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Security, Dividedness and Green Activism in Egypt

By Jihan Zakarriya¹

Abstract

This paper attempts to trace green trends in contemporary political activism in Egypt. Taking into consideration the long, deep-rooted history of military rule in the country, it examines the interconnection between the concepts of security and resistance. The paper specifically focuses on post-2011 grassroots, civil and opposition movements in Egypt, arguing that they share and adopt green concerns with nonviolent, comprehensive activism that relate and politicize different forms of environmental, gender, socio-economic, and political violence. In this sense, to fight patriarchy and the militarization and securitization of public spaces and daily activities in Egypt, post-revolutionary activists, feminists, and opposition movements adopt a hybrid green perspective relating to human-environmental equality and wellbeing. They approach the violent practices of successive 21st-century regimes in Egypt, particularly in the post-2011 era, and security apparatuses as one systematic strategy of patriarchy and corruption. Such awareness of the unequal distribution of insecurity and political inclusion offers a deep-level perspective of inequality among Egyptians, their rights, and their environments.

Keywords: Security, Violence, Green activism, Gender, Bio-politics, Spatial dividedness, Public space

Introduction: Green Activism, Patriarchy, and Security Violence

“Green politics is an ecological, holistic, and feminist movement that transcends the old political framework of left versus right. [...] It addresses the unjust and destructive dynamics of patriarchy. Green politics rejects all forms of exploitation – of nature, individuals, social groups, and countries. It is committed to nonviolence at all levels” (Capra and Spretnak, 21).

In the above quotation, Fritiof Capra and Charlene Spretnak perceive green politics as a secular, hybrid, plural, and comprehensive form of activism. It is a process of individual and social awareness and nonviolent action against all forms of polarization, patriarchy, and injustice. Green politics is not only an admission of the diversity and equality of human beings and natural environments but also an objection to any form of abuse or violation of the right to equality of humans of different genders, cultures, religions, and ethnicities on the one side and humans and nature on the other. Although green politics targets mainly individual attitudes, Capra and Spretnak argue that “it calls for social responsibility and a sound, sustainable economic system, one that is ecological decentralized, equitable and comprised of flexible institutions” (21). Noel Sturgeon supports Capra and Spretnak that green politics seeks to establish a “post-patriarchal society” through “the stress on decentralization, participatory democracy, and sustainable economic and

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ecological practices” (33). Seen this way, green politics share broad, global concerns with a whole array of disciplines and issues facing many modern societies including environmental degradation, injustice, militarization, inequality, and hierarchies. As climate change and environmental problems escalate worldwide, green politics grow stronger. Nowadays, green parties in Canada, Scotland, Germany, and other countries are running for parliamentary elections in these countries and gain increasing support (Derek, 12). Thus, green politics support feminist, political, and environmental causes calling for gender-religion-class and ethnic unbiases and justices. In addition to this, with the Coronavirus pandemic in the background, green politics not only aims at wider political manifestations concerning environmental hygiene and sustainability, but also arouses serious inquiries concerning justice, equality, and humanitarian-ethical attitudes among genders, ethnicities, and poor and rich classes, and countries.

Green concerns with the interdependence between human and environmental abuse on the one side and resistance against organized unequal distribution of natural resources, authoritarian rule, securitized spaces and censored access to public spaces is relevant to 21st-century Egypt. On 25 January 2011, the annual Police Holiday in Egypt, protesters spread all over public areas in Cairo and all Egyptian cities and governorates calling for “social justice, freedom and an end of police brutality and the emergency law” (Birnbaum, 1). Egyptian 2011 revolution aims at a decentralized economy, democratic transition, and healthy human and environmental conditions. From 2011 to the present, grassroots movements such as 6 April, Enough, Tamarod, and the National Association for Change, human rights movements such as the *Egyptian Organization for Human Rights*, and El Nadeem Centre for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture, and feminist movements such as anti-Sexual Harassment, I Saw Harassment, Tahrir Bodyguard, #MeToo and #assaultpolice succeed in mobilizing for legal and public action against patriarchal and authoritarian practices of Hosni Mubarak (1980-2011), SCAF: the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (2011-2012), Mohamed Morsi (2012-2013) and Abdel-Fatah el-Sisi (2014-). The unifying, customary enemy that faces Egyptian activists under such different regimes is a very influential, legalized, organized security state. In 1981, President Mubarak introduces the Emergency Law, still in effect till the present, that legalizes and normalizes the militarization and securitization of private and public spaces in Egypt. The police, the military, and the General National Intelligence utilize the Emergency Law to use exceptional measures to oppress, arrest and torture opposition political parties, individuals, and normal people. Gradually, mass arrests, incommunicado, sexual violations, and prolonged detentions without trial and torture are common in Egyptian police stations and prisons (Reza, 535). In this sense, Egyptian activists fight what Michael Foucault calls “bio-politics.” In *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault argues that “basic biological features of the human species become the object of a political strategy and security” (16). For Foucault, all modern political regimes seek to discipline and control the physical and cultural qualities and attitudes of their communities and individuals. So, the concept of security develops from the regulation of and sovereignty over territorial boundaries to the regulation and control of population and natural resources. Thus, representatives of authority not only employ “the individual as a particular way of dividing up the multiplicity,” but also “milieu becomes the determining factor of nature” (17). In revolutionary Egypt, Paul Amar describes bio-politics in the following way:

The SCAF preserved the essence of Mubarak’s Emergency Decree, reinvigorated the military court system to arrest and try civilians, and extended the repressive power of its class-and sexuality-driven logic of domination. Many of those detained

were young, male, working-class labor protesters whom the armed forces identified not as political dissenters with rights but as thugs (baltagiya) or fags (khawaliya). ... They detained women protesters and administered “virginity tests,” hymen inspections that are of course forms of molestation or rape in themselves. (3)

As explained by Amar, bio-political patriarchy and violence in Egypt are methodical and anti-green. Security apparatuses and the military coercively dominate and control public spaces and human bodies. Police violence in the post-2011 era includes security chaos, dangerous public spaces, coercive disappearance of protesters and activists, murder, organized sexual attacks, violent arrests, and torture in prisons (Kingsley 2014; Grove 2015 and Tadros 2015). Such violent practices circulate sexist, classist, and divisive. To begin with, female protesters are seen as “whores whose public presence was an attack on national honor,” while working-class protesters “defiled national dignity and insulted the army” (Amar, 3). To further punish protesters, security agents make protest spaces and surrounding environments unhealthy, unsafe, and hostile. They destroy the green space in Tahir Square and the neighborhood and build an elaborate system of walls and barbed-wire roadblocks to ward off demonstrators. Security agents assault medical personnel and prevent medical supplies from accessing protest spaces. (Malsin, 1). Gradually, public opposition, activists, and human rights figures are defamed in the media. For instance, Mohamed ElBaradei, the former director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, is accused of “facilitating American invasion of Iraq” and as “being westernized” (Amnesty International 2016). Members of the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, Hisham Mubarak Law Center (HMLC), and Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) are persistently accused of receiving “funds from foreign countries and as disturbing stability in Egypt” (Amnesty International 2016). Finally, the military utilizes the divisions and the disagreements among revolutionary groups and the failure of the Islamist President Mohamed Morsi to unify all Egyptians or to gain their trust. Again, Egypt’s home security is propagated as disciplining and regulating chaotic protesters, and violent Islamists. Furthermore, the ability of the military and the deep state to grip on power in revolutionary Egypt reflects the complexity and interdependence of domestic, regional, and globalized security interests and deals. For instance, the military warns Egyptians of the disturbing, unusual security conditions in the area ranging from civil wars in Syria, Yemen, and Libya, the emergence of ISIS, and ethnic, sectarian conflicts in Iraq and Lebanon. The growth of populist regimes in the West and the support of authoritarian Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates empower the Egyptian military as well. Paul Carnegie explains that:

The Egyptian military is still Washington’s favored institution for holding onto Egypt and maintaining a regional status quo conducive to its interests and that of local and global capital. There has been little change in the form of government. The el-Sisi ‘military junta’ represents little more than the continuation of Mubarak’s so-called civilian administration. (45)

Carnegie underscores the fact that globalized economic and security management limits the Egyptian protesters’ ability to reform the security sector. As Abdel Fattah el-Sisi seizes power, he leads extensive, unprecedented crackdown on the opposition, grassroots, and civil movements, including those who support el-Sisi’s coup against Morsi. For instance, 2011 youth such as Ahmed Maher, Mohammed Adel, Ahmed Douma, Israa Abdel Fattah, Mona Seif, Asmaa Mahfouz, Shady Harb, and others (Egypt: largest wave 2019, 1). Revolutionary, independent, and free thinkers and

activists such as Amer Hamzawi, Alaa el-Aswani, Khalid Yusuf, Choukri Fishere, and others are forced to leave Egypt. The European Parliament's report on human rights in Egypt (2015) states that "more than 22,000 people have been detained since 2013" (2). In 2013, Protest Law 107 restricts giving the Interior Minister the right to "cancel, postpone or move the protest. Violators of the law face hefty prison sentences and fines" (Jeannerod, 1 and Darwish, 1). Sexual violence against women in public spaces continues so that in 2014-2015, 1964 cases of public sexual harassment and assault were reported. In 2014, a new parliamentary law was passed and in 2018 referendum was passed to extend the President's term and his power in the selection and control of the judiciary, as well as the reorganization of the legislative branch (Roll and Mieke, 1). In 2017, Law 70 is issued to control non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In 2016, el-Sisi issues a law that enables him to dismiss Hisham Geneina, the head of the Egyptian Central Auditing Organization. Geneina states that he had "discovered corruption above 600 billion Egyptian pounds (about \$ 70 billion) in 2015 alone" (Reuters 2016). El-Sisi's dismissal of Geneina is met with disapproval from the judicial sector and wider sectors of civil society, but security oppression silences all.

Seen this way, bio-political violence in contemporary Egypt upholds a narrative of chaotic, divisive, and unsafe public spaces, a narrative that contrasted with the first experience of 2011 Tahrir Square and protests spaces as optimistic, inclusive, and secure. The extreme use of the Emergency Law and police power in revolutionary Egypt and the high levels of corruption in private and governmental sectors further frustrate and frighten many Egyptians from public revolt. In the forthcoming analysis, I aim at achieving two goals. Firstly, I examine how bio-politics in Egypt affects civil spaces and relationships among different classes and genders. I specifically focus on urban dividedness and spatial insecurity. Secondly, I trace how post-2011 activism exemplifies and is informed by different characteristics of green politics. It focuses specifically on access to public spaces, class-gender-religious integrity, and nonviolent interference in the decision-making processes in Egypt.

Eco-human Inequalities and Divisions in 21st-century Egypt: Systematic Socio-economic Violence

The constant securitization and militarization of Egyptian politics produce massive inequalities and abuses concerning the distribution of wealth, resources, services, and sustained ecosystems in the country. Jessica Winegar tackles aspects of poverty and spatial segregation in Egypt from an urban security perspective arguing that:

As the 1990s and 2000s wore on, Cairenes griped not only about the trash but also about the filth and disrepair of public spaces such as squares, parks, bus stops, government offices, and schools. As state welfare policy shifted its focus from the poor to the rich, urban space became extremely segregated and militarized. Many with the means moved out of what they viewed as the "chaos" of mixed- or lower-class areas of Cairo into gated communities or other secluded areas with private security systems. (Winegar 32)

The urbanization and modernization processes in Egypt are class-oriented. While affluent and rich classes and areas enjoy full state protection, healthy environments, and administrative care, poor classes lack basic services and are perceived as dangerous and criminal. Moreover, affordable public spaces of socialization such as parks and open, green spaces are neglected and militarized

(Abul-Magd, 30). Urban and public spaces in Cairo are intentionally designed and administered to control and limit human bodies, particularly women's bodies, through marginalization, violence, and insecurity that all entail fear of public spaces. There are no walking spaces in Egyptian streets and walking spaces are either destroyed or unmaintained. In *Environmental Problems in Third World Cities*, Jorge Hardoy, Diana Mitlin, and David Satterthwaite underscore the fact that urban development in Egypt has serious socio-economic and environmental drawbacks since:

“more than 10 percent of the nation's most productive farmland has been lost to urban encroachment in the last three decades, much of it through illegal squatting or sub-division while the same time prime sites within cities remain underdeveloped” (5).

As “the poor are confined in the worst located and most dangerous areas and slums,” Hardoy, Mitlin, and Satterthwaite continue, “the most serious environmental problems are largely confined to poorer groups” (5). Likewise, M. Davis traces that “the 39.9% (11.8 million) of the urban population in Egypt [who] live in slums suffer from problems in the accessibility, high residential densities, deteriorated infrastructure, lack of services and the absence of open spaces” (3). Slums are often not recognized and addressed by the public authorities as an integral part of the city (UN-Habitat 6). Moreover, the lack of basic services in slums results in the decline of the built and natural environments (Ali and Suleiman, 2006). In 2010, Egypt experiences an environmentally and health-threatening rubbish crisis as piles of rubbish spread all over Egyptian streets and the government fails to address the problem properly (Fahmi and Sutton 1766). Because of pervasive pollution, poor Egyptians suffer from long-term illnesses like kidney failure, cancer, or the Hepatitis C Virus (20%-10% of the population) and high and increasing rates of renal diseases and renal failure: roughly 30% of which are caused by Schistosomiasis, lack of safe drinking water and insufficient sewage treatment infrastructure (Wolfe and Abu-Raddad, 14757; Mahmoud et al, 2013).

The harmful influence of slums and impoverished areas, poor housing, and environmental conditions on the psychological and behavioral features of their inhabitants, particularly concerning women, arouses a variety of studies and inquiries. In *Slums, Violence and Health*, Silvia de Weerd argues persuasively that “since poverty, overcrowding, lack hygiene, and basic human services, ill-health and governmental negligence are main characteristics of slums worldwide, aspects of inter-personal violence and insecurity increase” (2). Women are the prime victims of insecurity and sexual violence. In *Dealing with Slums in Egypt*, Sylvia Habib echoes Weerd that residents of slums and poor areas in Egypt,

“feel insecure as a result of the isolation from other neighborhoods of the area along with the absence of a police station and the negligence of the authorities to the region which resulted in the prevalence of bullying and violence in the area. [...] There are a lot of drug dealers and gangs in some of these areas” (73).

Habib underscores further that slum residents suffer “negative impression the people outside the area got about them [due to] high levels of drugs and crimes in their areas” (73). Thus, slums and poor areas not only suffer systematic governmental negligence and abuse but also become a source of danger and insecurity to surrounding areas, specifically to women and to their peaceful inhabitants. They feel abandoned and inferiorized. Slums and poor and neglected areas in Egypt

have been the target of the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamist groups who dominate the civil society and shape culture. Islamists not only offer social services to many poor and marginalized communities but also propose themselves as a reliable substitute to the corrupt, unfair government. Nevertheless, Islamist President Morsi does not exert any real effort to improve living and environmental conditions in slums and poor areas. Likewise, in 2020, the Egyptian government takes sudden decisions that disturb slum dwellers and poor areas by ordering “the demolition of houses constructed illegally inside cities or on farmland with tens of thousands of people are losing their homes, especially with state authorities failing to offer them alternatives” (*Egypt: Thousands at risk*, 1). The government justifies its decisions that “between 2000 and 2017, around 2 million construction violations were committed in different parts of Egypt, and that Egypt has also lost over 12 percent of its nine million acres of farmland to the same violations” (Amin, 1). Egyptian government and authorities do not tell about or punish those who cause such high levels of corruption. Again, poor classes, rural people, and the ecosystem suffer.

In addition to this, securitized, authoritarian regimes in Egypt not only neglect the deteriorating, unhealthy, and unsafe life in slums and poor areas in Egypt but also Historic Cairo and major tourist attractions lack necessary maintenance and care and are unspeakably damaged and exploited by looters and corrupt security agents who vandalize the Egyptian Museum and other tourist sites they are supposed to protect and guard (Parcak et al. 2016; Fradley et al. 2017). *Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2015* announces that “Egypt, the 83rd in the global ranking and 10th in the region, has experienced safety and security concerns and infrastructure limitations” (18). In this way, the prioritization of security measures and the relegation of human and ecological wellbeing to secondary positions, all related to securitized and militarized political-economic structures in Egypt, that negatively affect Egyptian integrity, administrative effectiveness, and (international) accountability, particularly about women’s rights and environmental sustainability. The dominant urban planning of segregated and secluded areas and communities in Egypt not only reflect the exclusive, class-oriented production and circulation of power in the country but also discriminatorily organize the relationship between the different classes, environments, and individuals and determine the habits, health hazards, norms, expectations, ecosystems, and images in mass media. The authoritarian rule and the security state in Egypt are anti-green politics and thinking. In the second part of the paper, I discuss the emergence of green trends and concerns within post-2011 activism in Egypt.

Green Activism in Post-2011 Egypt

In relation to the above-mentioned analysis of human and environmental neglect and the violence of the security state in Egypt, this part of the paper identifies three aspects of post-2011 activism in Egypt as green. Firstly, in their fight against the persistently brutal and privileged security state, post-2011 activists in Egypt show great solidarity and ability for effective, collective mobilization and environmentally aware practices in public spaces. During all protests, rallies, and in sleeping tents and places built in Tahrir Square and other protest spaces, Egyptian protesters of all socioeconomic, religious, political, and gender backgrounds securely gather exemplifying what Douglas Torgerson calls “green citizen” who is “a political actor, who indeed acts with functional and constitutive ends in view, but who also engages in political performance” (23). Green citizens, Torgerson continues, balance between “the personal responsibility of the individual” and “the systematic patterns of incentives, structured principally through the administrative sphere that serve to shape and direct the behavior of the possessive individual” (23). During the 2011 revolution, Egyptians’ solidarity in protest spaces reflects the intersections of hybrid and plural

aspects of shared vulnerability to patriarchy including police violence, socio-economic inequalities, health, and environmental problems, and lack of freedom of speech, all administered by the military rule and police state. Although Egyptian protesters seek different incentives of freedom, justice, respectable economic income, and health care, they develop a collective green awareness of their responsibility towards their spaces and nature. Jessica Winegar comments on Egyptians' practices in public spaces as follows:

The revolution enabled [Egyptians] to break the fear of the security forces. Perhaps for the first time in their lives, they could work, laugh, and play together in public space without an overwhelming sense of state surveillance or upper-class disgust. They were trying to reverse and reject, the neglect of the Mubarak government by taking the repair and beautification of the city into their own hands. (33-34)

Winegar refers specifically to Egyptian people's strong physical existence in public spaces as a direct challenge to state power. They are not afraid and do not care about police violence, torture, or even murder. Moreover, environmentally-friendly campaigns such as Tahrir Beautification Day and Let's Clean that clean the Tahrir square and surrounding areas are a declaration of people's ability for sound administration and for making decisions on behalf of their corrupt government. Ali Abdel Mohsen explains how environmental activism in 21st-century Egypt has played an important role in effecting sustained progress and environmental justice tackling the pressing issues of climate change, pollution, and mountains of trash in streets, overflowing sewers, and lack of services in poor areas (1). Mohsen mentions pre-2011 environmental initiatives for recycling and clean life that spread in different Cairene neighborhoods and online platforms, and how such campaigns raise awareness of serious health and ecological hazards in Egypt (1). Elliott Woods supports Mohsen that environmental activism plays important role in advocating equal ecological and human rights in Egypt. Woods regards Egyptians "picking up trash, painting curbs, and adorning light posts and tree trunks with the colors of the Egyptian flag [as] they were finally taking ownership of their capital and their country [...] They were washing away corruption" (110). In this sense, decorating dirty, old walls with graffiti and cleaning streets are also acts of fighting negative feelings of uncertainty and temporality. Egyptians have experienced very long years of repression and silencing that talking publically about politics becomes taboo. So, Egyptian protesters' spatial freedom and domination are a battle against time. They want to claim a permanent position of power. Protesters form self-sufficient communities in public spaces with specialized groups for medical help, food supplies, blankets and beds, and clean clothes and toilets (Biggs, 1). Practices of mutual care and sanitation, necessary to sustain bodies and surrounding environments in Tahrir square and protest spaces and to continue the struggle, are definitely acts of green awareness. Protesters show care towards their national and cultural heritage as well. They form a human chain to protect the priceless artifacts within the Egyptian National Museum (Halime, 2012, 1).

Moreover, civil, human rights, and grassroots movements compete with the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamists in offering help and services for slums and poor and marginalized areas in Egypt. They also offer new cultural and social services and ideas concerning gender equality, political responsibility, and environmental-health awareness. Consequently, residents of slums, rural and poor areas are encouraged to effectively participate in political change. In 2011, famous Egyptian actor and director Mohamed Sobhi initiates "Together for Developing Slums" as a non-profit organization that aims to raise funds to "elevate slum-dwellers" standard of living, and grant

them an integrated decent life, where they have an access to individuals' basic needs, such as education, health care, security, and livelihood" (el-Henawy and Shawki 1). Young slum girls between the ages of 10 to 15 appear in media stating that "our campaign is political. We ask the state to protect from drug dealers and criminals that hide in our areas and to help us lead a decent and safe life" (el-Ebrashy). The fact that young, marginalized poor societies, particularly girls, are given a voice and that they dare to face the public and authorities asking for their rights as equal human beings show they gain a space of responsibility and action and could share a common democratic dream with Egyptians. They reuse the public and urban spaces not only to expose state hypocrisy and its pervading media-image of youth as either passive recipients or elements of chaos, but also to generate plural settings and meanings in opposition to oppression, socio-spatial segregation, emergency law, and ugliness. Tamarod is one of the most famous, nonviolent, and successful movements in post-2011-revolutionary Egypt that reflect the success of the civil society in effecting wide public change and support. Founded in 2013 by young Egyptian activists in opposition to Islamist President Mohamed Morsi's temporary constitution declaration that gives him the unlimited power to legislate without judicial review, Tamarod gathers 22 million signatures, a more than enough number to call for early presidential elections. Tamarod plays a significant role in legalizing the ousting of President Morsi. Julia Elyachar argues that "Tamarod rendered visible, and upended for political goals, a social infrastructure of communicative channels in Egypt" and thus represent "agency as distributed, dialogic, and historically constituted" (453). For Elyachar, Tamarod cleverly introduces new political symbols of action by utilizing a "multi-layered infrastructure of communicative channels with skill and tenacity such as mobile phones, Internet services, social media, visits, gossip, and socializing" (465). Tamarod innovatively and courageously mobilizes for public participation and gains international respect and support for their nonviolent, democratic plan of action. So, even though Tamarod's democratic plan is not fully accomplished and the military re-takes power in Egypt, Tamarod's access to public spaces and success in organizing and raising awareness for action promises real change in collective conscience in Egypt. In 2019 and 2020, and despite el-Sisi's unprecedented oppression and police violence, people in slums, poor neighborhoods, and the marginalized and neglected countryside organize anti-el-Sisi protests. They overcome their fears and are aware of their rights (Hamad 2020, al-Anani 2020).

Secondly, post-2011 activism shows a green awareness of gender violence and marginalization as political problems rather than the traditional view that they are women's issues. In *Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street*, Judith Butler underscores two important aspects of the revolutionary demonstrations in Tahrir square. The first is:

"a certain sociability was established within the square, a division of labor that broke down gender difference that involved rotating who would speak and who would clean the areas, developing a work schedule for everyone to maintain the environment" (77).

For Butler, the methodological and equal division of work, responsibility, and leadership among male and female protesters develops "horizontal relations" that challenge established cultural, political and economic hierarchies. The second aspect is:

"the collective chant of the word "silmiyya" (peace, nonviolence) as a way of encouraging people to resist the mimetic pull of military aggression – and the

aggression of the gangs – by keeping in mind the larger goal – radical democratic change” (78).

Butler emphasizes that Egyptian protesters express the patience, determination, and geographical expansion needed to realize the revolution and not to be distracted by useless fights or violence. I agree with Butler that since the 2011 revolution to the present, Egyptian women are constantly credited and appreciated for their sacrifices, courage, and significant participation in all political events, elections, and socio-cultural debates. Female protesters are murdered, arrested, and imprisoned like their male counterparts. Moreover, Egyptian women experience systematic, organized, and state-sponsored acts of public sexual violence and rape as a political weapon of defaming and frightening female activists and their families of accessing protest spaces. Women in Tahrir Square and surrounding areas are constantly harassed and sometimes raped by unidentified mobs and by members of the security forces. In many cases, police and military stationed in these areas did not prevent the mob attacks (Tadros, 1351; Sorbera 69). Yet, Egyptian women resist and do not retreat from protest and public spaces. Rather, Egyptian women’s equal and acknowledged public political roles develop their green activism for establishing real gender-ecological ethics placing sexual and gender-based violence as a health and human rights concern in the country. Gill Valentine argues that:

The public blame of victims who were in public places, for being in a dangerous or inappropriate place when they were attacked, encourages all women to transfer their threat appraisal from men to certain public spaces. Fear of being in public space is for women to adopt false assumptions about their security. [...] Mental maps of feared environments elaborated by images gained from hearing the frightening experiences and advice of others; and from media reporting. (386)

Valentine explains how patriarchal and authoritarian societies and regimes use media to devilize and deform the relationship between humans in general, and women in particular, and environment and nature, including built and public spaces, for repressive security aims. Since the beginning of the 21st-century to the present time, Egyptian women experience systematic practices of slow public violence. The pervasive, unevenly distributed, and chaotic nature of public, gendered violence over space and time causes high levels of unpredictability, anxiety, and alertness among Egyptian women who not only internalize a culture of fear and vulnerability, particularly in public spaces but also that the male perpetrators and the state as unaccountable and irresponsible. So, women have to seclude and stay home to feel secure. Nonetheless, in post-2011 Egypt, female public activism and their stereotypical security perceptions change as women’s real contacts with different and diverse male and female agents and groups in public spaces counter traditional state and media narratives about public spaces as dangerous for women. For instance, during the first 18 days of the Egyptian revolution, no single case of sexual violence is reported and female protesters declare that “men were not touching women; in fact, they were saying sorry every time they bumped into a woman” (Biggs, 1). Women’s positive experiences in revolutionary public spaces, Sylviane Aacinski argues, “partially destroy the old framework of political life, pushing it onto the stage of media communication” (130). Eventually, the emerging gender-ecological activism wins the media scene. Awareness campaigns of women’s rights for a secure public appearance and how individuals and groups ought to behave with each other and with the environment become consistent and common. The political-ecological causes and factors of

gender violence are explicitly discussed, rendering socio-cultural stereotypes that blame the female victims invalid. Civil male and female members of anti-sexual harassment movements and initiatives exist in public spaces and interfere to protect female protesters. The shortages of existing harassment laws are openly discussed in social media, pamphlets, online blogs and sites, TV programs, and public speeches by common people and public figures (Flock, 2-3 and Zakarriya, 127).

Providing women with safe means and platforms to tell their stories and to document the sexual attacks help them overcome feelings of shame and fear related to sexual violations. Such informal social controls and interferences in public areas gain protesters, particularly women, credibility and trust and endorses civil potential intervention in the decision-making processes. Moreover, the widespread use of public and private cameras, usually used for policing Egypt, to document cases of sexual violence and to catch the attackers is a new, practical approach to examine and watch public spaces. Egyptians are documenting, supervising, and holding accountable the state, its security members, and perpetrators of sexual and gendered violent acts. The factual, visual, and online documentation of sexual, spatial and gender violations and violence maintains updated information and knowledge and pressure authorities and decision-makers to act. For example, Presidents Morsi, and el-Sisi criminalize sexual harassment and rape, and new harassment laws are introduced and more women are encouraged to report their experiences of sexual violence. Inspired by the international #MeToo, Egyptian #metoo, and #assaultpolice, for example, achieve a great legal, socio-cultural, and political development through documenting and exposing cases of sexual violence and rape committed by upper-class, wealthy, and powerful men including Ahmed Bassam Zaki, AUC student and the son of a powerful and wealthy family, who has been coercively assaulting, harassing, and raping his female colleagues is arrested and is under trial. The Fairmont Hotel Group Rape was committed by a group of wealthy and powerful men who used to drug and rape women are caught. A poor rural girl called Farah, who is raped by two powerful brothers in her village, appears in the media and tells her stories. Farah's rapists are caught and tried (Salah 2020; Tarek 2020). Sexual violence in Egypt is not just seen as stemming from cultural or social sexist ideas or problems, but as a political problem as well. Egyptian women realize that power and immunity beget sexual abuse. Consequently, Egyptian women's activism against sexual violence is political activism. They defend their rights for equal and safe access to public spaces.

Finally, post-2011 grassroots, feminist, and opposition activism and movements are characterized by national and globalized green integrity and resilience against all forms of violence. Egyptian resistance movements adopt green thinking of security that exceeds narrow conceptions of war, military power, national security, terrorism, security state, and police brutality. Rather, they embrace a wider, ecological attitude towards security in Egypt discussing and relating issues of gendered and class inequalities and violence, repression, individual and collective security, development as entailing spatial and economic justice and access to services and resources, decentralized administration, and environmental degradation. Since the early beginning of the 2011 revolution in Egypt, there are organized visual and written documentation of individual and collective memory, abuses, and violation that Egyptians go through during the different stages of the revolution. Reputable and credible human rights, feminist and grassroots organizations, and movements authenticate violations and acts of violence maintaining a political space of condemnation and resistance of responsible and complicit regimes and structures (Sorbera, 499; Zakarriya, 128). The trials of Presidents Mubarak and Morsi give hope of realizing justice for past and present atrocities in the future. Taking into consideration the fact that the military is valued

and respected as the defenders of the nation, opposition movements distinguish between corrupt military men and the military as a protective, national entity. They use precise descriptions and specific, legal demands. El-Nadeem Centre for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture declares that “women’s security is a precondition to a real democratic transition” affirming the need for “legislation to penalize violence and discriminations against women, seeing that the Egyptian constitution lacks articles that prohibit discrimination and violence and establishing equality between men and women in all areas of life”. (4–5). Grassroot thinkers and feminist and human rights activists persuasively propagate that security in Egypt is related to “empowering poor and slum dwellers, particularly women, through education and skill development and appropriate health care to overcome high fertility and crime levels” (Naber and Abd El-Hameed, 525). Nazra for Feminist Studies, the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, and the Arab Network cooperate to “document state and non-state violence against women in public spaces, violations against freedom of expression, violations of human and physical rights of political prisoners and provide legal, medical, and psychological remedies to survivors of violence” (Naber and Abd El-Hameed, 521-2). They communicate with and exchange knowledge with international human rights and feminist organizations that watch security violations in Egypt regularly.

In *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, Rob Nixon argues that:

“violence, above all environmental violence, needs to be seen—and deeply considered—as a contest not only over space, or bodies, or labor, or resources but also over time. We need to bear in mind Faulkner’s dictum that ‘the past is never dead. It’s not even past’ (8).

Nixon emphasizes that dictatorial and corrupt regimes permeate landscapes and oppress people through time exercising measures of slow violence. To refute and resist such eco-human forms of slow violence, Nixon continues, “resistance may assume not just human forms but also arise from an unanticipated recalcitrance on the part of a targeted resource, which may prove harder to commodify and profitably remove or manage than corporate moguls foresaw” (69). For Nixon, resistance requires patience, insistence, and strategy. In addition to constant documentation of violations and violence and awareness campaigns of human and security rights, Egyptian activists utilize current international and national conditions to support their green agenda. On the national level, el-Sisi faces the emergence of angry opposition in slums and poor areas that defy the image of the military men as immune to criticism. In 2019, Mohammed Ali, a young Egyptian actor and a wealthy construction contractor who has been working with the military for 15 years turns against the regime. Ali posts a series of videos on his social media giving detailed descriptions and naming senior military officers involved in cases of corruption and wasting billions on luxurious projects (Videos accusing Egypt's Sisi, 2019). Ali’s videos cause unrest and resentment among lower and marginalized classes who protest against their injustices who lead protests against el-Sisi asking for equal economic and social rights. Under extreme security measures and growing popular resentment concerning inequalities among classes, el-Sisi’s early call for national cohesion and stability is jeopardized by the exaggerated inequalities, internal displacements by environmental or economic stress, and human rights violations. Because of pressure from civil society and social criticism, the Egyptian government takes specific measures to help lower classes in slums. In 2020, el-Sisi declares an upgrading and national development plan of unsafe and unhealthy slums in Egypt (Farouk, 1).

On the international level, green thinking and politics get a boost with the ‘unanticipated’ devastating economic and health effects of the Coronavirus pandemic, the devastating everyday environmental-human cost of militarism, and the irresponsible use of chemicals and weapons symbolized in the Beirut Explosion and Trump’s defeat in 2020 Presidential elections, mainly because he failed to address Coronavirus appropriately. In this sense, Egypt is no exception. There are public demands of environmental-health sustainability. Despite the restrictions on civil organizations and activism, Egyptian activists and ordinary people use online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to exchange information and tell their experiences with coronavirus and public health issues. Some youth use innovative ways such as graffiti to spread awareness about the corona and preventive practices. Many youth-led initiatives in poor areas distribute free antiseptics, masks, and gloves (Zaiyada, 1). Youth not only raise awareness cornering measures that can be followed to prevent the transmission of the disease but also guide people concerning dealing with their infected neighbors and relatives. Likewise, youth in villages launch initiatives to sterilize the streets and houses of their villages and to educate people about public and private hygiene, and the right ways to deal with rubbish. A group of young people delivers groceries to home for free to protect the elderly. One4All is a civil society initiative to fight Covid-19 in Egypt. One4All is a partnership between private sector leaders and local health startups that is helping provide a myriad of services to Egypt’s population free of charge, to help the population cope and lessen the strain on hospitals (*One4All*, 1). Furthermore, civil groups and initiatives put pressure on the government to offer special help to irregular and rural workers who lost their jobs because of the Corona epidemic. Covid-19 exceptional measures include giving irregular workers, including women, a monthly allowance of EGP 500 (around USD 32) in cash, and increasing payments to women community leaders in rural areas from EGP 350 to EGP 900 per month to ensure gender equity. Moreover, the Takaful and Karama social protection programs expand to include additional 60,000 households, where women already represent 88% of the programs’ beneficiaries (*The Covid-19 Crisis in Egypt*, 3-4). As such, the emerging resistance and pressure of the civil society and ordinary people in Egypt, despite strict restrictions, have great potential and reflect real green awareness of the interconnections between spatial, gender, and political violence in the society.

Conclusion

This paper rethinks the relationship between the concepts of the security state and resistance in contemporary Egypt from a green perspective. It argues that civil and political activism in post-2011 Egypt is characterized by green trends that fight the militarization of spaces, economy, and power in Egypt through hybrid, collective, nonviolent actions. Although the military re-seizes power in 2014, the political and civil map of thought and action has changed in Egypt. The downfall of the Muslim Brotherhood along with the military leaders’ loss of credibility and immunity to criticism, propose feminist, civil, and grassroots movements as a credible and trustworthy substitute. Post-2011 Egyptian resistance explores military complexes, exposes the unjust and oppressive division of resources, services and rights in Egypt. Many political, social, and sexual taboos are challenged and refuted in post-2011 Egypt. Activists unite to endorse legal and practical measures concerning aspects of poor lives in slums, spatial violence and insecurity.

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