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Kathrine Van Den Bogert

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Blood, Bodies, and Violence

Gender and Women's Embodied Agency in the Egyptian Uprisings

KATHRINE VAN DEN BOGERT

December 2011. It is only my first week in Egypt when Omar and Amir take me for a tour to Tahrir Square.¹ At that moment there are no massive protests or marches, but the whole square still breathes revolution: many street sellers with Egyptian flags, scarves, and T-shirts; tents; a stage with a protest singer and supporters; dolls that represent Mubarak and Tantawi;² and maybe the most striking for Tahrir Square: no traffic. It feels like an amazing festival atmosphere with elated people, but signs of the violence that happened there are still very much present: some buildings in the square have been destroyed by fire, the Egyptian Museum is partly damaged, Amir points to the rooftops from which snipers were shooting at the protestors, and the bullet holes in the buildings and street signs are uncountable. The blocks and barbed wire that were raised in the streets to prevent protestors from entering give me the feeling of a war zone. But only when Omar shows me the spot where he was hiding during the shooting by the military, and when he tells about a friend who died in his arms, do I realize how violent the protests were in Tahrir Square for all the protestors involved, men and women.³

A couple of weeks later I have my first interview with Amir:

The first day I felt like I witnessed war. It was the 2nd of February, the black Tuesday, with the camels and horses. Yeah it was really . . . war. You see soldiers everywhere . . . And even women they were doing something. For example, after three or four hours of thugs attacking us from all around Tahrir Square, I just sat there. Because you just see every two minutes somebody that is being carried away, and a lot of blood. Somehow, I just sat there and I was watching. Maybe I was shocked. And then one woman distributing sandwiches came and said: "Why are you like that? Don't be desperate, we are powerful, and if they want to come inside to kill us, those people at the front lines will get tired. And if you get tired, we

will lose. So if they want to kill us, we will fight back.” Actually she really boosted me with energy and I just started again . . . throwing either one or two stones at the front line and then going back.

—Amir⁴

INTRODUCTION

Omar and Amir are two protestors who participated in the Egyptian revolution that started 25th of January 2011.⁵ After Tunisia, Egypt was the second country where a dictator resigned after days of protest by millions of people in what was soon called the Arab Spring. They protested against the corrupt government, the lack of freedom and of free elections. When the revolution started in Tunisia and dictator Ben Ali was unseated, this accelerated the waves of protest in Egypt that were already going on against the regime, and it resulted in the decisive events from January 25 to February 11, 2011, when Hosni Mubarak was ousted as president of Egypt.⁶

Although this revolution became known as a relatively nonviolent one, there were many violent clashes between the regime and the protestors.⁷ The Mubarak regime ordered the police to prevent people by force from entering and staying in Tahrir Square in the first days of the revolution; and the regime released prisoners and ordered them to attack the protestors in the square by horses and camels on the 2nd of February, also known as the camel battle.⁸ These prisoners were called *baltagiya*, an Egyptian colloquial term often translated as *thugs* in English, and referring to poor and criminalized men who were hired by the regime to do the dirty work of attacking the protestors.⁹

After Mubarak was ousted in February 2011, the military forces (SCAF) were in charge. Field Marshal Tantawi promised a peaceful transition period until the parliamentary elections took place. Many people trusted the SCAF at first, but they failed to come with a concrete and democratic transition plan, and granted themselves further power. Hence protests and sit-ins in Tahrir Square resumed in March, and anti-SCAF protests slowly gained more support. Soon the military started to attack protestors in the square as well, but protests continued, especially on Fridays. From October 2011 onward, violence by the SCAF increased, and violent massacres took place: Maspero Street, a demonstration with mainly Copts; and the Mohamed Mahmoud clashes in November, named after the street where the protests and the violence took place and where SCAF used excessive bullets and tear gas. It started with large protests in front of the Ministry of Interior, after demonstrators and family members of martyrs were expelled from Tahrir Square. Violence continued

until February 2012, when another massacre took place in a soccer stadium in Port Said.¹⁰ The protestors' experiences that I discuss are from these events between January 2011 and February 2012, and I discuss their experiences mainly in relation to counter-revolutionary discourses and violence from first the Mubarak regime and then the military regime, and less in relation to the specific political circumstances, like the elections.

As we see in Amir's story, he recollects a kind of gendered labor differentiation in Tahrir Square during the fights. Although the overall picture is more diverse, according to him at the front lines there were mostly men fighting; more specifically ultras from the different football clubs in Cairo. Ultras, hooligans, are experienced in fighting with the police and are notably anti-police and anti-regime. They have used this experience in the revolution and played a major role in defeating the police forces on January 28.¹¹ Other protestors were throwing stones, carrying away the injured, and distributing gas masks and antidotes. Many women were distributing food and drinks and bringing in medicines. Young people were also filming, taking photographs, and uploading everything on social media. But as mentioned before, these lines of labor differentiation were not clearly defined, as there were women protesting, fighting and throwing stones at the front lines as well.¹² Women's participation in these violent clashes became subject to discussions about women's acceptable role in the revolution.

The violence was often gendered and sexualized: *baltagiya* got orders from the police to sexually harass and touch female protestors, arrested female revolutionists were subjected to virginity tests by SCAF, and men got electroshocks on their genitals.¹³ Almost every Egyptian has seen the YouTube video of the brutal violence used against men and women in the protests of November 2011, where a female protestor had her clothes dragged off and was beaten by the military.¹⁴ She became known by the color of her underwear: the woman with the blue bra.¹⁵ These violent events show that women's participation in the protests became especially contested when their bodies were violated. I am thus interested in the specific experiences of women in the violent protests, as they—and their bodies—became a significant and controversial factor in the Egyptian revolution. The main question I aim to answer in this paper is: How have young protestors in Egypt experienced the violence in the uprisings, and how have the violent protests been gendered and embodied?

First, I discuss scholarly literature on women, gender, and revolution in different historical and geographical contexts, indicating how revolutions have been theorized with regard to gender and the body. Then I briefly discuss the methods of this research, before moving to the analysis of my ethnographic data, starting with the experiences of violence. Blood was an important

material and symbolic substance during the violent clashes, so I discuss the meaning of blood in the revolution, as motivation for the protestors and in the gendered construction of martyrdom. I continue my analysis by focusing specifically on the gendered aspects of violence and women's bodies in the protest, discussing how women re-appropriated gendered and patriarchal ideals as a means of revolution. I argue that this is best understood as an *embodied agency*, in which ambiguity is crucial. Finally, in the concluding part I argue that through women's embodied agency and ambiguous bodies in the protests a new space of action has emerged in Egypt.

PROTESTING WOMEN, GENDERED BODIES: HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Feminist scholars have shown that women have always played a central role in revolutions, protests, and national liberation wars.¹⁶ Well-known examples are the 1789 women's march on Versailles in the French revolution, the February Revolution in Russia in 1917 and the Iranian Revolution of 1979.¹⁷ Feminist scholarship on revolutions has suggested not only that *women* are central in revolutions but that *gender* relations count for a great deal the make-up of revolutionary culture, practices, ideology, and politics. Gender relations are key in constructing a new national identity after independence or war and in the construction and controlling of communities in times of social transformation.¹⁸ This is indeed the case in Egypt, both historically and in the recent uprisings. Beth Baron has shown {I am not sure about this, is it has showed or has shown?} how in the creation of Egypt as a modern nation, women's bodies became central as symbols of the nation but were at the same time excluded from mainstream political processes. Despite their exclusion, women and feminists have been involved for a long time in political protests, revolution, and activism; and their struggles were intertwined with nationalist and independence struggles, notably in the 1919 revolution and independence from Britain in 1922.¹⁹

The 1919 revolution became famous for the "ladies demonstrations," where women staged their own demonstrations at Tahrir Square against the British occupation. These early women's groups strove for a reform of family law, suffrage, girls' education, health care, and greater gender equality in the workplace and in politics, yet their demands were often subordinated to nationalist demands and national liberation.²⁰ Nevertheless, these revolutionary women in Tahrir Square temporarily inverted and challenged the usual gender order, as they were protesting in public spaces, something not very common for these mainly elite women.²¹

Both the 2011 demonstrations and the 1919 revolution were preceded by activist women striving for socio-political equality, something that is often downplayed in historical records in favor of the image of the sudden revolutionary women in the anti-colonial or anti-regime demonstrations.²² Thus the current focus on the iconic participation of women in the Egyptian protests is more a change in the stereotypical *perceptions* of Arab and Muslim women as passive and oppressed than a change in empirical realities.²³ Egyptian women have always been involved in politics and protests, independence and nation-state building.²⁴ The revolts of 2011 were clearly not the first time that women took to the streets in Egypt. Women and gender relations, norms, and roles are not marginal to revolutionary and counter-revolutionary processes but key to them. Crucial is the way women's *bodies* play a role in the Egyptian uprisings and revolution, both in 1919 and 2011.

Feminist research has shown that in many societies, women's bodies serve as a symbol for the nation, including Egypt.²⁵ According to Baron, Egypt is imagined as a woman, which feeds into the gendered construction of national honor that is exercised over women's bodies, and that is especially strong in times of violence, war, or revolution.²⁶ Through her sexuality and reproduction, the female body represents, creates, and protects the boundaries of the nation.²⁷ So, when a woman's body is affected or violated, the whole nation is affected. For example, the rape of women in the war in the former Yugoslavia, Zarkov argues, was not rape against a woman, but against the whole nation. Furthermore, the rape of a woman is seen as a sign of male impotence to protect her.²⁸ Women's bodies and sexuality should thus be secured and protected, in order to protect society. In this, not only is the body a discursive symbol, but there are actual rituals or actions performed on the body that can cause pain or blood but also humiliation or shame.²⁹

In the case of Egypt, sexual assault of female protestors was used to discourage them, to humiliate their male relatives, and to humiliate the whole revolutionary community to which they belong. Also, women's sexuality was used by the regime to portray female revolutionaries as loose, dissenting, and unruly. Protesting women were accused of being prostitutes, and stories were told that they slept with men and used drugs.³⁰ Male relatives were questioned about their inability to control the female protestors, and the woman in the blue bra was pictured as a *femme fatale*, blaming the victim instead of the perpetrators.³¹ Hafez sums it up: "By defiling revolutionary women's honor and painting them as immoral and loose—as women who are not entitled to social respect—the state in turn denigrated the men who demonstrated against state corruption and injustice."³² In these ways, through rape and sexual assault on female protestors, and depictions of female protestors as sexually loose,

the regime used women's bodies as symbols of the nation for their counter-revolutionary forces.

In nationalist and counter-revolutionary discourses this is a typical way of constructing women's bodies as the symbolic bearers of the nation but denying them "any direct relation to national agency," as McClintock states,³³ and as Baron also shows for Egypt.³⁴ By focusing on women's bodies only as symbols of the nation, their roles as protestors, activist, and organizers of women's movements are ignored.³⁵ According to Zarkov, the female body is at the same time a space where dominant patriarchal and national ideals are represented but also a space for self-determination and self-representation.³⁶ Feminist scholars have therefore often mentioned the need to focus on women as agents of revolution, rather than merely as symbols or victims.³⁷ Interestingly, there the body tends to move to the background. For example, Baron discusses how women's bodies were symbolically incorporated in nationalist struggles, and how women and feminists reworked and manipulated gendered constructions of the nation in favor of their political and feminist agenda. Less clear, however, is how their physical, symbolic, and gendered bodies were involved in their political protests. As I contend, political protest takes place not only on a discursive or political level but also on an embodied level. Frantz Fanon has shown this clearly in the case of the Algerian revolution of 1954–62.

Fanon discussed the role of women's bodies and the veil in the Algerian revolution, where women played a critical role in resisting the French occupation and in the striving for independence.³⁸ He shows how the French colonial administration used women's bodies for gaining control over the Algerian nation. Central in this strategy was the campaign of westernizing and unveiling women, where veiled Algerian women were portrayed as suppressed and held to be liberated. In this context, rather than unveiling, precisely wearing the veil became a form of women's liberation and resistance against the French. Thus women reworked and used colonial patriarchal ideals for their revolutionary struggles, and gender and the body became the "centers of resistance."³⁹ Fanon pays particularly attention to the role of women's bodies and violence in the Algerian independence struggle. For, not only was wearing traditional clothing and the veil an embodied discursive form of resistance; it was also the perfect hiding place for distributing bombs, weapons, and messages among the National Liberation Front (FLN), a task that women took on in the revolution.

In the course of the revolution, it became necessary to manipulate the colonial strategy of unveiling also in a different way. Algerian women dressed like unveiled European women, which made them easily pass the French military checkpoints in the European part of Algiers, without being checked on

carrying bombs or weapons, as they were seen as harmless and supporting the French. In that case *not* wearing the veil became a form of resistance and revolution. Fanon points to the importance of the body in this process: “The Algerian woman who walks stark naked into the European city relearns her body, re-establishes it in a totally revolutionary fashion.”⁴⁰ When the French military discovered this new practice, the veil appeared again for carrying weaponry or packages unseen, and women had to use their bodies as though there was nothing hiding inside their clothes. So not only the veil but the woman’s whole body became a means of resistance and of revolution. According to Fanon, this was in itself a revolutionary step, which would necessarily bring new gender dimensions and liberties for Algerian women.

Yet feminist scholars have criticized Fanon for presenting a rather fixed image of the position of women before the revolution,⁴¹ and have questioned both his assumptions of women participating equally with men in the revolution and the positive change in gender relations this would generate. Rather, they argue, women’s liberation is not similar to or does not automatically follow from national liberation.⁴² Participation in war against colonial or political oppression does not necessarily liberate women, but can precisely reinforce patriarchal oppressive politics.⁴³ Woodhull emphasizes how women’s exclusion from national politics, rights, and public spaces was central in producing the new Algerian nation after independence.⁴⁴

Following this line of thought, much research on gender and revolution focuses on the macro-political implications and consequences of women’s participation in protests, and less on the micro-embodied experiences of women participating in revolution and protests. Moghadam, for example, classifies revolutions according to two types: one where women’s emancipation is a major goal or outcome, like the Kemalist revolution in Turkey, and one where women’s modesty and family roles are a major goal or outcome, like in Algeria and Iran.⁴⁵ Many feminist scholars have pointed out that often after a war, revolt or struggle for (colonial) independence—where women participate next to men—traditional and restrictive gender roles are reintroduced again and women are marginalized.⁴⁶ This raises the question if there is anything left of women’s active embodied participation in revolution and the changing meanings of women’s bodies and gender, as Fanon so aptly described for Algeria. I suggest there is, but in a more complex way than Fanon and feminist critics have argued. Namely, women’s embodied participation in (violent) struggle does not automatically lead to women’s liberation after the revolution or war, nor does it result in restrictive gender roles and marginalization only.

Indeed, women need to demand women’s rights explicitly in gender-based struggles to prevent themselves being subjugated again,⁴⁷ yet I suggest this is

not a straightforward process. Rather, I argue that it is necessary to look at the embodied experiences of women during the protests, to point out how gender relations and norms are involved during and after the revolution. The most important argument I take from Fanon's discussion of women's bodies in revolutionary struggle is that the role and meaning of women's bodies are never fixed, but that they change over time, as related to the violent events taking place in the revolution. This is also central in Eileraas's and Dabashi's postcolonial critique in relation to naked political protest in the Arab uprisings and beyond: gendered bodies have different meanings in different times and contexts, and the story of gender and bodies in revolution is not one of linear "progress," but one of messy and complex constellations of experiences, power, symbols, meanings, and violence.

While the political implications are nevertheless important—it is still the case that women are excluded from political transformations after protests have calmed down, including in Egypt⁴⁸—this is not the only story. In this article I focus on how revolution is working out "on the ground," by women's and men's bodies in the struggle. Some recent research has also focused on the changing role of gendered bodies in the Egyptian uprisings. Al-Ali, Pratt, Hafez, and Eileraas argue that gendered and sexualized bodies have been not only central in counter-revolutionary forces but also center stage in the uprisings and the protests against patriarchal authority in Egypt and broader in the region.⁴⁹ According to Hafez, resistance is precisely there, where patriarchal power is exercised over bodies; so by being in the public square, bodies become sites of resistance.⁵⁰ Female protestors have appropriated existing gender norms into embodied forms of resistance, and their gendered and sexualized bodies became sites of dissent and revolution. This cannot be seen separate, however, from dominant constructions of symbolic meanings of women's bodies as bearers of the nation. Resistance is always a "bargain"⁵¹ with "sticky"⁵² patriarchal and gendered norms, expectations, values, and symbolic meanings of women's bodies. Examples of well-known female protestors include Aliaa El-Mahdy and Samira Ibrahim, who publicly displayed or discussed their naked bodies as part of revolutionary protest, and the woman in the blue bra. They urged their wide public to acknowledge gender, sexuality, and bodies as critical aspects of the revolution.⁵³ Furthermore, their naked protesting bodies have reimagined embodied vulnerability as intimate politics of disruption, revolution, and social change, as both Eileraas and Dabashi argue.⁵⁴

Although these authors give crucial insights in the roles of gender and bodies in the Egyptian uprisings, they have mainly given a feminist cultural analysis of the disrupting bodies of those famous protestors, who were widely

discussed in many media outlets. Other authors have focused on forms of intimate and emotional protests on women's online blogs and how these have been critically reshaping notions of gender, politics, and public and private.⁵⁵ Less research has focused on the role of gender, bodies, and violence in the daily experiences of protestors in Tahrir Square and beyond, in a more anthropological way. Early ethnographic work on the Egyptian uprising by Ghannam shows how the use of violence proved to be crucial in generating broad support for the revolutionists from Egyptians. This support drew on daily experiences and meanings of violence: accepted violence, the protection of vulnerable people, often women; versus improper violence performed by *baltagiya*, police, and the military.⁵⁶ Many Egyptians, especially young men, experience state and police violence on a daily basis, which according to Hafez is an important form of patriarchal state power that is resisted by both men and women in the revolution.⁵⁷ Additionally, Winegar brings to the fore how embodied protest does not necessarily take place only in public squares but also in homes, especially by less privileged women who were not able to go out because of work and family responsibilities or safety.⁵⁸

In this essay I build on these ethnographic insights and discuss the narratives and experiences of "ordinary" protesting women and men, specifically taking into account their experiences of violent protests and how these violent protests have been gendered and embodied. As these daily experiences of revolution are not separate from the more mediated embodied protests of famous protestors, I connect their stories by providing an analysis of gendered bodies and embodied agency in the revolution.

METHODS

The essay is based on four months of ethnographic fieldwork in Cairo, from December 2011 until April 2012, where I spoke with revolutionists, participated in and observed during protests in Tahrir Square, and conducted in-depth interviews about the revolution with ten young revolutionists. These young revolutionists were mainly from Egypt's upper and upper middle class. As a driving force behind the political protests, this social group was an interesting group to investigate. Also they were the most accessible for me, as I could interview them in English and easily meet with them. I am therefore not aiming at a representation of the whole population of Egypt in the revolution; rather I share and analyze the experiences of the young revolutionists I met and via their story reflect on the gendered and embodied aspects of the revolution. The revolutionists I interviewed were all between nineteen and thirty-one years old and lived in different upper-middle-class neighbor-

hoods in Cairo like Nasr City and Mohandiseen, where I also lived myself. I interviewed five women and five men, four of them studying and six in the early years of their careers. I met some on Tahrir Square during protests; two women at Cairo University, where I was an exchange student in political science; and three friends via a flat mate in Mohandiseen. I started the open interviews by asking about their experiences of the protests and then followed the story they wanted to tell. In the course of the interviews, I also asked their opinions about women's participation in the protests. With some of these informants, I went about ten times to Tahrir Square to participate in (peaceful) protests, of which two occasions were specifically women's protests.

I analyzed my data by qualitative coding and identifying themes and sub-themes, of which violence, blood, and gender relations are the main ones discussed in this article. This analysis is supplemented with a discussion of four female protestors who became famous in Egyptian and worldwide media: Sally Zahran, the controversial female martyr; Samira Ibrahim, who spoke out against the virginity tests; the blue bra woman, who was attacked in violent clashes; and Aliaa el-Mahdy, who posed naked on her blog as political protest.

EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE: BLOOD AS MOTIVATION TO CONTINUE

In an interview, Omar tells me about the clashes with the military forces in March 2011:

When we went to Tahrir Square, we saw a lot of blood in the streets, I can't forget this day. Many people with a lot of injuries. Really, the streets were full of blood! And full of parts of the people, you know, like arms and legs. I don't know what the military is thinking . . . they go to war and they don't believe that the people who see that, will never forget what they [the military] did. So the people will be more positive! They are not going to be afraid.

—Omar⁵⁹

Omar continues and explains that the people who were close to the killings and the blood are different from the ones who did not experience the violence and blood. According to him, those people close to the violence have changed; they got a positive motivation to continue the fight, to continue what the ones who died had fought for. Also for him personally, the violence and the blood changed him and his motivation for the revolution:

The seeing of all the people with the blood, it changed a lot of things. That I will continue, till we succeed or till I die. You know what I would like you

to know . . . from the moment I see that guy who died in my hands . . . he gave me positive energy that I must get his rights back. It was a big shock for me because I was holding him, I didn't know that he was dying or that he had bullets in his body . . . I just found the blood on my hand. . . . Till now the jacket that has a lot of blood of him, I still didn't wash it. I keep it. Sometimes I look at it, and I remember him.

—Omar⁶⁰

When I talked with people about the revolution, stories like this one were common. Many revolutionists mention the huge amounts of blood they saw on the streets, on their clothes, and on people. It made them even more motivated to continue the revolution, not despite but *because* of the blood and the violence, as also for Amir:

The reason to be there . . . I would confess that, mainly when it gets tensed or violent I feel it's a must to go. Otherwise I get a very bad guilt that I'm leaving brothers and sisters there. Although you cannot really do something, but on the other hand, yeah one person does something. At least if I would throw some stones or treat people! Like giving them sprays for the tear gas. It was the 9th of March 2011, the first obvious attack by the military to protestors, when they took girls and did the virginity tests. And took guys and electrified them.

—Amir⁶¹

Here Amir speaks about brothers and sisters, something I heard many others also do when they talked about their fellow protestors. Blood is one of the main bodily substances through which kinship or family relations are made or imagined. In anthropological studies on kinship, blood is not approached as either a biological or a cultural relationality but as both.⁶² Blood figures at the intersection of the material and the symbolic;⁶³ and as material and symbolic substance, blood in violent contexts is used as a sign of allegiance and bonding.⁶⁴ So as a combination of both bodily substance and cultural meaning, defined in that particular context and time of revolution, the blood in the streets made people as brothers and sisters, like one big family protesting against the military regime.

When I asked Nancy what made her go to the violent clashes during the Mohamed Mahmoud events, she also explained how the blood and violence were key factors for her motivation:

Because of the blood I saw . . . and I couldn't . . . the time when I was not in the Square, I could not do anything. I could not think of anything. The

whole night I couldn't sleep. At the office I couldn't work. All the time on Twitter and on Facebook, to see what's happening. When I finished work, I go to the Square, and when I have to go back home I open the computer and I check everything . . . and the next morning I was waking up with the computer on my lap! The whole week, from Saturday until Thursday. All of it. It's an obligation. It's an obligation that I have to go, it's not a choice. Even if I don't want to go down to Tahrir, I can't . . . I would feel guilty if I don't go down. The revolution became your life! Your goal, your cause.

Do you know where this feeling of obligation or guilt comes from?—Author

I feel that people are dying in the streets and sacrificing their life, so that everybody in this country lives a better life. So I cannot sit and enjoy my daily life and not pay attention to this. . . . Even if I don't know how to throw rocks or I'm not efficient in some way. But by being there . . . you know . . . I'm registering my position. I'm telling: "I'm with you." Even if they want just a tissue or water, this is why I went close . . . next to the front lines because I could be useful, I could be more useful there than sitting outside. Even if I'm not throwing rocks or whatever. Yeah, it's the blood, that . . . I feel that the blood is on our hands. And I can't look to myself in the mirror knowing that . . . you know . . . it's personal. . . . We're continuing, no matter how many you kill of us, how many are injured. The pain makes us stronger, I mean, really every time they kill, every time I see more blood, I don't get discouraged. I get more motivation to continue.

—Nancy⁶⁵

Thus for Nancy also the blood and violence made her more motivated to continue the revolution. In this, it was not only about the fighting itself, but about being there, the actual and symbolic presence to show that you were supporting each other, as brothers and sisters, bonded by the blood on the streets. This feeling was present particularly during violent clashes, like the battle of the camels in the first eighteen days of protest, and the clashes with the military regime between March and December 2011. Especially in the latter period, when there were diverging strategies and ideas on how to proceed politically, the violence and blood in the streets created unity anew in Tahrir Square.

During violent events, all people in the square were exposed to dangers and attacks on their bodies, so class differences that in normal life “divide” bodies and actions temporarily faded during these events. Athanasiou conceptualizes this as “shared vulnerability.” While this does not mean that gendered, classed,

and racialized bodies are equally vulnerable, it does mean that vulnerability becomes relational and that it provides a base for collective action and solidarity. Whereas vulnerability is normally attached to individual bodies and creating difference, in the square it was politically mobilized as a force of resistance and revolution.⁶⁶ The blood, as most visible bodily substance in violent clashes, was key in this. The blood in the streets is “common”—everyone has it and needs it. It is not from a poor or rich person, not from someone living in Cairo’s slums or in its most upper-class areas; as I heard a protestor in Tahrir say: “*It is my blood, what is there in the streets.*”⁶⁷ This blood made people realize that they were all in the same position of being subject to being killed; there was no difference between them any more when being so close to the border between life and death. For it was not just about being brothers and sisters, but because their brothers and sisters were dying, that protestors were strengthened in their will and power to continue the revolution and the struggle. Blood became the key ground of mobilization to bring justice for those who died, and became the central ground for the continuation of the struggle, as Schielke also noted.⁶⁸ Blood is thus a physical memory that invokes a shared vulnerability,⁶⁹ a call for action,⁷⁰ or the “motivation to continue,” as my informants called it.

Also, the blood in the streets changed the opinion of many people in Egypt who previously supported the regime. The blood made visible the crimes and violence perpetuated by the regime, whereas beforehand this was hidden inside the secret investigation centers. When ordinary people saw this blood, they started to support the goal of the revolutionists: the removal of the regime. This happened first when Mubarak was still in charge, as Ghannam has shown,⁷¹ and later also with the military, who first promised and pretended to be peaceful. The idea that “*when you see blood, it brings truth,*” as Castelli showed in relation to Catholic ritual,⁷² is also applicable in this context. According to the protestors in my research, the blood in the streets showed the true face of the military regime. Also Carsten argues that blood as revealing truth appears in many contexts. “Normally hidden in the body, when it becomes visible it gives access to the truth.”⁷³ Blood is the material truth; it shows the atrocities being done by the regime and creates a moral truth of who’s “good”—the people, who are nonviolent or only use acceptable violence for defense, and who’s “bad”—the violent regime.⁷⁴ For this truth to come out, the blood must be physically visible on streets, bodies, and clothes.⁷⁵

Because blood has this meaning of truth, it is impossible not to be invoked by its call to action—the protestors “have to go to Tahrir Square.” The bloodshed not only creates a motivation to continue, but is also related to the construction of martyrdom, as those who died in the violence are the “true” and

“good” Egyptians: martyrs for the country. The martyr’s blood in particular plays a considerable role in rituals surrounding martyrdom.⁷⁶ For Omar, the blood on the jacket was important in remembering the martyr who died in his hands, as he kept the jacket unwashed. Yet, as I will show next, blood, truth, and martyrdom are also highly gendered.

BLOOD AS GENDERED MARTYRDOM

Blood in the streets shows the lives that are sacrificed in the struggle or war.⁷⁷ In Egypt those people who died in the revolution are martyrs because they gave their life for a cause: a better Egypt. “*The blood is not just worthless blood, they are paying and sacrificing their blood for something*,” said Nancy.⁷⁸ Whether this is religiously seen as a legitimate cause to become a martyr is not very important here. In the interviews and talks I had with people, as well as in popular revolution songs, people talk about the martyrs of the revolution.

Although their bodies are dead, the martyrs are still speaking to the community⁷⁹ through their bloodshed as a call to action and as revealing truth. In this rendering, gender norms and relations are also revealed, as female martyrs were highly controversial, and martyrdom has a particular masculine image. In the revolution song “I love you my country”⁸⁰ the martyrs portrayed are male, with their mothers mourning them. The only female martyr who was often portrayed in media, graffiti, or newspapers was Sally Zahran.⁸¹ However, this caused major controversies about the legitimacy of her being a (female) martyr.

In the original account, as described by Armbrust, she was killed on January 28, 2011 by a thug hitting her on her head while she was heading toward Tahrir Square. But when her story became more known, it began to change. Newspapers suggested that she actually was not in Cairo at all on the 28th, and “details emerged that conflicted with the iconic image of Zahran slain in battle.”⁸² It was said that she died accidentally by falling from a balcony and was not killed at all, picturing her as a passive bystander; something that happens more often with female protestors, for example in Iran.⁸³ Debates emerged about the meaning of her being a martyr or whether she could be considered a martyr at all.⁸⁴ Also questioned was her status as veiled woman. The picture that was distributed widely showed Zahran unveiled; however, there were requests by her family and other Egyptians to replace this picture with one where Zahran is veiled, and some pictures even had a veil photoshopped around her head.⁸⁵ This suggests that at least for some people, a woman can become a martyr only when her body is covered.

Here, martyrdom is gendered because blood is. Jansen and Dresen ar-

gue that while in comparison with other bodily substances—like milk and semen—blood *seems* gender neutral, in fact it is not.⁸⁶ Male blood is mostly seen as holy and as a conscious bloodshed—one is dying for the nation and being a martyr—whereas female blood is seen as polluting, unclean, and unconscious, like menstrual blood.⁸⁷ Also, because of menstruation female blood is more related to fertility and sexuality than is male blood.⁸⁸ Female blood on the streets, as “matter out of place,”⁸⁹ is disordering the social gender order, as women are not expected to participate in violent clashes resulting in conscious bloodshed and become martyrs. In the case of male bloodshed in the revolution, it was interpreted as a sacrifice, and in the case of female bloodshed it was seen as polluting and in need of removal—as Zahran’s image as martyr is often removed from posters—or in need of control, by picturing her with a (photoshopped) veil. Blood is therefore often limiting women’s social or religious space, even after death in the case of Zahran. It is giving different meanings and truths to the violation of men’s and women’s bodies, the first as full martyr, the latter as victim or false martyr.

Female martyrs therefore have a double meaning: they have not only sacrificed their lives for the community or the nation, but their sacrifice also reveals gendered norms, as their martyrdom and bloodshed are contested.⁹⁰ Women’s participation in the revolution was already ambivalent, but this became particularly clear in violent events, with their blood on the streets. When women became victims of attacks from the military or police, their bodies were seen as sexually violated, not as martyrs. These meanings of gendered blood and gendered martyrdom revert to the symbolic meanings of women’s bodies as representing and protecting the nation, which are discussed in the following section in relation to women’s experiences and strategies in the revolution.

WOMEN’S BODIES IN THE REVOLUTION: SYMBOLS AND AGENTS

In one of the interviews, Nancy⁹¹ describes the changing attitude toward the participation and violations of women’s bodies in the revolution:

On the 8th of March 2011, the women’s day, there was a protest, a march for women’s rights. Of course it was a disaster. They were attacked. Not by thugs or anything but by normal people saying “it’s not the time now to ask for women’s rights, you should sit at home” and they were sexually harassed and it was a mess. Compare that with December the same year. The photo of the woman with the blue bra, it hit us off the spot. It is a matter of honor now. And this is because of the patriarchal society. Because when they saw the photos of the men being beaten they were not so affected as

when they saw women being beaten. It has of course advantages and disadvantages, when they saw that woman . . . it's an honor crime. And this is why it mobilized so many. And it was at a point when the morale was very low for the revolution. And the women's march in December, it basically gave it back.

—Nancy

Nancy describes how women's bodies, notably the woman with the blue bra, are a symbol for the society and national honor, precisely as Baron has argued.⁹² Because a woman's body, and thus Egypt's honor, got violated, it generated a huge response among many Egyptians, men and women, in the form of a women's march.

In this women's march, women used slogans like "the daughters of Egypt do not get stripped" and "the daughters of Egypt are a red line."⁹³ Also in other protests, they stated, "We are not women, we are Egyptians,"⁹⁴ and at almost every protest I observed women who embodied the colors of the national flag in their headscarves and cloth. In February 2012 there was a women's protest where the women represented themselves as mothers, after almost two hundred Egyptian football fans were killed at a soccer game, supposedly by the police.⁹⁵ In this way, according to Hafez, women demonstrated their allegiance to the nation to affirm their political voice and demands.⁹⁶ Because women represented themselves as mothers and daughters of the nation, thereby endorsing the patriarchal system that links women's bodies with honor and the nation, the women's protest was accepted by fellow protestors. This is in sharp contrast with the feminist demonstration on Women's Day on March 8, when women were attacked and accused of "taking away attention from the main issues,"⁹⁷ as Nancy also recounted. The protest on Women's Day might have been especially tense since just a few days beforehand, the first protests that demanded the fall of the military regime had started, and broad support for this new "main issue" had to be collected.

Baron shows that in 1919 demonstrating women also used kinship idioms to emphasize their loyalty to the nation, thereby reproducing gendered narratives of the nation, martyrdom, and the family. It was because the women's protests were not for their own "feminist" cause, but for the nation, that their protests were accepted.⁹⁸ It was this use of national rhetoric—combined with the violation of a woman's body, which was a symbolic violation of the nation—that made the December 2011 women's protest a popular one, including among men. Furthermore, it increased the support for the anti-SCAF protests, as when people saw the women joining the protest, they knew anti-SCAF protestors were not thugs, Nancy told me. This women's protest

clearly illustrates the intricate relationship of women's bodies as symbols of the nation, and women's bodies as sites of dissent and revolution, as Hafez describes.⁹⁹ She analyses these women's protests as a "bargain with patriarchy," which means that women employ the same techniques of patriarchal and national gender ideologies, namely the symbolized body, for their revolutionary and feminist goals.¹⁰⁰ If we see the women's protests as a bargain with patriarchy, women's representation as mothers of the nation is not necessarily subordinating them or legitimizing patriarchal structures, but it can be precisely the legitimizing reason for them being able to participate at all, as Nancy explained for the 2011 uprisings and Baron for the 1919 protests.¹⁰¹

The Gezi protests in Turkey show that women representing themselves as mothers of the nation were explicitly also resisting the patriarchal gender system, which constructs public space as male space. In response to the regime's call for the mothers to take their protesting children home, women took to the streets *as mothers* to *join* the public protest.¹⁰² Their slogan was: "Mothers are everywhere, resistance is everywhere," stating that mothers are resisting the regime and at the same time resisting normative ideas about the public space as masculine.¹⁰³ Women as mothers can thus also be a powerful force in the revolution resisting both the regime *and* patriarchal gender structures. Female protestors are not submitting to a patriarchal discourse here, but are using it to articulate their rights, and they claim national signifiers as a space for embodied feminist resistance.¹⁰⁴

In Egypt, Aliaa, who as a political protest posed naked on her blog *A Rebel's Diary*, is also a clear example of a woman's embodied protest, agency, and resistance. According to Aliaa,¹⁰⁵ her naked body was a symbol for the new nation of Egypt to come: racist free, sexist free, and free of corruption. She reconceptualizes symbolic meanings of women's bodies, as she distorts her body from dominant meanings of women's bodies as sexualized and as boundaries of the existing nation,¹⁰⁶ reconfiguring it into a symbol of a *new* nation to come: racist free, sexist free, and free of corruption. As with the woman with the blue bra, the disruptive potential of the embodied protest lies in the framing of nakedness and vulnerability as central forces in the revolution, rather than as mere limitations.¹⁰⁷ Thus women's bodies are at the same time a symbol for society *and* a space for agency and action, and these both reinforce each other. It is important to zoom in further on the body.

This protesting body is not only a discursive but also a very physical body. Protest is about the actual presence of women's and men's bodies in the streets and the pains and damages inflicted on them. Public protest is always embodied: chanting, raising voices, standing or sitting, posing online, forming blockades, and persistently coming together in public spaces.¹⁰⁸ Often bodies

are the only means left for people to protest.¹⁰⁹ In Egypt the consequences of protests were physical: people died because of blood loss, got bullets in their bodies, or they lost their eyes through bullets. Amir also tells me that protestors have written their name and their family's telephone number on their bodies; in case they are killed. My informants experienced that people were protecting each other with their bodies, even people they did not know. Eiler-aas sums up: "Our bodies are precarious; prone to bruises, breaks, and scars; and reliant on others."¹¹⁰ Bodies are crucial agents in protests and revolution. The body is the means and medium of revolution, the key vehicle of protest,¹¹¹ and a discursive battlefield.¹¹² Without all those bodies in the square, there is no revolution. The revolutionary body has thus a necessarily public dimension, as it appears to others and the skin and flesh are exposed to violence.¹¹³

The protesting body is not only the *means* of revolution, but the body itself *is* revolution in public spaces like Tahrir Square, the streets, and Facebook. Sasson-Levy and Rapoport show that women's bodies in social movements and public protest are especially contested when their bodies explicitly challenge gender relations, by making the body not only an instrument for the message of protest but the message *itself*, by being in public space.¹¹⁴ This public space is thereby not a given, but is precisely that which is contested, as by protesting in public spaces women's bodies disrupt patriarchal relations and gender norms through which public space is constituted.¹¹⁵ Women's public protests deterritorialize patriarchal codes of sexuality and "subvert conventional socio-cultural and spatial associations of gendered and sexualized bodies."¹¹⁶ Violated or naked bodies disrupt dichotomies between public and private, male and female, visible and hidden. Aliaa's body deconstructs hegemonic notions of public and private space, as she shows the private zones of her body in public. The gendered bodies of Sally Zahran and the blue bra woman were visible in public spaces in non-normative ways: not as passive bystander but as active protestor; not as mother of the nation but as martyr. But also women who protested from their homes, by cooking for protestors, giving shelter and medicine during violent clashes, and making noise with kitchen utensils,¹¹⁷ demanded a reconfiguration of home not only as domestic but also as public.

I have shown extensively how gendered bodies play a role in the revolution, and how women re-appropriated patriarchal and gendered ideals, both for resisting the patriarchal regime and for disrupting gendered norms in society. Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity theoretically elucidates these processes of re-appropriation. Performativity means that gender and gender norms come into being through repeated embodied acts or performances. Though these actions are based on existing gender norms, they are at the same time an act of difference; performativity is thus always a repeated

act with a difference and a potential disruption.¹¹⁸ In this way, the continuous construction and reconstruction of gender norms in revolution can be approached. Women act according to gendered and patriarchal norms, but with a difference, and thus at the same time manipulate and rework these norms. This is also the way agency has often been understood,¹¹⁹ and in the context of revolution I argue that women's performative actions can be best understood as an *embodied* agency. In Butler's recent work, she extends her concept of performativity to collective acts of assembly and protest. Here it is not the individual body who performatively reconstructs gender, but the relational bodies in the streets, connected through shared vulnerability¹²⁰ and, as I have shown, blood. By understanding women's participation and performativity in violent protests as embodied agency, it is embedded with crucial notions of blood, bodies, and its changing gendered meanings. In the Egyptian uprisings, it was through female blood that gendered norms were revealed and continuously contested. Female blood is private and uncontested when inside the body, but when it comes out it is public and disrupting. Previously I have shown how blood shows the truth in violent clashes; female blood, on the contrary, does not install truth but *disrupts* it, and at the same time it continues to attract people to the square. As I will now show, this role of blood and gendered bodies was never straightforward or clear, but rather ambiguous, messy, and contradictory, crucial aspects of gender performativity and embodied agency.

WOMEN'S BODIES AS AMBIGUOUS AGENTS

Often I heard contradictory statements from my informants about women in Tahrir Square as something completely normal but, at the same time, "*it's not a place to take your sister*" as Amir told me. He refers to the gender-based violence and danger women faced in the square, something that made more families to prohibit their daughters from protesting.¹²¹ It points to the ambiguity of women participating in the revolution, for both women and men. Many men felt the need to protect women from (sexual) violence, for example by forming a human shield around them. This was something valued very ambiguously among the women I spoke with. Nancy described it as: "*We are in conflict with ourselves.*"¹²² By this she, and others like Heba and Noha, mean the space between accepting the protection of men and contesting the patriarchal norms behind it:

It is not for protection, it is not that I cannot protect myself, I hate it when others think they should protect me. But it is just a signal that women

should still come to the revolution, that they don't need to be afraid of the violence. It is just a signal and it only lasted for a while, after that the men didn't stay around the women anymore.

—Heba¹²³

Because of this protection, I felt we are a great nation. I don't know. I felt good you know, I felt safe to protest and safe to express myself, without any harm, so it was really good.

—Noha¹²⁴

Thus the protection of women was a sign of safety so that women could protest without fear of being attacked and sexually harassed by thugs, yet some women experienced it also as a patriarchal form of control over women by men, or a way of reinforcing patriarchal masculinity as norm.¹²⁵ Others re-appropriated vulnerability and patriarchal norms, like the 'mothers of the nation' trope, to be able to go out protesting safely. Hence the ambiguity of women and their bodies in the violence and revolution; their participation was normal and accepted in Tahrir, but at the same time also dangerous and risky, which contributed to the opinion that women should be protected or even stay at home.

However, this ambiguity is not necessarily negative, as it precisely contests patriarchal violence and norms and creates opportunities for debate and change. Through their ambiguous bodies in public space Aliaa and the woman in the blue bra were able to discuss precisely the hegemonic symbolic meanings attached to their bodies and thus resist them. Naked bodies in political protest create tensions, contradictions, and thus opportunities.¹²⁶ Also, the contested image of Zahran as martyr has the potential for change, as Armbrust states: "Sally Zahran was more productive than any other martyr because she highlighted social tensions. She functioned as a prism refracting the light of events; a kind of medium, in other words, that redirects meanings."¹²⁷ Ambiguous women's bodies in the revolution created space to rethink the place of women in society, as Zahran's martyrdom has done. Zahran is seen as a "flawed" and contested martyr, but therefore she could precisely move people to action—in the field of women's rights, activism, or protests—and she inspired people to articulate their views on these issues. Ambiguous bodies make visible patriarchal and gendered norms, through contesting public space, blood, and (sexual) violence, and performatively transform them. Women's embodied agency in violent protests therefore includes a necessary element of ambiguity.

Nancy describes how women's embodied agency in the revolution creates a new space of action,¹²⁸ and the openings it brings to "profoundly challenge hegemonic gender norms"¹²⁹:

How the women were involved, it was basically stating the obvious. Stating that . . . women are part of society, I mean they have a role to play just like the men have a role to play. But after the revolution, a new space has been created. For example, the story of Samira Ibrahim, one of the girls who were subjected to virginity tests. She came out, told her story and sued the army! Before the revolution this would never ever be possible for someone, a woman, to come out and say that something like that happened. And she's from upper-Egypt, a very conservative place, her dad was [in the] Muslim brotherhood. This space has been created after the revolution! Something like the women's march, for example, I mean this was completely spontaneous, we started out as not more than 20-30 people and then thousands! And women from all walks of life, with their children, fully covered, Christians, young women, old women, women walking in the street and joining us after hearing the chants and seeing the photos. New space has definitely been created.

—Nancy

This new space, however, is always a bargain with existing patriarchal structures and meanings of women's bodies that subjugate them as symbolic bearers of the nation. Ibrahim stated after she lost the trial against the military: "No one violated my honor; it's Egypt's honor that's been violated." She agreed with commentators that the judgment is an injustice to the country and not to her person.¹³⁰ The following quote about the rape of a female revolutionist in Libya also speaks to Ibrahim's case: "Her rape is not only meant to violate and harm an individual woman, but it is a way to humiliate and violate entire communities. What made this case so different from the many others that go unreported is that she did not allow herself to be silenced by prevailing notions of shame and codes of honor."¹³¹ By precisely using the gendered discourse of the nation, Ibrahim was able to talk about the sexual violence and create a new space to speak out.

CONCLUSIONS

The experiences of protestors in the violent uprisings have thus been ambiguous experiences. The blood in the streets was dangerous but at the same time motivating. The blood also revealed gendered differences that shaped the ex-

periences of men and women: men as full martyrs, women as controversial bodies. Here it becomes clear how women's agency and the symbolic meanings of their bodies are related. Protesting women, through their symbolized body, refuse to postpone feminist demands in the revolution; they explicitly centralize issues of sexuality, gender, harassment, rape, and public shaming as critical components of the revolution.¹³²

I have shown how women's bodies are central not only in symbolic constructions of the nation but also in revolutionary agency and protest. Protestors dealt with the symbolic meanings of women's bodies by embodying these notions to reinforce their revolutionary message and agency. This is an embodied agency that is inherently ambiguous. It is a negotiation with dominant meanings of women's bodies, where women performatively create new meanings by redirecting old discourses.¹³³ The construction of women's bodies as symbols of the nation, is thus not necessarily undermining women's agency but articulating it through performative recreations of meaning and a space to speak out. It follows that revolutionary protest is necessarily embodied and gendered in ambiguous ways, yet this precisely provides the impetus for transformation.

Following from these experiences, looking at Egypt's future is complex. What the revolution has meant for women and gender relations is highly ambiguous and still contested. Through women's ambiguous participation in the revolution, a new space of action emerged. In this space women and men together actively contest gender-based violence in Egyptian society.¹³⁴ Performatively changing gendered norms and resisting the patriarchal regime means reconceptualizing not only femininity but also masculinity.¹³⁵ The experience of revolution has inspired young women and men to become active in women's or social movements. Noha and Heba, for instance, became members of the Women's Union, and Nancy is active in community development. Women translated their experience of protest, violence, and revolution in Tahrir Square into anti-sexual harassment groups and self-defense courses for women and girls.¹³⁶ In these self-defense courses women learn not only physical techniques but also how they can raise their voice and say no, something previously not part of hegemonic femininity in Egypt.¹³⁷ Silence is no longer an option for young activists in Egypt in responding to sexual harassment.¹³⁸ Although some of the anti-harassment groups had to quit their activities due to security concerns or the conviction of members, their legacy is important, Galan argues, since these groups "challenged the previous victimization of women, and contested the 'blame the victim' discourse."¹³⁹ The speaking out of Samira Ibrahim has provided a starting point for these new discourses.

Political demands of the revolution have not been met in Egypt, women

are still marginalized in politics, and the blood in the streets since 2013 is more polarizing than uniting,¹⁴⁰ yet it is in the gender relations and norms that the revolution continues. Through their embodied agency in the revolution, women became aware of and contested gender norms in society. Thus rather than political change, the revolution in Egypt has caused social change. In a bottom-up way, women and men came to articulate gender and sexuality concerns and are able to redeploy their bodies in public space. According to Nancy: *“it is a social change, and this is even more important than the political part, this is what’s really going to build a new country.”*

This research shows that rather than focusing on how “successful” a revolution is in terms of gender equality and the position of women—either emancipatory or subjugating—focusing on the ambivalent experiences of women’s participation shows how gender norms are constructed and transformed through embodied agency during and after revolution. There is not a single answer to “the woman question”; revolution and gender transformation are never a straightforward process but necessarily a contradictory and embodied experience. They are a negotiation and bargain with existing norms, and the embodied actions of protesting women involve uncertainty, unclarity, contradictions, and loss. Gender relations and revolutionary agency are always in flux. Research on revolution and gender should emphasize the ambivalent and controversial aspects of women’s bodies to reveal what potential revolutionary embodied agency has for the transformation of gender norms and relations, and how a new space of action can emerge. Indeed, perhaps revolution itself is better conceptualized as an ambiguous, controversial, and embodied process than a straightforward one.

KATHRINE VAN DEN BOGERT is postdoctoral researcher and lecturer at the Department of Gender and Diversity and the Department of Anthropology and Development Studies at the Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands. She is interested in embodied and public forms of resistance and protest and in migrants’ local grassroots movements, especially in relation to gender, religion, popular culture, and urban youth.

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NOTES

1. All names in this paper are pseudonyms, except for the well-known protestors Sally Zahran, Samira Ibrahim, and Aliaa el-Mahdy.

2. At that time, Field Marshal Tantawi from the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) was the de facto leader of Egypt after the ousting of President Hosni Mubarak.

3. Field notes, December 9, 2011, Tahrir Square.

4. Interview, January 23, 2012, Cairo. Amir is twenty-nine years old, and a “dentist by day, revolutionist by night,” as he describes himself on his Facebook Profile. For a discussion of the battle of the camels Amir is referring to, see also Farha Ghannam, “Meanings and Feelings: Local Interpretations of the Use of Violence in the Egyptian Revolution,” *American Ethnologist* 39, no. 1 (2012): 32–36.

5. It is debatable whether the events in Egypt can be described as revolution. However, the people I spoke with in Egypt usually use this term to describe what is happening, and here I follow them. Several scholars have argued that the revolutions of the Arab Spring are not revolutions as we are used to understanding them, as a radical and sudden shift of political power and social and economic restructuring, but an open-ended process of creativity and civil liberties. See Hamid Dabashi, *The Arab Spring* (London: Zed Books, 2012); Frances S. Hasso and Zakia Salime, eds., *Freedom without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016): 3, 6.

6. Tariq Osman, *Egypt on the Brink* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 2011).

7. Samuli Schielke, “There Will Be Blood: Expecting Violence in Egypt, 2011–2013,” *ZMO Working papers* 11 (2011): 1–16.

8. Amy A. Holmes, “There Are Weeks When Decades Happen: Structure and Strategy in the Egyptian Revolution,” *Mobilization: An International Journal* 17, no. 4 (2012): 391–410; Ghannam, “Meanings and Feelings.”

9. Adel Iskandar, *Egypt in Flux* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2013), 73–76.

10. Mona Abaza, “Walls, Segregating Downtown Cairo and the Mohammed Mahmud Street Graffiti,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 30, no. 1 (2013): 122–39.

11. Manal Hamzeh and Heather Sykes, “Egyptian Football Ultras and the January 25th Revolution: Anti-Corporate, Anti-Militarist and Martyrdom Masculinities,” *Anthropology of the Middle East* 9, no. 2 (2014): 91–107.

12. Nadia Taher, “‘We are not women, we are Egyptians’: Spaces of Protest and Representation,” *City* 16, no. 3 (2012): 369–76.

13. Taher, “We are not women,” 371; Sherine Hafez, “Bodies That Protest: The Girl in the Blue Bra, Sexuality, and State Violence in Revolutionary Egypt,” *Signs* 40, no. 1 (2014): 23; Nadje Al-Ali, “Gendering the Arab Spring,” *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 5 (2012): 26–31.

14. This shocking video can be seen on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oua2yl1BMxw>.
15. Sherine Hafez, "The Revolution Shall Not Pass through Women's Bodies: Egypt, Uprising and Gender Politics," *Journal of North African Studies* 19, no. 2 (2014): 172–85.
16. Valentine M. Moghadam, "Gender and Revolutionary Transformation," *Gender and Society* 9, no. 3 (1995): 328–58; Valentine M. Moghadam, *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003); Al-Ali, "Gendering the Arab Spring."
17. Moghadam, "Gender and Revolutionary Transformation".
18. Moghadam, "Gender and Revolutionary Transformation," 354; Al-Ali, "Gendering the Arab Spring," 31.
19. Nadje Al-Ali, *Secularism, Gender and the State in the Middle East: The Egyptian Women's Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Al-Ali, "Gendering the Arab Spring"; Beth Baron, *Egypt as a Woman: Nationalism, Gender, and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).
20. Nikkie R. Keddie, *Women in the Middle East* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).
21. Baron, *Egypt as a Woman*, 107–34.
22. Baron, *Egypt as a Woman*, 107–34; Hafez, "The Revolution Shall Not Pass," 179. Fatima Sadiqi, "Introduction: The Centrality of Women's Movements in the Post-revolution Dynamics in North Africa," in *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*, ed. Fatima Sadiqi (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 2.
23. Dabashi, *The Arab Spring*, 182.
24. Dabashi, *The Arab Spring*; Hafez, "The Revolution Shall Not Pass," 183; Margot Badran, "Creative Disobedience: Feminism, Islam, and Revolution in Egypt," in *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*, ed. Fatima Sadiqi, 45–60 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).
25. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (New York: Routledge, 1984 [1966]); Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: Sage Publications, 1997); Baron, *Egypt as a Woman*.
26. Baron, *Egypt as a Woman*, 40–56.
27. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*; Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*; Dubravka Zarkov, *The Body of War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).
28. Zarkov, *The Body of War*.
29. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*.
30. Taher, "We are not women," 371; Hafez, "Bodies That Protest," 25; Hafez, "The Revolution Shall Not Pass," 174.
31. Taher, "We are not women," 372; Hafez, "Bodies That Protest," 21, 25.
32. Hafez, "Bodies That Protest," 25.
33. Anne McClintock, "'No Longer in a Future Heaven': Gender, Race, and Nation-

alism,” in *Dangerous Liaisons*, ed. Anne McClintock, A. Mufti, and E. Shohat, 89–112 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 90.

34. Baron, *Egypt as a Woman*.

35. Zarkov, *The Body of War*.

36. Zarkov, *The Body of War*.

37. Zarkov, *The Body of War*; McClintock, “No Longer in a Future Heaven.”

38. Frantz Fanon, “Algeria Unveiled,” in *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 35–67.

39. Fanon, “Algeria Unveiled,” 47.

40. Fanon, “Algeria Unveiled,” 59.

41. See also Dabashi, *The Arab Spring*.

42. Aaronnette White, “All the Men Are Fighting for Freedom, All the Women Are Mourning Their Men, but Some of Us Carried Guns: A Raced-Gendered Analysis of Fanon’s Psychological Perspectives on War,” *Signs* 32, vol. 4 (2007): 857–84; Winifred Woodhull, “Unveiling Algeria,” in *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills, 267–585 (New York: Routledge, 2003); Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: Sage Publications, 1997); McClintock, “No Longer in a Future Heaven.”

43. White, “All the Men.”

44. Woodhull, “Unveiling Algeria,” 569.

45. Moghadam, *Modernizing Women*.

46. Al-Ali, “Gendering the Arab Spring”; White, “All the Men”; Moghadam, “Gender and Revolutionary Transformation”; Moghadam, *Modernizing Women*; Margot Badran, “Gender, Islam, and the State: Kuwaiti Women in Struggle, Pre-Invasion to Postliberation,” in *Islam, Gender and Social Change*, ed. Yvonne Haddad and John Esposito, 190–208 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); William Darrow, “Women’s Place and the Place of Women in the Iranian Revolution,” in *Women, Religion and Social Change*, ed. Yvonne Haddad and Ellison Findley, 307–20 (New York: State University of New York Press, 1985).

47. McClintock, “No Longer in a Future Heaven,” 109; Al-Ali, “Gendering the Arab Spring,” 28.

48. Sherine Hafez, “No Longer a Bargain: Women, Masculinity, and the Egyptian Uprising,” *American Ethnologist* 39, vol. 1 (2012): 37–42.

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69. Athanasiou, "Precarious Intensities."
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93. Taher, “We are not women,” 373.
94. Taher, “We are not women,” 369.
95. Taher, “We are not women,” 373.
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