buildings in Cairo and other cities. The security forces were following their usual script in anticipation of protests, and even though it seemed that they were expecting significant turnout in multiple cities, they took what would be considered usual

precautions against protests. This is to say that they assembled forces at the expected protest site(s) and waited to meet any arriving demonstrators with excessive numbers and force, augmented by plainclothes police officers and usually a significant complement of paid thugs used to intimidate and assault protestors.

Tuesday the 25th was chilly and the streets on the morning of the holiday were uncharacteristically empty, even for a holiday. People travelling around Cairo early in the morning reported seeing police already at key strategic positions in the city looking in many cases as if they had been stationed overnight (some were sleeping at their posts), but nothing else. Downtown, the usual locus of protest activities, was particularly empty and streets were closed off and police checkpoints established on many key streets leading into the city center. Cairo forces were deployed waiting for hours in front of traditional demonstration locations: the lawyers' syndicate, press syndicate, attorney general's building, ministry of the interior, the High Court building, and Ramses and Tahrir squares among others. The situation stayed quiet like this through the entire morning, with the tension and anticipation broken only by news of a protest of a few hundred in Dar El Salaam, a town to the south of Cairo.

Protestors were assembling, to be sure, but not in the locations and in the ways that security forces had come to expect. Instead of heading straight to key protest points, demonstrators had begun to march within their own neighborhoods across the city, beginning in small groups on side streets and collecting and massing until their numbers swelled, sometimes circling the same few small streets for hours. Reports of protests came first from neighborhoods outside of, and in some cases far away from, downtown, and at first in numbers of only a few hundred at a time if that large. Alternately chanting slogans against the government and encouraging people looking on from windows and balconies to come down and join them in the street, saying "Come down from your houses! We're

here to get your rights!” These small, scattered protests grew. Eventually, these groups began to join together on side streets and march towards main thoroughfares, made confident and in high spirits by virtue of the fact that they had been able to go for so long already without running into police presence. Moving out onto these boulevards and thoroughfares, protestors were shocked and then overjoyed as they suddenly realized that the small groups they had started in were suddenly numbering in the thousands and even tens of thousands and against all expectations something important was already happening.

Between noon and three o'clock alone protests were reported to have assembled in numbers in Mohandiseen, Ma'adi, Shubra, Dokki, Wekalat al Balah, Meit Uqba, Masr el Qadeema, Bulaq¹², and in downtown alone separate protests quickly formed in front of the NDP headquarters, the State Security building in Lazoghly Square, The High Court building, Abdul Min'am Riyadh Square, the Foreign Ministry and along the entire Nile Corniche, Ataba Square. It was in many cases as if the main streets in these areas went from being empty to suddenly filled with thousands and even tens of thousands of chanting demonstrators. Numbers aside, this sudden appearance must be attributable to the fact that protestors had indeed been marching in small groups within these neighborhoods for some time, collecting numbers in the safety of residential areas and then joining up together at main streets, giving the appearance of suddenness. Also, already reports showed that bystanders and people in their homes, first in Shubra, had

¹² To give a sense of the diversity of participation, these neighborhoods were (respectively): One of Cairo's wealthiest neighborhoods, home to several embassies and a commercial area featuring many American and European boutiques and brands; Another wealthy neighborhood, popular with American expats and flanked by several "popular" areas; a diverse middle and working class neighborhood home to Cairo's largest concentration of Copts; another upper-middle class neighborhood; a large market area known for secondhand clothing; a small informal neighborhood practically in the middle of Mohandiseen; Historic old Cairo; an older informal neighborhood in downtown.

begun to join the protests, encouraged by chants of the protestors to join them and likely by the realization that the situation then was already different from any other protest Cairo had witnessed. People at this point were already exuberant and overjoyed, having felt a sense of great accomplishment even in having brought numbers this large to the streets, irrespective of what they might then achieve.

The first confrontations with the police began soon after this, as protestors moved onto main streets and began moving towards downtown and key buildings and squares in the downtown area, with new groups of protestors pouring in at every intersection swelling the ranks. As crowds moved down large boulevards, with automobile traffic still stuck amidst them and trying to make its way through these new masses of people, the central security forces had initially difficulties setting up any sort of concerted response. The police at first attempted simply to form static lines, 2-3 soldiers deep, hoping that their presence alone would cordon the protestors; in other situations such lines of black-clad Central Security officers with Riot shields and truncheons may have been a deterrent.

Each time this happened, though, the protestors simply walked past the police with their hands above their heads shouting “peaceful, peaceful!” (“silmeyya, silmeyya”), leaving the officers standing amidst the crowd confused; this happened several times in most cases as the soldiers would be ordered to form a new line further back to the same effect. The sight of police in the streets—figures of violence held in-potential—which for so long had effectively frightened or cowed people from making a stand in the streets by their mere presence alone, was now insufficient to stop the marchers.

As protestors continued to move through the streets, many of these large groups began to make their way towards Tahrir square; the symbolism of the square was deep within the minds of the Egyptian people and many of the protesting activists, many of

whom went with memories of the last time they were able to take and hold it in numbers, in 2003 during the anti Iraq War protests. The square itself, a huge irregular area composed itself of different spaces, has twenty-three separate streets leading in to different parts, and spends most of its time as a gargantuan, congested series of traffic circles; within hours of initial reports of protests forming in neighborhoods, marching groups arrived almost simultaneously to Tahrir square from several main streets and bridges in huge numbers, even navigating around the light holiday traffic that had been taken by surprise. Police armored trucks fitted with water cannons had already been deployed in waiting, and as protestors approached they opened fire. Many people took a stand and withstood the barrages, while others rushed the trucks clambering on them and attempting to disable the cannons or obscure the driver's view. The trucks retreated after a certain point, and the mass of people began to push back against police in the square ultimately dislodging them and compelling them to retreat. The protestors had taken the square for the first time since the Iraq War protests: many people described the exhilarating rush at simply finding and standing on the grass in the center traffic island in the square.

Although not a terribly defensible space in itself, protestors had now reached and taken control of one of the central sites not only of symbolic power within the city and the country as a whole, but also a key strategic locus disrupting traffic and circulation between and through downtown to all the surrounding neighborhoods. The protestors had now transitioned from a state of simply standing up to the police to a state of tangible spatial and political gains. They were now engaged in an entirely different realm of possibilities, from doubting that the marches could even gather enough people to make an impression to now being convinced that they could hold the square, liberated from the control of the police and the state. Skirmishes continued with police for a while after the

initial taking of Tahrir, as riot officers would approach from one of the streets firing tear gas, and protestors would grab and volley the canisters back towards the police and assemble in human chains at the opening until the police were dissuaded from entering and fell back.

Having taken the square, demonstrators now considered the possibility of occupying the Parliament, which sat on a side street only about 500 meters away, and a large group moved down Qasr al-Ainy street towards where the parliament and several important ministry buildings stood. The police, prepared, had brought rocks with them. Protestors marching down this wide boulevard were pelted with bricks and pieces of rock from the uniformed security forces, and subsequently responded by returning the missiles; as the situation became more aggravated, police became freer in dispensing violence, dropping entirely the earlier pretexts of permitting peaceful demonstrations. These confrontations lasted for roughly two hours, and the disorganized and inconsistent tactics of the police gave protestors inside the square the impression that the security forces had not yet formed a concerted plan, and that they had clearly been caught by surprise. Some claimed to have seen the chief of Cairo police observing events from an apartment above a fast food restaurant directly overlooking the square. Even though this is unconfirmed it was clear that the police, their pride wounded and having lost the bulk of their authority the moment protestors refused to submit to fear and confronted them, would now seek to create a counterassault strategy to dislodge these demonstrators from the space.

Soon, around sunset, police attacked en masse from the northwest corner of the Tahrir at Qasr Al-Ainy Street with huge volleys of US-manufactured tear gas; protestors were driven back across the length of the square, stunned. Once the smoke had settled and people were able to regain their bearings, it was clear that the square still was still in the protestors' control, and that the disparity in numbers, the square still full of people

even as they fled the effects of the gas, forced the police to retreat just as quickly as they stormed in to maintain their control over parliament. Nonetheless, in the next few hours security forces continued to assemble and mass up in lines supported by armored trucks; at the same time as they realized that there would likely be more attempts to drive them out, protestors had already begun to plan a sit in and started setting up tents and blankets in the square. Their symbolic and tactical victories throughout the day, beginning with the surprise of finding that they were so many, and growing with each successive victory over the police, had given them the sense that a long-term occupation was now possible, that the area was not only defended enough for a sit-in but was also a space made valuable through their efforts. The persistence of demonstrators overnight in the square meant a gap or disruption of the government's ability to order, manage and police the people; an occupied space or territory would act as a mechanism for promoting, producing and operationalizing a revolt against the state. This revolt had not necessarily been planned as such, and surely among the majority of demonstrators who joined in there would have been no idea or inclination to stage such an event—even after witnessing the successes in Tunisia, Egyptians had been pessimistic. But now that the square had been taken, the thousands of people in the square saw this very clearly as their goal.

However, it was still evident that the police would not tolerate such an occupation; even if they had not yet responded with full force of arms against the marches and moving demonstrations, the continued presence of people in such a large and important public space was too great a threat to the normative order of the state and to their ability to maintain the image of total control over city spaces. Shortly after midnight the police launched an attack simultaneously firing hundreds of tear gas canisters into the square; the smoke was so thick people could hardly see well enough to run away, and the volleys did not stop even well after protestors had been choked out of the square. What is

interesting, however, is that at this point the scattered protestors did not simply return home to lick their wounds. Even knowing that they had lost a battle and that there would be no chance of retaking the square at that point, several groups of roughly a thousand each reformed and began a new march through downtown. The marches converged progressed onwards in the direction of Shubra, one of the neighborhoods with the biggest turnout earlier in the day and some of the most energetic confrontations with police. Despite being so late at night, the size of the demonstrations grew as people joined the marches from their homes or leaving cafes to participate. All along the route there would be occasional altercations with police firing tear gas or throwing rocks attempting to scare the protestors into dispersing, but these were unsuccessful. Momentum was kept up as the march reached Shubra, with high spirits and loud chanting. Around 5AM, however, the police had redeployed in Shubra and responded with severe beatings and tear gas dispersing people for the rest of the night.

Despite being beaten and scattered by the police, and having lost Tahrir Square, protestors knew that they had not only won significant tactical moments against the police throughout the day, but—in one of the most common refrains of the day—that they had broken down the “barrier of fear” (*hagiz al khawf*) that had up to that point separated them from the street. Having seen that they could defeat police, that they could not only amass numbers but also seize territory from the state and occupy a large public space, the protestors were clearly emboldened. The tactical and spatial gains of the day began to reinforce their political demands and will to see these demands through, protests had already been planned for Friday the 28th to continue the momentum of the day. These people, realizing the extent of what they had done: breaking through lines of Central Security officers and water cannons, braving rocks and tear gas to take a piece of the city, a formal public square, were already expressing sentiments that they had “done it,” that

they could in fact depose the regime, and even if they could not repeat Tunisia's example with these protests, there could be no return to the old political landscape.

The next two days would be relatively quiet, as protests had been announced next for Friday January 28th, planned as a "Day of Rage" (*Youm al Ghadab*). That there were no scheduled demonstrations for that Wednesday and Thursday, however, did not mean that there was not a great deal of activity going on; protestors were out in the hundreds, in Cairo (described below) but also in Alexandria and Suez and other cities, with Suez in particular seeing the brunt of state violence as the governor or local head of the interior ministry pursuing a hard-line opposition that included the first uses of live fire against demonstrators. Security forces remained deployed in numbers throughout the country, engaged in hundreds of small skirmishes and scrambling to distribute themselves across the landscape to regain control of the cities, likely realizing that even without large masses of demonstrators on the streets their former ability to project invisible power over the public was shaken.

FRIDAY: THE DAY OF RAGE

That recounting the events of the 28th may take up less space here than that of the preceding days is not meant to underestimate their pivotal importance in the Egyptian uprising. After all, the 28th was the day that police were soundly defeated by people both desperate and excitedly eager to take the city away from the state and the cops.¹³ At the same time, the police fought back with a ferocity and violence that was more than despicable, making the day's victories all the more valuable. Finally, the 28th marked the

¹³ In some respects, the protestors were not taking control back of these spaces, as it is arguable whether or not the state had control in the first place considering its deterritorialized spatial logics within the city; it may be more appropriate to say that they were asserting a public (collective, political) presence in these spaces against the attempts of the state to keep them decontrolled, empty voids.

beginning of a sustained occupation of Tahrir Square that would continue past the fall of Mubarak, creating a liberated space that worked as a machine for the production of revolutionary subjectivities and the development and distribution of the demands of the revolution.

Here, it is interesting to see in the narrative of the Day of Rage how the tactics begun on the 25th were learned and reflected on by the protestors, including their knowledge of and adaptation to the police tactics. Also, how the protestors acted—building on their previous subjective gains—with a direct intention to capture and occupy urban space, particularly Tahrir square, recognizing the power in a sustained spatial control over the city. Finally, it is remarkable how all this occurred without the use of the internet or cell phones—both of which had been shut off by the government in anticipation of the protests—as testament to the powerful internal organization that developed among protestors through on-the-spot deliberation, discussion and planning.¹⁴

Fridays in Egypt mark the beginning of the weekend and the Muslim Sabbath, and a typical Friday in Cairo saw empty streets until after the conclusion of midday prayers.¹⁵ The plans that had been in place before the revolution, to begin protests in neighborhoods, would be amplified insofar as it had been decided earlier that after prayers people would assemble from the mosques that dotted the entire city, giving them a basis to form groups and begin marches. Activists had been planning a similar distribution, having heard rumors that communications networks would be shut down

¹⁴ It is telling that the Government attempted to shut down infrastructural connections within the city, shutting down those means of connection, particularly the cell phones, that protestors had been using to share information and link different protest sites together. However, it is perhaps more telling that this strategy failed to work, that the latent skills of connectedness among people who had long been used to dealing with strangers and working through informal means of communication were just as robust.

¹⁵ Friday *Goma'ah* prayers in Egypt generally attracted even many non-observant Muslims to mosque, as it is considered a communal event, the word *Goma'ah* coming from the Arabic root meaning “to gather”

they coordinated closely but secretly and mostly through word of mouth to assemble in small cells in different neighborhoods in the city. Landlines were still operational, as were a couple of internet connections,¹⁶ and at least one “relay” that I know of had been decided on with a landline number distributed amongst activists for the possibility of occasional updates and further coordination. Nonetheless, the mosques provided natural sites for assembly and it seemed certain that once started the protests would have a momentum of their own.

Protests began quickly after the conclusion of prayers. In fact, within moments after prayers ended and in some cases before any actual protest activities had occurred police began assaults against people in the streets outside of mosques with tear gas, water cannons and stun grenades, likely accelerating the protests and galvanizing anyone who may have been uncertain about whether they would take part. Police were giving no quarter on the 28th, seemingly out with a vendetta after the events of the previous day, using more and “seemingly stronger” tear gas according to many of the protestors descriptions, rubber bullets and shotguns filled with rock salt in addition to water cannons and using armored cars themselves as weapons;¹⁷ use of live ammunition was also reported. As further proof of the security forces’ intentional attempts to escalate the violence, officers had even been observed dousing cars parked downtown with gasoline to be set on fire and blamed on protestors.

Protestors in all locations of the city seemed to be developing their own group strategies for movement and direction. On the 28th small protests began throughout the

¹⁶ One of the Internet service providers, Noor, remained functional throughout the blackout. The company however had perhaps only 10% of subscriptions in Egypt and most of these were tied to banks and corporations.

¹⁷ Several vans belonging to the United States embassy were also used by police to run over peaceful protestors. The US State department claims these vans were stolen from in front of the heavily secured compound in Garden City.

city in groups of perhaps no more than ten to thirty people, but could quickly swell to one to two hundred people, often started or kept together by activists or organized individuals familiar with the neighborhood, quickly linking up to where these small protests became, within a matter of a few hours, up to ten thousand strong. Imbaba was the site of one of Friday's biggest protests, and the former "Emirate" stronghold of the Islamic Group until the siege of the neighborhood was now a rather strong location for the revolutionary socialists and other politically aware youth, as well home to as a large population likely still incredibly resentful after the 1994 attack on their neighborhood. A small group of activists had planned earlier to go to Imbaba on Friday, to support the people there, particularly since it was anticipated that police would deal more harshly with protests coming out of the informal neighborhood than those with more middle class youth and trained human rights activists. The protests were at first hardly noticeable, small groups of less than fifty people—many if not most under the age of 16—winding through the neighborhood's back streets chanting "Come down! Come down!" to the residents. These small bands grew exponentially, and after an hour's time thousands of people had joined.

These protestors, angry and excited, waited until their number was somewhere between 5-10 thousand strong to start moving towards one of the main feeder streets leading to Tahrir. En route, tear gas would fly in from the mouth of a larger street, and people would scatter down side streets and rejoin. Crossing from Imbaba into the more upscale Mohandiseen, the protest quickly met a large contingent of police standing in between them and the direction of Tahrir; after a series of skirmishes and an intense amount of tear gas, the protestors decided to circumvent the police, and rerouted back through the side streets neighborhoods until they reached El-Galaa' square, a central

point of connection between Giza and the East bank of the Nile,¹⁸ at the tail end of an enormous demonstration that had been the site of significant use of force by police.

Elsewhere, or perhaps everywhere else, shortly before sunset, a critical mass of protests descended, nearly simultaneously on the square from multiple directions; the security forces were present in force at most of these points, and fierce battles ensued as protestors sought to find a point of entry against the continuous waves of tear gas and riot police; Qasr al-Nil bridge (at the other end of the same street where the battle for Midan el-Galaa' was taking place) was a particularly hard-fought scene with a long back and forth fight between security forces attempting to control this choke point as tear gas hung like fog over the Nile.

Throughout this epic turmoil, there was still a surprising amount of rather basic civility in evidence, as private citizens opened their homes to allow people to use telephones to let their loved ones know they were alive, and shopkeepers were handing out onions, vinegar and bottles of cola to ease the sting of tear gas for complete strangers. It is uncertain what the politics of these helpful people were, but even among those who may have vacillated on the actual question of Mubarak's departure, many if not most were very often tied to the protestors on seeing the extremity of the police response, and responded, if for no other reason, out of a civility that was different than the much stereotyped Egyptian hospitality. This civility was simply the recognition of the dignity of the person before them, and the consequent treatment of that person with just such respect, not the ingratiation of a host. It would not be uncommon to see a doorman or a

¹⁸ Normally, in a telling connection between the everyday and the revolutionary, the square would be filled with minibuses parked two to three rows deep by the bridge, taking fares to all parts of Giza; protestors identified el-Galaa' square as tactically important by virtue of their knowledge of that symptom, not through any prior strategy to take it or comparison of maps.

shopkeeper giving refuge to a protestor as police came by, then seeing them off with nothing more than a “God be with you” as they returned to the fray.

At sunset, roughly, many of these protests had broken through into the square and were attempting to drive police out once and for all amidst burning vehicles, water cannons and tear gas. It was clear that the protestors would not give up and that the police would not be able to beat them. Back in Midan el-Galaa’ protestors witnessed the surreal scene not of a forced retreat of the police but of their sudden disengagement in the middle the fight as a ranking officer issued an order and soldiers lowered their weapons and stepped aside.¹⁹ In many cases already defeated, the police were at least partly withdrawn shortly after sunset (around 8 or 9 PM) as the army entered Tahrir Square and downtown.

People cheered on the soldiers as they entered, and it was clear that as much as they welcomed relief from the assaults of police, they were also enacting a direct attempt to win over the hearts (and thereby the protection of) many of the soldiers and officers, just as they had attempted to do, less successfully, with the security forces.²⁰ Sporadic clashes with police continued for the next several hours, but it was clear that the day had been won by the demonstrators as the square filled with thousands and thousands of exuberant Egyptians.

Citizens had already set up perimeters at entrances to the square when army vehicles rolled in to the city, and a small mosque in an alley adjacent to Tahrir was quickly turned into a makeshift field hospital, with doctors arriving to treat the many wounded

¹⁹ There was a speculation among protestors that the police withdrew at least in part because they had run out of munitions

²⁰ The cheers of “the people and the army are one hand” that rang out often in the coming days, much to the bemusement of the international press, was used in an almost Pavlovian fashion as protestors would use it to either encourage the army to act in their favor in questionable situations or to give them “positive reinforcement” when they did do so.

from the police battles and medical supplies and food being brought in by car and foot from various parts of the city. Tents and blankets arrived the next day, setting up in the grassy traffic circle in the center of the square, known by protestors as “the garden”. Tahrir had now become a space separate from the city under the protestor’s control, open to the thousands of Egyptians who were already pouring in to the square but already clearly becoming a changed space, somewhere totally other in the wake of the unprecedented occupation and the battles that preceded it.

These events, as they took place, were connected to specific spaces, actors and tactics that guided the protests onwards and also helped them continue. The relationship of urban experience in the informal city to the protests and political demands of the protestors was a key factor not only in the success of the uprising on these days but also the way that the occupation of Tahrir square would transform the city in such an immediate and profound fashion. The above narrative has described some of these movements and tactics; the following sections seek to understand, at least in part, what specifically this connection was between the city and its protestors, and how in at least several cases the political was almost indistinguishable from the everyday.

6. HADA'A AND REVOLUTIONARY "STUFF": READING THE MANUAL

One of the factors that may explain the successes of protestors in defeating police on both January 25th and January 28th, the two main days of confrontation with police during the Egyptian Revolution, was the significant difference in tactics used by protestors. The state of protests up to that point in Egypt had effectively been circumscribed by police tactics used to diffuse and disperse any public demonstration. The police, knowing protest locations in advance either through public dissemination or through State Security informants, would deploy units (uniformed officers in addition to complements of plainclothes police and paid thugs) in advance and through this overwhelming force—of both numbers and violence—would seek to disperse or drive away protestors before any significant or critical mass could be assembled at the demonstration sites. Police in this fashion effectively ran protests on their own lines, perhaps allowing a small demonstration to occur but always present in enough force and numbers to crush and disperse any more potent threats to their picture of order in the street. Particularly in the protests of many professional groups (e.g. lawyers or journalists) in front of syndicate buildings, it was always simple enough for police to form cordons often two or three deep around building entrances, separating protest organizers and early participants from the possibility of any interaction with the street or with a crowd, even without direct use of force. Even something as seemingly benign as a women's solidarity protest with the women of Palestine would be met with a heavy uniformed and armed police presence and the authorized harassment and assaults of paid thugs and plainclothes officers. This sort of spectacular display of force and violence against protestors, along with the general, well-earned reputation of the Egyptian police as thugs

and torturers, instilled enough fear in most Egyptians to prevent them from even considering attending a demonstration.

Highly effective, if only because of the sheer force of numbers and willingness to use violence that central security was able to bring to bear on any protest situation, these tactics quashed all but a handful of Egyptian protests and demonstrations in recent years, with small but notable exceptions in 2000,²¹ 2003,²² and 2007.²³ Even these exceptions, however, were not necessarily simply explained as the first two instances—revolving around issues of foreign policy—allowed the Egyptian state to use issues external to itself as a pressure valve to diffuse some of the popular energies that might otherwise be directed against the regime. Externalizing portraits of imperialist aggression and occupation forces that could be safely demonstrated against without producing any potential change allowed the Mubarak regime to carry on with its own processes of urban apartheid and internal colonialism bolstered by the image of permitting such popular expression of anger.

In light of this history of extremity and defeat when taking to the streets, most of the population and many activists had driven the thought of a successful demonstration out of mind. Many people, knowing about the planned protests on the 25th, assumed they would be a small affair quickly dispersed by police and many people including journalists and activists had decided not to go for these reasons. However, as the events of the day progressed it quickly turned out that this was not the case, and as momentous and historic protests began breaking out in the city, even defeating police attempts to disperse and cordon them, it was clear that something was different. Indeed, in addition to the

²¹ Protests during the Second Intifada in solidarity with the Palestinian people

²² Demonstrations in opposition to the US-led invasion of Iraq

²³ Large-scale strikes and protests of workers in the industrial city of Mahalla

sheer numbers of protestors (which were albeit large from the start, but still significantly smaller than the police's demonstrated capacity to deal with) there were significant tactical differences in the way that protests and protestors assembled, moved through the city, and even engaged with the police. It was, among other things, a strange and unique combination of actors involving activists, neighbors, street vendors and football fans that created this new protest space, the vast majority drawing not on histories of political experience, having absolutely none, but instead on the quotidian ways of walking through, negotiating and interacting with the city that constituted part of their everyday lives within the informal city. Throughout the days' battles with police it was clear that protests and protestors were using the very material of the city—its streets, buildings, neighborhoods and normal activities—and their knowledge of the city in a direct, sometimes seemingly planned, strategic fashion that had not been seen before in Egypt.

What makes the proliferation of these novel tactics particularly interesting is the fact that several weeks before the protest, a manual began to circulate through email and photocopy, titled "*Kayf Tathawwir Bihada'a*," which some English news sources would later translate as "How to Revolt Intelligently"; the Egyptian colloquial word *hada'a*, however, means much more than intelligence, as will be described below. This manual, written and illustrated by Egyptian activists in Egyptian colloquial dialect usually reserved for spoken conversation, was photocopied and passed between different groups with an interest in the protest, consciously avoiding its publication on any websites or social networking sites such as Twitter or Facebook due to concerns about the security and surveillance of those sites by the Egyptian State Police. The manual, 26 pages in all, begins by stating a set of demands of the Egyptian people against the state and then goes on to discuss general tactics, collective tactics and police countermeasures and lists

specific targets of strategic importance for protests and how to best approach and take control of these areas, showing maps for several of them.

While the manual had fairly wide distribution among the relatively small community of activists and organizers, it is uncertain how much it was received and read outside of these circles. Additionally, many of the tactics that were advocated in the manual were already in use by protesting football ultras (described below) or the evasion tactics of young street vendors and may in fact have been borrowed from the experiences of these groups, or even if they were not consciously borrowed we can imagine or infer a habitus of provocation and evasion forming out of the near-universal experiences of young Egyptian men with police. Nonetheless, even if it was not a direct inspiration for many of the protestors and their tactics in the early days of the revolution, those actions and tactics mirror the contents of the manual in many essential characteristics; it may not be that the manual aided the success of the protestors, but that the protestors aided the success of the manual, making it no less a valuable document and worthy of some analysis. Furthermore, the manual presents the transformation of social tactics and learned resourcefulness of the informal into weapons against the police and the state.

First, as was mentioned above, the Egyptian word *hada'a* has no simple English equivalent, being a combination of intelligence, intuition, street smarts, and particularly connoting the ability to quickly apprehend and interpret a situation on the fly. *Hada'a* also implies a morally ambiguous, sometimes negative application of such qualities, as someone *hadi'* may be a trickster or use this knowledge to find shortcuts and get around the system or to not play by the rules; even in these cases, however, there is usually the implication that the 'gaming' comes at the expense of the more powerful; *hada'a* is an attribute of the underdog. A relatively modern piece of Egyptian slang, it seems impossible to disconnect *hada'a* with various forms of social life and tactics in the city.

The *khirtiyyen*, for example, informal tour guides (or perhaps con artists) who are omnipresent fixtures of Downtown, might be said to have this quality. These young men have a knack for mimicking European or American dress and affect and may exude a disarming charm that only serves to mask the hard sell. For the most storied of their tactics, they will guide tourists to cafes and shops offering the traveler the “Egyptian price,” a fairly astronomical markup, and even bargain for the tourist with the proprietor they have colluded with long before. No less, the tourist will walk away ripped off but surely happy in their ignorance to have “connected” with a local in such an authentic fashion. Unlicensed, heavily stigmatized by the police, and working through *hada’a* alone, the *khirti* epitomizes employment in conditions of informality, tied to global capital but only in a peripheral fashion and always at risk from police.²⁴ Despite the relatively negative impression of the *khirti*, however, Egyptians recognize *hada’a* as a quality that is characteristic of, if not unique to, Egyptians.

Having set the tone in this fashion, the Manual begins with a description of seven demands of the protests. While the audience was likely uncertain the demands are comprehensive and universal enough that they were likely to be agreed upon by anyone willing to take to the streets, including the downfall of the current regime, civilian rule and greater rights and freedoms (once occupation of Tahrir did begin, essentially the same list of demands could be seen on banners all around the square). Tactically, the manual then goes on to a discussion of how to assemble the protests and the types of moves that protesters should make on the day of protests. Instead of beginning with the key government buildings to be occupied or where protestors should assemble, the manual lays out a distributed protest strategy, advocating the assembly of protestors not

²⁴ For more on the *khirtiyyeen* and policing of the more illicit aspects of Egyptian tourism, see (Behbehanian 2000), although perhaps no description can fully capture them in action.

in front of Parliament or the Presidential palace *but on their own streets*. Beginning in groups of “friends and neighbors” away from sites of anticipated police resistance, within those places where ‘the state does not exist,’ the manual instructs protestors to begin by chanting slogans featuring positive content and moreover calling down to neighbors and other onlookers to join them in the streets, moving out when they had reached critical mass.

The residential neighborhoods of Cairo provided a sanctuary for the protestors as they gathered strength. As opposed to the large boulevards of downtown or the enormous space and network of crisscrossing roads of Tahrir square, Cairo’s neighborhoods, particularly the informal and semi-informal neighborhoods were networks of small streets rarely set on a grid pattern, with numerous alleyways and other detours. Starting in these areas with narrower streets would in the first place limit the possibility of police to mobilize and move against them, reducing the ability of police to marshal superior numbers and spreading forces thin across the city. Also, the advantage of *knowing* the areas where they would confront police first better than the police themselves provided protestors with, among other things ample opportunities to avoid kettling, confuse and disorient officers and, if necessary, escape back into the narrow, labyrinthine grids. Additionally, the densities of these residential neighborhoods would create literally hundreds of thousands of witnesses to some of the first acts of police violence—violence, more specifically, directed at their own neighbors and people they might know. The sheer volume of amateur video that would be shot from apartment windows or balconies attests to this, and attests to the built in means of publicity and publication of the protests that their beginnings in the neighborhoods would have, as the normal surveillance of neighbors over one another might now see the actions of the police in full force.

As we saw, this mode of assembly proved crucial on the 25th, as it was in having enough mass to break through those first lines of the Central Security, producing the almost immediate change of possibilities that set and accelerated the momentum for the rest of the protests. By avoiding significant sites where police presence was likely to be high, protestors could begin to aggregate before or without the possibility of dispersal by superior police forces. But these neighborhood spaces were also coded with the various, idiosyncratic characteristics that governed interactions between neighbors, which a demonstration of “friends and neighbors” would be aware of and be able to tap into, drawing on personal connections and more general codes. Instead of first hearing of protests through the media mouthpieces of the state (or not at all, for that matter) and be discouraged from joining, originating within the neighborhoods began the protests as a phenomenon of neighbors, that it could be clear that this was not the workings of a political group or party but of familiar faces, residents, similarly situated, cheering on Egypt and its people towards positive ends. Thus, relying on the very negligence of the state, protestors could both buy themselves time to build momentum against the police and tap into a more immediate, penetrating access to these residents through informal codes than the propaganda narratives of the state, which though highly effective were bound in a cynicism that could be displaced.

In the context of the *hada'a* of the protester, this process is almost a type of cajolery, requiring the protestors to appraise the mood of the areas they find themselves in, gauge its residents and one's own group, and tailor a rhetoric on the spot to best convince more people to join the marches; many standard chants were given variations in this way, with quick changes floated by people in the crowd catching on by either tapping into a new humorous situation or finding some new point of potential anger to direct attention towards. This type of persuasion was also relevant in the manual's advice in

dealing with police and the army, to try to win them over and even encourage them to cross sides and join the civilians. A more difficult task than convincing fellow citizens much less family or neighbors, there is nonetheless evidence that there was a substantial play of rhetoric being used on both the army and the police even if very few or no officers formally crossed lines. In moments of such persuasion, women played a particularly powerful role, using their gender as a point of leverage often to attempt to render approval, but more often to shame police officers or disrupt their ability to violently repress protestors, at times even throwing themselves in between aggressive officers and young men in on the verge of being clubbed or kicked. These women relied on the male officers' constructions of masculinity and femininity; where in the day to day life in the informal neighborhood, women enact transformations of gendered space within the home and the public spaces of the neighborhood (Ismail 2006, 114-119), here the challenge is directly to the state, challenging its authority constituted in the masculinity; these women explicitly knew the catch-22 at work on the officers and seized on it, either the police fight back against the women and lose their role as "guardians" of women or they fall back and show themselves to be unable to stand up to a woman.

In addition to these general spatial tactics outlined in the manual, several aerial images of Cairo are displayed featuring key government buildings with arrows drawn on them and descriptions of which streets to approach from and how best to take control of these locations.²⁵ Included among these maps are not just the presidential palace and

²⁵ . In one interesting case among these, for a police station in Helwan, an industrial/informal suburb, the only suggestions given are that "the people of Helwan will find a way." It is ultimately unclear what this lack of specificity means, but we can assume that it is related to a confidence in residents' knowledge of the area. It may also be related to Helwan itself; of the other sites portrayed and mapped, Helwan is the only one that is in a largely informal area, the remainder of the spaces are in formally masterplanned areas (Downtown, Ma'adi, and Heliopolis) all planned according to Haussmanian principles of maximum possible control of space. The spaces which had been produced according to strategies of surveillance and control presumably require a greater counterstrategy to overcome this; Helwan, on the other hand, immersed in informality,

state media building, traditional fodder of revolutions, but also local police stations, the targeting and occupation of which would paradoxically deeply impact the central government per the command and control structure of the police in the streets and over the direct control of the cities themselves. These distinctly urban targets, in addition to being symbols of the most unequivocally hated apparatus of the state, fundamentally represent the sites of spatial authority of the state within neighborhoods and cities. Not only symbolic manifestations of authority but also the sites of its production, the occupation of police stations would, even if it did not directly advance political goals of the protestors, provide the means for the protests to “liberate” the cities themselves. Police stations were in effect the only sites of the state’s reproduction in the city, choke points for the state power that had no means of impacting the city other than through police actions. By occupying or, as was in several instances the case destroying, these spaces protestors in Cairo could cut off the neglectful state’s main (perhaps only) corporeal link to the city.

Furthermore, the most direct instructions for those demonstrators in governorates outside of Cairo is to seize the provincial headquarters, instructing protestors to declare the municipalities and provinces “no longer subservient to the corrupt government.” These offices were the symbolic spaces of power and, in no small part due to the direct Executive appointment of governors out of the pool of retired generals, symbols of vassalage of the governorates to the desires of Cairo, this peripheralization being a longstanding source of resentment. Breaking these lines of sight and command of the state over its governorates and cities would also be a direct means toward liberating urban life in those moments, disrupting police attempts to re-impose

means that protestors own skills with this informality and their *hada'a* will have a natural upper hand and will consequently find a way.

'order' by spreading them thin across multiple fronts throughout the country and cutting off one of their primary means of connection to the state.

Finally, the manual details a number of specific tactics in dealing with anticipated police assaults and how to be most effective against a direct confrontation with the Central Security Forces. In these lists of clothing and supplies appropriate for dealing with tear gas, injuries and long periods out in the streets, there is a practicality and an ad-hoc quality that is nearly comical it is so out of the normal tone of what we think of when we think "revolution": cola, soapy water, the lid to a large stockpot, analgesics, snacks²⁶—yet each of these implements serves a purpose, and often a very clever one at that. Among the information provided, for instance, the cola is useful to attenuate the effects of tear gas²⁷, plastic bags filled with soap water are suggested to impede the traction of the CSF's armored trucks, a pot lid is a shield, spray paint does just about everything. Indeed, many of these devices were used extensively, and throughout the uprising many other, similar bricolages out of whatever was at hand: caps to protect against stones were made with cardboard wrapped over the head with scarves or empty plastic bottles tied into a cushioning headband,²⁸ slings to hurl stones were stitched from burlap sacks, t-shirts and scarves; protesters even *constructed a trebuchet* out of scrap wood and other detritus from a construction site in the square.

These tools and their uses are nearly a metaphor for urban informality itself, a recombinant modernism that uses the material at hand, mundane and even desultory

²⁶ Looking at this list in light of the self-aggrandizing claims made by State Department funded prodemocracy organizations such as Freedom House they had a role in training and preparing activists for this, makes one think that these claims are either totally laughable or that Freedom House must be operating on a fairly tight budget or is just a summer camp with a fancy name.

²⁷ A technique directly attributed to "our brothers in Tunisia," revolutionaries there who had been engaged in their own battles with police not long before.

²⁸ The award for greatest ad-hoc headgear, however, goes not to an Egyptian, but a Yemeni man who fabricated a "bread helmet".

objects, and turned into the implements of a peaceable insurgency through this politicized *hada'a*. The language of revolution could be a vernacular, informal language in Egypt because informality was already the (super)dominant mode of experiencing urbanization. The manual is transmitting not only overriding political goals and demands but also the immediate means to disrupt police weapons and infrastructure and engage with police in the conflict of street battles. It seems clear from reading it that the manual is more than a political pamphlet; somewhere in between treatise on civil disobedience and guerilla warfare, the manual contains forms of experiential and habituated knowledge and ways of action based the varieties of informal life in Cairo, modified only slightly, translated, into the means of directly asserting control of spaces of protest against police. This knowledge would itself be essential, and although it is still uncertain how widespread the distribution of the manual was before the beginning of the revolution, it is clear that this type of local, experiential knowledge was being reconfigured and deployed, and subsequently spread and transferred throughout the course of the uprising as people coordinated, collaborated and acted together to keep the protests alive even as they were under vicious assault.

The irony, perhaps, is that Cairenes didn't need to "read the manual," as they were already well versed in all the tools they needed to use, and the disassembly of the State's spatial presence was not so different than work they had done before.

6. POPULAR COMMITTEES

The popular committees that formed in the “security vacuum” during the 18 day uprising were a remarkable social formation, and Egyptians as well as the international media were proud and surprised at the comprehensive and effective response to potential wide-spread terror caused by a lack of police and the fear of looting. While the comprehensiveness of these popular committees, their almost uniform organization, behavior, and civility across the country may not be fully explained, they were nonetheless not created from nothing. These popular committees of neighbors defending not just their streets but the city and normal ways of urban life were clearly linked to Egyptians’ own day-to-day control of their own city, both in the formal and informal neighborhoods; their organization and deployment during the uprising seems nothing less than a recognition of the importance of the city and the street as the basis of urban life, but also a more direct move of resistance against the tactics of the state, claiming the very immediate, very real possession of the city for its residents.

Almost immediately after the army had entered the cities, the security forces and police, battered and largely defeated, withdrew completely around the country. At the same time as the police, even traffic and patrol officers, disappeared entirely, reports came out of escaping convicts from several of Egypt’s prisons simultaneously. The coincidence of these two extraordinary occurrences was hardly an accident, as it seems to be the case that the Interior ministry gave orders both for police to return to their homes and for prisoners to be let out. In the latter case, it was reported that prisoners were actually forced out of their cells at gunpoint by their guards, many of them distraught and even staying on prison grounds for fear that short sentences might later get extended if they

were deemed to have escaped. In one case it seems that a prison officer refusing to participate in these scorched-earth tactics was killed by his fellow officers. Shortly after this, reports of looting were repeated hysterically on state TV; it seemed clear that the government's next move, having not been able to prevent street assemblies through police measures, would be to terrorize and frighten people by creating a policing vacuum and releasing prisoners to compel people to return to their homes. In some respects, this fear tactic did work, as there were indeed several instances of looting or armed thugs (although hardly a considerable number in the absolute)²⁹. What is more fascinating, however, is that within perhaps two hours of this news, *ligan sha'abiyya* "popular committees" had formed simultaneously across the entirety of Cairo where neighbors went down into the streets, set up roadblocks and citizen checkpoints and began monitoring traffic through the neighborhoods and defending their streets.

Again, mobile phones and Internet were still down so this spontaneous organization, echoed throughout the city, took place through landlines and face to face communication between neighborhood residents. In many cases, this coordination stretched even further as long streets or neighborhoods created passwords shared between checkpoints to allow citizens travelling at night easier passage through a known area. At these checkpoints, one could see people of all ages monitoring traffic, checking IDs and searching cars for weapons or suspicious items; in many ways these citizen checkpoints were a respectful mirror of police checkpoints that almost all residents of Egypt had to deal with on a regular basis. The culprits apprehended by the members of these popular committees, often plainclothes police or paid thugs found with weapons, would be detained and apprehended to the nearest army post. These committees

²⁹ In many if not almost all cases of purported looting, captured thugs were found with police IDs on them.

represented a total transformation of the city streets, and a means of spatial policing (albeit in a defensive, not a disciplinary sense) and control that at once was totally nonhierarchical and unamanged but managed to extend a continuous and relatively consistent web of protection and safety across the entire city. Despite the nervousness and even fear of many people about the lack of police and presence of criminals in the streets, the streets were incredibly safe and definitely well cared for considering these circumstances.

Over the next few days these popular committees began to take over many more caretaker functions for neighborhoods and residential areas, as youth could be seen directing traffic, organizing erstwhile trash depositories until garbage collection could be resumed, performing routine patrols and check-ins on elderly residents, and in some cases even setting up cordons around shops where the storekeepers had been caught price gouging to gently “encourage” them to keep prices stable. What was happening was no less than a rapid, spontaneous and uncoordinated (but highly organized) assumption of key municipal governmental functions (public health, safety and welfare) by ordinary residents in neighborhoods throughout Cairo. This occurred almost entirely without incident and with significant success. The city went from policing by one of the most highly centralized police forces imaginable to an incredibly anarchic, but arguably more effective system produced and managed by ordinary people taking responsibility for their neighborhoods. This is not to totally romanticize the situation, as it did take the abhorrent provocations of the Ministry of the Interior to make this happen, and such popular committees required a substantial amount of time and labor from ordinary citizens to function, but for these forms of organization to have come into existence at all, not to mention so quickly and so consistently throughout the country, speaks to a dense and relatively powerful set of urban social networks that were drawn upon.

Additionally, it seems significant that these activities took place in the streets, as opposed to people defending their private residences; on the one hand the scope of activities assumed by the popular committees was greater than the simple defense of private homes and property, but also such organization at the street or neighborhood level required a significant preexisting set of social networks and means of sociability and relationship to both neighbors and the street such that individuals would not only be able to organize such committees but also feel it incumbent upon them to engage in such larger-scale collective actions. The relationship of these networks to the everyday politics of the street in Cairo seems relevant; whereas the state exerted a strong police presence in certain regards (particularly public dissent or protest), it was relatively weak insofar as neighborhood policing went and particularly weak with respect to the sorts of day-to-day ordering and governance of urban space that are usually incorporated in both planning and police functions (particularly compared to the visibility not only of police in Northern cities but also the visibility of planning and environmental design as tools for crime prevention or more general forms of organizing and disciplining populations).

The day-to-day modes of interaction that most Egyptians experienced were on the one hand never really protected by the police, but on the other hand as a consequence they were not regulated or observed necessarily. As such there was always a mechanism of sociability between neighbors that was as much a matter of hospitality and good manners as it was a means of ensuring the safety and stability of neighborhoods. What was always a backstop against the precarious conditions of the urban disorder of Egyptian cities was now deployed to its limit in the absence of police to become a means of protecting the urban social fabric from forces that directly threatened to bring it to its knees.³⁰ As a

³⁰ The case of popular committees dealing with price gouging by shops illustrates this most clearly, perhaps, for although it lacks the immediacy of some of the security related functions of the popular

consequence of these sorts of activities, life even under these extreme conditions was allowed to continue with a high degree of security, at many points even a sense of normalcy. The government's attempts to unleash anarchy on the city were thus foiled by people drawing on the means by which they had always kept an eye on their neighborhoods and neighbors, negotiated traffic and even bargained with vendors over the price of goods into temporary revolutionary mechanisms of urban governance.

This example of the popular committees stands out as well as it must be remembered that the vast majority of those who went out to protect their streets at night, mobilize traffic and other local services were not protestors or demonstrators. It is uncertain where many of these people stood, and while many of them may have been in support of the uprising but either still too afraid or noncommittal to join, many others just as well would have been opposed to the protests. These actions were not partisan, and hardly political then, but they were brought about by an extreme set of circumstances, and were responding to the deeply aggressive, feckless moves of the regime regardless of their political orientation. Moreover, these neighborhoods went beyond necessity, which would have been merely the creation of secure, locked down environments, and instead attempted to maintain the order that they had for years been cultivating in their own interactions with one another, at times nosily but generally invested deeply in the welfare of their communities and neighborhoods. There was no reason, perhaps no explanation for the checkpoints in such a heightened state of panic to let anyone through neighborhoods except residents, yet after ensuring that a traveler was not a policeman or an escaped prisoner, but the residents manning them were incredibly courteous and not only let people through but also helped drivers with directions to navigate the myriad

committees, price gouging would clearly threaten the ability of residents to secure necessary goods and increase the possibility of theft, hoarding or unrest among citizens.

road closures and even made a few jokes about the situation.³¹ Nevertheless we might also see the extent to which the popular committees persisted as indirectly supporting Tahrir, by participating in maintaining the city as much as possible they cushioned the possible reaction against the protests in the square were there to be serious problems in the city.

The checkpoints served not just to protect the city, but to maintain an environment where ordinary modes of sociability could, for the most part persist. They saw to it that shops stayed open and that people got the basic goods that they needed, they eased tensions within neighborhoods and more than anything else, perhaps, gave a show of strength and solidarity against the threat of government-sponsored chaos. The popular committees affirmed the proposition that Cairo had for some time belonged in fact to its citizens, and despite the state's attempts to terrify them into recalcitrance and beg for the return of the police, the people were more than willing to claim ownership of and defend the city. However, this defense was not one of territorial control or "locking down" the neighborhoods; people were allowed to pass through day and night (not as freely as before, perhaps, but still). It is incredibly significant that the neighborhoods remained so open, particularly when the temptation to do the opposite was so great; Cairenes surely understood the importance of the whole city to its residents, that people were always moving from place to place for some reason or another, and the fact of security issues should not come as a blanket prohibition on people's activities. It helps of course that Cairo is by all accounts an uncharacteristically safe city,³² yet—perhaps as a consequence—Egyptians have a tendency for being risk-averse, paranoid even, about

³¹ One taxi driver I was riding with one of these nights, engaging in small talk with a teenager manning one of the checkpoints, remarked that he'd not yet been able to find a bakery open after curfew and that he wasn't sure if they had bread at the house for the next day. The young man not only told him of a bakery nearby that was open, but got in the car and lead him to the bakery, helping expedite passage through the other neighborhood checkpoints on the way.

³² A fact for which I have never seen any convincing explanation.

incidents of crime; one bit of black humor that some of the cooler heads were talking about is that the police had never paid any attention to actually keeping the city safe from thieves or the like, and neighborhoods were likely safer without police in the streets. Regardless of the actual level of danger, however, in a situation such as this where people's perceptions of danger, uncertainty, and unrest were so deeply felt, it is remarkable that they nonetheless kept calm and carried on

With respect to the question of whose city Cairo was, the fact that looting did not occur and crime rates did not go up in any significant fashion during this entire period again brings the situation of the state's relationship to the city and the role that police played in city spaces into stark, almost absurd relief. For the state to so quickly and so easily *completely disappear* reflects as much the extent to which they had already been absent as it does the extent to which these popular committees had already been operating in almost the exact same ways that they been for years but not under any organization or name as such; they were just neighbors and residents who were ensuring that the city around them was functioning, safe and even cared for.³³ These modes of civility—associational but not restricted to the immediacy of family, neighborhood, or organization—grew out of a use and experience of the city that was governed in fact by its own citizens for years. In the absence of police people saw the institution of actual civil municipal institutions, local regulation and control, and management of affairs that was almost entirely non-hierarchical, contingent to the needs of the day and responsive to

³³ As an extreme example perhaps of the normality of this extranormal time, I went to visit my grandmother briefly and drop some things off with her, and as we were talking her neighbor across the hall knocked on the door and came in with a pistol on high alert checking to make sure she was alright. The irony of the situation is that this was not the first time this had happened. Several years before I had been staying in Egypt at my grandmother's flat and, coming home late at night and fumbling to get the door unlocked in the dim stairwell, the same neighbor popped out of his doorway in a bathrobe with a gun. After the initial fright we both realized what was going on, wished one another a good night and went back inside.

extremity and exigency. The system was not perfect, perhaps, and by no means was it necessarily the most feasible arrangement as it required a substantial commitment of time and effort (largely from people who were already living hand-to-mouth) to secure all these various functions in so active a capacity, but as a temporary spatial arrangement the popular committees were astonishing.³⁴

³⁴ As I write this, these same popular committees, and some new ones, have continued to organize as local political committees and are meeting under the banner of “popular committees for the defense of the revolution”

7. YOUNG MEN AT WORK AND PLAY

The uprising also saw the transformation of other types of apolitical life, characteristic of everyday Cairo, into mechanisms of political insurgency aimed at bringing down the state. Many of these transformations involved a directness, occurring at the level of the body and the motions of protestors, that spoke of ways of acting, moving and responding that were more deeply engrained than a few short days of protesting would allow for. The cases of two different groups of young men, football hooligans for one of Egypt's biggest teams and small bands of "flash demonstrators" roaming downtown and harassing police in a guerilla war of attrition, illustrate types of protest activities that were at times indistinguishable from actions of everyday life. These groups of young men—particularly targeted and stigmatized by the state—had perhaps the greatest degree of contact with the "everyday state," as their attempts both to partake in fun and celebration or informal work on the streets constantly placed them directly at odds with the Egyptian state's maximalist policing of public spaces. These apolitical groups of youth, not only disenfranchised but disenchanting with the possibility of politics before, took to the streets to reclaim them from the police, to assert their rights to be youth, to be free of stigma and random oppression by police, and tied to these the demand to act in public, freely and with dignity. These demands could not have been heard, much less respected, until they were issued as calls for the end of the state whose only motive was to restrict and police them. Again, their demands for revolution were intimately tied to questions of simple dignity and public life.

Furthermore, the actual movements of these groups: the actions they took and the way that they physically traversed the streets, confronted police and organized amongst one another in almost choreographed fashion, displayed a symmetry with the movements

and bodies of youth engaged in everyday activities in the streets of Cairo that was almost uncanny. These scripts or performed roles, whether they were based in modes of group celebration or the loose associations of hawkers and lookouts, were “weaponized”; they were not changed so much as they were put to new use, as the tactics they had learned through experience in the city to mitigate against the police became the means they used to directly confront them.

POLITICIZED HOOLIGANS

A complete picture of the protests against police needs to include a description of the football “Ultras” of *Nadi al-Ahli* and their role in those demonstrations. al-Ahli, one of Cairo’s popular athletic or social clubs, is owner of Egypt’s most successful soccer team, which has a long history of devoted and partisan football fans and a populist image, particularly against their historic rivalry with al-Zamalek, Egypt’s other largest team, with a years-long and raucous, sometimes violent rivalry. Just about every household in Egypt is either a *Ahlawi* or *Zamalkawi* household, and taking sides opposite family members’ preference was an act of minor insurrection. The mainstay or vanguard of support for the team is the Ultras, mostly teenagers and young men in their twenties committed just as much to the success of the Ahly in its matches as to postgame celebrations and hooliganism.³⁵ The Ultras would put on huge displays of support for their team, often involving hundreds if not thousands of them at a time, including intricately organized displays of signs in the stands or choreographed songs, chants and dances. In the course of these large, collective expressions of team spirit during the games and celebrations after the games (some of which may be difficult to discern from riots), confrontation with the

³⁵ Although, British expats I have spoken to on the issue insist, with a bit of pride perhaps, that even at their worst (best?) the Egyptian ultras can’t compete with the British hooligans

police and Central Security Forces (held at bay in stadiums for just such occasions) has long been a regular and brutal occurrence, with security forces showing little reservation in using tear gas, physically assaulting and arresting the ultras. Combined with the generalized harassment, abuse and even torture of young men from working class and informal neighborhoods, this history of police brutality against the young ultras not only made them have little love lost for the police but also gave them an enormous wealth of experience—more than the majority of political activists, even—in dealing with police and security forces. Thus, as word spread about protests on Police Day, the Ahly Ultras committed themselves to attending in discussions on the Internet and amongst one another through their organization. Their commitment to go out to protests was heightened as the Zamalek Ultras opposed the planned demonstrations and even tentatively supported the regime; making a scene on the 25th would furthermore get to be a good opportunity to snub their main rival.

As protests began, it quickly became clear that the ultras were not only prepared and highly organized, but were perhaps the vanguard of many of the initial confrontations with police. While many protestors were uncertain of how to deal with oncoming police lines and the assaults with sticks and tear gas, this was clearly not the case with the Ultras. The youths were operating in small mobs of 15-20, using a code of whistles and hand signals to coordinate intricate formations, direct movements and retreats and even using signals for rotating the front line of confrontations with police out with relief waiting behind them. The Ultras that day were clearly inspired and dedicated to ensure that the protests survived the first rounds of police resistance and assaults, absorbing a great deal of these blows themselves as the masses of other protestors assembled behind and alongside them, perhaps learned from them and gathered numbers and courage. This appearance and performance was all the more amazing to observers as these youths had

never before been political, either as an organization or, for the large majority of them, as individuals. This commitment of the apolitical Ultras to come out to the protests demonstrates the blurred line between politics, fun and public space that took place in the Egyptian Revolution. The Ultras were not only using their knowledge of dealing with police, but were also surely protesting for the right to claim the street, to be out in public as one of the general desires of youth.

On the one hand, there was the general impression that the state used the football matches and football rivalries as a palliative, or at the very last enjoyed the benefits of a public discourse that could not talk about politics so they spoke about football; in Egypt it was a better opiate for the masses than religion at the very least. This strange blending of the political and the sports scenes reached almost pathological levels, after intense matches between Algeria and Egypt for World Cup qualification in the fall of 2009 lead to riots in both countries, including hacking of newspapers' websites in both countries, Egyptian players' stoning of the Algerian team's bus in Cairo, and the destruction of Egyptian-owned stores and harassment of Egyptian workers in Algeria. The government condemned these attacks to be sure, as they violated the "public order," but at the same time they did effectively nothing else, and it very often it seemed that in a country that had completely circumscribed public discourse, and severely limited opportunities for youth in particular. The public gardens and parks, for instance, are nearly all kept under lock and key or protected by entry fees³⁶ usually under some variant of the justification that popular classes would ruin or sully them by improper use (without noting that the actual amount of green space was so small per capita in Cairo that any park anywhere would be overrun just by virtue of demand). The government had established "Youth Centers" in 1999 to

³⁶ With The Giza Zoo serving as a notable exception perhaps proving the rule, see: (Battesti 2009) for a discussion of the zoo and the testing of boundaries and display of public behaviors.

serve young people to deal with the “youth problem” as a matter of “national security”, as perception of the young in the public mind, particularly among political elites, but the horrid condition of these centers along with their heavily didactic, structured program made them incredibly unpopular.

Bayat, writing on “the politics of fun” in Egypt, describes an “anti-fundamentalism” among Islamists, Elites and the older generations that severely circumscribes the ability of young Egyptians to have fun: “an array of ad-hoc, nonroutine, and joyful pursuits...where individuals break free temporarily from the disciplined constraints of daily life, normative obligations, and organized power.” (2009, 138) A combination of the conflux of contemporary Islamist preoccupations with “diversions” and the productivist rhetoric of Egypt’s neoliberal state apparatus, anti-fun politics represent to Bayat both attempts to limit the bodies of youth and to hamper the development of individual, creative attitudes that could conceivably challenge power founded in notions of empty collective unity. As a consequence of this anti-fun politics, spaces for the types of ad-hoc expressions of youthfulness are effectively nonexistent, and the street is heavily circumscribed. This may be particularly evident in informal neighborhoods, where despite the absence of regular policing, regulation of youth still occurs from neighbors religious or not acting as virtual “fun police,” and youth in particular lack the same flexibility or “looseness” seen in other unregulated activities.

Support for football teams, consequently, is one of the few inexpensive avenues available for fun, as “sports are regarded as a way of channeling youthful energies into activities that are wholesome and, not coincidentally, serve as means of bringing glory to the nation.” (Swedenburg 2007) This nominal support for football as it fits into the narrative of the modern nation-state gives the young fans some license, and it is likely that the group nature of their activities gives them some strength in numbers to avoid

immediate censoring that individuals or couples might lack. Furthermore, the activities of football fans is generally limited in duration (around match times) and to certain spaces (stadiums), and outside of monumental victories this sort of fun does not pose the same threat to the state or cultural institutions. Nevertheless, the Central Security Forces were no strangers to the Ultras, and there was always a clear understanding that celebration would only be tolerated to a certain extent before being quickly repressed.

Thus, in taking to the streets that day, the Ultras were going out against a regime that had taken away spaces of celebration and fun, who had used paramilitary riot police against them for years and generally restricted their ability as youth to experience all the enjoyment and exploration that goes with that. At the same time, it is no doubt true that they were likely seeking revenge against the police, and while they were not particularly aggressive they were surely enjoying the chance to overpower and claim a victory against these officers. These police, instantiations of the state of public space, were very clearly being targeted not just for the abuses that they had perpetrated but for the general spatial order that they maintained, going out into the streets for the Ultras was almost surely an expression of an opportunity to win the fight for a change, to go out to the streets and stay out in them.

RECONFIGURING INFORMAL ACTIVITIES

In a common site in downtown Cairo, particularly along the wide avenue of Tala'at Harb street, a popular shopping area for clothes and shoes for the working and middle classes, one would see young men with pallets loaded-down with piles of colorful t-shirts, sweaters or scarves—often knock-offs of popular American brands—advertising their wares loudly in singsong as others rummaged through the articles, haggling and

trading bills back and forth, doing brisk business. At any given moment, the street would suddenly be filled with loud whistles, starting at one end of a block and being relayed down the way to alert these dealers to the presence of a police officer rounding the corner. Suddenly, the young men would disappear, two or three of them running down a side street or alley with their pallet taking cover from the officer's gaze. No sooner than would policeman would pass by than you would see them back in their same place, another or the same crowd gathered to browse. This was a constant and ubiquitous mode of existence for many young men in Cairo, seeking temporary or permanent work where employment opportunities were sparse, and the ebb and flow of avoiding police or having to pay bribes was something deeply engrained in their way of seeing the city, learning its streets and even creating a special awareness of surroundings.

These activities of the young street vendors, these types of coordination between small groups at a distance in a crowded street, and even the exact same signals and movements employed by the young vendors were seen in the "flash mob protests" that occurred sporadically throughout downtown in between the 25th and the 28th. Protest activities in Cairo during these intervening days were (relatively) small, but significant activities were taking place. Police presence was high, and security forces and plainclothes police were continually arresting anyone who seemed suspicious or involved in protest activities, and generally hassling any groups or gatherings of even four or five people in the downtown area. At the same time, however, many groups of youth were very busy in downtown, engaged in "flash demonstrations." Small groups of perhaps ten to twenty young men would suddenly form up in the middle of a downtown street amidst shoppers and people walking by and begin shouting anti-regime chants. These small groups would quickly draw police attention and ire, soliciting tear gas fire and charging

officers, and just as quickly as they assembled run away and disappear through back streets and around corners.

This happened frequently and repeatedly throughout downtown on the 26th and 27th and appears to have had several effects. On the one hand, by such disproportionate responses by police such as tear gassing an entire street full of shopping families and working people seemed to galvanize popular resentment against the police and their heavy-handed tactics. On the other hand, this was a form of reconnaissance being practiced by the youths, as they were successively testing police responsiveness, willingness to use force and to pursue them, and the relative numbers of police in a certain street or area at a given time. Also, the constant attrition provided by these small, easily assembled and easily dispersed crowds surely exhausted and wore down the police in downtown, forcing them to be on constant alert in the vain hope of spotting them before they formed and forcing them to give chase when they did. Surely recognizing that police would be more prepared and in greater numbers in advance of the Friday demonstration, these youths sought to test and exhaust the officers, waging a guerilla campaign against officers stationed in the city: exposing the presence of plainclothes police, tiring the security forces, and making them play their hands too early and against otherwise uninvolved people.

It seems very likely, if not certain, that many of the same individuals were involved in both, so similar were their tactics. Only the provocation had changed: from selling shirts on the sidewalk without a permit³⁷ to directly confronting the authority and legitimacy of the state; from illicit economic activity to illicit political expression, both of these are nonetheless encroachments on public space or particular modes of public

³⁷ Notably political in its own way, as active uses of public space are themselves the making of a specific claim of ownership over or encroachment on such spaces.

appearance, grounded in the fact of the street as a place where people congregate, assemble, shop and circulate.³⁸ This symmetry of activities on the one hand reinforces the fact that the state was overwhelmingly concerned with the control of space, so that the everyday requirements of dealing with police being a street vendor were not entirely different from leading anti-regime

What *was* different, however, is that before the uprising, street vendors were avoiding police in order to continue doing their jobs without fear of arrest, confiscation of goods, or compulsion to pay bribes; their activity was a paradigmatic example of quiet encroachment, individual, autonomous actors banding together as a political unit only when those gains they had appropriated from the state (here, the sidewalks) were threatened. Vendors for instance would pool money to replace one another's goods when confiscated by police.³⁹ Ismail speaks briefly about a conviviality between the ruled, suggesting: "Intimacy with power in the sense of knowing it closely and sensing it insinuate itself in one's daily business and surroundings creates the context for complicity among the ruled." (2006, 134) Vendors and hawkers, paradigmatic figures in downtown, were always keenly aware of police, their movements, and consequently as well, since the

³⁸ If we can read this symmetry so, with not only the slogans of political protest registering as provocation but also these forms of informal or illicit economic activity, then we may begin to think of urban politics as manifesting itself as a continuous process to resist the state's definitions over what the spatial order of the city is, the promotion of an immanent construction of the city and city spaces by its users.

³⁹ It should be noted that even after the uprising, street vendors have not fared much better, and recently several hundred street vendors were forcibly evicted from Midan Ramses, a large square downtown, this time by Military Police. (<http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/node/385438>) The vendors have held protests and sit-ins, even offering to be allowed to obtain licenses to hawk goods (they claim they were accustomed to paying money in bribes anyway) and at this point it is unclear what will happen in their case. It is interesting, however, how the narratives of "rebuilding Egypt" that have come into the public discourse since the end of the uprising are being used here to perpetuate many of the same stigmas against the urban poor as before. The fact that the military police were deployed to evict these vendors indicates that this is a clearly political action by the Army, more pointed in its subtext perhaps than the day-to-day abuses of the police.

police were there to project the state over space, were intimately familiar with that space as well, both where the police were and where they did not know or would not go.

As these vendors were replaced by demonstrators—or as the vendors turned into protestors—this became an active position, and instead of attempting to manage their relationship with the everyday state through diminishing their visibility and avoiding police, were seeking out police and provoking them then disappearing. The wildly disproportionate responses by the security forces also served to institute this same conviviality, as people saw these harmless, small groups being set upon by much larger complements of security forces firing tear gas, and surely felt sympathetic; furthermore the collateral damage of these responses, as people were trying to go about their daily business, angered others on the streets as the demonstrators forced the normally insular tactics of the state against those using the public streets to include all users. In effect they made the state reveal its physical force, as opposed to the normal invisibility of retreat.

It is also important to note how these same moves seem to indicate a habitus among these groups of protesting youth. The knowledge of the area, of coordinating these small groups and of recognizing in advance the reactions of police to their provocations were all behaviors that were surely known before the protests began; these people were, ironically, used to running from police, but now the normal fear that conditioned retreat was turned into a tactical tool to allow for continuous pressure on security forces. Again, we see a situation of “switching” where the quotidian tools of avoiding power or managing affairs in the city were turned into mobilizations against the spatial control of the state over the city. This one-to-one correlation in the movements and techniques speaks to the incredibly thin line—in Egypt in particular, but generally as well—between the “stateless” world of the city before the revolution and the revolutionary moment; the only difference was the police were playing defense instead of offense. The

use of police to govern and regulate space, though it created serious conditions of repression, nonetheless made for relatively neutral spaces themselves, that could be traversed and learned as long as those bodily agents of the state were not present or could be negotiated around. Turning on these same agents, provoking them and unsettling them, only took a slight switch in intention to turn negotiation into provocation.

In fact, the success of provocation even relied on an intimate knowledge of the spatial politics and practices of power; only a police apparatus so thoroughly and myopically concerned with even minor street vendors and peddlers would react in such a way to these small groups of young men shouting slogans. Recognition of the police's absolute intolerance of these modes of public appearance in everyday life conditioned and defined these modes of protest, allowing relatively small groups to have a significant impact throughout downtown.

In both of these cases, as in the many others similar to these, there was a remarkable symmetry between the means that individuals or groups used to live their daily lives or engage in commercial or social activities and the means that they used to take to the streets, to protest and to traverse the city. In some respects, these mechanisms of everyday existence in Cairo and the forms of quiet encroachment used by residents to secure their livelihoods were surely forms of confrontation with the state, here instead of being tacit or secretive they were used openly and in combination with a political language that sought not just the ability to keep what gains they had made over public space but an end to the systems of surveillance and ordering of the state that sought to strip control of the city and these spaces from the people. We can again consider this idea of revolting *bil hada'a*, with a canny that interpreted the situation at hand and designed its strategies to fit. Built by years of dealing with police in quotidian contexts, both the Ultras and street vendors knew their tools, their tactics, and their limitations, much more

than the police knew of these groups. The spatial organization of the city and the order of everyday policing created a multitude of forced, coerced and unwanted interactions with the state in a direct fashion⁴⁰ that ingrained this habitus of an awareness to one's immediate environment, of quick movement, of advance and retreat. This same habitus needed only then to be deployed under different motives to go from a state of quiet encroachment to one of active uprising.

⁴⁰ Compare this to the United States or similar contexts where, as a result of normative city planning and particularly variants of it ascribing to "Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

8. AFTER THE ANGER

The sustained marches, street assemblies, flash protests, and running battles with police between January 25th and 28th tell a story of different types of bodies and crowds and their movement through the city. Across the irregular fabric and textures of neighborhoods, side streets, residential areas, grand thoroughfares, roundabouts and open squares, such assemblages were being produced with crowds appearing seemingly out of nowhere, small groups becoming thousands in an hour's time, marches circulating in peripheral neighborhoods for hours only to suddenly pour out into main streets in force, groups of youth suddenly confronting police and disappearing just as quickly into alleys and back streets, protestors clashing with then moving away from or around police lines. The protests surely related to the city and the streets, and to the knowledge of the various individuals and groups involved in the city, the streets and the police. This knowledge, accumulated and deepened through years of lived experience, was clearly visible in the moves of protestors in these early days of the uprising; in many respects, these were the same mechanisms of ordinary, everyday life in the city but rearranged and put to new purpose.

As was described above, in the face of a state that had both dramatically pulled away from the city in terms of infrastructural investments, public services, economic development and social welfare but at the same time exerted increasingly greater police authority over the streets and public space, people had long since been creating their own means of securing housing, livelihoods and mutual aid through informal networks and modes of sociability unregulated or unseen by the state. The city, as a collector of people and a source of material, served as the site and means of construction of these networks, economies and associations as the Egyptian people continually came to rely on the city

itself where the state proper had deserted them. The density and intricacy of the city also served as a means to avoid the gaze of the state as it manifest itself in policing: where public participation and expression were just as illegal as many of the informal livelihoods of people in the city, they had created means to avoid the surveillance and violence of the police forces. In taking to the streets, then, these people were claiming possession and ownership of a city that was already theirs.

Beyond the fulfillment of material demands, the creation of a new society or the promotion of political or social justice goals, the most prominent, palpable sensation during the early days of protest was an anger—expressed directly at the regime and by proxy through rage at the police—at the inability of the people to live meaningful, dignified public lives, as the protests began to give them the impression suddenly that this was possible. Even before the possibility dawned on protestors that the state could indeed fall, they were already realizing as they went out onto the streets how deprived they had been of these public lives, evidenced by the incredible elation of protestors, having broken through the first police cordons and kettles, running and even laughing as they shouted “We’ve done it! We’ve done it! Come and join us!”

THE STATE EMBODIED

What these movements of people in the street manifest was the materiality of the everyday state, temporarily but decisively breaking the “cynical agency” born in fear that prevented their knowledge of the weakness of the state from connecting to an ability to contest and challenge it directly. The first victories against police and the initial success of the protests have been described as breaking the barrier of fear, but how was it broken? It seems quite literally, by breaking through cordons and winning ground against the police.

The protestors disarticulated the unity that existed between the everyday state—weak, corrupt, petty police officers and thugs—and the fetish of the state, the idea of its unity and omnipotence. Cairo was just a space held empty by police, projecting the image of a coherent and total control over space, but ultimately limited to physically policing spaces to ensure that they could not be used by political subjects; the sheer number of Central Security Forces, regular police, and secret police and intelligence officers—the physical size of the apparatus—created an illusion of a more definitive presence and panoptic surveillance. The ubiquity and consistency of harassment and abuse by police in everyday life along with the extremity with which the state responded to any public activities, its violence literally being spectacular, similar to Debord’s notion of the “concentrated spectacle” in bureaucratic societies placing the power of the entire bureaucracy in the individual bureaucrat. These acts of police violence were meant both to be consumed as an image of the power of the state and meant to concentrate the appearance or existence of state power through this image in the individual officers carrying it out. This concentration, produced by images of authority, uniforms, and even the way that we talk about “*the state*,” where languages of everyday description of the state, of law and of power binds the individual to abstract reifications (Taussig 1991, 136-137), giving them a vicarious reality by connection to the individuals and their experience: “The structure of feeling elicited through this face-to-face encounter with “the state that is”—the state that comes down to earth—is not without its links to the reinstatement of the state as fetish and its abstraction and elevation above society.” (Ismail 2006, 313)

Ultimately, however, this fetishism of the state through the police was limited, as it clearly took astonishingly large material inputs and effort to continually project itself; the gaze and reach of the state over the space of the city was in this regard quite literally the gaze and reach of police officers. I have described how the informal areas provided

spaces where officers did not patrol and therefore did not see, and how street vendors could disappear into back alleys to keep from being seen and caught; the reach of the state, as well, is the arm's length of the officer or officers, meaning their ability to strike but ultimately that at any given time the state only controlled a small circle around its agents, a few feet to either side of it that relied on the power of its fetish to control huge areas.

I described the surprise that followed the breaking through of the first cordons of police on the 25th, the exuberance and the almost immediate sense that a point had been reached where people realized something had already happened. Pushing through the police lines was the materialization of the fact that the police were just that, merely individuals authorized to use violence, and at the other side of the cordons there was no big other but only empty streets (literally and figuratively); these individuals could be pushed, could be evaded and ducked under and moved aside. Running past the lines of police was the first jump into a city space that was open and not in control, the self-surveillance that normally occurred in city spaces, the worry that a police officer was nearby or could be watching was not in this space past the lines of police, as it was very clear from the confrontation where the police were and where they were not. To paraphrase the big other himself: There is no Man behind the cordon.

This lesson had to be learned, through the aleatory chance of actually pushing past the police, making it through the first line, which had up to the moment of its occurrence been considered an impossibility that prevented even its attempt; all previous attempts to resist police had resulted in failure, constituting the fear and fetish of their power that made direct, physical opposition to them impossible. The break therefore seems similar to what Badiou's formulation of the event, the fact of something "happening": 'Something happens' is something like a cut in the continuum of the world,

something which is new, something also which disappears—which appears, but also which disappears. Because happening is when appearing is the same thing as disappearing” (Badiou 2005). From this position of impossibility beforehand, the actual success of protestors in even defeating police, much less upending the regime, was an impossibility, and breaking through their lines was hardly even a sensible proposition. After this first breakthrough, however, it was indeed clear that something had happened, and while the protestors may not have immediately realized the full consequences of this moment, it is clear that things shifted, that the balance of power had not changed (since, as we have seen, the police were never truly as powerful as they projected) but that the organization and distribution of meaning around it had. The protestors had materialized the state with this action, breaking the power of the fetish such that now The Egyptian state could be counted not as a whole but as the sum of the bodies of police officers, not an entity that constituted or made up the space of the city but a number. An entire array of concepts could not be engaged with, much less defeated—the state, the police, the regime, the president—was substituted for the group of actual things and people that made them up, and the math even early on seemed to be favorable for the protestors.

This ‘embodiment’ of the Egyptian state had further consequences; if the security forces were just individuals, then they could be confronted, they could be exhausted, tired, pushed, and outrun. In some respects, as we have discussed, this was not entirely new to the Egyptians, they had dealt with police as individuals before, youths had outrun them and it was a fairly common sight to catch officers sleeping at posts. However, at this point these many separate instances, that had not resonated because they could be dealt with in individual terms and encounters with police, were now magnified by the scale of things—there was no mistaking these lines of security forces in full riot gear for one or two

tired cops—and thus the most direct instance of elision between police and the state presented itself.

This event allowed for the beginning of a learning process. People began to accrue knowledge over these days, testing the state gave them new knowledge of its material existence and therefore its physiological limits and even psychological limits. Now that the police were just bodies who projected the will of the state in specific spaces and protestors knew this, they could begin experimenting with tactics against them that were not available or cognizable beforehand. They could also connect the police with their day-to-day spatial practices that they used to deal with other obstacles, other people, other spatial problems. This type of experimentation was evident in the flash demonstrations in the intervening days, which surely would not have made sense if the state was still monolithic; these small provocations now could be considered as part of a larger set of strategies to take on police over the coming days, working within a city space that was itself now much more strategic since it was on the one hand all available for use and on the other hand only under as much control or offered as much resistance as there were police present. These lessons learned through experimentation and subsequent successes in defiance of police attempts to shut down protestors deepened the latter's convictions in the possibility of success, and likely contributed to the fact that the occupation of Tahrir occurred the way it did; the notion that a "republic of Tahrir" could be constituted required a spatial understanding of the state and a recognition that began implicitly and eventually became explicit, that "we are here and they are *out there*."

9. “THE REPUBLIC OF TAHRIR”

Following the taking of Tahrir Square by protestors on Friday and its immediate occupation, the square became a place distinct from the city. The presence of tanks and lines of protestors standing guard against a return of the police, blocking entrances removed it from its normal role as a site of daily circulation and traffic, separating it from the car exhaust, engine noise and purposive bustle of its usual context. In addition to this, separation from the city allowed for the square to be used as a direct and open space, where its full area, usually taken up by those same cars, was now a large plateau for the congregation of demonstrators and others entering to take in the spectacle, ask questions, or even simply transiting through it to walk from one side of downtown to the other.

The many portals to the square then, created by the exigencies of containment and defense, became boundary conditions for the creation of a totally new, unique space of congregation, political expression and protest. An explicitly reinforced production of subjectivities—through chanting, signs, music, and even frisking on entry and picking up litter—that reinforced inside and outside and that created and reinforced a sense of a revolutionary environment within the square. Through the many days of occupation of Tahrir prior to the fall of Mubarak, even as the atmosphere and optimism may have fluctuated amongst protestors, the square was a source of constant dynamism, energy and mobilization.

The narrative of the occupation of Tahrir Square here will take on two moments, that of defense and of the festival. Defense will be mentioned first, in part because the protestors were so quickly forced to defend, with their blood and lives, the gains they had made in the square from the attacks of plainclothes police and thugs, again creating

spontaneous means of organization and coordination that were astonishing and effective. Following the successful defense of the square on “Bloody Wednesday”—as people began to truly realize the extent to which people protesting were willing to risk their lives for what they believed in—and after an impassioned plea of a young organizer candidly broadcast on satellite television, the atmosphere in the country began to shift as people went to see what was really happening there in Tahrir (and not just believe the lies of the state media). Over the next two weeks people began going into Tahrir, crossing this threshold in millions and travelling from all parts of the country, not just Cairo, to satisfy curiosity, to witness or to participate; the “Republic of Tahrir” as many called it, became an active place for the transformation of subjectivities and the demonstration of a virtual future. The spatial conditions of the occupation became a means of reinforcing and producing an atmosphere of revolution and a means of winning over people to the cause of protestors.

Just as the first *Milyoneyyah*⁴¹ was quieting down in Tahrir Square on February 1st, after a day of enormous demonstrations in the square and across Egypt marked by exuberance and a confidence in the downfall of Mubarak and victory of the protestors, the President appeared on Egyptian state television and delivered a speech that was ostensibly to announce he would not run for a second term. The speech, however, was marked by an aggressive and confrontational tone towards the protests and protestors, rife with propaganda and accusations, if not direct incitements to violence against demonstrators, and was not only a disappointment to those expecting him to resign but also caused serious apprehension. These worries about the tone and rhetoric of the

⁴¹ A *mozaherah milyoneyyah* means a “demonstration of a million,” usually shortened just to *milyoneyyah*. The term has been translated mostly as “million man march,” which is a bit misleading. I leave the term in the Arabic as well as the construction does not require the specification of a gender as in “million man march”

president's words continued through the night as reports came in, first from Alexandria, of small clashes between protestors and supposed "pro-Mubarak demonstrators." There was no doubt amongst the protestors who these aggressive demonstrators actually were: *Baltagiya*, literally meaning "thugs" and imported from the Turkish word for "axe," the *baltagiya* were thugs that would be paid by members of the regime on a day basis to attack protestors, disrupt elections or otherwise carry out acts of paramilitary violence on a mercenary basis.

The next morning a tense atmosphere pervaded the entire city, as it was still uncertain what responses and reactions the speech would garner; there were mutterings from some around the city and on the news outlets that this was a sad and broken man who should be allowed to live out the rest of his presidential term in peace, even to the point of making bizarre apologies on behalf of the Egyptian people to Mubarak. Throughout the city, small groups of a few hundred people at most could be seen marching and chanting slogans supporting the president, not necessarily large in number but a strange sight to be sure in light of both longstanding history and recent events, and disheartening to those supporting the uprising. However, in the early afternoon the timbre of these protests changed as they moved from being small quiet marches to heavily orchestrated affairs, complete with trucks, loudspeaker systems and large full-color professional prints and posters. Also, instead of the small crowds of miscellaneous apologists, these new marches were almost entirely characters matching the general *baltagi* profile perfectly, many carrying clubs, truncheons or other weapons. Very quickly these protestors started pouring into downtown and the square in a heavily orchestrated fashion, attacking protestors indiscriminately and singling out foreign journalists particularly. At one point, in an event that seemed to transfix Western media outlets' coverage of events, men on horseback and camels charged into the square with whips and

clubs, attacking protestors.⁴² These initial attacks were fended off as stunned protestors recovered, forming human chains to defend the center of the square and pushing out the thugs (and stabled the captured horses nearby). As attacks on the square continued to take place intermittently, the army was completely silent. Though their tanks and APCs still sat at the entrances to the square, soldiers stood off to the side and effectively allowed the attackers entry to the square.⁴³

By mid-afternoon the battles had begun in earnest, and under the notion that if these thugs were allowed entry into the square it would surely result in a massacre, protestors sprang to the defense of their hard-won gains. Throughout the square different groups all sprung to organize elements of a defense; one of the first things to happen was a construction fence surrounding the site of the Nile Hilton was pulled down and huge sheets of corrugated metal were pulled by groups to form barricades, along with the burned-out carapaces of cars left by security forces, to defend the entrances to the square. Not long after, many within the square began pulling up the pavement and breaking the concrete sidewalks of the square into rocks to be used as missiles to stop the advance of the oncoming attackers, with some people dislodging large pieces, others working to break them into smaller sizes, and yet more loading these rocks onto cardboard trays and portaging them to those fighting at the fronts. At the same time, doctors had set

⁴² One activist noted on this subject that the depravity of the regime ran so deep that it was willing even to Orientalize its own citizenry.

⁴³ Robert Fisk would later report, moreover, that the regime had given orders to the Army to crush the protestors but that these orders were disobeyed, and officers could be seen ripping off their headsets and making panicked calls to their families for advice and consolation. The army clearly did not carry out these grim orders, but it seems that allowing the thugs access to protestors may have been a subsequent compromise. Even as they pulled away, there was at least one moment where amidst a hailstorm of stones being thrown by approaching thugs, a young soldier standing on top an APC fired several rounds from his Kalashnikov into the air to disperse them. Once this high-tension moment passed, the tension of the situation suddenly hit him and his legs gave out from under him. As volunteer doctors from inside the square ran to help him and the crowd cheered and thanked him, he could be seen crying.

themselves up in the middle of a street near the Egyptian Museum, the site of one of the fiercest battles, and groups of 20-30 youth formed human chains around the ad-hoc clinic to give the medics space to work and the wounded privacy. People were going around and collecting water bottles to be filled and distributed as others found ways out of the square to bring in food that others then portioned out, even feeding by hand those whose arms were linked in human chains. Others still were circulating news and reports from the different sides of the square, helping direct people to where help was needed most at any given time.

At the fronts of the battle lines themselves, discussions were rampant, even amidst the din of stones raining on the metal barricades. Tactical decisions were being discussed, announced and carried out by quick agreement and collective action, similar to the way in which actions had taken place the previous Friday. Without any formal leadership or hierarchy, the heavy barricades comprised of several loosely interlocked and adjacent pieces would begin to move as people orchestrated the pace of advance and retreat. This is not to say that these were highly regimented and disciplined units, nor to unnecessarily romanticize what was ultimately just canny and will exceeding desperation, but it is nonetheless important to recognize the deliberate way in which much of these events were occurring, and the many different interwoven units of organization that had sprung up suddenly and exigently. These were not soldiers but high school and college students, unemployed youth, service industry workers, mothers, laborers, public servants, street vendors, children, doctors, pensioners, engineers and other wholly ordinary people. It seems likely, perhaps, that people were drawing on latent experience of the everyday sorts of negotiations and forms of mutual assistance that characterized a city like Cairo.

By two in the morning it seemed that the protestors were gaining significant ground, and while there were still reports of sniper fire and altercations through the night

until perhaps four or five in the morning, it seemed that the long battle with these thugs and plainclothes policemen had been won. The army had returned after literally sitting by and watching the night-long battles and separated the two sides. The square was in disarray as the sun came up, and once the battles were done protestors reinforced the barricades and collected the thousands of stones that littered the streets and collected them into piles, neatly arranged as reminders of the possibility of further attack. These barricades, made from bits of signs, steel fencing, traffic barriers and myriad other pieces of urban detritus, would become the new gateways for entry into the square, with loose lines of men and women standing at each entry checking identification to ensure that there were no police or state security spies coming into the square and to ensure that no weapons came inside. These searchers would constantly apologize for frisking individuals and checking backs, knowing that it was an unhappy task, and at times groups of greeters at the square would sing songs welcoming the Egyptians and chanting to them “don’t get upset by the searches!” These songs would come later, because the tension was still thoroughly in place after the battle had been finished, with a feeling of victory matched by uncertainty.

While the square itself had been held, and the space of occupation maintained even in the face of battles that had left tens dead and hundreds wounded, the situation between inside and outside came into relief as thugs continued to mill about outside of the square, at times blocking off entrances, mobbing journalists, or preventing the delivery of food, blankets and medical supplies to inside. Clashes as well continued sporadically, with reports of gunfire—some from the army to disperse fighting crowds, some from snipers on rooftops—coming throughout the day. People were constantly broadcasting which entrances were safe and which were not as these points changed hands throughout the day.

Journalists in particular were targeted with particular fervor, as the regime attempted to effectively create a blackout not only on the scenes of state sponsored violence taking place around the square but also of the continued resolve of the protestors. Many different news crews were attacked, seemingly indiscriminately and without much reason beyond the impression that they were destroying Egypt's image and throwing their support behind the protestors.⁴⁴ One particular irony of these attacks on Journalists was that they began the same day that Christiane Amanpour decided to sit down with Hosni Mubarak for an interview, even sending several messages out on his behalf via her Twitter account, giving the regime a humanized mouthpiece at the same time as media links to the protests were being violently cut. This strategy would continue, as direct violence against the square had not dislodged the spatial occupation, the government moved on to strategies of attempting to block media coverage of the protests and simultaneously create a generalized fear and hysteria of foreign agents and spies throughout the protests. This xenophobia, often provoked by plainclothes state security or intelligence personnel and taken up by groups of scared or angry bystanders, was so irrational that even ordinary Egyptian youth were harassed and at times attacked on suspicion of being "foreign agents". Where the square had become an effective point of pressure by keeping the state and the police out, now the state would attempt to turn this space that thwarted their control internally into an island and completely isolate the square, using its uncertainty in the minds of most Egyptians, compounded by this new segregation, as a place to breed imaginary monsters and threats.

⁴⁴ In at least one instance, even, a group of journalists from Al-Arabiyya (A Saudi-owned satellite TV station) were thrown out of the square by antigovernment demonstrators because the perception that they were squarely against the revolution. Documentation of attacks against journalists by pro-regime thugs can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/journoattacks>

This uneasy situation continued for days, and the mood of victory and perseverance among protestors continued to be tempered with an anxiety and worry about the vitriol being stirred up against them by the state and the continuing sporadic violence, even if their resolve was unshaken. Paradoxically, perhaps, over these next few days, many felt that inside the square was the safest place to be in Egypt, as crowds continued to gather in what was once again becoming a relaxed almost festive atmosphere while at the same time outside the square the distributed crackdown of police, paid regime thugs and others were still harassing and occasionally attacking people. Another Friday came, dubbed the “day of departure,” and although Mubarak failed to do so⁴⁵ this demonstration brought large numbers again to the square. Additionally, a “Sunday of the Martyrs” brought many to the square to pay their respects to those hundreds who had died since the 25th in the protests, with monuments made to those who died and some people laying down with flags over them to represent the death toll to that point. In each of these planned demonstrations, protestors managed to bring thousands, sometimes hundreds of thousands, to the square, but at the same time a general suspicion and fear pervaded the country as a whole, and the next few days seemed wholly uncertain.

As the days dragged on, there was a creeping sense that even if the uprising had not been put down by violence, that it would be dissipated in the anxiety and shock of the aftermath of these battles. The regime might have played out its most aggressive hand, but it still possessed enough legitimacy and wherewithal in the absence of any change in the country’s mood to wait, producing a disheartening stalemate that threatened to bring

⁴⁵ A joke (possibly an old one repurposed) had been going around saying that Mubarak had been told by one of his advisors that it was time to prepare a farewell speech for his citizens, to which Mubarak replies “Why? Where are they going?”

back the image of the state's seeming imperviousness and invulnerability to any sort of assault, and protestors struggled to consider what other strategies could be brought to bear.

Then on Monday February 7, a young marketing executive working for Google, Wael Ghonim, was released from detention, where he had been held blindfolded by State Security since January 27th. Ghonim has been the administrator of the 'Kolena Khaled Said' Facebook page dedicated to the memory of Khlaed Said and ending police violence, and had taken part in sending out some of the first calls to protest to the 700,000 strong subscribership of the Khaled Said page. He had not been seen or heard from since the 27th, although a video taken that day and uploaded to the Internet showed him being accosted and violently carried off by plainclothes police from a demonstration in front of the Journalists' Syndicate. It is uncertain why Ghonim was released at this point in time, or why he was released at all; a large public outcry had focused on Ghonim in particular, partially due to the efforts and pressure of his employer. It may also be the case that the state, since they had treated Ghonim "relatively" well during his detention⁴⁶ and since the Hossam Badrawy—Secretary General of the NDP—himself personally drove the young man home, was attempting to curry favor and respect from him. It seemed that they had expected Ghonim to come out and if not renounce the revolution then act as a voice calling for compromise or hearing out the government's plans for reform. Surely they could not have expected what followed.

Within hours of his release, Ghonim sat for an interview with Mona El-Shazly on the popular interview program *Al Ashira Masa'an*, "10 P.M." on independent satellite

⁴⁶ Meaning he had not been beaten or physically abused, despite being bound and blindfolded in a cell for almost two weeks. Ghonim had also been spoken to in a respectful fashion, a paltry comparison to the abuse of his

television and gave an electrifying, interview that swayed the country. At the same time distraught and defiant Ghonim sat with El-Shazly for a little over a half hour, and far from the recalcitrance that may have been expected, he called on the government to step down and implored the people of Egypt, particularly the mothers and fathers of the country, to trust in the youth who went out on the 25th and to stand up against the corruption and abuse that had ruled the country for so long. As he sat it seemed as if the entire country was riveted by what he was saying; here was a young educated Egyptian, a father and an executive at a prominent company who organized and supported the goals of the protestors, perhaps the furthest possible image from the foreign agents, traitors and saboteurs spread by the state propaganda engine nevertheless insisting in uncompromising terms that the regime had to go. The interview was cut short, as Ghonim, seeing pictures for the first time of some of those who had been killed by police and the state's thugs, began weeping. After sitting, unable to collect himself for some time, he said through his tears: "I - I want to say something to every mother and every father—truthfully—who lost their child: I'm sorry but it wasn't our mistake. I swear to God it wasn't our mistake; this is *their* mistake, the mistake of every one of them who was holding on to power and refused to let go of it. I want to leave—" and he walked off set.

Particularly as he addressed so many parents in the country, parents whose children themselves may have been in the protests⁴⁷ or of the same age as those many wounded and killed, it seemed that any further violence against protestors in the square would be completely impossible. At the same time, Ghonim was during this interview so self-effacing and so passionate about the goals of the protestors and the justness of the cause that it seemed immediately clear that minds were being changed across the country.

⁴⁷ Rumors and reports had been circulating that the children of many NDP members even had been attending protests unbeknownst to their parents

Whether serendipity or proof of how little truth and sincerity was actually required to dissolve the regime's propaganda, the situation was completely different from this point forward. Immediately after the interview, during it even, all over Egypt people were calling one another, making sure that they were watching or asking if they'd seen the program. Among the activists who were watching it at the time, there was a shocked and nervous feeling of the possibility of hope again; it was stunning to think that this had all just played out on an Egyptian satellite channel with a well respected talk-show host, and although there was no way of knowing what its outcome would be, there was no one who had been worried over the state of the uprising whose hopes were not at least somewhat lifted.

The next day's attendance in Tahrir Square reversed the tide of attrition that had been occurring as new faces poured into the square. Many, entering for the first time and unsure what to expect, wept at the evidence of the carnage that had been wrought by the state's thugs only a few days sooner, many embracing the wounded and thanking those in the square for their heroism and apologizing to them for not coming sooner: "we were afraid" was a phrase uttered many times in the coming days, almost always in the plural, as those coming late recognized the collective fear that had held them in check. These late arrivals were welcomed as they saw how much they had been lied to about events, and a week to the day after the first *millyoneyyah* Tahrir on February 8 seemed once again to be in a position of prominence within the city, with Ghonim's interview and influx of people to the square breathing new immediacy into the political demands of the protestors. From this point the momentum would continue to grow as the "Republic of Tahrir" admitted new citizens daily by the hundreds of thousand, and the space was used to change minds and transform subjectivities, beginning a process that was as much political transformation as it was a festival of everyday life.

On the 9th of February, the workers of Mahalla, who had inspired the April 6 movement and had been the most consistent political forces working against the regime for years (Particularly due to the cooptation function of the state run Egyptian Trade Union Federation, all strikes were effectively unpermitted wildcat actions) joined the fray and declared a strike. Though laborers and labor interests had been represented in individual capacities, with many of the protestors being workers or recently laid-off or temporary employees on “flexible” labor contracts, this was the first move towards putting concerted economic pressure on the Mubarak regime, and more and more unions and workers either went out on strike or announced plans to strike.

That same day, a protest of several thousand university professors from Cairo University marched to down Qasr Al-Ainy Tahrir, and a group of two to three hundred of these professors took the opportunity provided by the lax security around the parliament to break off and begin a demonstration in front of the parliament, cabinet and several ministry buildings. By that evening, the professors were still there and communicating back to Tahrir, a group of several thousand lead by enthusiastic young ultras made the short walk and set up the second concerted occupation of the uprising in Cairo. Within minutes of arriving in front of the parliament, no army presence anywhere in sight, a sign was hung on the large wrought iron gates saying “Pardon: Closed until the Fall of the Regime” (*Afwan: Moghlaqan Hata Isqaat Al-Nizam*) and the youth now in stead of chanting, “The people want the fall of the regime” they shouted “The people already have toppled the regime!” Tarpaulin, tents and blankets followed within the next hour, as did some tired looking army soldiers seemingly with no orders to stop protestors, just as well since the only damage to property was a fresh coat of graffiti along the perimeter wall of the Cabinet building, including several graffiti claiming in block lettering “THE LIBERATED REVOLUTIONARIES” (*AL-THAWWAR AL-AHRAR*).

The next day was rife with speculation that Mubarak would step down, as statements by the NDP Secretary General seemed to make such claims on television, and early in the day a high-ranking army officer came to Tahrir and told the people there: “All your demands will be met.” The demonstration that day was huge, the biggest to date, and people waited all day for Mubarak’s supposed speech. It was well into the night when the speech actually was broadcast, some two hours after its expected air time. As the entire square went from cacophony to almost total silence, the speech was audible over thousands of radios, cell phones, megaphones, PA systems and anything else with a speaker. After an incredibly verbose speech, Mubarak declared he would not be stepping down, which was immediately greeted with angry, heated chants of “Leave! Leave! Leave!” (*Irhal! Irhal! Irhal!*). Disappointed but not disheartened, huge groups of thousands of protestors marched from Tahrir to the State TV building along the Nile and, more significantly, to the Presidential Palace some 15 kilometers away.

The next day, as these protests intensified and kept occupations up at the newly “liberated” spaces, it seemed clear that regardless of Mubarak’s intention there was no possibility of people giving up, as numbers continued to swell. At one point, there were so many people in Tahrir that a group of perhaps five thousand decided to leave and join the protest in front of the State TV building, streaming out from a small back street shouting “Where’s Al Jazeera? The Liars are right in there!” That afternoon, on short notice it was announced that there would be an address by the office of the President, and newly appointed VP, Omar Suleiman⁴⁸ appeared on state Television for thirty seconds,

⁴⁸ Suleiman, an intelligence chief and the point man for the American “extraordinary rendition” program that outsourced torture to Egypt, will perhaps forever be remembered for his astonishing phrase about the Muslim Brotherhood: “Brother Muslimhood all have Brother Muslimhood, and Brother Muslimhood ask Brother Muslimhood to be President of this Country. We don’t want Chaos in our Country.”

standing in what looked to be a hallway with a single man standing behind him⁴⁹ and announced the abrogation of the President and the delegation of all his powers to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. The speech was so short and abrupt that State TV immediately re-aired it as many viewers inured by the bloviating of Mubarak likely hadn't even begun to pay attention before the announcement was over. Celebrations erupted in the streets, now not just Tahrir but *all* the streets of Cairo. Traffic was at a standstill in most places as horns honked and people waved flags, reveling in the news. At the same time as many proclaimed "God, Alone, Toppled the Regime" groups of youth were shouting "Where's the booze! We're getting drunk!" itself a minor victory in a country where alcohol consumption, even if permitted, was considered taboo by most of the population. The vast majority, however, were all but at a loss for words, frantically congratulating everyone they saw saying "*Mabrouk, mabrouk! 'Alf mabrouk!*": a thousand congratulations

In only 18 days, the same people who had been Orientalized and patronized by their leaders for their thousands of years of constancy (or docility), had toppled the President of 30 years.

PERFORMING PUBLIC SPACE

Interestingly, although Tahrir was a site for the production of criticism against the regime—for both past crimes and the freshly committed—and was also a hub of conversation, with rapid and sometimes heated debates about possible political futures and a multiplicity of visions of social and political life after Mubarak, neither of these was the primary offering of Midan al-Tahrir, even though these new political languages came

⁴⁹ Omar Suleiman will likely be forgotten long before the people of Egypt forget "The man standing behind Omar Suleiman" who, among other things "Fought in three wars and was martyred twice"

out of the space of the square. The primary force that Tahrir mobilized, the mechanism that allowed it to so successfully change minds reinvigorate people's political faculties, was the fact that it was public space in a radical sense of the term, "a physical manifestation of democracy." (Elshahed 2011) More even than its manifestation of democracy, this public space represented an aleatory, open space of encounters, where normal modes of behavior, inscribed either by the repression of the state or forms of governance constituted by the informal "internal governmentalities" (Ismail 2006) and power structures of gender, the family, or religion were suspended and dislocated, losing their stable referents (constituted in the private spaces of the home, the neighborhood street or church or mosque) to the radical uncertainty and malleability of this public space.

The square became, for the duration of its occupation, a space for the production of a revolutionary citizenship that worked at the level of publicizing, discussing and presaging the revolutionary demands (particularly insofar as the isolation of the space from the city and country as a whole allowed for their immediate realization within the boundaries of the square, "piloting" a postrevolutionary future), and similarly producing revolutionary affect and a different type of subjectivity that was generative of an immanent politics, one which distorted the scope of possibility in everyday life to create a "virtual" world, used in the Deleuzian sense: "The virtual is opposed not to the real but to the actual. *The virtual is fully real in so far as it is virtual.*" (Deleuze 1999, 109) This objectively real situation, radically detached from the "actual" question of the state, involved enacting and performing new possible ways of citizenship and interaction in the space of the "as if" the regime had already fallen. This production of a virtual citizenship, in turn, created greater support for the demands of the protestors and the means for creating the critical mass sufficient to unseat the state. The establishment then of Tahrir as a radically public

space must then be thought of as the primary mechanism for the destruction of the Mubarak regime, as it was the substrate off of which these virtualities could be constructed and through which active, participatory subjectivities ascribing to the potentiality of these new modes of interaction and constitution of social bodies in public.

As a corollary to this point, Tahrir was not a place cut out of the city or separate from it. Even though it was lined with barriers and barricades, it was open to all without reservation, with the only rule of exclusion being those figures of the state—police, political figures, and, strangely, about half if not more of Egypt's film and music industry (those who had publicly opposed or incited against the protestors). These figures were not excluded on the basis of any qualities of theirs other than the fact that they sought the active negation and annihilation of this public space, representing a source of enormous risk to their own private interests and the stability of their investments in authoritarianism. The question, however, was largely moot, as the only attempts to enter Tahrir by the state were continuations of the same sorts of spectacular violence in a crude yet thankfully unsuccessful attempt to destroy that which it could not govern.

Furthermore, another turning point had been reached during the occupation and fighting for Tahrir, one that had been part of the process of the transformation of the Egyptian people since the 25th; as the Egyptian state continued to expose its corporeality, the source of its strength in the city but also a means to discover its weaknesses, and launch attack after attack on the protestors, people began to see it naked for what it was and the desperation with which it wanted to maintain not the public order but only its own hold on the city. The loosing of camels, horses and thousands of armed thugs and plainclothes policemen was the ultimate instance of such spectacle, and if a point of no return for the state had not been reached up to that point it was shortly after. The attempts of the state to destroy the protest in the square had to lack any subtlety, having

lost the ability to use fear and the fetish of the state and public order to marshal obedience from the citizenry several days earlier, they were compelled to unleash the full extent of violence possible on the citizenry in the hope that this would be enough. However, due to the heroism of the people within the square, this too failed.

Now, whatever semblance of a state remained even amongst people who had not been in the protests was completely dissipated; stripped naked by its own crude tactics, it had renounced any legitimacy over the city and effectively admitted its complete loss of control. The huge crowds that arrived in the square after Wael Ghonim's interview, which effectively confirmed this when he said that these deaths were the fault of those who would not relinquish power, had perhaps even been convinced of this days prior, watching the horrible spectacle in the square and wondering how this could be possible, but were only confident enough to go down to the square after this explicit confirmation.

To wit, one of Egypt's independent papers tracked down two self-confessed *baltagiya* and anonymously spoke with them, leading to a shockingly frank portrait of the events of Bloody Wednesday. One of the men had seen Muabrak's speech the night before and taken pity on him; he made some calls and heard about demonstrations supporting the president and went down to one early Wednesday morning. He described the mood as aggressive and unnatural from the beginning, but stayed with the group until he received a call from his parliamentary representative telling him to join another group, that they had "signs, banners, and weapons." The man says he hung up his phone and returned home, shaken; the next day he discovered that his two younger brothers had been in the square fighting on the protestors' side. The other interviewee seemed to be a professional *baltagi*, paid to employ "intimidation tactics" during the protests and when told that people were meeting at the square on Wednesday went armed anticipating what was planned. The same parliamentary representative was there, handing out ski masks,

white weapons and firearms. Entering into the fray having been told the protestors were just overprivileged students, at one point he realized: "They were willing to die for what they believed in, and I was fighting them because I had been paid LE200. The thought of it broke my heart." He and several others, realizing how they had been lied to and the depravity they had been sent into, left. The regime had not only reached a point of shocking the conscience, but one of incredible weakness, exposing their desperation.

In the wake of this, although people were afraid at first to go to the square, it was clear to everyone that they had no government, that the city had been forsaken as the regime attempted to use its own citizens as mercenaries and willing to cannibalize the very basis of urban life and community in order to maintain its hold. As people did begin to go to the square in larger numbers, overcoming their fears, they did so as much in support of the political demands of the protestors (as it was clear many of the latecomers were more moderate) as to protest the obscenity of attempting to destroy the City in such an awful fashion. Just as the popular committees were a reaffirmation of the importance of the city and urban space, so was the expression of much of the activity in Tahrir square.

Entering the square, particularly for the first time, was itself a transforming, transformative process. The borders to Tahrir were strange things: at the same time open, effectively invisible or nonexistent, as they were points of radical disjuncture, noticeable points of passage or threshold. As the tanks and personnel carriers of the army stood covered in anti-regime graffiti, often intertwined with the barricades still up and at ready from the defense of the square on Bloody Wednesday, one could not but get the sense that another world lay behind them, the sight was so alien. Even from these strange barricades and tanks, things that should not appear in the city under any normal circumstances, activity could be heard coming from inside; then, at the entry, just at the thresholds, people stood forming tunnels playing drums and tambourines, singing "Here

are the Egyptians! Welcome, Welcome to the Heroes!” This uncompromising greeting, lauding people simply for entering regardless of whether or not they had been there for the defense of the square or earlier conflicts, was disarming and exciting, and moreover it was meant to affirm, from the outset, the importance not of who had been at what battle or who came late, but the fundamental importance of presence, that the heroism and valor was due to anyone who came to experience and see what was happening in Tahrir. The stage for an immanent politics, a citizenship based on presence in public, was being set through this, one of the many performances taking place in the square.

Other performances could be seen throughout the square, as people consciously worked to make Tahrir into a virtual space inside of which the regime had already fallen. All of these moves were simple changes to the way of being in the city that people had normally experienced, but in addition to presenting a transformed, idealized society, these demonstrators and performers were making these events funny, exciting, and dramatic. This was the explosion of a civil society, one which had existed quietly in the small spaces of the city, informal quarters and other everyday places, now taking command over one of the largest and most symbolic squares in the capital, reveling in the almost utopian character of performing these small, civil acts in public.

Not only was litter being picked up constantly, separate bins were set up for organic and non organic wastes, and groups of men and women went around with trash bags soliciting litter by shouting “contributions for the National Democratic Party! Please be generous!” Food and drink were on offer to anyone, and then, as the numbers swelled street vendors were brought in selling *koshari*, popcorn, sodas and other snacks. There was some initial grumbling about this introduction, but at the same time to have these vendors operating freely without police harassment, with people enjoying popcorn and watermelon seeds as they might on an evening out or during one of the *mulid*

festivals, only served to emphasize the spectacular quality of the square, allowing people to enjoy the political demonstrations as a festival of everyday life unleashed. Musicians of all stripes played constantly, sometimes more than one at a time on different stages, singing contemporary and classical tunes, and some new ones written by young musicians among the demonstrators. Poets came and gave public readings to receptive crowds, including the legendary Ahmed Fouad Negm, a folk poet who had since the Nasser era been writing and singing with his partner the blind Sheikh Imam about politics in a satirical and often hilarious fashion that got them arrested for the better part of thirty years. People held signs now that were not just statements of political demands, but often cartoons or jokes, such as “Mubarak Leave so I can go Home and Shave”; these jokes extended to satire and mockery of the propaganda the state media was leveling against the protestors, such as a young man standing at one entrance asking if anyone had change for a 50 Euro note, in reference to State TV’s claims that protestors were all American agents receiving daily compensation for demonstrating. Even on exit, connections were forged to the space, as a gauntlet of joking, singing demonstrators hugged and thanked people as they left, and the people leaving themselves usually chanted “We’ll be back tomorrow!” in response.

And just as in the *mulids* (the comparison to *mulids* or *mahragan*, festivals, was made explicitly. First in attempts to trivialize the occupation, then as sheer expression of excitement as people walked through the square), social roles and hierarchies were displaced; even more than in the *mulids*, the attitudes and subjectivities at play in Tahrir were not even based in the traditional form of a religious festival, there were no ceremonies even to guide the activities as the governing rules of the space evolved tacitly and through negotiation of its participants, constantly shifting with situations but always civil and positive.

Youth literally held the center of the square, and had set their tents up in some of the most prominent locations. Here, the younger generations were the most prominently represented, and commanded a respect that Egyptian society had never seen, speaking frankly, critically and authoritatively with people three times their age often.⁵⁰ Women in the square were amazed at the fact that there was none or almost no sexual harassment in Tahrir, and that they were treated with dignity and respect by men of all ages and religious backgrounds regardless of appearance or dress. This comes as a particularly incredible shock for Egypt, where the catcalling and harassment of women on the street is notorious, even infamous. A 2008 study by the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights found that 83 percent of Egyptian women and 91 percent of foreign women reported having experienced harassment in daily life, regardless of how they dressed.⁵¹ For the incidence, even if claims were embellished, to drop to zero or almost zero is incredibly significant. There was obviously a different set of social rules operating in Tahrir even from the earliest days, where women were public figures in protests from the very beginning, subverting stigmas against their gender and even taking part in the fighting at times; men as well must have sensed that harassment, for whatever reasons, was completely inappropriate in this space, that even if harassment were considered acceptable by most men in normal circumstances, within this virtual republic it would not be proper or tolerated.

⁵⁰ Comparing this active participation and leadership of the youth in the square then to the empty representations and platitudes later given out by the Army and members of the interim government in the same breaths as they passed more paternalistic edicts by diktat has been particularly disheartening, such that even before Mubarak stepped down the actual youth activists were trying to distance themselves from the term and the paternalism it invited.

⁵¹ It should be noted here that women reported the most common harassers by profession to be police, and that reporting rates of harassment to police were 2.4 percent for Egyptian women and 7.9 percent for foreign women in Egypt, saying that when they did attempt to make reports police often would mock them or also harass them. The vast majority did not seek police help, seeing it as worthless.

Religious discourse, usually the only permissible language at least nominally used in opposition of the state and a prominent part of many Egyptians' lives—both Muslim and Christian—was incredibly attenuated from its usual levels, and serious discussions of anti-sectarianism took place, along with manifest displays of unity as individuals of one religion would stand watch over the others while they prayed (a custom begun during the marches against police when Christians protected praying Muslims from water cannons and batons, now made into a symbolic gesture of respect).

All the while, large groups of people were chanting and singing songs against the regime, many of them humorous, reaffirming the connection of this space to its political basis and vice versa, tying the political demands and the changes demanded of the state, economy and institutions inextricably with the creation of a public space that was vibrant, undefined and open to participation and collaboration from anyone, as there were so many open microphones and megaphones that surely anyone with something to say had their opportunity. This from a space that many demonstrators explicitly mentioned that they could have never even walked in before without being harassed, arrested or forced to pay a bribe.

Tahrir, following from the above analysis of the "emptying out" of the city under the regime's neoliberal strategy, its attempted total policing of citizens in public spaces through violence and intimidation, was the only area in Cairo where citizenship was actually constituted in the sense of being produced in its immediacy as a net of loose and open associations and socialibilities, the only fully public space in the city. It is thus a fallacy to propose that the "Republic of Tahrir" was a nested "state within a state" or even a discontinuity in the Egyptian state, a landlocked micronation such as the putative "Emirate of Imbaba". Topologically it was the only space capable of being called public in the city, whose walls protected it from being once again 'emptied out' by the regime

(whether literally, by physical force, or nomological, by the reassertion of a police logic of surveillance, not-belonging). Tahrir was not outside of, inside, on top of, or nested within any other space than the flat plane of Cairo that it rested on; the “Republic of Tahrir” was the exact same city, the same people with all of their modes of sociability and civility, simply flushed of police and the presence of the state, it was the public space of the entire city concentrated and explosive from creative, intellectual, libidinal and political energies. This concentration made it incredibly dear to the demonstrators and visitors, who continuously produced these new modes of subjectivity, experimenting and testing myriad forms of behavior interaction and discussion as a new language of citizenship was being created. As people saw and interpreted these behaviors and performances, they experienced the mix of the real, the hopeful, the virtual and the utopian, putting together and reassembling old languages of politics and conviviality and speaking with others, realizing what little distance lay between these virtualities of the square where the regime was already dissolved and in many ways waiting, experiencing more every day, and deciding in moments of frustration not to give up but simply to take more space, make the public realm larger until the Regime could no longer bear it or until, conceivably, they had taken it all away and the regime had nothing left to police.

10. CONCLUSION

The occupation of Tahrir was forcibly dispersed by the Egyptian Army in the early morning hours of February 23. Several subsequent protests attempting to stage sit-ins or similar occupations—in Tahrir but also in other points of the city—have been forcibly cleared by the Army, including most recently a spectacular incident on the 9th of April where thousands of soldiers—firing blanks and live ammunition—spent three hours clearing out a group of demonstrators and army officers protesting corruption in the Supreme Council of Armed Forces and calling for the trial of the corrupt former regime and a civilian transitional government. At least one person was killed by army bullets. Each time these spectacular, violent events have happened some change has come, highlighting the fact to many that the Egyptian Army, for all its rhetoric of carrying out the demands of protestors, only responds to direct pressure on the streets as it attempts to return "stability" to the country and largely keep things unchanged. The transitional government has also attempted to criminalize strikes and protests for similar reasons, privileging normalcy over the possibility of transformation. As things stand currently, Egypt is in a constant flux between those people and groups who wish to see real, revolutionary change in the country and those forces that would rather maintain as much of the *ancien regime* as possible, making some concessions to a formal democratic system.

In light of this often bitter struggle of people to see the changes that they took to the streets to achieve carried out, the street politics and occupation during the 18 day uprising period seems all the more important, as the memory of the transformation that took place in the "Republic of Tahrir" only heightens the dissatisfactions with anything short of revolutionary transformation. To reiterate Henri Lefebvre's call quoted

above, “Someone who does not begin with this critique of the existing State apparatus is simply someone who operates within the framework of existing reality, who does not propose to change it...” Tahrir provided such a critique, spatialized and made real for a period, challenging the idea of government as a system of administration and order with a version of citizenship that demonstrated the political potential of everyday life and the importance of a free and liberated government sphere, controlled, haphazardly even at times, by the individuals who make their livelihoods and lives in the city. While this politics may have been ephemeral, and the suspension of many productive everyday activities created by the need to set up *lagnat shabiyya* and a large occupation of public space put some strain on individuals and the Egyptian economy, they nonetheless proved in many ways that Egyptians already had the means to run their cities, to take control of their political and social lives, and to create worlds that were far beyond the limited imaginations of Egypt's political and military class. Moreover these radical transformations were not discussed, but happened in real time, in the virtual laboratory of the Square or in streets and neighborhoods throughout all of Egypt.

Returning, then, to the initial discussion of cities, sovereignty and citizenship at the beginning of this thesis, the Egyptian uprising and the tactics and forms that it produced are important to considerations of citizenship in the city because they show how when insurgent modes of practice and ways of informal life in the city are combined with a radical—even if not necessarily revolutionary—critique of the state as an institution and as a systems of policing and control out of the hands of everyday citizens, may produce powerful, irruptive forms of life within the city. These forms go beyond mere challenge to the exclusionary structure of urban life or the "inclusively inegalitarian" systems of citizenship in the modern state, but point to new, undefined—possibly universal—propositions on equality, participation and membership not just within a

political community but within organized systems of living and everyday activity. These tactics of attacking the injustices and the neglectful foundation of the state at the same time as bringing the informal city into public life show how the grounds to a new right to the city were being produced at the same time as the city itself was being remade.

Also, along these lines of considering the immediate possibilities of urban political life, there is the thought, by looking at the habitus of many of the protestors as I have briefly outlined it, that people both know the city and learn how to operate in it through experimental and contingent means, that disfavored and complex sorts of interaction may have multiple uses and valences across the city, that potential for activism, politics, and urban transformation exist in unlikely places united perhaps only by their shared spaces in the city and perhaps shared relationships to policing. This knowledge that people have of how to act, how to move in the city, and how to organize their lives around individual and collective sources of meaning that do not reference, and perhaps even criticize, the state, that I have referred to in discussing the *hada'a* of the Egyptian protestors, is not a characteristic unique to Egypt. This cleverness or ability to interpret and react to urban life is a universal capacity; people have been living in such conditions and developing such faculties since the beginning of organized human settlement, and while tactics may change with the ebb and flow of different forms of organization, government, technology and the like, the capacity for such behavior and habitus quietly, continually exist and reproduce themselves in all the varied social interactions of the city.

Such 'cleverness' and canny can nonetheless become attenuated under certain systems of convenience or ordering, as Richard Sennett for instance noted in *The Uses of Disorder* (1992) that our desire under certain modes of life to seek total control and predictability of space and the urban environment has led to the weakening of our social faculties and the stifling of the creative potential of the city, but they can just as well be

reignited, as only small changes or differences may trigger the rapid production of new ways of seeing the city, reacting to it and being in it. The transformation of many youth from football-supporting hooligans to a vanguard force against police alone shows how these politically transformative arrangements may come from incredibly unexpected places. For planners and others who work on issues of organizing, regulating and designing the city as well, this should give pause to consider the virtues of the city as such, as a place of such potentiality. The normalizing and developmental impulses of much of the planning function often go hand in hand with certain modes of policing and spatial governmentality that may threaten enfranchisement, interaction and these latent modes of organization, just as much as contextual solutions that recognize the political capacity and virtue of certain modes of informal urbanization should be encouraged and nurtured.

These questions have a global reference and relevance, and while Egypt was a particularly extreme case: in terms of its police, in terms of its degree of informality, in terms of the extent of the revolt, cities everywhere in both the Global South and the North are constantly subject to many of the same pressures of policing, of surveillance and of the rollback of the state and the increasing reorientation of local priorities toward abstract economies of transnational capital. Spatial occupations have characterized or epitomized many of these recent protests against such policing, dispossession and disenfranchisement; Almost all of the uprisings of the "Arab Spring" so far have found places to occupy, public squares and streets, schools, cities, mosques, buildings. Similarly, we have seen a wave of occupations of universities in the Greece, the United State, France, Italy and the UK in opposition to drastic cuts to public education that threaten the ability of an entire generation to benefit from the same educations and resources that those now making the cuts themselves benefitted from. The UK Uncut movement has grown and developed in the past year through occupations of stores of tax-evading

corporations such as Vodafone linked to with protesting austerity in the public sector, creating distributed, small occupations that have produced a significant political movement out of these small guerilla actions.

Many of these recent occupations have cited Tahrir as an exemplar, not just for its effectiveness as a means of protest but for the "spirit of Tahrir," the revolutionary transformations of public life and political imaginations that arose out of the spaces of occupation and the development of new consciousness among the occupiers in these transformed and taken-over spaces. The occupied space, tied dialectically to the sovereignties it protests, nonetheless lies somewhere outside of its control, pushing the police and the state out of spaces not necessarily caught in the binaries of inclusion and exclusion or the presentation of narratives and exercise of everyday power by the state. Look, for instance, at how absolutely untenable the "Clash of Civilizations" seemed in light of this truly civilized space that arose in Tahrir, representing neither Islamic Fundamentalism or liberal-capitalist hegemony, at times rejecting both equally for the desire for something greater. Finding a way past the impoverishment of our present situation that lies beyond the ballot box or even our current imagine requires a space to make it in, to test it and produce it.

These occupations, highlighting the spatial discontinuity occurring in cities around the world between the orientation of governments towards abstract capital and economic development against the needs and desires of the local population (which themselves may be quite cosmopolitan and global), can provide insight into the possibilities for strategic mobilization in this fashion. This phenomenon of occupations, with the negotiation, the discussion, the building of solidarity and the testing of alternative futures that occurs within the civility of the occupied space, hold such promise for a world that is becoming increasingly abstracted and violent. They give discrete,

practical opportunities to escape or exceed such worlds (even if only temporarily) and directly bring to the surface populations, groups and ideas that are all too often subject to both direct violence and repression but also the casual, abstract violence of dispossession, immiseration and disenfranchisement. Indeed, before we talk about the right to the city, in many ways we must make or remake the city, produce new real spaces that challenge the speculative debates about property, rights and vulnerability with alternatives and other possibilities. The occupation forces a disruption in these faceless, abstract processes, compelling them to manifest themselves in space just as—as we have seen in these recent occupations—occupiers are already involved in using these spaces to make a world past them, showing us in these public spaces what new arrangements of the public, of the citizen, and of the city are themselves possible, in many ways existing already but only lacking the space to freely be.

II. REFERENCES

- Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1990. "The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power Through Bedouin Women." *American Ethnologist* 17 (1) (February 1): 41-55.
- Adham, Khaled. 2004. Cairo's Urban Deja Vu: Globalization and Urban Fantasies. In *Planning Middle Eastern Cities: An Urban Kaleidoscope*, ed. Yasser Elsheshtawy. 1st ed. Routledge, September 3.
- Agamben, Giorgio. 1998. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- . 2000. *Means without end : notes on politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Alsayyad, Nezar, and Ananya Roy. 2006. "Medieval modernity: On citizenship and urbanism in a global era." *Space and Polity* 10 (1): 1-20.
doi:10.1080/13562570600796747.
- Badiou, Alain. 2005. "The Subject of Art." *The Symptom*.
http://www.lacan.com/symptom6_articles/badiou.html.
- Balibar, Etienne. 1996. "Is European Citizenship Possible?" *Public Culture* 8 (2) (January 1): 355-376. doi:10.1215/08992363-8-2-355.
- . 2004. "Is a Philosophy of Human Civic Rights Possible? New Reflections on Equaliberty." Trans. James Swenson. *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 103 (2): 311-322.
- Balibar, Etienne, and Immanuel Wallerstein. 1991. *Race, Nation, Class*. First English language edition. Verso, December 17.
- Battesti, Vincent. 2009. The Giza Zoo: Re-Appropriating Public Spaces, Re-Imagining Urban Beauty. In *Cairo Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture, and Urban Space in the New Globalized Middle East*, ed. Diane Singerman and Paul Amar, 489-512. American University in Cairo Press, August 25.
- Bayat, Asef. 1997a. "Cairo's poor: Dilemmas of survival and solidarity." *Middle East Report* 27: 2-6.
- . 1997b. *Street Politics*. 0th ed. Columbia University Press, April 15.
- . 2007. "Radical Religion and the Habitus of the Dispossessed: Does Islamic Militancy Have an Urban Ecology?" *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 31 (3) (September 1): 579-590. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2007.00746.x.
- . 2009. *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*. Stanford University Press, October 21.
- Behbehanian, Laleh. 2000. "Policing the Illicit Peripheries of Egypt's Tourism Industry." *Middle East Report* (216): 32-34.

- Beinin, Joel. 2009. "Workers' Protest in Egypt: Neo-liberalism and Class Struggle in 21st Century." *Social Movement Studies: Journal of Social, Cultural and Political Protest* 8 (4): 449.
- Ben Nefissa, Sarah. 2009. Cairo's Urban Government: The Crisis of Local Administration and the Refusal of Urban Citizenship. In *Cairo Contested: Governance, Urban Space, and Global Modernity*, ed. Diane Singerman, 177-198. American University in Cairo Press, December 2.
- Bobbitt, Philip. 2008. *Terror and Consent : The Wars for the Twenty-First Century*. 1st ed. Knopf, April 1.
- Bromley, Ray. 2004. Power, Property, and Poverty: Why De Soto's "Mystery of Capital" Cannot be Solved. In *Urban Informality: Transnational Perspectives from the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia*, ed. Nezar AlSayyad and Ananya Roy. Lexington Books, January.
- Caldeira, Teresa P. R. 1996. "Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation." *Public Culture* 8 (2) (January 1): 303-328. doi:10.1215/08992363-8-2-303.
- Çelik, Zeynep. 1997. *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations: Algiers Under French Rule*. 1st ed. University of California Press, July 28.
- Davis, Mike. 2007. *Planet of Slums*. Verso, September 17.
- De Certeau, Michel. 1984. *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Deboulet, Agnes. 2009. The Dictatorship of the Straight Line and the Myth of Social Disorder: Revisiting Informality in Cairo. In *Cairo Contested: Governance, Urban Space, and Global Modernity*, ed. Diane Singerman, 199-234. American University in Cairo Press, December 2.
- Deleuze, Gilles. 1999. The Virtual. In *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, by Alain Badiou, trans. Louise Burchill. 1st ed. Univ Of Minnesota Press, December 7.
- Denis, Eric. 2009. Cairo as Neoliberal Capital. In *Cairo Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture, and Urban Space in the New Globalized Middle East*, ed. Diane Singerman and Paul Amar. American University in Cairo Press, August 25. http://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/37/92/02/PDF/2006_Denis_gated_communities.pdf.
- Dikeç, Mustafa. 2002. "Police, politics, and the right to the city." *GeoJournal* 58 (2/3): 91-98. doi:10.1023/B:GEJO.0000010828.40053.de.
- Diouf, Mamadou. 1996. "Urban Youth and Senegalese Politics: Dakar 1988-1994." *Public Culture* 8 (2) (January 1): 225-249. doi:10.1215/08992363-8-2-225.
- Dorman, W. J. 2009. Of Demolitions and Donors: The Problems of State Intervention in Informal Cairo. In *Cairo Contested: Governance, Urban Space, and Global Modernity*, ed. Diane Singerman, 269-290. American University in Cairo Press, December 2.

- El-Amrani, Issandr. 2008. From Trash Heap to Emerald Lung. In *With/without: spatial products, practices & politics in the Middle East*, ed. Shumon Basar, Antonia Carver, and Markus Miessen, 33-50. Bidoun, March.
- Elshahed, Mohammed. 2011. Tahrir Square: Social Media, Public Space. *Design Observer Places*. February 27.
<http://places.designobserver.com/entry.html?entry=25108>.
- Elsheshtawy, Yasser. 2009. Urban Transformations: Social Control at al-Rifa'i Mosque. In *Cairo Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture, and Urban Space in the New Globalized Middle East*, ed. Diane Singerman and Paul Amar, 295-312. American University in Cairo Press, August 25.
- Elyachar, Julia. 2005. *Markets of Dispossession: NGOs, Economic Development, and the State in Cairo*. Duke University Press Books, October 5.
- Fahmi, Wael, and Keith Sutton. 2008. "Greater Cairo's housing crisis: Contested spaces from inner city areas to new communities." *Cities* 25 (5) (October): 277-297.
 doi:10.1016/j.cities.2008.06.001.
- Florin, Benedicte. 2009. Banished by the Quake: Urban Cairenes Displaced from the Historic Center to the Desert Periphery. In *Cairo Contested: Governance, Urban Space, and Global Modernity*, ed. Diane Singerman, 291-308. American University in Cairo Press, December 2.
- Flyvbjerg, Bent. 2001. *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How it Can Succeed Again*. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press, January 29.
- Foucault, Michel. 1990. *The history of sexuality, volume I: an introduction*. Vintage Books ed. -. New York: Random House.
- Friedmann, J. 1995. "The right to the city." *Society and Nature* 1 (1): 71-84.
- Frug, Gerald. 2001. A Legal History of Cities. In *The Legal Geographies Reader: Law, Power and Space*, ed. Nicholas Blomley. Wiley-Blackwell, February 16.
- Ghannam, Farha. 1996. "Relocation and the Use of Urban Space in Cairo." *Middle East Report* (202) (December 1): 17-20. doi:10.2307/3013034.
- . 2002. *Remaking the modern: space, relocation, and the politics of identity in a global Cairo*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Glibert, Alan. 2004. Love in the Time of Enhanced Capital Flows: Reflections on the Link Between Liberalization and Informality. In *Urban Informality: Transnational Perspectives from the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia*, ed. Nezar AlSayyad and Ananya Roy. Lexington Books, January.
- Graham, Stephen, and Simon Marvin. 2001. *Splintering urbanism: networked infrastructures, technological mobilities and the urban condition*. London ; New York: Routledge.
- Hannah, Matthew G. 2008. States of Exception and Unexceptionability. In *War, Citizenship, Territory*, ed. Deborah Cowen, 57-74. New York: Routledge.
- Harvey, D. 2003. "The right to the city." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27 (4): 939-941.

- Harvey, David. 1991. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Wiley-Blackwell, October.
- . 2003. *The New Imperialism*. Oxford University Press, USA, October 9.
- Holston, James. 2009. *Insurgent citizenship : disjunctions of democracy and modernity in Brazil*. Princeton N.J. ; Woodstock: Princeton University Press.
- Holston, James, and Arjun Appadurai. 1996. "Cities and Citizenship." *Public Culture* 8 (2): 187-204. doi:10.1215/08992363-8-2-187.
- Ibrahim, Kareem. 2009. Extract from a Diary: Marginal Notes on the Soft Dialectics of Historic Cairo. In *Cairo Contested: Governance, Urban Space, and Global Modernity*, ed. Diane Singerman, 235-268. American University in Cairo Press, December 2.
- Ismail, Salwa. 2006. *Political life in Cairo's new quarters: encountering the everyday state*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Karim, Lamia. 2008. "Demystifying Micro-Credit." *Cultural Dynamics* 20 (1) (March 1): 5-29. doi:10.1177/0921374007088053.
- Keil, Roger. 2003. Globalization Makes States: Perspectives on Local Governance in the Age of the World City. In *State/Space: A Reader*, ed. Neil Brenner, Bob Jessop, Martin Jones, and Gordon Macleod, 278-295. Wiley-Blackwell, January 27.
- Kuppinger, Petra. 2004. "Exclusive Greenery: new gated communities in Cairo." *City & Society* 16 (2) (December 1): 35-61. doi:10.1525/city.2004.16.2.35.
- Lefebvre, Henri. 2002. *Critique of everyday life. v.2 : foundations for a sociology of the everyday*. London: Verso.
- . 2009. *State, space, world : selected essays*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- MacCannell, Dean. 1999. New Urbanism and Its Discontents. In *Giving ground : the politics of propinquity*, ed. Joan Copjec and Michael Sorkin, 106-130. New York: Verso.
- Mbembé, J.-A. 2003. "Necropolitics." Trans. Libby. Meintjes. *Public Culture* 15 (1): 11-40.
- Mitchell, Timothy. 1991. *Colonising Egypt*. University of California Press, October 11.
- . 1999a. "No factories, no problems: the logic of neo-liberalism in Egypt." *Review of African Political Economy* 26 (82): 455.
- . 1999b. "Dreamland: The Neoliberalism of Your Desires." *Middle East Report* (210): 28-33.
- . 2002. *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*. 1st ed. University of California Press, November.
- National Organization for Urban Harmony. 2010. *International Competition for the Urban Design and Harmony and Historic Conservation of Opera and Ataba Squares, Cairo, Egypt*. Ministry of Culture, Egypt.
<http://www.urbanharmony.org/en/en%20ataba%20T-O-R.pdf>.
- Ong, Aihwa, Virginia R. Dominguez, Jonathan Friedman, Nina Glick Schiller, Verena Stolcke, David Y. H. Wu, and Hu Ying. 1996. "Cultural Citizenship as Subject-

- Making: Immigrants Negotiate Racial and Cultural Boundaries in the United States [and Comments and Reply].” *Current Anthropology* 37 (5) (December 1): 737-762.
- Peck, Jamie, and Adam Tickell. 2002. “Neoliberalizing Space.” *Antipode* 34 (3) (July 1): 380-404. doi:10.1111/1467-8330.00247.
- Pieterse, Edgar. 2008. *City Futures: Confronting the Crisis of Urban Development*. Zed Books, June 15.
- Purcell, Mark. 2002. “Excavating Lefebvre: The right to the city and its urban politics of the inhabitant.” *GeoJournal* 58 (2): 99-108.
- Roy, Ananya. 2005. “Urban Informality: Toward an Epistemology of Planning.” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 71 (2): 147-158.
- Sassen, Saskia. 1996. “Whose City Is It? Globalization and the Formation of New Claims.” *Public Culture* 8 (2) (January 1): 205-223. doi:10.1215/08992363-8-2-205.
- . 2000. *Cities in a World Economy*. 2nd ed. Pine Forge Press, February 15.
- Sawy, A. 2002. Governors without Governance: Constitutional, Legal and Administrative Frameworks of Local Government in Egypt. In *Mediterranean Development Forum (MDF) Four*.
- Schielke, Samuli. 2009. Policing Mulids and Their Meaning. In *Cairo Contested: Governance, Urban Space, and Global Modernity*, ed. Diane Singerman, 83-110. American University in Cairo Press, December 2.
- Schneider, Friedrich. 2002. Size and Measurement of the Informal Economy in 110 Countries. In ANU, Australia.
http://www.amnet.co.il/attachments/informal_economy110.pdf.
- Sennett, Richard. 1992. *The Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity & City Life*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Shaw, Martin. 2003. The State of Globalization: Towards a Theory of State Transformation. In *State/Space: A Reader*, ed. Neil Brenner, Bob Jessop, Martin Jones, and Gordon Macleod. Wiley-Blackwell, January 27.
- Simone, Abdoumalig. 2004. *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities*. Duke University Press Books, September 16.
- . 2005. “The Right to the City.” *Interventions: The International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 7 (3) (November): 321-325. doi:10.1080/13698010500268189.
- Sims, David. 2011. *Understanding Cairo The Logic of a City Out of Control*. Amer Univ in Cairo Press.
- Singerman, Diane. 2009. The Siege of Imbaba, Egypt’s Internal “Other,” and the Criminalization of Politics. In *Cairo Contested: Governance, Urban Space, and Global Modernity*, ed. Diane Singerman, 111-144. American University in Cairo Press, December 2.
- Smith, Neil. 1992. “Contours of a Spatialized Politics: Homeless Vehicles and the Production of Geographical Scale.” *Social Text* (33) (January 1): 55-81. doi:10.2307/466434.

- Sorkin, Michael, ed. 1992. *Variations on a theme park: the new American city and the end of public space*. Macmillan.
- Swedenburg, Ted. 2007. "Imagined Youths." *Middle East Report* 37 (245): 4.
- Swyngedouw, Erik. 2004. "Globalisation or 'glocalisation'? Networks, territories and rescaling." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 17 (1): 25-48.
doi:10.1080/0955757042000203632.
- Taussig, Michael. 1991. *The Nervous System*. 1st ed. Routledge, November 20.
- Turner, John. 1976. *Housing by people : Towards autonomy in building environments*. London: Marion Boyars Publishers.
- UN-Habitat (Nairobi). 2003. *The challenge of slums*. London [etc.]: Earthscan for UN-Habitat.
- Vignal, Leila, and Eric Denis. 2009. Cairo as Regional/Global Economic Capital? In *Cairo Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture, and Urban Space in the New Globalized Middle East*, ed. Diane Singerman and Paul Amar, 99-147. American University in Cairo Press, August 25.
- Ward, Peter M. 2004. The "Not So Strange Case" of the Texas Colonias. In *Urban Informality: Transnational Perspectives from the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia*, ed. Nezar AlSayyad and Ananya Roy. Lexington Books, January.
- Ward, Peter M. 1999. *Colonias and public policy in Texas and Mexico: urbanization by stealth*. University of Texas Press.
- Williams, Caroline. 2009. Reconstructing Islamic Cairo: Forces at Work. In *Cairo Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture, and Urban Space in the New Globalized Middle East*, ed. Diane Singerman and Paul Amar, 269-294. American University in Cairo Press, August 25.
- Wood, Josh. 2010. "Remaking Cairo - Downtown's faded glamour." *Executive*, November. <http://www.executive-magazine.com/getarticle.php?article=13660>.