HOW YOUNG EGYPTIANS' INTERACTIONS WITH EGYPT'S MASTER HISTORICAL
NARRATIVE SHAPE THEIR SOCIAL IDENTITIES AND CIVIC ATTITUDES

EHAAB DYAA ABDOU

Department of Integrated Studies in Education

McGill University

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Dedication

To young Egyptians who continue to dream of, and work towards, a more equitable and more inclusive Egypt that would look to the future while critically embracing its long, multi-layered history and its rich diversity.

people's agency. He is the one who consistently reminded me that we should not neglect the plight of the many excluded and marginalized groups in Egypt, the region, and across the world. The very important perspectives of political science regarding questions of power and citizenship that he introduced me to, clearly pushed me to make my arguments more solid and more nuanced. I am indebted to my supervisors and my committee members for guiding me to learn about, and use, the approaches, tools, and language that have together enabled me to engage with the questions I have been driven to explore.

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Abstract

This dissertation elucidates how young Egyptians interact with Egypt's 'dominant' or 'master' historical narrative, as presented in their formal school curricula. Further, it seeks to understand how the omission and misrepresentation of minority perspectives and historical narratives influences post-secondary students' social identities and civic attitudes, as embodied in their current and envisioned societal roles. While I discuss post-secondary Egyptian students' interactions with general omissions and misrepresentations in the dominant historical narrative, I focus on the widely acknowledged, but understudied, omissions and misrepresentations of Coptic (Egyptian Christian) history and contributions from the formal curriculum. To approach these questions, I worked with a diverse group of recent graduates of Egyptian secondary schools (n=39). Adopting a grounded theory approach and guided by historical consciousness, social representations theories, critical discourse analysis and critical pedagogy, my data collection methods included written questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and participatory visual methods.

The data analysis reveals that many of the participants - especially because of the Egyptian January 2011 revolution and its aftermaths, and their minority community's misrepresentation in some cases - have developed strong critical approaches vis-à-vis the dominant narrative constructed and propagated by the ruling elite. However, this critical approach is still taking place within the confines of the dominant narrative, thus leaving some of its key defining elements and features intact and unchallenged. Those features include normalizing the nature of the Egyptian state as primordial, and the nature of history as cyclical.

Within these critical approaches to the dominant narrative, several important nuances emerge. First, only a few participants questioned structural issues or power dynamics and interests that the dominant historical narrative serve. Second, the dominant discourses shaping

the public sphere in Egypt - including the territorial nationalist and the religious-based discourse - clearly shaped the alternative narratives that the participants sought to construct. For instance, participants embedded in a religious-based understanding, while critical of the nationalistic discourse, reverted uncritically to a transcendental – and in some cases a mythical historical narrative – as historical fact. The study shows that especially those exposed to academic history courses and engaged in extracurricular history-related initiatives exhibited a more evolved ability to embrace multiple perspectives in their approaches to critiquing and deconstructing the dominant narrative.

In terms of the participants' civic attitudes, there is a general shift towards economic empowerment, educational, and awareness building activities clearly minimizing contact or possible support to the ruling elite. As a generally excluded and misunderstood minority, several of the Coptic participants seemed to attempt to channel their general sense of exclusion and being misunderstood towards establishing and supporting community initiatives that would foster Muslim-Christian interfaith relations and respect.

Sommaire

Cette thèse élucide la manière dont les jeunes Égyptiens interagissent avec le récit historique « dominant » ou « maître » de l'Égypte, présenté dans leurs programmes scolaires officiels. En outre, il cherche à comprendre en quoi l'omission et la fausse représentation des points de vue des minorités et des récits historiques influent sur les identités sociales et les attitudes civiques des étudiants de niveau postsecondaire, telles qu'énoncées dans leurs rôles sociaux actuels et envisagés. Bien que je discute des interactions des étudiants égyptiens du postsecondaire avec les omissions générales et les fausses déclarations dans le récit historique dominant, je me concentre sur les omissions et les représentations largement reconnues, mais sous-étudiées, de l'histoire copte (chrétienne égyptienne) et du programme officiel. Pour aborder ces questions, j'ai travaillé avec un groupe de diplômés récents d'écoles secondaires égyptiennes, d'une grande diversité (n = 39). Adoptant une approche théorique ancrée et guidée par la conscience historique (*Historical Consciousness*), les théories de représentations sociales (*Social Representations*), l'analyse critique du discours (*Critical Discourse Analysis*) et la pédagogie critique (*Critical Pedagogy*), mes méthodes de collecte de données comprenaient des questionnaires écrits, des entretiens semi-structurés et des méthodes visuelles participatives.

L'analyse des données révèle que de nombreux participants - en particulier à cause de la révolution égyptienne de janvier 2011 et de ses conséquences, ainsi que dans certains cas des déclarations erronées de leur communauté minoritaire - ont développé des approches critiques fortes à l'égard du récit dominant construit et propagé par les élites au pouvoir. Cependant, cette approche critique continue à se dérouler dans les limites du récit dominant, laissant ainsi certains des éléments et caractéristiques essentiels du récit dominant intacts et non contestés. Ces caractéristiques incluent la normalisation de la nature primordiale de l'État égyptien ainsi que la nature cyclique de l'histoire.

Au sein de ces approches critiques du récit dominant, plusieurs nuances importantes se dégagent. Premièrement, seuls quelques participants ont mis en doute des problèmes structurels ou des dynamiques de pouvoir et d'intérêts qui le récit historique dominant sert. Deuxièmement, les discours dominants qui façonnent la sphère publique en Égypte - y compris le discours nationaliste territorial et le discours fondé sur la religion - ont clairement façonné les récits alternatifs que les participants ont cherché à construire. Par exemple, les participants ancrés dans une compréhension religieuse, tout en critiquant le discours nationaliste, sont revenus sans discernement à un récit transcendantal - et dans certains cas à un récit historique mythique - en tant que fait historique. L'étude montre que les personnes exposées à des cours d'histoire universitaire et engagées dans des initiatives parascolaires liées à l'histoire ont montré une capacité plus développée à adopter de perspectives multiples dans leurs approches de la critique et de la déconstruction du récit dominant.

En ce qui concerne les attitudes civiques des participants, on assiste à un changement général vers des activités d'autonomisation économique, d'éducation et de sensibilisation minimisant clairement le contact ou le soutien possible à l'élite dirigeante. En tant que minorité généralement exclue et incompris, plusieurs participants coptes semblaient tenter de canaliser leur sentiment général d'exclusion et d'incompréhension vers l'établissement et le soutien d'initiatives communautaires qui favoriseraient les relations et le respect interreligieux entre chrétiens et musulmans.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Several modern societies are clearly polarized and divided - albeit to varying extents - especially across generational divides or ideological divides. As scholars have revealed in many contexts, formal education feeds into and reproduces those divisions and shapes those civic attitudes. Sociocultural influences, including lived experiences and interactions outside of school, also have been found to have strong influences. This has been shown in several Western contexts, where studies have attempted to elucidate the influence of various extracurricular sites in contexts such as in the United States (e.g., Epstein, 2007), Quebec (Létourneau, 2007; Létourneau & Moisan, 2004), and British Columbia (Seixas & Clark, 2004), and in Ireland (Barton & McCully, 2005).

Often, formal curriculum offers notions and understandings of the nation and its history that collide with competing versions offered by other social sites. These visions – whether the curricular or extracurricular - mobilize, construct, and deconstruct historical narratives to legitimize their stance and rally others around their visions and causes. The dominant ruling elite constructs, maintains, and disseminates a master narrative that serves its interests and legitimizes its rule and ideological stances. These master or dominant narratives are often embedded in nationalist discourses that legitimize nationalist rule through essentializing the concept of 'nation-states', and presenting the nation, its borders, and its national identity as primordial (e.g., Carretero & Van Alphen, 2014; Carretero, 2017; Fahmy, 1997).[1] Similarly, legitimizing particular forms of rule and ideological stances, such as a theocratic rule, would necessitate that

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[1] Please note that throughout the study, I use the terms 'master narrative' and 'dominant narrative' interchangeably. They both refer to the historical narratives which are constructed, maintained, and propagated by the dominant ruling elite, and which serve its interests.

ruling elites mobilize a religious-based historical narrative, such as in the case of Iran, where its Islamized curricula – like those in similar contexts - are characterized by an "inadequate sensitivity to cultural and ethnic diversity" which underplays the significance of the country's ancient pre-Islamic past (Mehrmohammadi, 2014, pp. 230-231).

In other cases, where supposedly secular ruling regimes need to negotiate the tides of growing religiosity in society or to appease and accommodate oppositional religious-based ideological groups, the dominant narrative maintains a nationalistic orientation, while strategically making room for religious-based narratives and interpretations of the nation and its history. Thus, as is clear in the cases of Egypt (Botros, 2012) and Pakistan (Rosser, 2006), the outcome becomes a nationalist narrative where rulers backed by their military establishment and Western powers mobilize a nationalist discourse. While they do that, they also make sure to appease an exclusionary Islamist religious-based discourse by accommodating a religious-based orientation that highlights the majority religion at the expense of the particularities and cultural specificities of religious and ethnic minorities. Clearly, those dominant historical narratives – embedded in and legitimized by these dominant discourses – are contested by counter-narratives produced by opposing groups, including those ethnic minority groups that are either omitted or misrepresented.

So, how do post-secondary students negotiate those competing - and often diametrically opposed - visions of the nation that they are exposed to in their formal curriculum and other social sites? And, are some of them able to break out of some of those tensions and binaries that confine them within a dominant historical narrative that is informed by nationalistic and religious-based tendencies? Some studies have grappled with the question of how omitted minorities negotiate their omission and misrepresentation in the dominant narrative, such as in the case of the English-speaking minority in Quebec (e.g., Zanazanian, 2008, 2010, 2015a), immigrant students in the UK (Harris & Reynolds, 2014; Wilkinson, 2014), and African-

American students in the US (Epstein, 2000). However, apart from those efforts, there is very little done on that question related to either majority or minority students' interaction with the dominant historical narrative, especially in non-Western contexts. Given the paucity of research especially on questions of how "students of given backgrounds learn history both in and out of school" (Barton, 2008, p. 250), I hope that my study on Egypt will make a meaningful contribution to the literature on the generally understudied area of how Egyptians interact with the country's master historical narrative, and how such interaction might shape their subjectivities and civic attitudes. This study aims help to elucidate such interactions and, further, to explore the understudied differences that might exist among students based on their religious backgrounds.

In addition to the above questions, in the case of Egypt, apart from a very few recent studies, there is very little understanding of how students of the various marginalized ethnic and religious minorities negotiate their omission and misrepresentation (for exceptions see Ha, 2016), especially when arguably there is an alternative narrative offered, such as in the case of Coptic students and the presence of the Coptic Church's narrative enacted through the Sunday School curriculum and various other activities (e.g., El-Khawaga, 1998). This leads me to ask: does the Egyptian educational establishment, with its formal curricular content and teachers' enactment of the curriculum in classrooms, reproduce the marginalization of Copts? Or does it somehow offer an alternative understanding of the place of Copts in society? More importantly, how does that shape Muslim and Coptic students' social identities and civic attitudes? These questions, which remain largely understudied, are the focus of this study.

Research Question Overview and Rationale

In this study, I am interested to examine how post-secondary students in non-Western contexts, particularly in the case of Egypt, engage with their nation's master historical narrative.

Further, I seek to understand the implications that this interaction has on their social identities and civic attitudes towards the nation, and towards questions of diversity and difference. Thus, the overarching research question that guides my research is: *How do young Egyptians' interactions with the country's history inform and influence their social identities and civic attitudes?* Two sub-questions inform the research agenda: (a) How do young Egyptian Muslims and Christians interact with Egypt's master historical narrative, especially the narrative presented in the official curriculum, including its omissions and misrepresentations? and, (b) How do young Egyptians' interactions with that master narrative and competing narratives - such as the Coptic Orthodox Church's Sunday School curriculum - shape their social identities and civic attitudes? By 'interaction' here, I refer to the various strategies that young Egyptians might revert to and adopt in interpreting and reacting to the country's master historical narrative, such as whether they might passively internalize or alternatively resist and challenge it. As will be outlined in more detail later on in this chapter and in Chapters 4 and 5, to explore these questions, I am guided by a Grounded Theory approach that is informed by Critical Theory – specifically, its manifestations in Critical Pedagogy and Critical Discourse Analysis - as well as Social Representations and Historical Consciousness theories.

Defining Social Identity and Civic Attitudes

In defining social identity and subjectivity, I draw on social representation theorists' Wagner and Hayes (2005) definition which conceives of a person's social identity as being defined by an "individual's place and embedding in its social group" (p. 196). Further, I follow Gee's (2011) lead in using the terms 'social identity' and 'subjectivity' interchangeably throughout this dissertation, since, as he argues convincingly, both terms, "socially situated identity" and "subjectivity" emphasize and capture the fluidity as well as "the multiple identities we take on in different practices and contexts" (p. 41). Thus, social identity could be defined as a fluid construct that would attempt to help us capture how individuals understand and enact their

place in society and the world, and how that understanding might shape their interactions within their social groups as well as with others in society at large. In contrast to 'social identity' would be what Gee (2011) proposes to call "core identity" signifying more "fixed" aspects of a sense of self, which "underlies contextually shifting multiple identities" (p. 41).[2]

Thus, in my understanding of social identities and subjectivities, I am also cognizant of and attempt to avoid essentializations that perceive identities as rigidly defined, alternatively seeing them as constantly evolving and changing. As curriculum theorists remind us, identity has lost its "auratic status" where notions of defining racial identity through "origins", "ancestry", "language", or "cultural unity" are being challenged in many spaces "by the immense processes of hybridity, disjuncture, and renarration" and thus are being negotiated, shaped and reshaped within numerous spaces, including new technologies and social media (McCarthy, Bulut, & Patel, 2014, p. 39).

In attempting to explore civic attitudes I mainly investigate individuals' understandings of their roles in society in terms of their current and envisioned volunteering and engagement in their immediate communities or the wider public sphere. Naturally, given that civic attitudes and values are "rooted in social relations" (Flanagan, 2004, p. 724), this exploration of civic attitudes entails analyzing individuals' understandings of and relationships with the religious 'other', wherever that emerges in the discussion with my participants. Thus, I use the term 'civic attitudes' here to capture the participants' understandings of their role in society as well as their attitudes vis-à-vis cultural diversity and the 'other' within Egyptian society.

To offer a fuller analysis of interactions with history, it would be important to also analyze how individuals conceive of the nature of history itself. Scholars have offered important contributions into theorizing how cultural differences might influence how individuals interact

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[2] As noted earlier, following Gee's lead, I use the terms 'social identity' and 'subjectivity' interchangeably throughout this dissertation.

with the past and how they understand the nature of history. They have theorized that an understanding of the nature of history is influenced by culture, including religious traditions and ways of knowing the world (or epistemologies). For instance, some cultures and traditions might understand the nature of history as linear (for instance, the Western Judeo-Christian tradition) as opposed to circular or cyclical, as some scholars have argued is the case with some non-Western contexts and their conception of time (Burke, 2002), including Indigenous peoples living in Western contexts, such as Canada (Marker, 2011; Seixas, 2012). Thus, in this study, I also attempt to gain insight into how post-secondary Egyptian students perceive the nature of history.

Defining Young Egyptians

In this study I am mainly interested in studying the experiences and perspectives of young people. In defining youth, I am guided by the United Nations' definition – widely used in African and Arab States - which refers to youths as individuals between 15 and 35 years of age (UNESCO, 2018). As will be further detailed in Chapter 5, due to serious security concerns and restrictions imposed by authorities on conducting research in Egypt - including on recruiting students currently enrolled in secondary schools - I focused on recruiting post-secondary (i.e., university) students and recent university graduates. Focusing on young university students, who have graduated recently from Egyptian secondary schools, brought several advantages from the standpoint of this study. For instance, the participants' recent graduation from school ensured that their impressions of their schooling experiences were still generally fresh and vivid. Another advantage was that, having recently graduated from their secondary schools, several of them were able to develop the needed distance to critically reflect on their schooling experiences. To summarize, my research seeks to understand how young Egyptians engage with and understand history, and how such interactions might influence their social identities and civic attitudes. More specifically, I am seeking to elucidate how the apparent omission or misrepresentation of the Coptic era in curricula might shape post-secondary students' interactions with omissions and

misrepresentations more generally, and how that might shape their social identities and civic attitudes.

Why This Study?

Given that students' interactions with history and the relationship between that and their social identities and civic attitudes has been explored in a few contexts, I believe it is pertinent to also explore such a question in a non-Western context, such as that of Egypt. Additionally, focusing on the question of Copts, as a non-Muslim religious minority, is timely for Egypt and the whole Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The region is gradually – and alarmingly - becoming more monolithic, losing much of its defining and historical religious and ethnic diversity. Exclusionary dominant discourses and their historical narratives that are not reflective of the diversity of many of the region's historical and contemporary demographic make-ups are translating into an actual gradual loss of and decrease in the numbers of religious and ethnic minorities. Such decrease has been the result of general societal strife and civil conflicts or violence and mass killings specifically targeted against some non-Muslim minorities, including, but not limited to, the ancient indigenous Christian minority across various parts of the region (Gardner, 2017; Wright, 2017), and the ancient indigenous Yazidi religious minority in Iraq (Arraf, 2018; Polglase, 2018). Such violence has led to mass exoduses resulting in internal displacements within the same country, such as in the case of Copts in Egypt (EIPR, 2010, 2017), or immigration mostly to Western countries. Human rights groups such as the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) continue to problematize how internally displaced groups, such as the tens of displaced Coptic school students who were recently displaced along with their families from the conflict-ridden Egyptian region of Northern Sinai, were not duly compensated or adequately placed in schools in other parts of the country (EIPR, 2017).

Through this study I aim to fulfill several objectives. First, I aim to contribute to an understanding of how education shapes young Egyptians' sense of identity and belonging.

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Second, I aim to contribute to a better understanding of how young Egyptians interact with the country's history, while shedding light on how such interaction might vary based on ethnic or religious identities, especially as relates to Copts, who constitute the country's and the region's largest non-Muslim minority. Such analysis seeks to engage with and unpack the understudied questions of the complex relationship of docility and resistance, as well as the agency and passivity of individuals and groups vis-à-vis the master historical narrative. Third, I sincerely hope that – building on current efforts led by the Egyptian state that attempt to render curricula and the educational system more inclusive - the study would offer Egyptian policy makers, curriculum developers, as well as those engaged in history-related extracurricular efforts some helpful insights into areas of curriculum where there are successes that could be built upon and shortcomings that would need to be addressed. Finally, I am hoping that studying the Egyptian context might continue to inspire others across the region grappling with similar questions and dynamics, such as scholars studying the place of traditionally marginalized languages and histories in educational curricula in contexts such as that of Morocco (e.g., Buckner, 2006; Redouane, 1998).

The Egyptian Context

In addition to being the region's most populous country (one in every four Arabic language speakers in the world is Egyptian) and the third most populous country in Africa, the centrality and importance of Egypt's education in the regional context has been discussed by several scholars (e.g., Cochran, 1986). Thus, a study of Egypt might help elucidate similar dynamics within other contexts, especially authoritarian ones that offer little space for participation and civic engagement. In the case of Egypt impediments include serious security, legal, and regulatory restrictions on political participation, as well as on engaging in non-political civil society activities (e.g., Abdel Rahman, 2004; Gohar, 2008; Onodera, 2015; The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, 2016).

Egyptian education.

In terms of the number of students enrolled, the Egyptian public educational system is the largest in the whole MENA region (Farag, 2012, p. 81). Of the more than 17 million students enrolled in around forty thousand schools in Egypt, approximately 80 per cent study in state-run public schools that "teach the national curriculum devised by the Ministry of Education" (Farag, 2012, p. 81). While approximately 7% of Egyptian students attend private schools - characterized by high fees and elitist education - approximately 10% attend the Islamic education Al-Azhar system which is a semi-autonomous parallel system that runs its own schools starting from the elementary level through to the end of secondary education. Additionally, private Muslim schools that are based on Islamic values - and which by extension only cater to Muslim students - have also emerged in the 1990s under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (MOE) (Herrera, 2006; Starrett, 1998). No equivalent of those exclusively Muslim schools exists for any other religious community in Egypt.[3]

The Copts: General marginalization and religious-based violence.

'Copts' is the term used to refer to Egyptian Christians.[4] As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, Copts have generally been marginalized in the Egyptian public sphere. The exact percentage that the Copts constitute of Egypt's total population has been contested; some Coptic Church figures reach 20%, while the official Egyptian government figures have remained at around 6% (e.g. Fargues, 1998; Tadros, 2013). What is uncontested is that the Copts constitute the largest Christian minority across the predominantly Muslim Southwest Asia and North Africa geographical region (a.k.a. the 'Middle East'), and the largest 'non-Muslim' minority across the

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[3] Missionary schools set up by Catholic and Protestant missionaries, discussed in further detail in Chapters 2 and 3, have traditionally been open to and attended by students of all religious backgrounds.

[4] For practical reasons, I use the words 'Coptic' or 'Copt' to refer to 'Egyptian Christian'. However, I am in full agreement with historians and linguists who have reminded us that the word 'Coptic' is synonymous to 'Egyptian'. Thus, when classifying Egyptians by religion, I believe it would be more accurate and appropriate to refer to Coptic Christians and Coptic Muslims, etc. This argument is said to have first been put forward by renowned intellectual Ahmed Lufti al-Sayyid in the early twentieth century (e.g. Gershoni & Jankowski, 1986; Tadros, 2013).

whole region (Van Doorn-Harder, 2005, p. 28).[5] Marginalization and religious-based violence against Copts have generally been responded to with denial by the several successive regimes, including Mubarak's regime (EIPR, 2010, 2017; Khorshid, 2014; Tadros, 2013; Zuhur, 2014).

Despite their varying magnitude and intensity over the past approximately 1,400 years, Copts have faced numerous incidents of historical violence, forced conversions, and persecution under various Arab Muslim rulers since the Arab conquest of Egypt in 641 CE (e.g., Abdul-Jalil, 2003; El-Masry, 1996; Tadros, 2013). This has taken various forms of severity, including forced mass conversions to Islam during the Abbasid era, rulers' orders to demolish churches, or distinctive clothing imposed on Copts by some extremist Fatimid era rulers (Tadros, 2013). In more modern times, exclusion and discrimination continue to manifest in unequal access to top official positions in the government, the political system, as well as the military and police. It also includes clear restrictions on the right to build or repair churches (Tadros, 2013; Zuhur, 2014). It has also taken the form of societal violence and forced displacement against Copts, which has intensified especially since the 1980s.

The violence continues until today with several recent attacks, including those carried out by terrorist groups such as the self-styled 'Islamic State', on Coptic churches which had killed dozens of worshipers, including recent attacks on Coptic churches in Alexandria and Tanta during Palm Sunday service (Samaan & Walsh, 2017) and the killing of Coptic worshippers on their way to perform pilgrimages in ancient Coptic desert monasteries (Magdy & Hendawi, 2018). However, as outlined in more detail in Chapter 3, there have been some recent improvements especially on the state level, including President El-Sisi's widely welcomed initiatives towards the Coptic community, such as helping construct Africa's and the Middle

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[5] Whenever possible, I attempt to avoid using the term 'Middle East' because of the colonial legacy it represents and the images it conjures of a modern 'Middle East' and its borders that were especially consolidated in the early 1900s to continue to serve the interests of imperial European powers (e.g., Owen, 1992/2004).

East's largest Cathedral, and his own visits and speeches at Coptic Orthodox Christmas Mass the past few years (Aljazeera, 2015; Egypt Independent, 2017; El-Shamy, 2018; Kingsley, 2015).

A growing interest in history (or nostalgia) among Egyptians.
Some general observations offer a sense of a growing interest in the past and in history among Egyptians. For instance, some of the best-selling books over the past few years in Egypt have been historical fiction books, including the young Egyptian novelist Ahmed Mourad's *Ard Al-Ilah* (the Land of the Lord) (2015) and his novel '1919' (2014). The former offers an alternative narrative to the Biblical Exodus narrative, while the latter focuses on Egyptian social history around the historically significant year of 1919. Similarly, Youssef Zeydan's (2011) novel *Azazeel*, offering an alternative fictional narrative to the history of early Christianity in Egypt, continues to be among the bestselling historical fiction novels since it first came out in 2008. In addition, nonfictional history books such as modern Egyptian historian Khaled Fahmy's seminal *Koll Rijal Al-Basha* (All the Pasha's Men), offering a counter-narrative about Mehmed Ali's rule, continues to be among the bestselling historical nonfiction books since its Arabic translation was released in 2001 (Assem, 2016; Quessy, 2016).

Similarly, a quick look at popular TV series offers a glimpse into that growing interest, especially in the country's modern history. A review of social media websites and YouTube videos also attest to that growing sense of nostalgia, especially among a growing segment of Egyptians whether for particular eras such as the 1980s (e.g., Darwish, 2017), or earlier and more glorious eras. Beyond these various social sites, initiatives have been established to offer alternative approaches to learning history. For instance, the Cairo Institute for Liberal Arts (CILAS) – which graduated its first cohort in 2013 - offers various types of courses, mostly inspired by critical and postmodernist approaches to the humanities and social sciences. Similarly, *Ehki Ya Tarikh* (Narrate to Us, O History!) workshop series, first offered in 2010, encourage alternative narrations of history through capturing oral histories of various segments

of Egyptians. The two initiatives also attempt to impart knowledge of historical research tools and their applications (Abdelrahman & Yehia, 2019).

Since 2011 new initiatives emerged, such as *Sheikh Al-Ammoud* (The Sheikh of the Pillar), which focuses on teaching Islamic history since the early days of Prophet Muhammad until modern day society, and the *Mobtadaa* initiative helping secondary school students to critically deconstruct the humanities and social sciences (Abdelrahman & Yehia, 2019). All those initiatives have successfully attracted secondary school students, post-secondary university students, and recent university graduates. As pointed out earlier, similar to other civil society initiatives, these efforts would continue to face challenges in sustaining themselves or in expanding their scope because of the restrictive legal and regulatory framework governing civil society in Egypt. Despite the need for further analysis, these observations arguably begin to offer a sense of an emerging and strengthened interest in the past, especially among young Egyptians.

Positioning Myself

I am personally strongly committed to social justice. My social justice commitment is informed by constructivism, which Lincoln and Guba (2005) eloquently explain, "adopts a relativist ontology … a transactional epistemology, and a hermeneutic methodology… oriented to the production of reconstructed understandings of the social world" (p. 184). With this social justice agenda and constructivist paradigm as a foundation, I am guided by socio-cultural approaches to studying history education, which drives me to interrogate how "the processes of production and consumption of historical narratives" influence and shape individuals' social identities and subjectivities (Bermúdez, 2012, p. 204). Such approaches pay particular attention to the importance of the interactions that individuals have with their surroundings and different social sites, and the influence those sites have on shaping their subjectivities (see e.g., Carretero et al., 2012; Wertsch, 1998, 2000). Barton and McCully (2005) remind us that constructivist and socio-cultural approaches, together, offer important supplementary perspectives on historical

understanding. The constructivist approach contends that students are not passive recipients but engage in a process of active construction in an ongoing attempt to make sense of the world, while socio-cultural approaches affirm that the information that students are exposed to as historically and socially constructed.

As will be outlined in more detail in Chapter 4, in this study I am more interested in exploring social factors that shape individuals' "narrative meaning making and negotiation of identities" or what could be referred to as a "discursive-rhetorical model" (Bermúdez, 2012, p. 217). Consequently, instead of focusing on analyzing the specifics of the developmental cognitive historical thinking abilities of individuals, the study largely focuses on how historical understanding is fostered and shaped through the various socio-cultural factors.

Factors Shaping My Awareness and Particular Interest in Coptic Exclusion in Education

As discussed above, I am interested in understanding how education shapes students' sense of inclusion and belonging, and how that might influence their civic attitudes, as embodied in their interactions with other groups and in their civic engagement choices. Within that I am more specifically interested in the question of Coptic omission or misrepresentation, and thus I believe it is important to briefly outline some of the factors shaping that specific interest in Coptic marginalization. Born in the early 1970s, I grew up in Egypt in the 1980s and 1990s. I remember growing up sensing an increased sense of division between Egyptian Muslims and Christians (Copts).

For instance, as many Egyptian boys did, I spent a large part of the summer vacation playing soccer either in a sporting club or sometimes with my neighbors on the street. We were mainly three neighbors around the same age: Tarek, Mark, and myself.[6] Both Tarek and I were

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[6] My childhood friend and neighbor Mark's parents who were born in the later 1940s and early 1950s had typical religiously neutral Egyptian and Arabic names. In contrast, Mark and his brother Peter - born in the late 1970s – were given Western Christian names, the Egyptian Christian equivalent of which would have been: Morqos (Mark) and Girgis (George). Similarly, all the seven Coptic participants in this study had distinctively Christian-sounding

Muslim, while Mark was Coptic Orthodox. Tarek's parents started working in Saudi Arabia in the early 1980s; he and his three siblings started their schooling there. They would only visit Egypt during their summer vacations. I remember witnessing a growing rift between Tarek and Mark. In the public school that Tarek was attending in Saudi Arabia, he was being educated in an exclusively Muslim school under a heavily Islamic curriculum, including several subject matters focused on religion. For example, as he explained to us, instead of having religious studies as one subject matter as was the case in Egyptian schools, in his Saudi Arabian school, religious studies were divided into several standalone specialized religion-related subject matters, such as Sharia Law, often with their own teachers and separate assessments.

Similarly, I witnessed how that increasing Islamization of outlooks and attitudes was starting to take root in Egypt. My younger cousin Tamer who would visit us, and who used to tremendously enjoy the company of Mark and his younger brother George, started to distance himself from them. In the mid 1980s, Tamer had been moved by his parents from his secular private school to an exclusively Islamic private school. Based on his schooling, his views and attitudes towards Mark and George, and Copts in general, started shifting. For instance, when we would get thirsty after playing football, he would refuse to drink water in Mark's parents' apartment, which was the closest and most convenient one to go to. He would cite Islamic sayings and interpretations he had heard in his school about how Muslims should not share food or drink with non-Muslims.

So, I grew up experiencing this growing divide and noticing other manifestations of the growing Islamization of society, such as the increasing number of veiled women on the streets of Cairo and among family members, especially around the late 1990s and early 2000s. Parallel to

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names: either Coptic Christian names (e.g., prominent ancient martyrs or Popes) or Western Christian sounding names historically uncommon in Egypt.

these phenomena, I grew up reading about and listening to a counter-narrative that was nostalgic of a more open, inclusive, and tolerant Egypt. For instance, my late grandfather always remarked on how many of his closest friends were Coptic; he was also extremely proud to have personally known the late Coptic Orthodox Pope Cyril V (Pope Kyrollos). My grandfather also had a great influence on shaping my awareness of general Coptic omission and marginalization from the public sphere. We often watched the main news program at 9pm on Channel 1 of the Egyptian state TV together.[7] As the names of the TV news crew scrolled up the screen, my grandfather would remark on how the names were all – or at least predominantly - Muslim. 'Not one single Coptic-sounding name?' he would exclaim. All this, in addition to hearing about the several terrorist attacks that targeted Copts across the country in the 1990s, clearly contributed to my heightened sense of the general exclusion and misrepresentation of Copts in society, and helped me become more sensitive to the plight of Copts vis-à-vis a growing and strengthening exclusionary Islamized public discourse.

Later after my graduation from university when I worked for a little more than a year in a multinational corporation in Cairo in the late 1990s, I faced a new reality as I soon discovered that a disproportionately large number of employees in this company were Egyptian Christians, from Coptic Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic denominations. With time and when some confided in me, they explained that given that they were discriminated against in finding jobs

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[7] Well into the late 1990s, the vast majority of Egyptians were only exposed to 2 state-run TV channels. By the early 1990s, a third state-run TV channel and a few provincial channels were launched. CNN's - the American news channel - broadcasting in Egypt and the region, which started with the first Gulf War, marked a break of that 'monopoly.' Subsequently, by the early 2000s, there was an increased exposure and access to satellite dishes and a growing number of state and privately owned regional and Egyptian satellite channels by the mid 2000s. Thus, Egyptians of my generation and earlier generations, including intellectuals and novelists, express their sense of a more unified culture where all Egyptians watched the same TV programs, movies, and listened to the same radio programs. They, thus, express nostalgia for that sense of a collective culture and belonging of the 1980s and early 1990s (e.g., Darwish, 2017). Clearly, that reality is very different from today's plethora of TV channels, social media outlets, and sources of information and entertainment, where individuals have a wide variety of choices and access to a multiplicity of sources.

they were clearly qualified for with the public sector, the obvious place to find a job was either local private sector companies or multinational corporations, especially companies owned by Copts or those managed by tolerant Muslims who would generally not take issue with employing a Christian. Growing up with Mark and making friends at work also exposed me to how Copts reacted to such discrimination and omission by coming closer together and seeking refuge in what an outsider might see as a parallel society, including a full social life built around church, working closely together, and recruiting and supporting each other whenever they can. To offer a more balanced and nuanced image as well of how respect for diversity and tolerance remain characteristic across various segments of Egyptians, it is impotant to mention that my childhood friend and neighbor Mark tells me that, unlike many of his Coptic friends and relatives, he has personally never felt excluded or discriminated against whether in his public education or in his employment. He currently works for a Cairo-based information technology company where he has received several promotions, and currently leads one of the largest departments in this predominantly Muslim company.

Given my passion and drive to promote a better appreciation of Egypt's long and rich history, as well as interfaith understanding and respect between Muslims and Christians, in the mid 2000s, along with several other Egyptian musicians from various ethnic and religious backgrounds, I helped co-found the 'Ana Masry' (I am Egyptian) musical ensemble. The ensemble aims to create awareness among Egyptians about the country's rich ethnic and religious diversity through music. The experience of co-founding and leading this ensemble for several years since 2006 has helped expose me to the thirst and keen interest among many Egyptians to learn more about their country's history and its rich diversity. Simultaneously, the experience helped me see how Egyptians seemed to generally know little about the country's history and especially about the historical struggles, ancient and modern contributions, and lived realities of religious and ethnic minorities. Thus, these experiences intrigued me to continue to

pursue investigating how Egyptians interact with the country's history and how that interaction might shape their identities. Further, and as outlined above, I became more specifically interested to further investigate the question of the marginalization of Coptic history, and how both Egyptian Muslims and Copts interact with that reality.

Defining my approach and articulating my research questions.

I joined the doctoral program in McGill University in 2013 with a relatively clear - yet quite general - vision of what I wanted to study (i.e., how Egyptians approach their history and how that influences their sense of citizenship and belonging, with a specific interest in the question of the generally omitted Coptic history). I also came to the doctoral program with several years of active involvement in the civil society spaces in Egypt and North America- mainly focused on encouraging the active civic engagement of youth - and a master's degree from the University of Pittsburgh with a focus on civil society organizations. This background clearly informed my interest to further explore how interactions with the country's history might influence young people's civic engagement choices. However, I also came to the program with many uncertainties and questions, including what theoretical approaches and methodologies to adopt. Those were only elucidated, developed, and sharpened through multiple discussions with my co-supervisors and committee members.

Through our multiple discussions, serving as a Research Assistant and co-teaching with my doctoral co-supervisor, Paul Zanazanian - who has been working since the early 2000s on studying questions related to the historical consciousness and civic attitudes of the English-speaking minority in Quebec – introduced me to Historical Consciousness as a theoretical framework. Our multiple conversations and his scholarship have clearly inspired me to further refine my research questions and approach. These interactions also helped inform my interest in Historical Consciousness and Social Representations as theoretical frameworks, within which I was particularly intrigued by his 'repertory of ideal-type tendencies of historical consciousness'.

These conversations also helped me realize and further articulate my strong inclination towards Critical Theory. My coursework at McGill had initially exposed me to those theories, and especially some of their applications in educational research, namely through Critical Pedagogy and Critical Discourse Analysis. Some of my earliest academic publications during my study at McGill have also helped me to more deeply engage with these critical approaches to education. Given this initial inclination, Paul Zanazanian's engagement with, and knowledge of, the field have helped me realize that a focus on these critical approaches would help render my contribution to the field and to theorizing Historical Consciousness more meaningful and unique, since only a few scholars engage with those frameworks concurrently.

General Approaches Framing the Study

My study has its roots in a number of separate, yet overlapping, theoretical perspectives. As highlighted in Figure 1.1 below, these perspectives include the broad area of critical theory and its various manifestations and branches, including Critical Pedagogy and Critical Discourse Analysis, as well as theoretical perspectives that are more specific to the teaching of history, namely: Social Representations and Historical Consciousness. Given the strong influence that critical theory and its various theoretical manifestations have on this study, I hereby outline these key approaches that guide the research and further inform my positionality. Then in Chapter 4, I discuss the other theoretical frameworks of schematic narrative templates, social representations and historical consciousness at length.

Figure 1.1: Summary of conceptual framework guiding the study
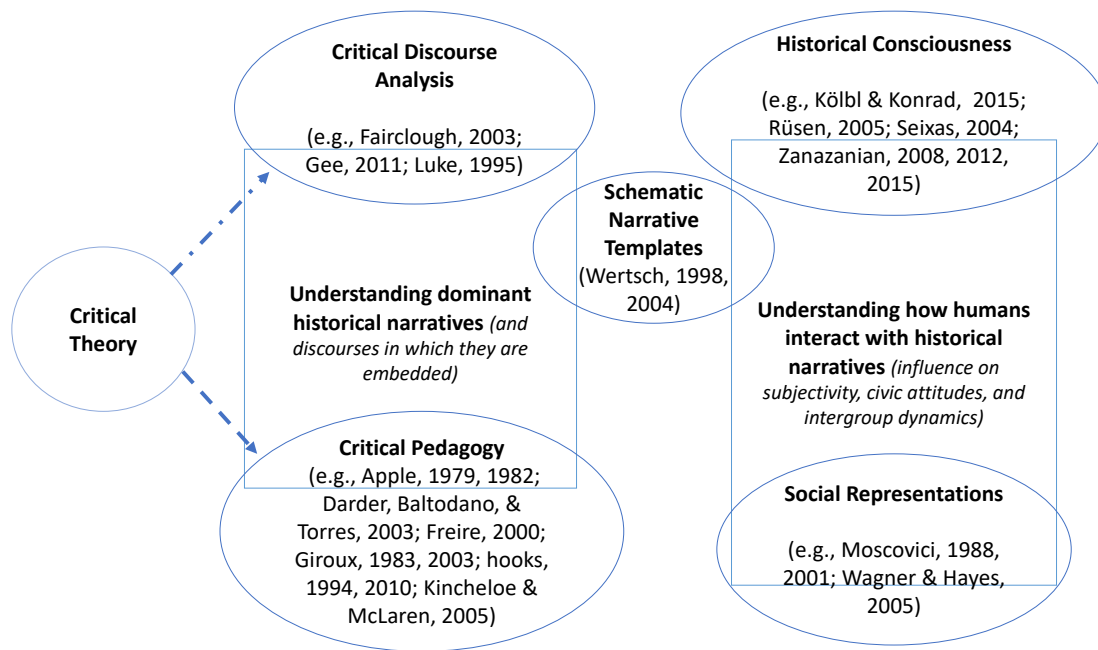
Critical Pedagogy

With the ultimate goal of empowering and emancipating subordinated groups in society, and establishing a more egalitarian democracy, critical pedagogy works to unmask and problematize power dynamics that serve the interests of dominant and privileged groups at the expense of marginalized groups in society and in schools (Apple, 1979, 1982; Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003; Eisner, 1992; Giroux, 1983, 2003; hooks, 1994, 2010). American scholar and cultural critic Henry Giroux is widely credited with coining the term 'critical pedagogy' in 1983, and for bridging gaps between critical pedagogy and other traditions that similarly see schooling as a space for promoting a "transformative social action in the interest of oppressed communities" (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003, p. 3). Historically, the approach evolved to respond to power asymmetries in society and to challenge "the impact of capitalism and gendered, racialized relations upon the lives of students from historically disenfranchised populations" (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003, p. 2).

Critical Pedagogy's epistemological orientation is strongly influenced and inspired by Critical Theory, which in turn traces its origins back to the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research (or the 'Frankfurt School'), founded in Europe in the 1920s. Established by critical theorists strongly influenced by Marxism, the Frankfurt School is strongly committed to connecting theory and practice to combat different forms of domination (Cherryholmes, 1991; Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003; Giroux, 2003).

As Herrera and Torres (2006) have pointed out in their seminal work on schooling in the MENA region, critical theories offer a suitable framework to approach schools and curriculum in Arabic-speaking countries. They contend that several scholars studying education in the region have embraced "Critical Social Theory" along with "Critical Pedagogy", which can be considered its "pedagogical counterpart", for the potential these approaches carry in helping explore and unmask "issues relating to social justice, participation, and democracy" as well as problematizing schools as social sites which largely reflect and reproduce "injustice, passivity, and authoritarianism" (p. 3). They argue that schools in Arabic-speaking countries, like Egypt, have generally been "complicit in the reproduction of the despotic personality", and in reinforcing "the monopoly of the decision-making processes and the negation of difference and alternate points of reference" (p. 12). Thus, critical pedagogy approaches offer productive means that might help elucidate some of these dynamics and to offer analytical insights whether in the Egyptian context or similar ones. Within that vision of society and education, there are some elements that define and distinguish Critical Pedagogy's approaches, which I elaborate on below.

Centrality of students' agency and resistance.

Critical pedagogy places the ability of individuals to problematize constructions of the past—and especially the dominant narrative—as central to its vision for empowering and emancipating marginalized students and teachers especially. Given that commitment, leading critical pedagogy theorists have critiqued the lack of focus on student agency in other

frameworks, such as French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's highly influential cultural production theory. Giroux (1983) critiques Bourdieu for his approach on two bases: he finds his structural approach too mechanistic, not accounting for the potential of human agency that could be fulfilled through reflexivity or critical self-consciousness; he also criticizes how Bourdieu sees the culture of domination as a one-way process not accounting for the working class's own cultural production, for instance, through adopting strategies of resistance, incorporation, or accommodation. He also criticizes Bourdieu for adopting a pure cultural lens not accounting for economic forces, rendering the analysis incomprehensive. Similarly, critical scholars Scheurich and McKenzie (2005) have critiqued Foucault's work finding that it largely neglects discussions of "resistance" and potentials of creating spaces for "possible change" (p. 861).

Thus, through critiquing and building on Bourdieu and other scholars, who had mostly focused on the role of schools in cultural production and reproduction, critical pedagogues propose that we approach schools not only as sites where different forms of oppression are manifested in subtle and overt ways to reproduce asymmetrical power relations in society at large, but also as sites where the marginalized and oppressed can resist and negotiate that oppression, and define their sense of agency to challenge the status quo (Apple, 2000; Giroux, 1983, 2005; McLaren, 2003).

Common elements within critical approaches to social studies curriculum.
Leading curriculum theorist, William Pinar (2014) reminds us that: "Through the curriculum and our experience of it, we choose what to remember about the past, what to believe about the present, and what to hope for and fear about the future" (p. 522). Critical pedagogy scholars are clearly cognizant of the strong influence of curricular content and enactment on student subjectivity. United in their belief in education's emancipatory potential, several critical pedagogy intellectuals and activists see social studies education more specifically as one of the key subject matters where the most daunting societal challenges and prejudices could be

confronted and negotiated (Apple, 1982; Giroux, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2003). According to

critical race theorists, since it is committed to contributing to citizenship education and

democratic values, social studies education is suited to instill the needed values and address

questions of intergroup dynamics and attitudes among citizens of various backgrounds and

experiences (Banks, 1997; Howard, 2003). Importantly, Thornton (2008) reminds us that these

subject matters are always "taught through some curricular frame", rendering them "never

ideologically neutral" (p. 19).

Critical pedagogy theorists recognize the central role that curriculum plays as "the

introduction to a particular form of life" which "serves in part to prepare students for dominant

or subordinate positions in the existing society" (McLaren, 2003, p. 86). As Giroux (1994)

clarifies, in interrogating curricula, critical pedagogy scholars ask the following questions:

> [W]hose stories are being produced under what circumstances? What social relations do they legitimate? What histories do they exclude or include? How are they complicitous with legacies of patriarchy, colonialism, racism, and other forms of oppression? (p. 155)

Problematizing omissions and misrepresentations of narratives and perspectives.

Giroux (2003) reminds us that critical theorists call for history and its various

manifestations to be inclusive of "the suppressed moments of history … to develop an equal

sensitivity to certain aspects of culture", which would in turn help traditionally marginalized and

misrepresented groups

> … affirm their own histories through the use of a language, a set of social relations, and body of knowledge that critically reconstructs and dignifies the cultural experiences that make up the tissue, texture, and history of their daily lives. (p. 52)

With regards to inclusion of misrepresented or omitted minority narratives and perspectives,

critical pedagogues are clearly inspired by Italian scholar Antonio Gramsci's radical call in his

famous *Prison Notebooks* for the need to write "a history of the subaltern classes" (Apple &

Buras, 2006, p. 6). Critical pedagogy calls on curriculum to make space to always be "attentive

to histories, dreams, and experiences that such [marginalized] students bring to schools" (Giroux, 2005, p. 142).

Making certain groups of students, based on race, gender or other dimensions of their identity feel invisible could bring much damage to their self-esteem (Freire, 1970/2000; hooks, 2010). In addition to a focus on missing narratives and perspectives, critical pedagogy theorists generally agree that curricular content needs to highlight historical power struggle as opposed to downplaying it or emphasizing consensus (Buras, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2003). A critical approach that includes those omitted narratives and perspectives would stand in sharp contrast to what some scholars have termed 'additive multiculturalism', where content of marginalized group narratives is simply 'added' devoid of the context of the groups' historical struggles against dominant groups and powers (Buras, 2006; Buras & Motter, 2006; Dimitriadis & McCarthy, 2001). This 'additive' approach is problematic as it leaves the dominant culture largely unquestioned and unchallenged (Apple & Buras, 2006; Giroux, 1992, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 2003). Thus, critical scholars call for inclusion of historical suffering, moving beyond the "celebration of diversity", towards addressing "issues of oppression and injustice … linked to social class, race, gender, and other markers of difference" (Zeichner & Flessner, 2009, p. 298).

Like other critical pedagogues, Freire (1970/2000) connects the manipulation of historical narratives to the hegemonic project, seeing such manipulation as a prerequisite for cultural invasion and domination by the oppressor group or class. To illustrate, in his highly influential *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Freire (1970/2000) cites the example of Tiradentes, the local Brazilian hero and freedom fighter, whose historical narrative was manipulated by the colonizing Portuguese powers, who - in very sharp contrast - presented him as a traitor. Such omissions and revisionist misrepresentations lead to what Freire (2000) refers to as a sense of "self-depreciation" or "intrinsic inferiority" among the oppressed (p. 63).

Revealing the hidden and null curriculum.

Ng-A-Fook (2010) reminds us that a critical approach to schooling necessitates that we question public education's "explicit, hidden, and null curricula" and how those "work to politically and psychically" shape teachers' and students' relationships and connections with society (p. 57). In aiming to build a framework to analyze hidden or missing narratives within curriculum, critical pedagogues have introduced important concepts, such as that of the 'hidden curriculum' (Jackson, 1968). The concept of hidden curriculum points to how ideologies and power dynamics - especially those not overtly manifest in curricular content and school practices - might contribute to reproducing societal power structures that ensure dominance and hegemony over certain groups in school (Apple, 1982; Eisner, 1994; Giroux & Purpel, 1983; Jackson, 1968). In what could be seen as an attempt to operationalize the concept of hidden curriculum, Eisner (1994) coined the term "null curriculum" to stress the importance of analyzing not only what is present in a curriculum but also what is excluded from it; studying the content or intellectual processes excluded, helps us better understand "the options students are not afforded, the perspectives they may never know about" (p. 107).

Importantly, Connelly and Clandinin (1988) remind us that the null curriculum entails interrogating not only what "lists of content" are excluded, but also what epistemologies, ideologies, and worldviews - simply put "ways of thinking about things" - are omitted (p. 154), which is key for critical pedagogues and their analyses. In an attempt to specifically name the experience of marginalized groups, Peshkin (1992) builds on Eisner's concept of null curriculum, introducing the term "null group" which he uses to refer to the group that might not be "invited or encouraged to learn" (p. 261). This emphasis on the hidden and null curriculum within critical approaches manifests in how teacher education programs adopting critical approaches emphasize that dimension. To illustrate, a key aim of the few teacher education programs that are inspired by critical pedagogy is to encourage pre-service teacher-students to

"examine formal and informal curricula... to uncover hidden messages" which they reinforce (Zeichner, & Flessner, 2009, p. 301).

Unveiling manifestations of dominant discourses and ideologies.

Bartolomé (2007) explains that a critical approach to curriculum is governed by two key principles: "a critical understanding of dominant ideologies" and "exposure to and development of effective counterhegemonic discourses to resist and transform such oppressive practices" (p. 280). The hidden curriculum and unbalanced historical narratives – with their omissions and misrepresentations - are embedded in dominant discourses, which critical scholars argue are embedded in knowledge systems and worldviews that need to be made visible and interrogated. For instance, in inviting us to approach curriculum as a "cultural construction", Tröhler (2014) emphasizes the importance of analyzing the "overall cultural dispositions" which are closely connected to and shape the various "power systems" and thus "systems of ideas" that govern the construction of any given curriculum and what it conveys (p. 62).

Those dominant discourses also essentialize the nature of history and thus how it comes to be perceived and presented in the curriculum. For instance, Giroux (1992) elaborates that critical pedagogy theorists embrace a postmodernist view of history as "decentered, discontinuous, fragmented and plural" as opposed to the modernist approach which still dominates curriculum, and which approaches history as "uniform, chronological, and teleological" (p. 122). In problematizing how curriculum production processes, and curricular content and enactment, reproduce power asymmetries and propagate these dominant ideologies through rendering it the 'common sense', critical curriculum scholars offer important insights (e.g., Apple, 1979, 1982; Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991). For instance, Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) attempt to explain how those dominant ideologies operate through curriculum

> Texts are really messages to and about the future. As part of a curriculum, they
> participate in no less than the organized knowledge system of society. They participate in

creating what a society has recognized as legitimate and truthful. They help set the canons of truthfulness and, as such, also help re-create a major reference point for what knowledge, culture, belief, and morality really *are*. (p. 4)

Critical citizenship education scholars, such as Pashby (2011), have also urged us to challenge current, limiting binaries in knowledge systems and to strive to offer alternative political visions and ways of viewing the world. Such an exercise would require that scholars and theorists liberate themselves from a mentality that there are "no alternatives" towards an outlook that encourages "imagining and creating new political alternatives" (Pashby, 2011, p. 431). Thus, in addition to critical scholars' focus on problematizing the omission and misrepresentation of particular narratives and perspectives as well as the role of hidden and null curriculum, they also emphasize the importance of attempting to expose the elements of the discourse(s) dominating any given curriculum and to present viable alternatives that might challenge and unsettle them.

Critiquing the role of the state in propagating dominant narratives and discourses.

Even in contexts that are supposedly less centralized, various key stakeholders in society expect curriculum to adhere to the dominant societal narrative. For instance, Wertsch (1998) notes that in the US context, although the educational curricula in the US are ultimately produced by private companies, they have to be "very sensitive to the political winds of nationalism and patriotism" if the narrative of their textbooks is to be accepted and appeal to the wider society (p. 142). Clearly, in a case of a highly centralized state-managed curriculum development and textbook production process such as the Egyptian context (Abdelrahman, 2016), curriculum developers and authors would be carefully selected based on their close political and ideological alignments with the ruling regime. This also reflects on who among national historians are given favor and who are sidelined based on their oppositional perspectives or critical historical narrations of modern Egyptian history (Di Capua, 2009).

Despite the paucity of efforts that demonstrate, document, and analyze how critical pedagogy's vision translates into curriculum and classroom practices of critical educators (Parkhouse, 2018), some documented and analyzed models offer inspiration. For instance, in his discussion of Brazil's Escola Cidadã (Citizen Schools) model – which several scholars have argued most closely embodies critical pedagogy's principles and values - Gandin (2009) demonstrates how, in attempting to overcome the historical silencing of discussions of racial inequalities and tensions in Brazil, the school's curriculum goes beyond "episodic mentioning of cultural manifestations of class, radical, sexual, and gender-based oppression," to include those themes "as an essential part of the process of construction of knowledge" (p. 345). To be prepared to negotiate those understandings with the exclusionary dominant discourse, the model also ensures that students learn and become well versed in the master historical narrative, albeit through more critical lenses (Gandin, 2009).

Decentering dominant knowledge systems by inviting silenced narratives and voices.

A deconstruction of the dominant narrative would necessitate drawing on alternative and often silenced sources of knowledge and ways of knowing, including giving space to often-silenced oral histories. Curriculum theorists such as Ng-A-Fook (2007) have demonstrated how creating space for oral histories of traditionally omitted and misrepresented perspectives, such as those of Indigenous peoples, could offer important opportunities for deconstructing the dominant narrative and engaging with historical injustices and contributions. These efforts would require capturing oral histories of the subaltern classes to challenge the dominant version of the bourgeois classes that is taught in textbooks (Fals-Borda, 1979). As Peterson (2003) explains, taking a critical pedagogy approach in his classroom meant that his teaching had to be student-centered. More specifically, it had to encourage students to bring in their personal experiences as well as create opportunities to interrogate the histories and lived experiences of their families and communities.

Similarly guided by Critical Theory, critical discourse analyses, as will be discussed in the next section, offer important insights and tools to explore and unpack dominant societal discourses and the systems of knowledge and ideologies guiding them, and how those subtly or overtly permeate various social sites and texts.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Curriculum, including the 'hidden curriculum', helps reinforce dominant ideologies, especially in subtle ways. For instance, in his analyses of the dominance of capitalism across most of the world's modern economies, Huerta-Charles (2007) demonstrates how to enable it to succeed in "manufacturing the public social consent regarding itself", it permeates various facets of society including "several discourses, institutions, and social practices" which aim at making people accept the capitalistic economic system as "a "given" reality … along with its social inequalities" (p. 251).

Leading critical theorists Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) help articulate critical pedagogy's commitment to explore the organic connection between discourse and subjectivity formation, arguing that "linguistic descriptions are not simply about the world but serve to construct it," (p. 310) which explains critical researchers' and theorists' ongoing quest to explore how discourses are used to construct reality or to serve as what they refer to as "a form of regulation and domination" (p. 310). In further explaining critical theorists' approach to discourse, Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) eloquently define "discursive practices" as:

> [A] set of tacit rules that regulate what can and cannot be said, who can speak with the blessings of authority and who must listen, whose social constructions are valid and whose is erroneous and unimportant … establishing *one correct reading* that implants a particular hegemonic/ideological message into the consciousness of the reader. (p. 310, emphasis added)

Critical discourse analysis is an attempt to bring together social theory with discourse analysis to help understand how discourse "constructs, becomes constructed by, represents, and

becomes represented by the social world" (Rogers et al., 2005, p. 366). Luke (1995) explains that discourses "articulate particular fields of knowledge and belief" (p. 15), thus defining how we view and understand the world. In other words, they become the 'common sense' that governs how we interpret the world and our experiences of it (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003). Discourse analysis approaches are relatively recent developments that are interdisciplinary in essence; among other theoretical, disciplinary, and ideological orientations, they bring together "poststructuralist discourse theory, feminist theory, functional linguistics, and neo-Marxian sociology" (Luke, 1995, p. 39). At its core, discourse analysis attempts to advance a social justice agenda with a commitment to reveal how language naturalizes power asymmetries and injustices. Wodak et al. (2009) capture such a commitment, reminding us that through their analysis of language, discourse analysis methods help us "unmask ideologically permeated and often obscured structures of power, political control, and dominance, as well as strategies of discriminatory inclusion and exclusion" (p. 8).

Discourse and social identity.

The significance of critically analyzing and understanding dominant discourses lies in their strong influence on shaping social realities and identities. As McLaren (2003) explains

> Discourses and discursive practices influence how we live our lives as conscious thinking subjects. They shape our subjectivities (our ways of understanding in relation to the world) because it is only in language and through discourse that social reality can be given meaning. (p. 84)

Importantly, critical discourse analysis pays particular attention to how individuals' meaning making of texts and social interactions determine how they enact themselves in the world. Thus, Fairclough (2004) explains that among the utmost commitments of that approach is to explore how making meaning through "text and talk", or what he calls a "process of texturing", influences individuals' "acting, relating, being, and intervening in the material world" (p. 231). Importantly, Wodak et al. (2009) contend that national identity is "the product of discourse",

explaining that the nation is fundamentally "constructed and conveyed in discourse, predominantly in narratives of national culture" (p. 22). Further, critical approaches to discourse are interested in investigating how for "some texts, textual practices and discourses" to be made "to count as official knowledge", others are "silenced or omitted"; clearly, this process entails "a political selection that involves the valorization of particular discourses, subjectivities, and practices" (Luke, 1995, pp. 36-37).

Influences of Curricular Content and Enactment on Human Subjectivities and Identities

The influence of text on human subjectivity is one key area of interest for this study. In order to establish the significance of that text-human subjectivity connection, I present some key arguments, which have been put forward by scholars regarding the relationship between the two. To begin, as outlined briefly above, critical pedagogy is cognizant of the strong influence that curriculum, and the discourse shaping it, have on student subjectivity. This is clearest in McLaren's (2003) definition of curriculum as:

> [M]uch more than a program of study, a classroom text, or a course syllabus. Rather, it represents the introduction to a particular form of life; it serves in part to prepare students for dominant or subordinate positions in the existing society. (p. 86)

On one hand, critical discourse theorists like Fairclough (2004) propose that the commitment of critical discourse analysis is essentially to deconstruct and analyze the text itself and its context; the main purpose, thus, is not to focus on the "social effects of texts" (p. 229). On the other hand, scholars such as Luke (1995) and Gee (2011) assert that understanding a text's influence on human subjectivity is an integral part of a complete critical discourse analysis. Luke (1995) reminds us that, "texts position and *construct individuals* [emphasis added], making available various meanings, ideas and versions of the world" (p. 13). Similarly, Gee (2011) argues that, narratives are "important sense-making devices" that enable individuals to "encode" and shape their social interactions and experiences (p. 161).

Texts play an important role in shaping social worlds, positions and subjectivities. Importantly, in explaining how critical discourse analysts approach texts, Luke (1995) reminds us that texts not only "stipulate a selective version of the world and of 'being' and 'doing' in that world", but he goes further to delineate the boundaries of that world defining how a reader becomes an insider, an outsider, visible or invisible within that world (p. 18). As discussed earlier, this sense of inclusion and exclusion could be achieved through the text's content as well as through the dominant narratives and societal discourses that this content is embedded within.

Postmodernists believe that identities and subjectivities are "not unitary or singular" (Luke, 1995, p. 14). Narrative analysis theorist Riessman (2008) agrees that identity is fluid, "always producing itself through the combined processes of being and becoming, belonging and longing to belong" (p. 8). Gee (2011) agrees that identities are "socially situated" allowing individuals to take multiple identities based on different practices and contexts they encounter and experience (p. 41). In all these definitions, text – which is shaped by social structures and practices - in turn, contributes to shaping these socially situated identities.

By extension, texts also shape cultural subjectivities of groups. Cultural models (Strauss & Quinn, 1997) and cultural categories (Luke, 1995) offer useful lenses to approach how individuals and groups define and negotiate these subjectivities within and between different narratives they are exposed to, such as master or competing historical narratives. Strauss and Quinn (1997) introduce the concept of cultural models, which are "everyday theories (i.e., storylines, images, schemas, metaphors, and models) about the world" that help shape our perspectives and understanding of the world (as cited in Gee, 2004, pp. 40-41). Luke (1995) helps us visualize these models by offering a metaphorical "hierarchical social grid" within which "cultural categories" of individual subjectivities are built and through which categories of "gender identity, sexual desire, ethnic identity, class and work, regional solidarity, citizenship and national identity" are also constructed and negotiated (p. 14). Riessman (2008) also reminds

us of the importance of narratives for group subjectivities where they are used "to mobilize others, and to foster a sense of belonging" (p. 8).

How the Dissertation is Organized

Given this background and outlining my guiding approach presented above, in the next two chapters I offer a historical overview of Egyptian education: in Chapter 2, I focus on the Egyptian public educational system, while Chapter 3 is focused on the place of Copts in Egyptian education, and in extracurricular spaces that offer them alternative narratives, such as the Church's Sunday Schools. In Chapter 4, I present a literature review of the key theories that guide my work, including my adoption of a Grounded Theory approach (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978; Morse, 2009). As will be illustrated, this approach was the most suitable for this study since I wanted to approach the data with a fresh perspective and allow the theory to emerge from the data collected, so as to avoid imposing ideas from past studies or attempting to force fit the data into already existing models that might have emerged in other contexts. Within that approach, I heed Charmaz's (2006) - a leading Grounded Theory scholar - approach and her call to attempt "to avoid importing preconceived ideas and imposing them" on our data (p. 165). In Chapter 5, I outline my use of the Grounded Theory approach and my data collection methods, describing the participant profiles. In Chapters 6 and 7, I present the data analyses. In Chapter 8, I discuss and engage with the various findings that emerge from these analyses. Finally, in Chapter 9, I offer conclusions, discussing the various implications of the study's findings, and outlining some of the constraints, limitations, and future research.

Chapter 2: Competing Imaginings of the Nation and Their Influences on Modern Egyptian Education and Curricula

With the first efforts to establish a modern educational system going back to the early 1800s under Mehmed Ali, Egypt's modern educational system has had a long history shaped by various forces and tensions, as well as several key continuities and some changes. To offer a fuller context for this study, it is crucial to trace how Egypt's modern education and its curricula have evolved to what they have become today. Thus, in this chapter, I conduct a survey of the literature pertaining to the history of modern Egyptian education, with a special focus on how competing ideologies have manifested in curricular content.

I start by offering a brief overview of some of the key competing ideological orientations or 'imaginings' of the nation which have largely shaped the public sphere and discourse in Egypt since the early 1900s. I then present a brief history of modern education in Egypt and key features that characterized curriculum under the successive regimes. Throughout this chapter and the next chapter, I attempt to maintain two argument threads: First, I try to identify areas of continuity and change, including significant turning points. Second, I attempt to unpack the efforts of the successive regimes to shape citizens' passive subjectivities and national or supranational cultural identities in various ways, and, wherever possible, capturing the strategies that Egyptians adopted in resisting and challenging those efforts.

Although my focus is mostly on state policies and approaches, wherever possible I attempt to shed light on some junctures of tensions and resistance by Egyptians vis-à-vis these dominant structures, their visions and projects hoping to offer nuances regarding the sense of agency and proactivity among Egyptians. However, given the space limitation, I mainly make references to relevant organized and institutionalized resistance, such as the organized efforts of Islamists or the Coptic Sunday Schools, the latter of which will be discussed in more detail in

Chapter 3. Further, my data analyses reveal the various strategies that modern day young Egyptians, including young Copts, employ in their interactions with the nation's master historical narrative and the competing narratives available to them. This analysis attempts to highlight young Egyptians' sense of agency and how they negotiate those various narratives and 'imaginings' of the nation. Later on, in Chapter 8, I also briefly highlight the few recent studies that have examined young Egyptians' engagement with the dominant narrative (e.g., Sobhy, 2012), and their political activism (e.g., El Mahdi & Marfleet, 2009; Shehata 2008).

After all, as Hobsbawm (1990) reminds us, and as several critical historians who have attempted to capture the histories of the subaltern in Egypt and elsewhere, in capturing the histories of nations and how they are constructed "from above", the picture remains incomplete if we are missing "the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people" (p. 10). This was a key critique that Hobsbawm fielded against scholars such as Gellner for instance, whom he viewed as focusing on the ruling elite's modernization projects and their visions, thereby neglecting people's agency and resistance, or what he referred to as the "view from below" (p. 11). As will become clearer, in these two chapters I am guided by the theoretical reflections on the discursive constructions of citizens outlined in Chapter 1, which I further expand on in Chapter 4 in which I outline my conceptual framework in more detail, including various strategies that individuals adopt in interacting with the master historical narrative.

Competing Imaginings of the Nation

In their field-changing books *Imagined Communities* (Anderson, 1983/2006) and *Nations and Nationalism* (Hobsbawm, 1990), both Anderson and Hobsbawm agree on how education was used to shape national identities, whether in 19th century Europe, or in other eras and contexts. Several scholars agree that since its centralization and standardization in late 18th and early 19th century Europe, history education has played a key role in building national identities (e.g., Barton, 2012; Lopez & Carretero, 2012; Lukacs, 1968). To serve that national project,

schools were key in diffusing master historical narratives to shape citizens' national identifications by connecting them to a unified understanding of an 'imagined' nation and a shared past (Anderson, 1983/2006). With increasingly literate populations, the print industry - through facilitating the spread of ideas captured in written texts - also played a crucial role in consolidating a common vision of the nation (Anderson, 1983/2006; Hobsbawm, 1990; Lukacs, 1986). Similar to other geographical contexts where written texts and print played a key role in reinforcing that sense of belonging to an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983/2006), in the 19th century, in their quest to create a modern subjectivity that was allied to the modern state through the definition of standard moral codes that are applicable across various contexts and circumstances, the Egyptian state imposed written text as a replacement of oral traditions of transmission, especially through its modern schooling (Sedra, 2011, pp. 2-3).

Printed materials, such as newspapers, as Anderson (1983/2006) argues, also contributed to creating a common experience of an "imagined world" which, through the common habit of reading newspapers in public spaces, had become "visibly rooted in everyday life" (p. 36). Importantly, print also gave language an illusory sense of permanence, credibility and "fixity" (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 61). Similarly, committing historical narratives to paper or print helped obscure the fact that in reality these narratives are largely an "invention"; historians, not unlike fiction writers, invent stories from the chronicles (White, 1973, pp. 6-7). However, with the growing proliferation of and generally easy access to alternative historical knowledge sources, such as social media (Herrera, 2012), those state-produced materials have arguably lost much of their hold and control.

While governments, influential political groups, and other stakeholders are often the ones defining and negotiating particular visions of the nation in education, it is important to be aware that sometimes the masses also influence these narratives. Hobsbawm (1990) encourages us to also consider how, in some instances, these political forces are reflective of - and responding to -

"unofficial nationalist sentiments", which oftentimes include elements of "xenophobia or chauvinism" (p. 92). This acknowledgment of the role of citizens' agency in shaping historical narratives is crucial for complicating and helping us gain a more nuanced understanding of the dynamic processes shaping historical narratives. Such acknowledgment is also central for critical pedagogy, which aspires to define and reinforce human agency that aims to challenge power structures and dominant master narratives, as outlined in Chapter 1.

In the Egyptian context, Fahmy (1997) reminds us of the significance of Mehmed Ali's rule and its policies in the 19th century, which sowed the seeds of shaping the Egyptian people's sense of national identity, fostering an image of Egypt "as a nation with a purposeful, clear identity" (p. 17). To serve his ambitious military vision, Mehmed Ali's regime attempted to educate the people of Egypt to believe that fighting for him and his family "was tantamount to giving one's life for the sake of the "nation", which was "thought to have always already existed and which … demanded the sacrifices of its citizens" (Fahmy, 1997, p. 19). Similarly, Mitchell (1991) notes that, as early as the 19th century, the political elite of Egypt was cognizant of the role of education in shaping people's understandings of their role in society, identities, and outlooks, rendering it central to a "political process of discipline and formation" (p. 119).

Centrality of Historical Narratives in the Nation-Building Project

Scholars have offered important insights into the nation-building efforts and processes to construct national identities, pointing to how in some cases these processes even necessitated the creation of common languages to tie the national population together. As Hobsbawm (1990) explains, the process of reinforcing a "nationalist mythology" is accompanied by efforts to construct or consolidate an already existing "standardized and homogenized language"; this process entails giving precedence to some languages or dialects while downgrading others (p. 54).

Similarly, manipulating historical narratives plays a key role in these nation-building efforts. Emphasizing how nation-states narrate history or revise it to help reinforce their legitimacy, Anderson (1983/2006) offers a powerful analogy of how national histories are revisited in ways that help legitimize "an originatory present" presenting a story of progress towards that present moment (p. 205). These efforts mainly aim to foster their citizens' sense of belonging and loyalty to a historically constructed "lasting political entity" or a "historical nation" (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 73). Driven by their nation-building objectives, these narratives are also fundamentally shaped by specific omissions or what Anderson (1983/2006) has referred to as "characteristic amnesias" (p. 204). These nationalist narratives also emphasize the homogeneity of the population; this naturally requires sidelining cultural diversity represented by local ethnic and religious minorities, which would discredit or at least weaken the coherence of the master narrative of a common historical origin. Schools and universities were clearly among the key institutions in helping advance that national identification and consciousness (Anderson, 1983/2006; Hobsbawm, 1990).

In the next section, I outline two key competing imaginings of the Egyptian nation and its people's cultural identity. For the purposes of this study, I classify the two key orientations shaping the competing camps as: a territorial nationalist, and a supra-nationalist orientation. The supra-nationalist orientation has taken various forms, including Pan-Arabism and Islamism. In reality those general classifications are not that clean-cut or that decisively mutually exclusive as will become apparent below. Within the discussion of supra nationalist orientations, I give special attention to political Islam - or Islamism - since it is scholars have agreed it is the ideology that is currently most relevant and most contentious, especially relating to questions of non-Muslim minorities in Egyptian society, which is of key interest for this study.

Territorial Nationalism

As Anderson (1983/2006) illustrates, the rise of nationalist sentiments and identifications was closely connected to and often instigated by various European institutions such as maps, the census, and the museum (p. 163). In Europe, the end of the First World War especially ushered in an emergence and growth of the "'principle of nationality" (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 131). In Egypt, closely connected to these events, with the backdrop of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the early 1900s witnessed the emergence of Egyptian territorial nationalism - or Egyptianism.

In their attempt to foster a collective Egyptian identity to unite modern Egyptians against their colonial enemy, Egyptian intellectuals of the early 1900s drew on the country's ancient history to emphasize links and commonalities that manifested in the language, customs, traditions and religious beliefs of the Egyptian people, regardless of their religious or ethnic backgrounds (Colla, 2007; Gershoni & Jankowski, 1986; Reid, 1997). Far from being unique, such practice of drawing on "a suitable (or suitably impressive) national state in the past" is common among elites seeking to foster a collective national identity (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 76).

This Egyptianist orientation has influenced and in turn has been reinforced by the nationalistic historiographical imagining of the Egyptian nation. In his critical analysis of the dominant nationalistic approaches to historiography in Egypt, Fahmy (1997) points to several of this school's essentializations, as is apparent in the case of narrating Mehmed Ali's era, including the narrative's proposition of the existence of a primordial sense of identity which translated into people's understandings of themselves as "Egyptians first and foremost" as opposed to ever having stronger identifications with being "Muslims or Ottoman subjects" for instance; further, that narrative proposes that this identity has always existed – albeit sometimes being dormant – awaiting a trigger, such as that of the creation of Mehmed Ali's army, to help Egyptians rediscover and reconnect with "their true identity" (p. 17). Further, Fahmy (1997) has challenged

dominant "Egyptian nationalist historiographies" in their imaginings of the nation, especially their "assumption that "Egypt" has always had a unified, self-contained, clearly recognizable identity", problematizing such an approach to the nation as "a primordial, eternal entity possessing a unified, conscious will potentially capable of autonomy and sovereignty" (pp. 312-313).

Tadros (2013) explains that this Egyptianist orientation asserted "the Egyptian umma [nation] being founded on a distinct Egyptian identity and heritage, Egyptian colloquial Arabic, and ancient Egyptian civilization" (p. 39). Egyptianist intellectuals, such as Mohamed Husayn Haykal and Ahmed Lutfi El-Sayyid (Gershoni & Jankowski, 1986; Tadros, 2013), advocated that despite the multiple waves of foreign invaders and colonizers over the millennia a "distinct Egyptian national character" has always existed (Gershoni & Jankowski, 1986, p. 13). Adherents of this vision advocated "Egypt as a particular national community which was distinct and set apart from the Ottoman order", positing it as mutually exclusive with "any Pan-Islamic manifestations" (Di Capua, 2001, p. 97).

It is evident why a territorial nationalism would appeal to indigenous minorities, since it offers a platform that potentially elevates them to the level of full and equal citizens; this buy-in has manifested in some of this ideology's staunchest advocates being Coptic intellectual, such as Salama Musa (Gershoni & Jankowski, 1986, p. 165). However, Ibrahim (2015) points out how in its valorization of sameness and national unity among Egyptians, this nationalist discourse puts more weight on the notion of being 'Egyptian' which might underplay differences and view Copts and any of their specific "minority right claims" or demands as "subordinate" or potentially "hostile" to broader 'Egyptian rights' (p. 2590).

Several scholars have noted the resilience and influence of this Egyptianist territorial orientation on supra-nationalist ideologies. For instance, Piterberg (1997) notes that the "imaginings" of the supranationalist ideologies of Arabism and Islamism "were subordinated to

the model of the territorial nation" (p. 49). Thus, as Smith (1997) explains, what emerged among Egyptian intellectuals were multiple "imaginings", all connected - to a lesser or greater extent - to the territorial nationalistic imagining of the nation (p. 619). Testifying to its resilience, Tadros (2013) points to the continued ability it maintains on mass mobilization, as was evident in the 1919 and 2011 revolutions – two high points of Coptic participation in Egyptian public life – both of which were initiated "in the name of Egyptian nationalism", not in the names of either "pan-Arabism" or "pan-Islamism" (p. 43).

Supra-Nationalist Ideologies (Pan-Arabism and Islamism)

Supra-nationalist ideologies envisioned Egypt's cultural identity as defined by cultural commonalities Egyptians shared with other 'imagined communities' that lie beyond the nation's official borders and territorial confines, whether as part of a larger Arab or Muslim nation. Gershoni and Jankowski (2002) have explained the emergence of supra-nationalist orientations, as a response to the interwar period's economic hardships, gaining further momentum with the emergence and growth of a new "urban, educated middle class of native Egyptians" – or the "new effendiyya" in the 1920s (p. 11).[8] More specifically, Van Doorn-Harder (2005) argues that the economic hardships caused by the First and Second World Wars motivated many Egyptian Muslims to turn away from Liberal Nationalism, which had failed them, towards more Islamist orientations, which advocated for a more central role for religion in ruling the country and in the public sphere. To illustrate, from its inception, the Muslim Brotherhood – a key proponent of a

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[8] This class is said to have emerged as a result of urbanization, the expansion of a national economy, and the educational institution, resulting in affluent families shifting their alliances from "al-Azhar, the family business, and the neighborhood to modern avenues of participation in education and professional specialization" (Di Capua, 2009, p. 143).

political Islamic ideology - "criticized the secular Wafd party and questioned the legitimacy of Copts in places of authority" (p. 26).[9]

As Tadros (2014) reminds us, the Islamist discourse, made more widely accessible through traditional media and social media channels between 2011 and 2013, advocates for an Islamist system of governance that, in its more strict forms, would likely require Copts to be ascribed "a subservient status", possibly requiring them to pay the *jizia* (obligatory tax on non-Muslim able male adults), thus rejecting their aspirations and calls for "equality in citizenry rights and responsibilities" (p. 215). In addition to their commonly critiqued views of women and their role in society, generally speaking, English and Arabic literature alike has criticized Islamists for considering non-Muslims, such as Jews and Christians, as "protected minorities, not full citizens" (Zuhur, 2014, p. 251). To illustrate, with the emergence of supra-nationalist Islamist ideologies between the 1930s and 1950s, Copts were slowly "rendered all but invisible" from the public sphere, including their removal from leadership positions of newspapers and other media (Van Doorn-Harder, 2005, p. 34).

A secular Arab nationalism - or Pan-Arabism - was conceived as an ideology that is more inclusive, especially of non-Muslim religious minorities that have already been culturally 'Arabized' (defined by being Arabic-speakers), such as the Copts. However, the construction of an Arab cultural identity has been largely informed by and thus essentially intertwined with Islamic culture and heritage, a message reinforced by how many Muslims and Islamists alike appropriate Arabic as the sacred language of the Quran and thus belonging to Islam and Muslims. Such shift towards a more exclusionary Islamic understanding of a Pan-Arab ideology clearly sidelined and alienated non-Muslim minorities, including the Copts. As Tadros (2013)

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[9] The Muslim Brotherhood was established in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, an Egyptian schoolteacher. Calling for "a regeneration of society on the basis of Islamic principles and for political and social reforms"; starting off as a "a philanthropic society", it quickly became an influential political actor playing a key role in fighting for Egypt's independence from British occupation (Gohar, 2008, p. 179).

explains, the more pan-Arabism "became infused with the notion of a common religion", the more non-Muslim minorities, including the Copts, started to "disengage from it" (p. 41). Some scholars have even argued that the Nasser regime's embrace of pan-Arabism has triggered among many Copts a return to "a pre-Arab and non-Arab identity" (Ha, 2016, p. 116).[10] This strong and growing entanglement of the Islamist and Pan-Arab identifications and the resultant alienation by non-Muslims from them is ironic: after all, as Hobsbawm (1990) reminds us, understandably the key founders and enthusiastic pioneers of the largely secular and inclusive vision of Arab nationalism or pan-Arabism in the early and mid 1900s, such as Michel Aflaq, were **"**Arab Christian minorities, Copts, Maronites and Greek Catholics" (p. 68).

Long before the rise of political Islam - as embodied in the form of organized political movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood which rose with the backdrop of the decline of the Ottoman Empire - it is clear that religious identity has played a central part of modern Egyptian identity. Far from being uniform, understandings of a Muslim religious identity have clearly evolved through several phases, including efforts by leading reformist Muslim scholars such as Muhammad Abduh and Rifa'a Al-Tahtawy, whose efforts to advocate for modernizing the Islamic discourse to more productively engage with modern societies are cited later in this chapter. Such intellectual visions of the religious identity and role of religion in society had clear ramifications on envisioning modern Egyptian education starting in the 1800s, which, while still

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[10] Scholars and activists alike have proposed that the 1967 defeat against Israel was a turning point after which Egyptians - both Muslims and Copts - turned away from the pan-Arab ideology. As Van Doorn-Harder (2005) explains, "Liberal Nationalism of the Wafd Party, Nasser's socialism, and Pan-Arabism" had all but failed them, as embodied in that devastating defeat (p. 27). Thus, in resistance to and rejection of these ideologies, Egyptians sought refuge and salvation in religiously-inspired political ideologies through which they could find consolation, possibly repentance – and most importantly meaning – in the wake of a defeat which some have interpreted as a result of society's loss of its moral compass by abandoning religion and its rightful central role in society and public life. It was arguably the Nasser regime's propaganda and lack of the state-controlled media's transparency about the power differentials between the Egyptian and the Israeli armies that allowed the effects of 1967 defeat to be that deeply influential for many Egyptians.

embedded in traditional religious approaches was becoming more aware of the need to embrace more modern pedagogical methods and subject matters. These roots of the tensions and the centrality of the religious component within the modern Egyptian subjectivity are well captured by Di Capua (2001) who explains that with the advent of the Nasser regime to power in 1952 with its adoption of a Pan-Arabist vision that emphasizes the centrality of the Arab component of modern Egyptians' cultural identity, the country was already clearly divided between two competing ideological visions. These visions, with their competing historical narratives vying for people's loyalty and support, included the one articulated by the legacy of the National Party (founded by anti-colonialist leader Mustafa Kamil) with its understanding of Egypt as essentially part of the Ottoman Empire, and the Wafd Party's territorial nationalistic vision (p. 97). Such tensions resulted in "two different versions of the nation's past" (Di Capua, 2001, p. 98).

More contemporary manifestations of that religious identity were clearly informed by and embody what Starrett (1998) - based on his analyses of public discourse and religion textbooks of the 1990s - aptly refers to as a "functionalization" of Islam. That functionalization entails not only interpreting religion as a guide for Muslims and society in modern times, but also more fundamentally reinterpreting Muslim religious texts and tradition in ways that help "legitimate the authority of policymakers … helping to bring religious instruction into the conscious service of independent social and political ends" (Starrett, 1998 p. 138).

Before turning to a discussion of Egyptian education and how some of these ideologies and visions influenced curricular content and approaches, it is worth reiterating that these various ideologies and identifications are not necessarily mutually exclusive, whether in the Egyptian case or in other contexts. As Hobsbawm (1990) had argued, nationalism did impose its "limits on religio-ethnic identification" (p. 69), however, interactions between the two "resist simple generalizations" (p. 71). For instance, having strong nationalistic sentiments does not negate

having other identifications and belongings; in fact, an individual's national identifications are "always combined with identifications of another kind", with those being fluid, carrying the potential to "change and shift" over relatively short periods of time (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 11).

Egyptian Education Since the Early 1800s

A Tool to Control the Masses and Shape Cultural and Social Identities

The modern Egyptian educational system has generally and consistently been envisioned as a site to indoctrinate young Egyptians into the ruling regimes' vision of the country and their societal roles as modern subjects. As early as Mehmed Ali's schools and those of subsequent regimes, the educational system was designed to produce Egyptian citizens who were functional in different professions or sectors, but who were not critical or highly engaged citizens (Brand, 2014; Fahmy, 1997; Gershoni & Jankowski, 1986, 2002; Mitchell, 1991; Starrett, 1998).

In his socio-economic class analysis, Sedra (2011) points to how in 19th century Egypt, like English landowners and elites, both Coptic and Muslim landowners saw modern education as a means to control their subjects and to turn them into "docile … political subjects" (p. 14). This system was largely inspired by the Lancaster monitorial system of education which emerged in England - introduced to Egypt by foreign missionaries and Western-inspired Egyptian educationalists - envisioning schools as spaces that helped the elite control and manage "lower orders" of society, to maintain societal order and stability (Sedra, 2011, p. 15). In other words, schools were intended as spaces where the state practices its "discipline" and control over the bodies of the Egyptian populace (Mitchell, 1991, p. 35). The ruling regime and the Egyptian economic elite, whether Muslim or Coptic, saw modern education as a space to effectively turn "impoverished coreligionists into industrious and disciplined laborers" (Sedra, 2011, p. 166).

In his seminal work *Colonising Egypt*, Timothy Mitchell (1991) points to the visits that Egyptian administrators made to schools based on the Lancaster monitorial model in England in the 1800s, of which they became strong admirers that they then attempted to adopt and

generalize in Egypt starting the mid-1800s. This was clearly an attempt to use schools to create

order and discipline among students, fulfilling their vision of education as "a process of

discipline, inspection and continuous obedience" (Mitchell, 1991, p. 73). The implementation of

such a vision, to ensure control over the Egyptian people to serve the elite's economic

modernization project, necessitated a strong centralized schooling system that would effectively

change people's "tastes and habits" into "modern political subject" who are "frugal, innocent

and, above all, busy" (Mitchell, 1991, p. 75). Some of the early scholarly observations offer

insights into the type of risk-averse, conservative citizen who was highly dependent on the state

that the system attempted to produce. For instance, Heyworth-Dunne (1938) – perhaps in an

overly pessimistic account - reminds us:

> The Egyptian had learnt to depend upon the firm hand of Muhammad [Mehmed] Ali to
> send him to school, to feed him, to clothe him and to find work for him in his
> professional capacity. Without government employment, he would have found nothing.
> (p. 229)

This approach might have been successful in instilling such docility, loyalty, and

dependence on the state among the majority of Egyptians. Ironically, however, many of these

schools happened to later produce Egyptians who resisted that narrative of docility and

obedience, revolting against those same powers that set up those schools for purposes of control

and hegemony. For instance, under the British occupation, schools managed to produce Egyptian

teachers and students who led movements that fought against the British, including the Muslim

Brotherhood, many of the founders of which have actually been school teachers (Mitchell, 1991,

p. 171; Starrett, 1998, p. 58).

Given this brief background about the general vision guiding the inception of modern

education in Egypt, to understand some of the dynamics, tensions, and shifts that continued to

shape modern Egyptian education and its curricula, I present the evolution of the modern

Egyptian educational system. This evolution can be loosely organized under five phases, based

on the key rulers of the country, starting with the Mehmed Ali and his heirs, who are often

approached in the literature as one unit of analysis. I then follow this by a discussion of the three

successive military-backed Egyptian rulers: Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak. After a discussion of

Mubarak, I offer some insights into the brief presidency of ousted President Morsi (member of

the now-banned Freedom and Justice Party, the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood).

Following that, I briefly present the current military-backed regime led by President El-Sisi, who

assumed power in 2014. In the summary chart below (Figure 2.1), I attempt to briefly capture the

key features defining each of these eras' approaches to education and curricula.

Figure 2.1. Summary of Key Features Shaping Education by Era (1805-Present):

	Key Features vis-à-vis Education and Curriculum
Mehmed Ali and his dynasty (until early Khedive Tawfik rule) (1805-1881)	• Seeds of a modern educational system, generally geared towards serving the military establishment and civil service. • Ismail's reign marks beginnings of efforts to make education more accessible for poor families (e.g., the Law of 19th of Rajab issued in 1867).
British occupation and Constitutional Monarchy (1882-1952)	• British focused on education producing qualified civil servants. • Curricula exhibit some tendencies of an inclusive Egyptianist ideology. • Beginnings of tensions with Islamist movements. • Late 1940s, growing public awareness and some efforts to offer free public education.
Gamal Abdel Nasser (1954-1970)	• Clear infiltration of an Arab Socialist identity and outlook in curricula. • Unification of a national curriculum with a consolidated centralization of managing national education. • Attempts towards an egalitarian public educational system; institutionalizing free public education for all.
Anwar Sadat (1970-1981)	• Islamist movements emboldened in educational institutions to combat Nasserist socialist legacy. • A free-market policy, including a rise in private schools. • Growing gaps between economic classes and their access to quality education.

	Expansion of Al-Azhar religious education system.
Hosni Mubarak (1981-2011)	• Neoliberal policies and continued support by international donors for educational and curricular reform. • Some efforts to render curricular content less Islamized. • Continued tensions between competing visions for education.
End of Mubarak until Present (2011 onwards)	• General continuation of Mubarak era's reform efforts. • Some recent discussions and initial efforts towards a drastic revamping of curriculum and redesigning standardized assessments.

Mehmed Ali and His Dynasty: Seeds of a Modern Education

The French campaign on Egypt (1789-1801), followed almost immediately by Mehmed Ali's rule (1805-1849) and his embrace of a Western-inspired modernizing project introduced some changes of seismic proportions in Egypt, especially challenging the authority of the dominant Islamic religious establishment and its scholars (Ali, 1989). Mehmed Ali's military schools, the first of which was established in 1816, arguably were the first attempt to introduce a modern national education in the country (Mitchell, 1991, p. 68).

The mere existence of a religious-based traditional education would clearly be seen as an obstacle to Mehmed Ali's modernization and expansionist project since he saw his modern education as a machine that would produce the needed human resources to serve his military and its affiliated institutions (Fahmy, 1997; Sedra, 2011). Understanding that connection between Ali's modern education and military conscription, which Egyptians "dreaded", led Egyptians to generally resist modern schooling (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 153). This continued to be the case under later rulers of Mehmed Ali's dynasty. For instance, during Said's reign, to avoid modern education and conscription, many Egyptian villagers joined Al-Azhar with the "pretext of pursuing religious studies" (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 397).

Before such a competing modern vision of education was introduced, the Mosque and its affiliated *kuttabs* - which depended on rote memorization of the Quran and some very basic

knowledge of arithmetic, measures, and currency - played a central role in educating young

Egyptians (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938).[11] Producing students who would either continue to study in

Al-Azhar mosque-university system or to study a trade, in both cases the Islamic religious

establishment prepared students to become good citizens in line with Muslim ethics, who would

be "part of the religious system", which "controlled almost every act of life" (Heyworth-Dunne,

1938, p. 6). As Mehmed Ali expanded his system and built more schools, by the 1830s *kuttabs*

experienced a noticeable decline (Starrett, 1998, pp. 27-28). Thus, despite ongoing tensions,

modernizing education through investing heavily in a "highly centralized and hierarchical state-

run education system" did succeed in generally sidelining the religious educational system

(Farag, 2012, p. 80). This modern educational system and many of its features, including its

highly centralized management, prevail until today (Farag, 2012).

  This Western, or specifically European, influence on modern Egyptian education was

further consolidated through the various state-funded waves of Egyptian students who were sent

to be educated in Europe starting in 1826 onwards, in what could be described as a continuous

flow over the following decades (Abdul-Karim, 1945; Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, pp. 157-170;

Saied, 2006). However, it is important to remember that these various educational institutions

and efforts were initially geared primarily towards serving Mehmed Ali's military establishment

and his expansionist vision (Cochran, 1986; Fahmy, 1997; Heyworth-Dunne, 1938; Sayed,

2006). To illustrate, the defeat of Mehmed Ali by European powers, which saw him as a threat to

their interests in the region, dictated that the military be reduced to no more than 18,000 soldiers,

after having reached approximately 250,000 (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 223). Given that the

primary purpose of his modern schools was to serve the military establishment, this military

downsizing necessitated that many schools be closed down by the end of Mehmed Ali's reign.

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[11] As I discuss in more detail in the next chapter, there were also a few non-Muslim *kuttabs* set up by the Coptic, Jewish, and Armenian communities (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938; Sedra, 2011).

Even those schools that remained open and were handed down to Abbas - Mehmed Ali's successor - were of very low quality (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938; Starrett, 1998).

Starting with Abbas, the development of the educational sector was highly inconsistent during the reigns of Mehmed Ali's heirs. Cochran (1986) points out that under both Abbas and Said many of the schools remained closed, except for some foreign schools that continued to serve foreigners along with a few Egyptian students (p. 5). After Mehmed Ali and the very brief rule of his son Ibrahim, who died prematurely after ruling for only over a year, the reign of Abbas introduced a welcomed and much needed stabilizing effect after the generally 'exhausting' years of his predecessors, offering no significant turning points of progress or decline (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938; Sedra, 2011).

Muhammad Said (1854-1863), who succeeded Abbas, is said to have been a "Francophile" described by some historians as "careless, impetuous, extravagant and unstable" (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 313). However, during his rule, there was a significant expansion of the number of modern schools: by 1863, Egypt is said to have had approximately 59 modern schools all over the country (pp. 339-340). However, this attention to specifically 'European' schooling systems - catering largely to the foreign communities residing in Egypt - came to the clear neglect of the national educational system, as exemplified in the poor state of Egyptian state public schools (p. 340). To put such neglect in perspective, Heyworth-Dunne (1938) notes that Said's spending on the Italian schools in Alexandria and the Frères schools in Cairo alone exceeded the total budget he spent on all public schools during his whole reign (p. 340).

Ismail Pasha: An accelerated modernization.

The reign of Ismail Pasha (1863-1879), Said's successor, was generally marked by his strong desire to modernize the country through creating closer contacts with Europe; thus, his reign is generally criticized for a growing "foreign intervention and opportunism," and a general "lack of rule of law" (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 344). As part of his attempt to further

"westernize Egypt" Ismail Pasha was keen on upgrading and expanding its educational system (Cochran, 1986, p. 5). Thus, during his reign, he re-established the types of schools that had been opened under Mehmed Ali (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 346). However, education continued to be vastly geared towards preparing students to serve the government and its military establishment, which employed at least 63% of the graduates (p. 381). Thus, arguably, Ismail's efforts represented a continuation of a modernization project, albeit with less fervor for military expansionism than that which characterized the Mehmed Ali era.

During Ismail's reign, an important development was the growing awareness of the need to make schooling more affordable for poor families. Thus, the Law of 19 Rajab 1284 (1867) aimed at the "total reorganization of education and recognized the necessity of spreading education among the people" (Cochran, 1986, p. 5), including provisions that the government would cover expenses of clothing for poor students (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 363).

With that strong orientation towards Europe, some of the leading intellectual figures at the time, such as Shaikh Al-Marsafi, started to advocate for a stronger unified "modern nationalism", arguing that schools would be the appropriate sites to instill those national sentiments (Mitchell, 1991, p. 132). These beginnings of a stronger sense of national identity among Egyptians were further enforced by the works of reformist Muslim scholar Jamaluddin al-Afghani, Salim an-Naqqash - a Syrian who arguably coined the Egyptian catchword "Egypt for the Egyptians" - and Yaqub Sanua, an Egyptian Jew, who published the satirical journal Abu-Nazarah (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938; Gershoni & Jankowski, 1986). Importantly, these efforts inspired a new, more critically aware generation of scholars and intellectuals, including prominent Muslim scholar Muhammad Abduh, one of al-Afghani's students, who vocally critiqued the rote memorization mode used in traditional religious education and its *kuttabs* (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 402).

After the ouster of Ismail, his son Tawfik ruled Egypt for a short period (1879-1883), which included the first year of the British occupation of Egypt (1882-1883). Although his rule did not generally witness drastic changes, it is worth noting that the year 1883 witnessed the abolishment of severe corporal punishment, including the use of the "korbaj/courbash" (the whip), which was commonly used in schools since Mehmed Ali's reign (Starrett, 1998, p. 41).

Between modern and traditional education: The curriculum under Mehmed Ali's dynasty.

Fitting within Mehmed Ali's general vision of education, the curriculum was designed to prepare graduates to fill military or related government positions (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 371). With those efforts emerged a growing discourse around educating Egyptians about their place in history, their role in the nation, and their collective identity. More specifically, in the words of prominent Egyptian educational visionary and public official during Said and Ismail's reigns, Rifa'a Al-Tahtawy (1801-1873): "formation of individuals was to be the means to the formation of a 'collective form'" (cited in Mitchell, 1991, pp. 119-120). Rifa'a Al-Tahtawy also believed that "political education was necessary for understanding one's role in the nation", suggesting the need to teach national Egyptian history and "the duties of citizenship" (Russell, 2001, p. 53).[12] Thus, arguably Ismail's reign witnessed a growing interest in education as a vehicle to shape a common cultural identity among Egyptians, and an understanding of their place and role in a modern nation-state.

In addition to the study of the Quran, the key subject matters taught in those modern schools included the Arabic, Turkish, and Persian languages, as well as arithmetic, algebra, geography, general notions of history, calligraphy, and drawing (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 196; Starrett, 1998, p. 28). Mehmed Ali's schools mandated the teaching of the Quran and Islamic

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[12] Heyworth-Dunne (1938) makes no mention of a history curriculum being offered in Ismail's schools, but it is possible that it was just that the author neglected to include that as no other accounts point clearly to an omission of any particular subject matters, including history.

history, which were to be taught by a Muslim shaykh; a European would teach subject matter such as "reading, writing, arithmetic, drawing, and gymnastics" (Sedra, 2011, p. 81). During Ismail's reign, in addition to reading and writing, the curriculum included subjects such as memorizing the Quran, Arabic grammar, French, geometry and arithmetic, English and German, Turkish, geography, and calligraphy (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 354).

Despite the variety of subject matters that were introduced, curricula remained highly centered on Muslim religious texts. For instance, Starrett (1998) notes that the first printed textbooks used in schools in 1834 was the "Alfiyya of Ibn Malik" - an eighth century Muslim legal text (p. 27). Additionally, the Quran continued to be a central subject matter in all schools funded by Mehmed Ali's budget (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 215). Essentially, the curriculum of these early modern schools was still highly dominated by a religious perspective and texts stressing the uncritical memorization of Islamic theological texts, which Starrett (1998) likens to al-Azhar "in miniature" (p. 27).

The centrality of religious texts, next to modern subject matters, continued well into Ismail's reign. This is evident in the Law of 19th of Rajab 1284 (1867) that was passed during Ismail's reign that mandated the teaching of subjects such as geography, history, arithmetic, and agriculture. However, those were to be taught alongside the subject matters of "Arabic, grammar, reading, tauhid, elementary fiqh, and politeness" (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, pp. 368-369). That strong Islamic religious influence on content and the range religious-based subjects offered was inevitable given "the large number of shaikhs on the committee that drew up the regulations" (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 374). Even some of the notably progressive visionaries of education at the time, such as Rifa'a Al-Tahtawy, simultaneous to his emphasis on the importance of producing well-educated and well-informed citizens, still believed that "a religious education was the foundation of an individual's studies" (Russell, 2001, p. 53).

During Tawfik's reign, as curricula evolved, social studies curricula seem to have gained more attention not only in the range and level of specialization of some of its subject matters, but also the growing awareness of the need for more effective pedagogical approaches. For instance, curricula taught during that period included the 'history of Egypt' and 'natural history' (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 430), with contemporary administrative reports highlighting the need to improve "the standard of history and geography instruction" (p. 432). However, as Starrett (1998) reminds us, well into the 1890s, while the modern schooling system expanded, and while the curriculum attempted to introduce a set of standardized regulations, the curriculum was still largely based on *kuttab* material (p. 46).

Beginnings of tensions between religious and modern secular visions of curriculum.
The advent of modern education to Egypt produced tensions between two visions of education: on one hand, a largely 'medieval' vision embraced and propagated by the religious establishment and scholars, and on the other hand, a more progressive vision that sought the separation of church and state. As illustrated, the seeds of this schism were sown in the 19th century, especially since Ismail's reign (1863-1879) (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938). While these tensions mainly manifested around debates surrounding curricular content and pedagogical approaches, they have also manifested in the resistance of the religious establishment against attempts to standardize and create a unified teacher preparation system across Al-Azhar and other institutions (Nessim, 1984, p. 230). The permeation of that religious-based discourse in the public space, and those ongoing negotiations with the modernization process meant that the official curricular content – despite attempts to secularize it - continued to be largely founded on religious-based worldviews and epistemologies, as I illustrate in the following sections.

The British Occupation and Constitutional Monarchy (1882-1952): Conflicting Approaches to Inclusive Access to Education
By the time the British occupation arrived in Egypt in 1882 there was already a strong appreciation of the value of good education among many Egyptians (Mitchell, 1991). For

instance, pointing to the growing realization of the significance and value of modern education among Egyptians, Mitchell (1991) reminds us that among the key demands proposed by Ahmed 'Urabi military officers' movement to Tawfik in 1881 was a new educational system that would fulfill the promise of a "good education" (p. 132). Such demands arguably echoed a general public perception that the successive rulers since Mehmed Ali had either solely focused on military education, or on the expansion of modern education catered largely to serve foreign communities living in Egypt, to the neglect of a modernized, high quality, and accessible public education for ordinary Egyptians. Thus, this period was defined by tensions between opposing visions vis-à-vis access to education: the British held a narrow vision that confined access of education to local elites, whereas the Constitutional Monarchy seemed more committed to expanding that access to the wider public.

To illustrate, despite the arguably growing public awareness of the importance of quality modern education, the British occupation actually took steps that were counter to this desire, including abolishing free public education (Farag, 2012, p. 80; Sayed, 2006, pp. 25-26). Similar to the preceding ruling regimes, the British occupation saw education as a machine that would produce the skilled civil servants, peasants, and artisans who would enable it to effectively administer the country and its resources (Russell, 2001).

By raising fees in government schools, the British occupation ensured that educational institutions were restricted to the economic elite through which they could develop their desired civil servants (Russell, 2001, p. 51). This vision effectively translated into rendering education highly inaccessible and prohibitively expensive to lower segments of the socio-economic ladder (Cochran, 1986, p. 19). Generally speaking, the advent of the British occupation ushered in the beginnings of an institutionalization of an inequitable educational system that stifled any significant social mobility. This vision, which created a highly segregated "two-tiered

educational system", coincided with the Egyptian economic elite's interests helping it to maintain its privileges, and to avoid the "mixing of social classes" (Russell, 2001, p. 51).

In response to a growing public awareness and debates that problematized this increasingly inequitable system among Egyptians, the Constitutional Monarchy period (1922-1952) - ending with King Farouk's ouster - witnessed a significant expansion in the number of students enrolled in schools, especially in the 1930s and 1940s. For instance, there was a significant increase in enrollment across all levels of education (primary, preparatory, secondary, and higher): in 1926 primary education had approximately 210,123 students and in 1946 had 1,039,177 (Gershoni and Jankowski, 2002, p. 13), and between 1940 and 1952, primary education enrollment nearly doubled (Cochran, 1986, p. 33). Additionally, the right to free public education was officially inscribed in the Egyptian constitution, introducing compulsory primary education in the 1930s; however, in reality, limited resources still impeded the full development, especially of "the public education system" (Farag, 2012, p. 80).

As a continuation of those same efforts, Hyde (1978) points out that in 1949, during King Farouk's reign, there was an "abolition of primary-school fees, including payment for school books, materials and school meals" (pp. 3-4); and in 1951, another law was passed stipulating that basic education was both "compulsory and free" (p. 4). Epitomizing this general direction, in 1950, prominent Egyptian intellectual Taha Husayn, the then minister of education, made his famous proclamation that education is like "water and air, the right of every citizen" (Sayed, 2006, p. 27). However, it was not until the advent of Nasser to power that there was a full opportunity to adopt and more aggressively apply free education for the masses of Egyptians, as part of serving his Pan-Arab Socialist vision.

While these socio-economic gaps might have long existed before the British occupation, perhaps it is the modern educational institution and the opportunities it was perceived to offer to those who had access to it that gave larger masses of Egyptians such a growing sense of

awareness of and unease with that inequitable system. These negative sentiments against the inequitable educational system would have been further exacerbated by general public tensions with the British occupation, which were further fed by efforts of independence movements. Those would have included organized independence efforts led by the secular nationalistic Wafd Party, as well as the more religious-based resistance movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Both of those had independence from the British as a common goal, despite their very different visions of the country's cultural identity and its possible post-colonial future.

Curriculum under the British occupation and Constitutional Monarchy.
The British occupation approached education as a site to produce the technocrats or what Starrett (1998) describes as "indigenous leaders who would consent foreign influence", and who could help the British administer and control the country's resources (p. 46). Similar to the type of citizen Mehmed Ali's and subsequent rulers' schools attempted to produce, the British occupation sought to continue to produce "passive people who took orders well", albeit with the minor difference that the British focused on teaching English and emphasizing preparedness for civil service positions as opposed to military ones (Cochran, 1986, p. 13). Consequently, some subject matters that would possibly instill critical thinking skills, such as "ethics; economics; philosophy, ancient or modern; and Arabic and European literature", were excluded from curricula (Cochran, 1986, p. 13). The British also mostly hired British teachers, which meant that subject matters such as history, geography, and mathematics had to be taught in English (Russell, 2001, p. 54).

In response to the general public discontent with the British neglect of Arabic as a language of instruction and subject matters such as religious studies, the ruling Egyptian elite demanded that more curricular content by taught in Arabic and place a "greater emphasis on Egyptian history"; thus, in 1907 a compromise was reached to use more Arabic in teaching, and to dedicate more time to "religious and moral instruction", and "Arabic language and Islamic

history" (Russell, 2001, p. 53). The British effectively hailed the emphasis on teaching subject matters such as religious studies in schools as a "practical instruction in the principles and religious history of Islam" (Starrett, 1998, p. 47). Russell (2001) offers a possible explanation for that potentially confusing positive reception by the British arguing that, while it appeased Egyptians by allowing them to "study their non-ancient history in a more intensive course of religion", it was nonthreatening to the British occupation, allowing it to continue "to teach history and geography classes with their empire as the central narrative" (p. 53).

Importantly, Russell (2001) argues that the British were able to maintain their occupation through reinforcing "submission" embedded in the religious studies curriculum and through essentializing "British hegemony", especially through history and geography curricula (p. 54). Similarly, Mitchell (1991) had argued that, "through its textbooks, school teachers, universities, newspapers", the British occupation succeeded to "penetrate and colonize local discourse" (p. 171). However, in contrast to Russell's and Mitchell's arguments, Starrett (1998) contends that the British interfered very little to change curricular content (p. 47). Generally speaking, how the British occupation might have actually attempted to revise curricula to promote its own ideologies and consolidate control is a generally understudied question in the literature and merits further textual analyses.[13]

Largely in response to the British occupation, in the 1920s and 1930s the Egyptianist ideological orientation was able to influence textbooks and curricula; according to Gershoni and

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[13] Based on other scholars' analyses (e.g., Di Capua, 2009), I agree with Starrett (1998) that the British did little to effectively meddle in curricular content. I base this observation on some of my own archival analysis of Egyptian history textbooks (e.g., Abdou, 2018). To illustrate, in referring to the historical narrative of Ahmed 'Urabi, as Di Capua (2009) explains, 'Urabi was presented in a positive light, even sometimes at the expense of criticizing some key figures of the Mehmed Ali dynasty, including Ismail and Tawfik which was the case in textbooks of the early 1900s (p. 175). If there were strong British influences, we would have expected a removal of positive references to 'Urabi, since positive depictions of him negate the raison d'être of the British occupation, which are often predicated on the motive to protect foreign communities living in Egypt from chaos caused by 'Urabi's uncompromising stances against Tawfik.

Jankowski (1986), a 1937 civics textbook explained that "the Arabs (like the Turks) arrived in Egypt as conquerors… they blended into the original local population, the Copts, and out of this mixture was formed a single nation, the Egyptian nation" (p. 155). Importantly, as discussed earlier, this territorial nationalistic project entailed a revisionist approach to "Egyptian historiography" narrating it through a purely territorial lens (Gershoni & Jankowski, 1986, p. 150). This orientation arguably had its foundations laid earlier through the state's support of the study of Egyptology and its encouragement of foreign-sponsored archeological expeditions, which spilled over into pedagogical influences as well. For instance, in the late 1800s, Ahmed Kamal (1849-1923) – widely acknowledged as the "father of Egyptian Egyptology" - created a specialized department within the Egyptian teachers' college to prepare teachers to teach "ancient Egyptian and civilization" (Haikal, 2003, p. 125). Thus, we could infer that teachers were also generally well versed in teaching ancient Egyptian history, which is arguably the bedrock of this territorial nationalistic ideology (as opposed to supranationalist ideologies that identify Egypt's cultural identity as one that is significantly and fundamentally defined by and shared with the identity of other 'Arab' and/or 'Muslim' *ummas* or communities that lie beyond Egypt's territorial borders).[14]

The Egyptianist orientation and its influences on curricula were soon to be challenged and from none other than the emerging religious-based Islamic conception of Egypt's identity emerging in the 1930s. To illustrate, Gershoni and Jankowski (2002) refer to two memorandums by the Islamic Guidance Society to the MOE, issued in 1932 and 1935, to criticize Egyptian

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[14] To illustrate the influence of this Egyptianist orientation on students at the time, Colla (2007) points to the strong ancient Egyptian themes that emerge in Naguib Mahfouz's and Sayyid Qutb's early writings to argue that they were the product of an educational system "steeped in the lessons of Pharaonist pedagogy" and literary culture that shaped curricula of the 1920s (pp. 238-239). Notably, Nobel Prize Laureate Mahfouz maintained his loyalty to that Egyptianist thread and variations of it throughout his long literary career, while Qutb – eventually becoming a key founder of the Muslim Brotherhood movement – later denounced ancient Egypt as an age of ignorance (*Jahiliyya*), "an accusation he hurled against Egyptian and European modernity alike" (p. 238).

history education, proposing a "curricular reorientation" towards Arab and Islamic history, which should be the "most important component in [Egyptian students'] national consciousness" (p. 88). The emergence of this competing religious-based ideology could explain why the numerous calls for the "secularization" of curricula in the 1930s had a relatively limited impact (Starrett, 1998, p. 71). Additionally, secular Egyptianist intellectuals seem to have pragmatically avoided treading into this highly divisive territory, thus, avoiding proposing the abolishment of religious education or secularizing curricula (Starrett, 1998).

In 1949, some efforts were made – although unsuccessful - to introduce a unified national curriculum (Starrett, 1998). Those attempts go back to as early as 1934, when the government started requiring foreign schools to teach Arabic to all their students, and to cover standard subjects such as the MOE's "civics, history, geography, and Arabic" curricula; however, such measures were not fully enforced until the Nasser era (Cochran, 1986, p. 29).

The Nasser Era: Expansion of Free Education, and Ideological Indoctrination, for the Masses

Nasser's and the Egyptian military's advent to power came at a historic moment shaped by several global changes that had their strong influences on Egypt. Externally, the emergence of the Soviet Union and the United States as two rival powers allowed Nasser to negotiate the two powers, and to eventually side with the Soviet Union and its ideological inclinations. His time was also marked with a growing anticolonial sentiments and successful liberation movements from European powers across much of the global South. Internally, the educational sector was also shaped by a continued and growing awareness among Egyptians of the importance of modern education, and ongoing public debates around the importance of rendering it accessible to all, as illustrated above.

With his strong leftist-leaning socialist agenda in governing, which was reflected on education, Nasser's era witnessed an unprecedented expansion of the public educational system

to include the poor, consolidating a strong centralization and unification of educational administration and curricula (Cochran, 1986, pp. 41-42; Farag, 2012, pp. 80-81). Nasser's extension of education to the masses was meant to serve as a vehicle "to promote the development of Egyptian patriotism" (Cochran, 1986, pp. 41-42). Guided by the principles of pan-Arabism and socialism, this education more specifically aimed at instilling "pride in the greater Arab nation" and preparing students for life in "a cooperative, democratic and socialist society" (Starrett, 1998, p. 78). In short, education continued to shape the masses to serve the ruling regime's project, which during Nasser's era was one of embracing a "socialist ideology" and preparing to "participate in the national cause of territorial sovereignty and the fight against foreign colonial threats" (Sayed, 2006, p. 30).

In addition to offering free education for all, Nasser's regime guaranteed jobs for all graduates of public higher education institutions; this served the regime's agenda to "gain middle-class support" and the country's "petite-bourgeoisie", while positioning those institutions as vehicles for equity and "social mobility" (Abd-Rabou, 2016, p. 55). Free education was also expanded to reach doctorate level students, including students from other Arab and Muslim nations (Cochran, 1986; Sayed, 2006). Despite these ambitious visions, the educational system was deprived of the needed resources that were depleted in the various wars the nation had entered into under Nasser's leadership, such as the Yemeni civil war, and the detrimental defeat suffered by the Egyptian army in the 1967 war against Israel (Cochran, 1986, p. 46).

In addition to representing a turning point in unifying and expanding a national public education and consolidating the state's control over it, Nasser's era was also a turning point in terms of bringing religious institutions - including Al-Azhar university and its primary and secondary Islamic educational system - under the MOE's control. The changes also stipulated that the head of Al-Azhar be appointed directly by the Egyptian president (Hyde, 1978, p. 154), a practice that has continued since then. The state's control extended to the Coptic community,

requiring that the election of a new pope be approved directly by the president (Ibrahim, 2015).

Efforts to consolidate the state's control over all facets of political, economic, and social life in

Egypt included abolishing political parties and violently suppressing opposition through

intimidation and imprisonment of dissidents. This included the suppression of the Muslim

Brotherhood movement, executing its leader Sayed Qutb in 1966 (Gohar, 2008, p. 179).

Under Nasser, the curriculum continued to reflect the tension and schism between the

various visions, including the religious and secular. Despite its strong promotion of an Arab

Socialism project – supposedly inclusive of non-Muslim minorities - the Nasser regime cannot

be said to have successfully addressed the influences of the religious-based discourse on the

public sphere in any fundamental way. In fact, in response to the thesis that curricular content

became more secular and inclusive, prominent historians such as Abdel-Malek (1968) had gone

as far as blaming the Nasser regime for issues that clearly put this supposedly secular or

inclusive vision in question. For instance, Abdel-Malek (1968) argued that textbook revisions

during Nasser's rule included "completely ignoring six centuries of Coptic history" (p. 261).

Other scholars have made similar claims (e.g., Hasan, 2003; Van-Doorn-Harder, 2005), as will

be discussed below.[15]

Curriculum under Nasser.
Fulfilling Nasser's vision outlined above necessitated the nationalization of the

educational system and consolidating power over its institutions, curricular content, and

standardized assessments, as will be discussed further below.

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[15] Such an entanglement of a supra-nationalist culturally and linguistically-based 'Pan-Arab identity' with the supra-nationalist religious-based 'Islamic identity', renders the former less inclusive of non-Muslim Arabic-speaking minorities. This entanglement of the two does not seem to be unique to the Nasserist regime but common among other secular Pan-Arab projects. For instance, in Iraq, the Baa'thists - despite their strong ideological commitment to Arab secularism – ruled, "with a worldview that was rooted in Islamic values" as clearly reflected in their school curricula (Rohde, 2013, p. 715).

A unified national curriculum.

Prior to Nasser's time - as was explained in previous sections of this chapter - Cochran (1986) notes, it was common that wealthier Egyptians who graduated from foreign schools would be well-versed in "the history, customs and the language of another country without attaining proficiency in Arabic" (p. 43). As a result, after the 1956 tripartite aggression against Egypt, the government "Egyptianized" all foreign schools, issuing Law No. 160 (1958) which decreed that Egyptian students be tested by "a new local examination" (what came to be known as the Egyptian General Secondary Certificate or *Thanaweyya 'Amma*) (Cochran, 1986, p. 152).[16] Importantly, that law mandated that all schools and teachers follow those national curricula closely, so as to prepare for this newly introduced standardized national examination (Cochran, 1986, p. 170). This domination of national standardized assessments, which emphasized rote memorization of curricular content, continued during the Sadat era and subsequent eras. This clearly placed the emphasis on instruction and preparation for national examinations as opposed to "learning how to apply knowledge" (Cochran, 1986, p. 63).

Curricular revisionism towards a new Arab and socialist identity.

The advent to power by the Free Officers in July 1952 through a popular military coup d'état marked a clear shift not only in the whole educational system, but also in the curricular content, which was revised to embody an explicit propaganda narrative that promoted an Arab cultural identity and a socialist ideology. Fundamentally, the historical narrative was revised to present all past revolts and events in a "teleological fashion that inevitably led to only one possible concluding event (the July Revolution)" (Di Capua, 2001, p. 93).

In his longitudinal analysis of the construction of the nation in history textbooks between the early 1950s and early 2000s, Botros (2012) detects a prevalent militaristic perspective in

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[16] The tripartite aggression by Israel, France, and Britain against Egypt in 1956 was mainly triggered by Nasser's unilateral nationalization of the Suez Canal.

Nasser era textbooks, which - in an effort to legitimize and essentialize a central role for the military in society - projected that perspective on various historical narratives, including ancient Egyptian history. For instance, the ancient act of unifying southern and northern Egypt was narrated in ways that implied strong similarities and parallels to the Egypto-Syrian unity under the United Arab Republic in the 1950s. To further confer legitimacy to the military as the defender of oppressed peoples, the Nasser era curricula "underscored the fact that the Arab countries were all sufferers from occupation by Britain, France or Italy" (Cochran, 1986, p. 50). Consolidating that militaristic narrative, the Nasser regime introduced military courses to be taught alongside the regular curriculum (Cochran, 1986). In addition to introducing "military education", the Nasser regime's measures included recruiting students to serve as "patrol officers" (Sayed, 2006, p. 30).

Similarly, Nasser era curricula were found to further emphasize an Arab—and by extension Muslim— cultural identity at the expense of other identities (Brand, 2014; Meital, 2006), where the ancient Egyptian era and the "advent of Islam and Arab culture" were given the most attention and positioned as the most significant eras and events in the country's history (Meital, 2006, p. 255). This essentialization of an Arab cultural identity clearly emerges in narrating the history of the Arab Muslim conquest of Egypt, which some Nasser era textbooks paint as a celebrated event marking a "long-awaited reunification between Copts and their Arab Muslim brethren" (Abdou, 2018, p. 11). In terms of the socialist ideology, the socialist perspective permeated Nasser era curricula. This included some religious studies textbooks' stated objective being to prepare "a virtuous youth, who believes in his Lord and in his country, even as he works for the benefit of his society on the bases of socialism, democracy and cooperation, all things called for and affirmed by religion" (Starrett, 1998, pp. 84-85).

Beginnings of Islamization of curricula?

In addition to an Arab-centered narrative, scholars have argued that it was under Nasser's regime that more Islamic content was added to curricula. In her review of Nasser era textbooks, Brand (2014), argues that, as part of the "centrality of Egypt's Arabo-Islamic identity to the narrative", a 1954 textbook made bold statements about how "Egypt had been transformed into an Arab Islamic homeland (*watan*), and Egyptians became part of a large family, the Islamic Arab people (*umma*)" (p. 38). Similarly, Hasan (2003) argues that it was during Nasser's era that "extracts of the Koran and poems in praise of the Prophet Muhammad as well as sections on Islamic history" were forced into various subject matters (p. 171). Van Doorn-Harder (2005) also argues that it was around the mid-1950s that curricula introduced Quranic verses that all students, regardless of their religious background, were expected to learn (p. 26). In his textual analysis, Botros (2012) finds traces of that Islamic tone in Nasser era history textbooks, revealing a strong Muslim metaphysical and transcendental tone that implied that some of the ancient Egyptian military achievements and expansionism were in fact "granted by Allah", thus granting those ancient military events "religious legitimacy as jihad" (p. 118).

While Islamic content might have relatively increased, it is important to note that such a dominance of a Muslim tone and perspective has existed long before Nasser's curricula. In a recent analysis of Egyptian history textbooks, I have found that the transcendental nature and the extensive use of Quranic verses and Islamic referents have effectively existed in Egyptian curricula as early as the history textbooks of the 1890s (Abdou, 2018). This should come as no surprise when we refer to the earlier discussion in this chapter depicting the close connections and tensions between a religious-based curriculum and a modern secular curriculum, which continue to inform debates around the role of public education and the content of its curricula.

While an increase in Islamic content might not have been clear during Nasser's time, what remains uncontestable is that Nasser's curricula introduced a clear propaganda-heavy,

exclusionary narrative that posits 'us' versus 'them', a template which could be easily deployed

beyond the Arab-centered narrative to an Islamic-centered narrative, or other exclusionary

ideologies. Although it did not fully replace it, the promotion of an Arab-Islamic identity came to

sideline and weaken the strong Egyptianist orientation in textbooks. For instance, starting in the

1950s, curricula removed the emphases on fundamental aspects of cultural continuity among

modern day Egyptians across religious and ethnic divides based on their common ancient

heritage, which curricula of the 1930s and 1940s had underscored (Abdou, 2017b).

Thus, while sharing some continuities with earlier eras, the Nasser era marked clear

changes and shifts not only in its expansion of access to free public education to Egyptian masses

and consolidating the centralization of the curriculum development and management process, but

also in making a clear shift in the curricular content. Most significantly, the shift in the curricular

content was towards a stronger essentialization of an Arab cultural identity –by extension

continuing to valorize a Muslim identity, as some scholars have argued – normalizing Socialism

and its egalitarian ideals, while offering more focus on peoples' agency and historical struggles

against foreign powers and imperialism. While the root causes of Islamization might have

emerged during Nasser's time, political Islam as an ideology was further emboldened and more

actively encouraged under Sadat's rule (Hasan, 2003). This turn was more clearly captured with

the increased religiosity of society that manifested in various ways, such as the gradual and

steady increase in the number of women who took on the Muslim *hijab* or *niqab*, emboldened by

further Sadat era discourses and discursive practices, which will be discussed further below.

The Sadat Era: Resurgence of Religious-based Education and an Economically Segregated Schooling System

Shaped by the Cold War and siding with the US against Nasser's earlier Soviet allies,

Sadat (1970-1981) adopted a capitalistic, free market orientation that aimed to foster economic

growth, often termed the "open door policy" (*infitah*) to indicate the country openness towards

foreign investors and trading with the world (Cochran, 1986, p. 54). This policy, without the

necessary social welfare policies and infrastructure in place, resulted in a return to a growing gap

in terms of the quality of education offered. Those "unable" or "unwilling" to be educated in

foreign or private schools had to attend the poor quality "overcrowded government schools"

which eventually led to low skilled government-guaranteed jobs (Cochran, 1986, pp. 54-55).

Thus, in a return to the pre-1952 dichotomy, the educational system as opposed to being an

equalizing force – as has been arguably briefly experienced under the Nasser regime –

reproduced social and economic inequalities (Ali, 1984, pp. 186-188). In his historical analysis

of the evolution and expansion of private language schools under Sadat, Ali (1984) points to how

education only served privileged families maintain their class-based status (p. 188).

Large sizes of classrooms, lack of motivation due to economic pressures, and mediocre

salaries, together meant that teachers underperformed and sought other income-generating

opportunities, including private tutoring, leading students who could not afford to take private

tutoring lessons to drop out. Thus, the Sadat era was also marked by an unprecedented growth in

the numbers of school dropouts (Cochran, 1986, p. 59).

Additionally, the Sadat era witnessed a strong shift towards emphasizing the country's

Islamic identity. For instance, in his speeches, Sadat often declared himself primarily

accountable to God, departing from Nasser's numerous declarations that his key constituents are

the Egyptian masses (*al-sha'b*) (Brand 2014; Hyde, 1978; Sobhy, 2015). Sadat embraced and

articulated "a renewed commitment to Islamic symbols" in policy and public discourse (Starrett,

1998, p. 80). More tangibly, he took some bold steps to institutionalize his religious orientation,

such as revising the Egyptian constitution to stipulate that Sharia (Islamic law) was "the" main

source of Egyptian legislation, and not simply "a" source of Egyptian legislation, as was

previously stated (e.g., Ibrahim, 2015, p. 2587).[17] Additionally, Sadat "gradually released" several controversial key political Islamist figures who had been imprisoned and persecuted under Nasser (Gohar, 2008, p. 179).

Sadat's policies included supporting Al-Azhar's religious education system, allowing it to expand both in Egypt and beyond (Hyde, 1978, p. 156), resulting in a 70% increase in enrollment of Al-Azhar's primary institutions alone (Starrett, 1998, p. 80). More strategically, Islamists were allowed greater access to "education committees in parliament" and "teacher institutes" where they had larger influences and enrollment (Sobhy, 2015, p. 811). Sadat's support to Islamist groups and their infiltration into the educational sector, growing dissatisfaction with opportunity gaps and mediocre public services, were all factors that helped fuel "a resurgence of patriotic religious fundamentalism" that clearly reflected on the education sector (Cochran, 1986, p. 74).

This era also witnessed the emergence of private Islamic schools; while having to abide by the national curriculum, these schools aimed to create "a more Islamic- as opposed to Egyptian or secular – identity" (Herrera, 2006, p. 35). In universities, to combat Nasser's socialist legacy, measures included empowering Islamic student organizations to combat leftist student groups (Starrett, 1998; Tadros, 2014). These clear shifts towards a decidedly religious-based discourse had some influences on curriculum, as will be discussed below.

Curriculum under Sadat.
Generally speaking, especially in comparison to the scholarly attention that Nasser era curricula received, little detailed textual analyses have been conducted on Sadat era curricula. Contrary to what many might expect, that little analysis indicates that curricular content was not

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[17] The celebrated Egyptian Constitution of 1923 did not mention Sharia as a source of the legal system. However, this did not necessarily mean an institutionalization of an equal or inclusive citizenship during that Egyptian Liberal era. For instance, in the 1920s and the 1930s, Copts - dissatisfied by their disproportionately limited access to public positions - called for a quota system to remedy this "imperfect Egyptian citizenship" (Botiveau, 1998, p. 114).

necessarily revised in any significant manner to emphasize the Islamic identity of the country. Perhaps this is an indication that earlier textbooks carried an already implicit Islamic orientation, thus not necessitating substantial revisions or changes. Some of that analysis points to how the shift to a free market capitalist ideology has reflected on curricular content, including a decline in references to "the declared principles of the July Revolution of social justice, anti-imperialism and Arab nationalism" (Sobhy, 2015, p. 810).

To elaborate, my own archival research - in which I analyzed the place of Copts within social studies textbooks (Abdou, 2018) - did not reveal drastic changes in the content or tone that might have otherwise been expected with the advent of the Sadat regime. In narrating the country's history, the 1970s and later textbooks did represent Islam as superior, and the Christian era and its contributions as largely obsolete and bygone. Additionally, beginning in the 1970s, textbooks started more clearly ignoring or glossing over sectarian or religious tensions, while emphasizing narratives of national unity and peaceful co-existence amongst Egyptians (Abdou, 2018, pp. 488-489). However, emphasizing the prominence of the country's Muslim identity had already started in the early 1960s textbooks under Nasser which had, for instance, emphasized that "the arrival of Islam meant that Egyptians turned a new page by carrying the flag of Islam and playing a crucial role in promoting its values, just as they had done before with their sacrifices for Christianity" (Abdou, 2018, p. 492).

While curriculum did not necessarily reflect much change, the Sadat regime did have a vision for education, especially religious education, in developing docile and submissive Egyptian citizens. As Starrett (1998) explains, with the backdrop of the 1977 bread riots against the Sadat regime and alarmed by those popular uprisings, Sadat decreed a revision of curricula that ensures a "new style" of teaching religion to overcome hatred (pp. 80-81).

Perhaps the reason why that increasingly Islamist public discourse did not materialize clearly in curricular content is that the focus was on curricular enactment not on content. Because

curricula already offered content that was Islamic-centered enough long before Sadat's era (e.g., Abdou, 2018; Hasan, 2003), propagating that discourse in schools depended more on teachers. Those Sadat era teachers – or curricular gatekeepers - would not have only been immersed in that dominant religious-based societal discourse; importantly, many of them would have graduated from Egyptian teacher colleges that were increasingly infiltrated by Islamist ideology (Herrera, 2006).

Thus, transitions between the Nasser and Sadat eras were defined by key continuities, and key changes. As illustrated, the key shift is the growing gap in the quality of education available for various socio-economic classes ushered in by Sadat's free market policies. In terms of curricular content, there seem to have been no drastic changes other than a shift from propagating socialism to a focus on free market, capitalist ideologies. In terms of continuities, the curriculum development process seems to have continued to be highly centralized and controlled by the state. Additionally, the curriculum seems to have continued to construct citizens as generally passive, albeit the Nasser era possibly offering more space for people's agency and historical struggles, but with a special focus on liberation struggles that were aimed against foreign and imperial powers.

Clearly, these efforts to construct that Egyptian citizen passivity were being contested and challenged in several spaces. Most prominently, they were contested within political Islamist-controlled spaces, which was among the very few ideologies allowed to thrive under Sadat. As outlined above, strengthening those religious-based ideologies was attempted as a strategy to suppress socialist movements, which were inspired by Nasser-era socialism. Ironically, it was those same Islamist movements - disillusioned by Sadat's policies, including his bold and proactive visit to Jerusalem and subsequently his signing of the first Arab peace treaty with Israel in 1979 - that assassinated Sadat in 1981. Thus, there clearly were fissures in the Sadat regime's attempted construction of passivity of Egyptian citizens, whereby the Islamist

movements utilized the space they had negotiated with the regime to construct spaces of protest, constructing an Egyptian Muslim subjectivity that would eventually come to strongly challenge and undermine the intended hegemony of the state.

The Mubarak Era Until the Present: Continuity with Sporadic Reform Efforts to Render Curricular Content More Inclusive

After Sadat was assassinated at the hands of extremist Islamists in 1981, vice president Hosni Mubarak became president. In reaction to the rise of Islamism and the Middle East conflict and in an attempt to maintain the sovereignty of the Egyptian state, starting in the 1990s, Mubarak emphasized basic education as a matter of "national security" (Sayed, 2006, p. 27). Under that pretext, the government took several steps to crackdown on the Islamist influence in schools and universities, further consolidating the state's security presence in educational institutions. Besides imposing stronger control on private education and Islamist civil society associations, the MOE also "removed schoolteachers advocating religious fundamentalism from their teaching jobs and transferred them to administrative jobs" (Sayed, 2006, p. 34). This 'national security' approach included "intensifying the screening and surveillance" of student-teachers in teacher colleges, in an attempt to weed out "Islamist teachers, administrators, and materials from schools" (Herrera, 2006, pp. 29-30).

Mubarak's responses to Islamism varied between strategies of direct suppression, as well as appeasement and rapprochement, but can be said to have been fraught with intimidation, tension and violence. Given space limitations I will not delve into the various turning points and the regime's various strategies in responding to Islamists and their sustained growth and popularity. Suffice to mention that their growth manifested in their control over the leadership of several strategic spaces, including professional syndicates of engineers and physicians, and winning several key parliamentary seats in the relatively credible 2005 elections (Gohar, 2008).

Despite the state's vigilance and concern vis-à-vis the continued growth of Islamist groups, during Mubarak's era religious-based education continued to expand, whether in its traditional and institutional Al-Azhar form or through taking newer and more modern forms. In fact, under Mubarak, Al-Azhar's system continued to expand more rapidly than primary education (Starrett, 1998, p. 105). Additionally, the continued growth in numbers of "Islamist private schools and tutoring centers established in urban slums and rural areas" ensured a continued Islamist influence on a growing number of Egyptian Muslim students (Sayed, 2006, p. 33). Importantly, in the early 2000s, elitist private schools with Islamic values emerged. Those emerged in response to a growing demand among affluent Egyptian Muslim families seeking to raise their children on Muslim values, yet with modern education that prepares them to compete in the global marketplace. Herrera (2006) has critiqued those schools for "reinforcing notions of class privilege within a … rigid Islamic environment" (p. 48). In response to that phenomenon, we recently begin to witness the emergence of exclusively modern Coptic schools, similarly offering modern and international certificates, such as the International Baccalaureate.[18]

International donors, such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), played an extremely important role in expanding and reforming the public Egyptian educational system in the 1990s, along which came a strong neo-liberal ideological influence. This influence resulted in the Egyptian public system abandoning its socialist legacy and clearly embracing a discourse that approaches education as a means towards attaining economic growth, heightened productivity, and potential socio-economic mobility (Farag, 2012; Sayed, 2006).

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[18] Only recently have there been an emergence of a model of a predominantly, if not exclusively, Coptic school, as exemplified in the St. John American School Patmos. However, this remains a rare phenomenon. This could be interpreted as a reaction to these other private schools exclusively catering to Muslim students, mentioned above. In a personal interaction with the director of one of these modern schools – which is professedly based on Islamic values and guidelines and certified to offer the International Baccalaureate high school degree - she explained that the Coptic St. John American School Patmos was established in response to, and largely emulating, the model that her school represents (personal communication, June 2018).

While this departure has started during the Sadat era, it has arguably been cemented through the support of international donors and their reform efforts with the MOE in the 1990s, returning to the pre-1952 variety of educational paths, which are clearly defined and segregated "along regional and class lines" (Farag, 2012, pp. 91-92). However, despite international donors' influences, the MOE still maintains a strong centralized control over the educational system's administration, as well as curriculum development and production processes (Farag, 2012).

Similar to their pre-1950s experiences and in a continuation of Sadat's legacy, Egyptian students' educational experiences vary widely in terms of quality based on their economic status (Farag, 2012). In addition to curricula that have been widely critiqued for being obsolete or heavily reliant on rote memorization, teachers remain ill prepared. Mediocre teacher training and preparation continue to be of major concern, which defies curricular reforms that promote scientific thinking or introduce improved classroom technologies (Abdelrahman & Irby, 2016; Sayed, 2006). Given that many schools do not require that a teacher be a graduate of a teachers' college, many in-service teachers depend solely on their "on-the-job experience and on their observation of their peers" (Abdelrahman & Irby, 2016, p. 26). The issue of the lack of standardized teacher certification and pedagogical preparation has been an ongoing concern in Egypt since the early 1900s (Nessim, 1984).

There have been some very ambitious MOE plans to revamp the whole Egyptian educational system championed by the new minister of education appointed in early 2018, including his revolutionary visions to abolish some high-stake national standardized assessments, as part of the 2030 vision project and as part of reforms that the World Bank will be funding through a loan of close to half a billion US Dollars (Egypt State Information, 2018). However, despite these ambitious plans and sincere efforts, several factors allow us to predict that, under the current regime of President El-Sisi, the pedagogical approach will continue to center on rote memorization. Those factors would include the regime's commitment to discourage dissent and

maintain full control. They would also include the reality of overcrowded classrooms that discourage teacher-student interaction and debate, especially in public schools which constitute the vast majority of Egyptian schools. Additionally, it is to be expected that national security agencies will continue to play a key role, ensuring that teachers follow the scripted curricular materials closely. In reaction to the 2011 events and their aftermaths, including the ouster of Mubarak in 2011, the current regime has relegated a growing role for agencies such as the "Egyptian General Intelligence Service and the Military Intelligence" in managing the country (Khorshid, 2014, p. 227). As Abd-Rabou (2016) notes, further empowered by a popular backing and legally institutionalizing its anti-terrorism acts, the current military-backed regime under President El-Sisi has continued its heavy-handed crackdown on any forms of dissent, including youth and student-led mobilizations. Although it might be too early to judge, the very limited influence that international donors were able to exert on the actual curricular content or pedagogical approaches during the Mubarak regime (Farag, 2012), can be expected to continue to be the case under the current regime. Avoiding these politically controversial questions related to curricular content changes, international donors' funding and efforts could be expected to continue to focus on infrastructure and technological innovations.

Curriculum during the Mubarak era until the present.

The Mubarak regime until the current regime have maintained the Nasser and Sadat regimes' strong control and centralization of the curriculum development process, characterized by the continued exclusion and "lack of participation" of various bodies and stakeholders, including teachers (Abdelrahman, 2016, p. 1). In terms of the cultural identity they propagate, since the beginning of Mubarak's time until the present, curricula have continued to explicitly and implicitly celebrate the supremacy of an Arab and Muslim identity, eclipsing other cultural, ethnic and religious identities (e.g., Abdou, 2016, 2018; Atallah & Makar, 2014; Sobhy, 2015). Comparing religious studies textbooks from the mid-1970s to those of the 1980s and 1990s,

Starrett (1998) had also concluded that "though slightly different in format" they are "nearly identical in style" and content (p. 81), including their focus on offering an "easy-to-memorize list of rules that can be repeated verbatim on an examination" (p. 132).

More specifically, there continues to be either a clear omission or a highly disproportionate smaller space dedicated to the narratives of various ethnic and religious minorities, such as the Nubians (Mansour, 2017), and the Copts (Abdou, 2018; Faour, 2012; Reiss, 2004; Toronto & Eissa, 2007). In her content analysis of history, Arabic, and religious studies textbooks between 1999 and 2001, Sayed (2006) concludes that the curriculum "is unlikely to produce students with a satisfactory knowledge of their history and national heritage" (p. 113). In terms of their pedagogical approaches, a focus on rote memorization prevails: in analyzing religious studies textbooks of the 2000s, Faour (2012) concludes that they clearly demonstrate the value placed on students' recall to be able to perform well on exams (p. 5).

Before discussing the various trends shaping curriculum under Mubarak and his successors, it is worth noting that based on my analyses of recent history textbooks, I have attempted to distill the Egyptian schematic narrative template. As will be elaborated on further in Chapter 4, whereas a master narrative refers to a nation's widely circulated and accepted story, its schematic narrative template – a term coined by James Wertsch (1998) - refers to the commonly recurring narrative structure across a nation's diverse historical narrations each of which might have its "particular setting, cast of characters, dates" (Wertsch, 2004, p. 57). My analysis of the various ancient and modern historical narratives across the most recent textbooks since 2013 has suggested that the Egyptian schematic narrative template is informed by some key resilient elements, which highlight the necessary role of a human 'savior', while downplaying the role of the individual citizen or collective agency in affecting social change:

> Egyptians seek liberation from a foreign colonizer (or a leader who is allied with foreign colonizers); Egyptians eventually triumph, but foreign powers are constantly conspiring

to control the country's destiny and its resources. While Egyptian people could revolt, for them to succeed, they need a leader. That leader, or savior, is often—if not always—a strong military leader. (Abdou, 2017a, p. 85)

In addition to clearly passivating and sidelining the significance of the role of citizens, this narrative continues to be fueled by a sense of conspiracy, blaming failures on foreign powers and their interventions. This curricular content reflects a general approach to the country's nationalist historiography. For instance, Fahmy (1997) reveals how the narrative consistently blames foreign powers and their conspiracies for Egypt's failures. Thus, expectedly Mehmed Ali's defeat by European powers ignores any mention of possible "shortcomings on the part of Egyptians"; but focuses on ""external" malice and conspiracy … aimed at frustrating the Egyptian nation's attempts at development, independence and dignity" (Fahmy, 1997, p. 17). Given that background, I now turn to some key trends that have shaped curricular content and approaches of the Mubarak era until the present.

Efforts to confront Islamization of curricula.
Brand (2014) notes that, in reaction to the increased Islamist influence in society and the perceived increase in Islamic content in curricula, in 1988 some Coptic religious figures complained to the minister of education "that the Arabic language books contained many Quranic verses and asked that Quranic selections be limited to religious education textbooks" (p. 101). Similarly, in 2013, current Pope Tawadros called for Coptic history to be included in textbooks (Shaaban, 2013). While there might have been some revisions, textbooks, including social studies textbooks, still contain strong Islamic referents and long passages of Quranic religious texts, not only when narrating early Islamic history, but also when discussing good citizenship and active civic engagement (Abdou, 2016, 2018; Sobhy, 2015).

In an attempt to render curricula more balanced and less Islamized, Sayed (2006) points to some steps taken by the MOE to reform curricula so as to "convey a moderate, tolerant, and

flexible interpretation of Islam … that advocates values of cultural diversity, tolerance, social

peace, individual initiative, and hard work… and to add more knowledge about the

Coptic/Christian role in Egyptian history" (p. 35). However, despite such rhetorical commitment

that resulted in a few actual changes, Sayed (2006) points out that the continued need to appease

the influential Islamists resulted in "inconsistent and contradictory messages in the educational

process" (p. 35). This reflected on many of the educational policies and curricula which

demonstrate the clear tension between the Islamist orientation and a more "pro-Western liberal

direction" (p. 62).

This tension and contradiction also manifests in how various curricula present competing

and conflicting messages. For instance, Faour's (2012) analysis of religious studies textbooks of

the 2000s demonstrates how they clearly diminish and challenge values promoted by other

subject matters: whereas social studies textbooks emphasize the values of "freedom, social

justice, and equality of citizens", Islamic religious studies curricula remind students that

according to Sharia, non-Muslims should not be allowed to hold "senior administrative positions

in the state, such as head of state or chief of the army" (p. 7).

In that regard, the brief rule of the Muslim Brotherhood's (MB) President Mohamed

Morsi (June 2012-July 2013) did not result in (or possibly require) any significant changes in

curricula (Atallah & Makar, 2014; Sasnal, 2014). Based on their textual analyses, Atallah and

Makar (2014) conclude that despite the panic and the media campaigns claiming that the

curricula were being Islamized under the MB's leadership, there were very few – if any - actual

changes to the textbooks. As these scholars have argued, it could possibly be the lack of time that

did not allow the MB to carry out planned changes. But, Sasnal (2014) does point to a few minor

changes, which could nonetheless be indicative of the direction curricular changes would have

taken were the MB to be given more time in power. In comparing the 2012/2013 civics textbook

with earlier versions she finds that the religious references to national unity embodied by "the

Coptic cross and Quran" were removed, while a section on "political consciousness in Islam" was positioned more prominently in the textbook (Sasnal, 2014, p. 18).

Another explanation for why the MB would not have sought more curricular changes is offered by Faour (2012) who suggests that even if they would have remained in power, they would probably not have needed to introduce much changes to curricula. His logic is that the gradual Islamization of the curricula backed by the increasing Islamization of society since the end of Nasser's era had already ensured that existing curricula did not "pose any real threat" to the MB's Islamist "ideology or political strategy" (Faour, 2012, p. 14). While this might be a speculative and hypothetical argument, what is important to note here is that - as illustrated above - curricula have long been dominated by Islamic content and perspectives.

As outlined earlier especially in discussions of the growing Islamization of the public discourse and public space under Sadat, it could be inferred that even if not actively sought, curriculum developers and most importantly teachers' colleges continued to be infiltrated by strong Islamist influences (Herrera, 2006). Thus, even if curricular content had not changed in any significant way, the way curriculum was enacted in classrooms, in response to and as a product of the growing exclusionary Islamist discourse, would be clearly expected to be equally exclusionary of non-Muslim or other competing perspectives. Perhaps the infiltration of such exclusionary discourse and ideology, with its lack of tolerance towards any competing perspectives or interpretations, has clearly influenced teachers and students alike. This has been evident in some recent incidents. For instance, in a case that attracted public attention in Egypt, in 2015, some Muslim female public school students in Sohag (Southern Egypt) filed an official complaint against their Coptic history teacher for attempting to share alternative historical narratives that shed negative light on Prophet Muhammad's early history. In reaction, to preempt potential public anger against the MOE and the teacher, the MOE immediately demoted the teacher, moving him to an administrative job (Abdel-Kader, 2015).

Tensions around rendering curricula more inclusive and pluralist.

Whether serious or simply rhetorical for public consumption, starting in Mubarak's era and up to the present, there have been ongoing public debates and some efforts to rid curricula of extremist content and to introduce new subject matters that emphasize pluralism and tolerance. For instance, in response to growing Islamic extremism and infiltration of Islamist ideology – translating into acts of discrimination, violence and terrorism, especially against political figures, Copts, and women - religious education curricula were revised in the early 1990s to "promote civic values such as tolerance of the other, human rights and co-citizenship" (Leirvik, 2004, p. 232). More recently, the 2014/2015 academic year witnessed the removal of some violent historical narratives, such as those of early Muslim military leaders Saladin and 'Uqba Ibn Nafie, from textbooks (El-Sawy, 2015).

Earlier, under the Mubarak regime, in the academic year 2002/2003, the MOE had launched the mandatory curriculum on 'morals and values education' for the first three grades of primary school (Pink, 2003). This curriculum was to be "compiled by Muslim and Christian theologians attached to Al-Azhar and the Coptic Church, together with other academics" (Sayed, 2006, p. 35). In her analysis of that curriculum, Pink (2003) finds that, while it might promote values of peaceful co-existence and tolerance, with its strong emphases on "duty over rights" it still prioritizes the "interests of an authoritarian national state" (para. 20). In analyzing this same curriculum, Leirvik (2004) finds that it promotes values of "freedom, happiness, peace, solidarity, love, economic awareness, humility and tolerance", dedicating a full lesson to Muslim-Christian relations, using images that highlight the historic value of national unity between Muslims and Copts (pp. 232-233). Several scholars and activists have celebrated the introduction of this subject matter as an important step towards "democracy and pluralism" (Faour, 2012, p. 17).

This curriculum is clearly a step in the right direction. However, some of the shortcomings need to be addressed as well. For instance, regarding Muslim-Coptic relations, the curriculum adopts a celebratory tone of national unity that reflects the state's denial strategy towards sectarian tensions between Muslims and Christians (Pink, 2003). This total denial and omission of sectarian tensions and conflict is endemic across other curricula (Abdou, 2018; Sobhy, 2015).

Expectedly, in response to this relatively more inclusive ethics and moral education curriculum, Islamists voiced fears and suspicion that this subject matter might eventually replace or reduce the amount of time dedicated to religious education lessons. In a parliamentary session with the minister of education at the time, the main Islamist critiques revolved around how ethics cannot be separated from religion, and how teaching the two separately might lead to a loss of identity among students (Pink, 2003). With the beginnings of the 2015/2016 academic year, the 'morals, values and citizenship' textbooks were not made available in schools. Offering no further explanation, and thus leaving room for wide speculation, national security agencies announced that the reason was that these textbooks did not follow the general guidelines and requirements agreed upon by the three concerned parties: the MOE, Al-Azhar, and the Coptic Church (Al-Naba' Al-Watani, 2015). Additionally, to ease the ongoing tensions and the accusations about the real motives behind introducing that subject matter, the MOE found itself compelled to publicly reiterate that it had no intention for this subject matter to replace religious education curricula (Aly, 2017).[19]

Debates and discussions around that subject matter further illustrate ongoing tensions between secular forces, on one hand, and Islamist elements (backed by the deeper religiosity and social conservatism embedded in the wider society), on the other hand. They also reveal the

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[19] The MOE had announced that three revised textbooks that aim to promote values such as peace, love, tolerance, and collaboration are to be launched effective the academic year 2018/2019 (Middle East News Agency, 2017).

definitive role that national security agencies play in reviewing, approving, or rejecting curricula. Clearly, the approach to education as 'a matter of national security' continues, potentially eclipsing other priorities, such as teaching about inclusive citizenship or promoting critical thinking.

The historic 2011 and 2013 events in curricula.
Given the vast polarizing effects that the massive protests that ousted Mubarak in 2011 and then Morsi in 2013 had among Egyptians, there has been much controversy about how the 2011 and 2013 uprisings should be narrated in curricula. Analyses of social studies textbooks between 2011 and 2014 reveal how the 2011 uprisings narrative has been revised to position the military in the center of the narrative and introduce it as the guardian of the revolution and the will of the Egyptian people throughout history (Abdou, 2017a; Sasnal, 2014). In her analysis of history textbooks between 2011 and 2014, Sasnal (2014) concludes that a strong "nationalistic and militaristic" perspective continues to dominate the narrative (p. 19). As expected, key changes included the removal of references to ousted President Hosni Mubarak and former first lady Suzanne Mubarak (Sasnal, 2014, pp. 9-10).

Indicative of the current regime's approach to controversy and dialogue, the authorities have decided to effectively omit any mentions of either of the 2011 or the 2013 events in new editions of textbooks (Hussein, 2017). This was a necessary step the regime had to take to avoid public debates around the political manipulation of curricular content, since, as Sasnal (2014) reminds us, these recent events are more difficult to manipulate successfully by the regime since they "happened in front of [the students'] own eyes" (p. 20).

Ongoing tensions and curricular compromises between the religious and secular.
The way that successive regimes have dealt with these tensions varies, but one can confidently say that any efforts had to clearly appease the religious establishment and ensure its loyalty, as well as appease the public opinion and the socially conservative and religious

Egyptian public. During Nasser's and Sadat's eras, most of the efforts of unifying a national

educational system focused on less controversial questions such as "the age of admission to

secondary school and procedures for standardizing other post primary studies" (Cochran, 1986,

p. 27). This has continued during Mubarak's era; thus, according to Herrera and Torres (2006)

this "long-standing dilemma" continues to manifest in how Egyptian education aims to both

"raise children in the proper Islamic way" while in the same time "educating them in principles

of secular nationalism and preparing them for employment in global markets" (p. 13). As a

result, this supposedly secular education has in reality "encouraged rather than discouraged

attachment to Islamic culture, contrary to the expectations of educational theorists who

encouraged schooling as a remedy to "traditional" mentalities" (Starrett, 1998, p. 91).

Consequently, what Cochran (1986) wrote in the mid-1980s seems to still be relevant and

resonant today:

> The conflict in the current educational system can be traced to the religious and secular
> power struggle within Egyptian society. On one hand are the religious leaders with a
> history of representing absolute knowledge to the populace and the government. On the
> other hand are the secular leaders and their specialized technical knowledge. (pp. 145-
> 146)

Curricular influences on Egyptian students' understandings of history.
We might want to conclude from those textual analyses that Egyptian students have

internalized the lack of agency, passivity, and docility that curricula have been said to propagate.

However, these would all be based on mere speculations since no studies, thus far, have

examined that question more closely and in a scholarly manner. Among the few exceptions is

Sasnal's (2014) study, which, in addition to textual analyses of 2011-2013 textbooks, offers

some anecdotal insights based on some interviews the author conducts with young Egyptians.

Based on those interviews, she confirms that students have passively internalized that dominant

narrative, concluding that the overly nationalistic and propaganda-driven tone of curricula has

resulted in "a certain inferiority complex, diminished critical thinking, and distorted Egyptian

history" (p. 19). However, other studies showed how students of Egyptian public schools, even in the years prior to the 2011 events, were showing clear signs of discontent with the ruling regime (Sobhy, 2012; 2015), although - given the repressive and restrictive public space - that frustration had not necessarily translated into organized political action, as will be elaborated on further in Chapter 8.

However, arguably, the 2011 events and their aftermaths – which young Egyptians played a central role in initiating and sustaining - have allowed many young Egyptians to deconstruct that dominant historical narrative and question its authority. We have witnessed that in how young Egyptians in general have openly challenged the police in January 2011, then defied the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), and how Coptic youth specifically defied the authority of the Coptic Church when they felt it contradicted their moral compass and sense of justice (e.g., Tadros, 2013), as will be discussed further in the next chapter[20].

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I sought to offer a survey of the evolution of modern Egyptian education, with a focus on how curricula might have been influenced by the successive regimes and competing ideologies. I illustrated how, despite some efforts for the educational system and its curricula to be more inclusive, it continues to promote a dominant Arab Muslim identity. While still maintaining an Egyptianist tone, this dominant narrative and approach has clearly excluded others, most notably the largest non-Muslim minority in Egypt and the region: the Copts.

Importantly, along with some of the ideological shifts and their reflections on curricula, there were clear continuities. Among the clear continuities is that Muslim religious texts and perspectives remain an integral part of various subject matters in the national curriculum. Similarly, religious educational institutions, embodied by Al-Azhar, continue to enroll and

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[20] The SCAF ruled the country intermittently after the outset of Mubarak until the election of President Morsi (2011-2012).

graduate a sizeable number of Egyptian Muslim students. Among the continuities as well is that pedagogical approach to curricula still emphasizes rote memorization as opposed to inquiry-based learning that promotes critical thinking. The continuities also include how education has generally failed at promoting social mobility or being an equalizing force in society. While a relatively brief disruption might have been experienced during Nasser's rule, which positioned public education as a vehicle for social mobility, Sadat's rule reinstated a highly unequal educational system. Thus, the educational system continues until the present to reproduce power asymmetries and maintain the concentration of power and access to the country's resources in the hands of the privileged few.

Similarly, there have been some important changes and turning points. For instance, Nasser's era formed a key turning point in terms of a more centralized educational system and a more focused effort to indoctrinate citizens to the regime's Arab Socialism project. Similarly, Sadat's era marked a turning point with its ushering in of a breach of the Nasser socialist contract, revoking key commitments such as securing jobs or offering free public education and universal health care. It was then Mubarak's embrace of neoliberal policies - which the current regime seems to be continuing to build upon - which consolidated such departure.

Chapter 3: The Formation of Coptic Subjectivities Within Formal and Non-formal Educational Spaces

In January 2015, two years after assuming the leadership of the country by ousting Islamist president Mohamed Morsi, President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi was the first Egyptian president to ever attend the Coptic Christmas Mass (Aljazeera, 2015; Kingsley, 2015). Two years later, in January 2017, El-Sisi vowed his continuous support for the Copts as partners in one nation, promising to build them the largest Cathedral in the whole of Africa and the Middle East (Egypt Independent, 2017, para. 3). In January 2018, President El-Sisi, for the fourth consecutive year, made sure to attend the Coptic Orthodox Christmas Mass, this time taking place at the partially inaugurated new grand Cathedral (El-Shamy, 2018). In all these occasions President El-Sisi made sure to go beyond the common polite greetings to make some bold statements about the importance of inclusive citizenship and respect for diversity as called for by all religions.

Especially when it comes to the Copts, El-Sisi has been a man of action, including rebuilding numerous churches that were demolished during and after Morsi's rule. While welcomed by large segments of the Coptic community, however, many Copts seem to feel that little has changed to address root causes of discrimination, including the fact that very few Copts ever make it to "the higher echelons of government, particularly in the security establishment" and that full and fair legal settlements are nearly non-existent in most cases where Copts were particularly targeted, forcibly displaced or killed (Kingsley, 2015, para. 7).

Some can dismiss those as political acts aimed by the regime to simply appease and ensure the loyalty of an important bloc that has traditionally supported secularism, and that has more recently – along with other secularists across the country - vocally opposed an Islamist rule. However, these commendable and desirable gestures can also be seen as an important point of departure where the new president has chosen to transcend the general appeasement rhetoric

to more concrete actions, such as rebuilding demolished churches or building the new grand Cathedral. Thus, the picture is less straightforward and more complex when it comes to the question of Copts and their place in society. Generally speaking, the Coptic question is fraught with tension and suspicion, since researchers and analysts working on it are often accused of negatively affecting national unity and the nation's basic fabric (Sedra, 2009).

In the previous chapter I presented a brief history of modern Egyptian education and the influences of competing ideologies on Egyptian curricula. While the previous chapter attempted to offer an understanding of the competing ideologies that shaped Egyptian students' understanding of their cultural identities and their roles as citizens, this chapter focuses on Coptic students. In addition to being part of the same educational system along with Egyptian students of other religious backgrounds, a majority of Coptic students arguably have other sites that shape how they understand their history, cultural identity, and role in society. Informed by the general exclusion of Coptic history and contributions from formal educational curricula, these understandings are shaped by alternative narratives offered by extracurricular institutions, especially the Coptic Church's Sunday Schools.

Thus, this chapter engages with the literature that has analyzed the key elements of the Church's narrative and how those might have influenced Coptic students' subjectivities, as well as approaches to history and the dominant national narrative. To do that, I start by providing a historical background of the place of Copts in formal education at large, and in curricula more specifically. I then discuss the history of the Coptic Church's Sunday Schools, focusing on the key themes that emerge from analyzing the various manifestations of the Coptic Church's historical narrative. This discussion is meant to also highlight the sense of agency among Copts and the various strategies they employed to resist and challenge the general exclusion they experienced from public education and the public sphere. In highlighting these I aim to again counter the general claim that often casts Copts – along with other Egyptians – as passive

subjects with no sense of purpose and agency. Finally, I end with a brief discussion of the historic 2011 revolution and its aftermath as potentially key events that helped re-shape young Copts' sense of identity, at least pertaining to contesting the Coptic Church's hegemony over Coptic bodies and lives.

The Place of Copts in Modern Egyptian Education

Mehmed Ali's rule did not discriminate on religious basis, as long as his subjects, regardless of their religion, were serving his vision. Just like the rest of Egyptians who were seen as important human resources to serve Mehmed Ali's project (Fahmy, 1997), Copts were also encouraged to join the educational system, to qualify to serve the military establishment. However, dreading the military and resisting the conscription-like strategies that forced young Egyptian peasant males to enroll in those schools, Copts were also suspicious of and reluctant to calls to join modern educational institutions, including those established by Coptic Pope Kyrollos IV (Cyril IV) (Sedra, 2011, p. 127).[21] Importantly, Mehmed Ali's religious tolerance – translating in clear advancement of Copts in administrative positions, including endowing the prestigious titles of 'bey' to some of them - marked a clear departure from the abuses of some of his predecessors, some of whom required "Christians to wear distinctive clothing" for instance (Sedra, 2011, p. 40).

With a growing sense of citizenship among Copts, during Said's rule, Pope Cyril IV demanded that Copts be allowed to enter "local government councils," to be eligible for higher posts of command in the military, and to be admitted into "the military, engineering and medical school"; however, given Said's delays in addressing those demands, largely attributed to his lack of tolerance towards Copts, Cyril died before seeing them being fulfilled (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 338). In contrast to Said's neglect of Coptic demands, Ismail's rule acknowledged

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[21] In the year 1855, it was decreed that Copts, along with Muslims, were required to serve in the military. Before that decree, Copts were exempt from serving in the military (Sedra, 2011, p. 127).

religious differences and the need to cater to those in the educational system and classroom. For instance, the Rajab Law issued in 1876 stipulated that in schools where both Muslim and Coptic students attended side-by-side, "the first year class was to be divided for the purposes of religious instruction" (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 363).

With the traditionally segregated *kuttab* system, *kuttabs* set up by the various religious communities – the Muslim, Coptic, and Jewish - up until the early 19th century meant that students of various religious backgrounds would exclusively be studying with their co-religionists (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938). It was not until the emergence of Mehmed Ali's schools, which enrolled Egyptians of various religious backgrounds, that they would start to encounter each other in an educational setting. While these encounters with the 'religious other' might have helped promote inter-communal exposure and interactions, they would have potentially also begun a process of clearer and more rigid articulations of concretely defined and reified religious identities, which might have been more fluid before that modernizing process. These less fluid religious-based identifications would have clearly been further reified by the state's efforts to promote its master narrative and perspectives through written text, which sidelined religious authority and the legitimacy of the multiplicity of religious interpretations and practices (Sedra, 2011). With this brief background on how Copts slowly found a place into a modern educational institution, the question of how such a place was affirmed or challenged by curricular content is worth exploring as it provides important insights and elucidates present dilemmas and tensions.

The Place of Copts in Curricula

As outlined in the previous chapter, despite their paucity, studies exploring the place of minorities have shown that Egyptian curricula generally promote an Arab Muslim identity at the expense of promoting diversity or including minority narratives and perspectives (e.g., Abdou, 2016, 2018; Atallah & Makar, 2014; Botros, 2012; Mansour, 2017). The analysis of the place of

Copts in curricula naturally needs to include an investigation of the portrayal of Christianity, as well as the representation of Coptic history and contributions. While the general sidelining and exclusion of the Coptic narrative have been consistent since the early 1890s, there have been some noteworthy nuances and variations that are outlined in the previous chapter, as well as below.

Portrayal of Christianity.
Earlier textbooks from the early 1900s included explicitly derogatory mentions of Christianity, which have subsequently been removed. For instance, in referring to the emergence of Islam in Arabia, a 1912 textbook uses condescending terms such as the 'lowly polytheism' (*hudeed al-wathaneyya*) when describing those practicing it, adding that Christianity and Judaism were not much better off than these pagan practices (Abdou, 2017c). However, possibly because of the growing Egyptianist influence at the time, starting in the 1920s, such negative depictions largely disappeared (Abdou, 2018). Nonetheless, the textbooks continued to make implicitly negative references to Christianity. For instance, in explaining the motives behind the conversion of Egyptians to Islam, late 1940s and early 1950s textbooks continued to explain the disillusionment of Egyptians by Christianity, elaborating that it had lost its moral compass and abandoned its core values, which led to violent intra-religious conflicts (Abdou, 2017c).

More recently - to the extent they might be included - the explicit mentions of Christianity and Christians have generally been found to be positive (Abdou, 2018; Groiss, 2004; Reiss, 2004). However, curricula have been critiqued for their very brief discussions of Christianity, leaving non-Christian students with very little understanding of that faith and its key tenets. In his review of social studies textbooks from the late 1990s and the early 2000s, Reiss (2004) finds that while the textbooks offer a positive portrayal of Christianity - in comparison with other non-Islamic faiths, such as Judaism - there are virtually no further details about the faith or its basic concepts such as the "the central rituals and holidays, and the various

denominations" (p. 4). Additionally, he finds that Christians are generally presented "as objects of the Arab rulers' tolerance (while ignoring the periods of repression), as subjects from whom taxes were to be raised and whose ancient churches and monasteries serve today as tourist sights (*sic.*)" (Reiss, 2004, p. 5).

Islamic religious studies textbooks also present Christianity in a favourable light, but present very little content about that faith, its history and tenets (Toronto & Eissa, 2007). Thus, based on his own analyses of religious studies textbooks, Faour (2012) concludes that Muslim students grow up not understanding the Christian faith; they are only taught about Christianity through the perspective of the Quran and hadith, in contrast to how both Muslim and Christian students are exposed to various aspects of Islamic teaching through other subjects, such as Arabic language curricula (p. 5).[22]

Representations of Coptic history and contributions.

An archival analysis of Egyptian history textbooks since the late 1800s reveals how Coptic history has been consistently marginalized either by the disproportionately smaller space allocated to it or its total omission in some cases (Abdou, 2018). Similarly, in contemporary textbooks, Coptic history is still disproportionately presented compared to other histories, including ancient Egyptian, Islamic and modern Egyptian histories (Abdou, 2016). Based on her content analysis of history, Arabic, and religious studies textbooks between 1999 and 2001, Sayed (2006) describes the curriculum as "inadequate in providing information about … Coptic (ancient Christian) history … giving the students glimpses about some historic periods and ignoring others" (p. 113).

Given the lack of attention it used to receive in earlier textbooks and the criticism that scholars and activists voiced in this regard, the Coptic era has started to receive relatively more

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[22] Hadiths are the sayings of Prophet Muhammad, which are held in very high regard second only to the authority Quran, especially for Sunni Muslims.

attention in the history curriculum (Abdou, 2018; Botros, 2012). In his review, Reiss (2004) offers a good example of this improvement by pointing to the addition of an annex to social studies textbooks with "a considerable amount of sound information … about Coptic Christianity up until the Arab conquest", including information about the "founding of the Coptic Church … the Catechetical School of Alexandria, the origins of monasticism in its various forms" (p. 5). However, Coptic history continues to receive a strikingly disproportionately small space compared to other eras (Abdou, 2018; Brand, 2014; Faour, 2012).

Additionally, textbooks indirectly exclude Coptic students by addressing students as if they were all Muslim. For example, in discussing early Islamic history, a 1960 history textbook asks students to memorize some Quranic verses calling for the obedience of the faithful to Prophet Mohammad and to God (Abdou, 2017c). Similarly, a 1988 history textbook instructs students to interview family members about their experiences during the Islamic pilgrimage in Mecca as well as instructing them to learn some Quranic verses (Abdou, 2017c).

The battle for the inclusion of Coptic history might have been a more difficult one since it clearly entails curriculum developers making compromises vis-à-vis the national curriculum and what majority Muslim students can learn about that history. In contrast, understandably, the battle for including Christian religious education has been a relatively easier one with some small victories, since it entailed the education of Coptic students about their own theology, with no needed accommodations or compromises within the unified national curriculum that majority Muslim students would need to study.

The place of Copts *outside* the religious studies classroom.

With the emergence of modern schools, Egyptians – both Muslims and non-Muslims – started to increasingly send their children to receive their education there, as opposed to sending them to the religiously segregated traditional *kuttabs*. With the growing expectations among non-

Muslim parents that their religions needed to be taught to their children in school, teaching non-Islamic religious studies became a sensitive and contentious issue since the early 1900s. Thus, the inclusion of Christian religious studies in schools was a gradual process. Starrett (1998) explains that, in response to the demands of the Coptic Congress (organized in 1911), most of the schools managed by the provincial councils that had at least fifteen Coptic students were allowed to have Coptic teachers or priests to teach Christian religious studies; additionally, the Khedivial Training College introduced classes to qualify a cadre of Coptic teachers to teach Christian religion in schools (p. 66).

Since 1948 Christian religious studies curricula have become mandatory in all Egyptian schools that have Coptic students, regardless of the number of Coptic students attending them which was a positive step; however, the way that religious studies lessons are conducted point to a clear sense of exclusion that Coptic students experience (Ha, 2016). As Russell (2001) explains, when the subject matter of Islamic religion was first introduced, "Christians and Jews would be separated from their Muslim classmates for such lessons", placing those lessons at the end of the school day so non-Muslim students can leave early, since there were no curricula or instruction available for their religions in schools (p. 53). Currently, during religious studies classes when Muslim and Coptic students need to be separated, because of their small numbers, Coptic students are the ones expected to leave the classroom to seek an alternative space - that is often a small room or sometimes a school corridor – which reinforces Coptic students' "minority situation within Egyptian society in terms of power-status relations" (Ha, 2016, p. 123).

In terms of their content, current religious studies curricula – of the national curriculum but not necessarily those of the Al-Azhar system - have generally been found to promote tolerance and values of good citizenship. In analyzing the religious studies curricula that were revised by the MOE in the early 1990s, Leirvik (2004) concludes that the curricula, despite being "firmly confessional in nature", clearly attempt to generally instill tolerance and the value of co-

existence (p. 232). From the above analysis it becomes clear that generally speaking Copts and Coptic students exemplify what Peshkin (1992) would call the "null group" (p. 261), whether in the curricular content or classroom practices.

Influences of exclusions on Coptic students.

As illustrated above, there have been some efforts to analyze Egyptian curricula and the various types of exclusions and omissions. In sharp contrast, however, very little research has been conducted on the influence of these exclusions on either majority or excluded minority students. Ha's (2016) study over the past two years is one of the very few - if not the only - studies that offers some insights into the experiences of Coptic students in Egyptian schools. She focuses on omissions related to religious studies education, finding that Coptic students in various types of schools - including international, public, and private schools - experience a general sense of alienation and exclusion. Some of her Coptic respondents clearly referred to how the fact that religion was taught in segregated spaces, with no discussion of religion being allowed in other curricula or classes, led to "divisive relationships among Muslim and non-Muslim students," often citing how they would hear their Muslim friends mock or talk about Christians "in a hostile way" (p. 121). Thus, she concludes that "school preserves religious separation rather than teaching equality and respect among Egyptians", leaving Coptic students especially feeling "marginalized and less supported at school" (p. 125).

Developing a Modern Coptic Subjectivity and Response to Marginalization

The growth of the educational institution and demand for it, coupled with activism against the British occupation, meant that by the early 1900s, there was an increased awareness among Copts of their missing rights, resulting in a large Coptic Congress being organized in 1911. The Congress demanded an end to discrimination in employment in public institutions and that Copts be allowed to have access to the educational facilities offered by the new provincial councils (Starrett, 1998, p. 65; Tamura, 1985, p. 106). Additional demands included "equal

opportunity for religious education in government schools" (Tamura, 1985, p. 106). These efforts were successful on various fronts, including that *kuttabs* started allowing Coptic students to be excused during Quran lessons if they wanted to and also that Coptic *kuttabs* could be established to offer "special religious instruction", on the condition that there is "sufficient numerical support in neighboring communities" (Starrett, 1998, p. 65).

In the 1930s, modern education helped foster a new sense of modernity among Egyptians, including Copts. This newfound Coptic sense of a modern identity, prompted those educated Copts to start to challenge the Coptic Church's backwardness. Thus, during the same time when the *new effendiyya* class was starting to flourish, young educated Copts were also joining forces through the platform of modern state education to set a more modern vision for their Church. Sedra (1999) traces back the revivalist and reformist vision of the Coptic Church to a group of Coptic university students who attended the King Fuad I University (later on Cairo University). In the 1930s Coptic university students were starting to gather in large numbers for weekly discussions, which started off as theological explorations and gradually embraced "a more activist tenor" calling for changes and Church reforms (pp. 224-225). This vision was a direct result of Coptic laypeople, like their Muslim counterparts, being part of a modern education and "the educational networks set up by the Egyptian State" (El-Khawaga, 1998, p. 178).

A few decades later, during the 1970s and 1980s, in response to aggressive Islamist encroachment on the public space especially during Sadat's rule, Coptic university students set up their own spaces which continued to give additional strength and momentum to the Church's Sunday Schools (discussed below in more detail). During those years, Coptic students reverted to "a system of groups or families (*usar*)" that enabled Coptic students to "serve the Sunday schools and to meet on campus for Bible study and prayer" (Van Doorn-Harder, 2005, p. 42). As will be discussed in more detail in the next section, perhaps the Coptic Church's Sunday Schools

were among the most significant sites that Copts used to actively resist their societal

marginalization starting the 1970s onwards.

Extracurricular Institutional Influences on the Formation of Coptic Subjectivity

If we are to understand the modern Coptic sense of identity and sense of agency to resist

and challenge the general misrepresentation and omission of Copts, it would be important to

analyze the role of alternative educational spaces created by Copts, including the Church's

Sunday Schools (Hasan, 2003; El Khawaga, 1998; Sedra, 2011; Van Doorn-Harder, 2005).

Before discussing that institution in detail, however, it is pertinent to offer some insights into the

activities of Western Christian - Catholic and Protestant - missionary schools and their

significant influences on the Coptic Church's education and Egyptian education more generally.

Influences of Western Christian Missionary Schools

There have been several waves of Western Christian missionary efforts mostly

proselytizing among Copts aiming to educate and convert them (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938; Sedra,

2011; Tadros, 2013; Zuhur, 2014). As Heyworth-Dunne (1938) notes, as early as the 13th

century there was evidence of Franciscan missionary activity as proven by the presence of

"Catholic Copts especially in Upper Egypt" (pp. 88-89). Although little is documented about

their activities especially during the first two decades of Mehmed Ali's reign, Western Christian

missionaries have become specifically active starting the 18th century (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938,

p. 271).

Given that proselytizing to Muslims was largely prohibited and inaccessible to French

Catholic, and English and American Protestant missionaries alike, they mostly focused their

efforts on converting Copts, who, in turn, viewed those missionary activities with great suspicion

(Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 282; Ramzy, 2015; Tadros, 2013; Zuhur, 2014).[23] However, Sedra

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[23] It is worth noting that proselytizing and certain Christian denominations, like Jehovah's Witnesses, remain illegal in Egypt (Zuhur, 2014, p. 247).

(2011) explains that regardless of those legal restrictions, the missionaries were independently convinced of their role to save their Coptic "brethren" whom they saw as a community infested with "rampant cursing, lying, hypocrisy, and diffidence", thus justifying the "urgency of 'colonizing' the Church, community, and mind of the Copt" (pp. 34-35). In other words, European missionaries regarded Copts as "obscurantist heretics who needed to be converted to a more enlightened form of Christianity" (Mahmood, 2013, p. 266). These sentiments were reflective of the general disdain that European Christian intellectuals and "Enlightenment Christianity" held vis-à-vis the Coptic Church and Oriental Christianity at large; this emerges in various texts, including in English priest, university professor, and novelist Charles Kingsley's (1819-75) novel "Hypatia" (Mahmood, 2013, p. 272).

European Christian missionary efforts thrived especially during Mehmed Ali's rule, which was more tolerant and lenient in allowing missionaries, especially when compared to other parts of the Ottoman Empire where such activities faced stricter restrictions (Sedra, 2011, p. 40). The second half of the 1800s especially witnessed more activity by Catholic missionaries who set up schools in Cairo and Alexandria, such as the Catholic girls' school established in 1845 (Heyworth-Dunn, 1938, p. 276). Similarly, around that same period, the Church Missionary Society of England set up a few schools in Cairo (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, pp. 278-279). It is worth noting that Mehmed Ali's successors, such as Abbas, did not interfere with Catholic missionary activities (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 308).

However, there was already a growing suspicion and resentment within the Coptic community which accused missionary schools of proselytizing, prompting many Coptic parents to withdraw their children from these schools (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 280). Thus, apart from the few enrolled in missionary schools, for the most part, Copts continued to largely follow the same traditional methods of education, including the Coptic *kuttabs*, with no opportunities for higher learning until the advent of Coptic Pope Cyril IV (Kyrollos IV). Cyril IV was a key

visionary figure in transforming the education of Copts and Egyptians more generally. During the reign of Abbas, Cyril led far-reaching reforms, including the establishment of the Coptic Patriarchal College in 1853, along with other schools that included girl schools (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 309).

This was the first attempt by Copts to set up their own schools modeled on Western methods and approaches, which they were mainly exposed to through missionary schools (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938; Sedra, 2011). Sedra (2011) argues that establishing these educational institutions, including girls' schools, was guided by a vision to establish "a modern Coptic political identity" (Sedra, 2011, p. 106).[24] These Coptic schools were of high enough quality that government officials made frequent visits to examine their textbooks and to recruit their students for governmental administrative jobs (Sedra, 2011, p. 149). However, Sedra (2011) provides an important class analysis, pointing to the fact that most of those who were attracted by the Coptic schools were the few rich Coptic families, who wanted to avoid missionary schools fearing the loss of their status in the Coptic community. Also, this type of education secured access to wealth, since joining government jobs upon their graduation guaranteed them "landholding rights," leading to some Coptic families owning vast pieces of land in Minya and Asyut (Sedra, 2011, p. 152). Thus, the interests and ties of the Coptic economic elite forged stronger ties to the Church's and the state's education and thus to a nationalist ideology. This seems to continue to be the case among Copts, where elite Copts possibly have stronger identifications with the nation-state and the narratives of national unity (Ha, 2016; Sedra, 2009), as will be discussed further below.

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[24] It was not until the year 1873 – approximately 20 years later - that the first school for Muslim girls was established; before that, only few Egyptian Muslim girls took advantage of those modern schools, mainly established by European missionary communities (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, pp. 374-375).

With several schools being opened and closed during his reign, perhaps the most notable changes during Said's rule was the increase in European schools mostly, if not exclusively, managed by missionary groups. Such expansion is said to have been the result of Said's strong affinity to the French, the growing supply of missionary schools, and most importantly, a growing demand among various communities - including the Italian, Greek and Coptic - for that type of modern education (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 330). Thus, his reign marked an important turning point in the history of European schools in Egypt and allowed for a "cultural consolidation of all the non-Moslem sections" (p. 330).

During Ismail's reign, schools established by missionary communities witnessed an unprecedented expansion, the vast majority of the students being Coptic, although these schools also accepted "Greeks, Syrians and Moslems" and were largely staffed by Coptic teachers trained by the American Missionaries (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938, p. 411). Such missionary activity undoubtedly prompted the Coptic Church to react in an attempt to emulate some of the educational models and approaches brought by these Western Christian missionary movements. Heyworth-Dunne (1938) argues that the increase in the number of schools opened by Copts during that period was "spurred on by the increasing influence of the American Missionaries in Cairo and in Upper Egypt" which helped Copts realize the "necessity of overhauling their traditional methods in order to compete for the posts in the government and in the increasing number of commercial houses" (p. 415). Thus, Cyril IV and the Coptic community's efforts were to a very large extent fueled by, and emulated, the modern schools established by Western missionaries operating in the country (Heyworth-Dunne, 1938; Sedra, 2011).

Missionary schools had another lasting influence on alerting the religious establishment, whether Muslim or Christian, to the significance and centrality of written texts in allowing them to consolidate better control on religious messages and interpretations. As Sedra (2011) elaborates, such a marked shift towards "modern, textual, disciplinary education" was instigated

by the missionaries in the early 19th century, then adopted by the Coptic Church in late 19th century. This approach was further adopted by the Egyptian state since this adherence to text helped it forge a direct connection with – and control over - its subjects, bypassing religious intermediaries and rendering them less powerful (Sedra, 2011, pp. 170-171).

Thus, Coptic schools and later on the Coptic Orthodox extracurricular Sunday School institution emerged in response to the threat of conversion, especially emanating from Protestant missionary movements in Upper Egypt in the late 1800s (El-Khawaga, 1998; Hasan, 2003; Sedra, 2011; Van Doorn-Harder, 2005). Before discussing Sunday Schools as a manifestation of the Coptic Church's resilience and its attempt to build a modern Coptic identity, that is both Egyptian and Christian, it would be pertinent to briefly discuss the hegemonic control that the Church has been striving to maintain over Copts and how its relationship with the Egyptian state has legitimated and shaped that control.

The Coptic Church and the Egyptian State

In a clear parallel to the Egyptian educational system seeking to shape Egyptian students' sense of citizenship, the Coptic Orthodox Church's Sunday School – in addition to seeking to develop a modern Coptic identity that importantly saw itself as both Christian and Egyptian - largely attempted to educate and control. In other words, the Coptic Church maintained what the Ottoman millet system largely decreed, where the Church was offered liberty in managing its community's affairs giving the Pope the needed prestige as the representative of that community, in exchange for ensuring the loyalty of its citizens to the ruling regime, basically giving the Church's leadership the "freedom to govern its followers" (Tadros, 2013, p. 27).

The Coptic Church's leadership - embodied in the Coptic Pope – played a significant role in maintaining this status quo. This continued through Coptic Pope Cyril (Kyrollos) VI who followed the footsteps of his predecessors and ensured a close alliance with the Nasser regime. Pope Shenouda III – who was initially vocally critical of the Sadat regime on issues such as the

amendment of the constitution and the Sharia clause - quickly resorted back to the traditional

model after being put under arrest in a monastery by the Sadat regime (Zuhur, 2014, p. 263).

Thus, in return for some favors such as releasing Coptic prisoners, Pope Shenouda would

publicly endorse and campaign for Sadat's and subsequently Mubarak's regime (Khorshid, 2014,

p. 228). Ramzy (2015) explains that after being put under monastery arrest, for the rest of his

reign, Pope Shenouda III

> … exchanged his activist fight for Coptic Christian rights for the role of a pastoral leader
> and spiritual teacher, urging his parishioners to pursue a similar kind of political
> (dis)engagement that focused on a Christian moral interior, a spiritual afterlife, as well as
> a heavenly nation up above. (p. 12)

Thus, the legacy of the millet system endures in shaping the nature of the relationship of

the Coptic community with the state, where the Coptic Church has de facto continued to manage

the Copts and to be their legitimate representative vis-à-vis the state (Ibrahim, 2015; Khorshid,

2014; Tadros, 2013; Zuhur, 2014). While it is convenient for the state for managing an important

constituent warranting their loyalty, this arrangement allows the Church's leadership to maintain

its power through practicing its hegemony over Copts and many of their affairs.

In line with the Egyptianist territorial orientation, in its quest for better rights for Copts

and equal citizenship, the Coptic Church has continued to emphasize a 'sameness' narrative

stressing how Copts and Muslims are the same, thus refusing calls that describe Copts as a

distinct minority. Thus, along with the Egyptian state's national unity narrative that denies

differences, inequality, or sectarian tensions, its partner the Coptic Orthodox Church has also

sought to underplay differences and emphasize a hegemonic 'narrative of sameness' (Galal,

2012). This simultaneity between 'Egyptian' and 'Christian', puts Christianity in a privileged

place that does not contradict with being Egyptian, but actually reinforces the "Egyptianness" of

Copts and emphasizes their "national belonging" (Galal, 2012, pp. 51-52). Thus, it seems that the

Church adopts a delicate "dual discourse" which promotes the "Christian identity" in ways that do not compromise the Copts' "Egyptianness", positing the Christian identity as an integral component of being that Egyptianness (Tadros, 2013, p. 37). As a result, Copts are said to have generally developed a strong loyalty and identification both to the Coptic Church's leadership as well as the Egyptian state, both of which supersede their sense of connection to "a worldwide Christian community" (Van Doorn-Harder, 2005, pp. 48-49).

This sameness narrative not only seems to overlook and downplay differences and the value of diversity, it also alienates secular or non-religious Copts, as well non-Orthodox Coptic Christians. Clearly, this neo-millet system or arrangement, which positioned the Church as the sole legitimate representative of the Copts excluded "ordinary Christians and secular Copts from the equation" (Khorshid, 2014, p. 228). Additionally, this unannounced pact further alienated non-Orthodox Egyptian Christians, such as Egyptian Protestants and Catholics, who rightfully complain of being "a marginalized minority within a minority" (Khorshid, 2014, p. 229).[25]

Within this arrangement, conveniently for the state, Coptic dissent and protests were to be managed under the umbrella of the Church and contained by it. This allowed the Church to reinforce its position "as the only authority able to channel Coptic discontent and to halt the reactions of the faithful towards attacks by a few Islamic groups during the 1980s and 1990s" (El-Khawaga, 1998, p. 188). For instance, in the late 1970s, as El Khawaga (1998) explains, in reaction to the rising Islamization including controversial proposed laws, it was the Church that called for a Coptic conference in 1977 "to affirm the right of Copts to maintain their legal independence and their equal status" (p. 173). However, starting the 1980s, the Church's leadership espoused a strategy of "unconditional support for the Egyptian State in its international, regional, and international policies" (p. 173). Some scholars have explained that

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[25] Egyptian Protestants and Catholics constitute at least 2% of the Egyptian population (Khorshid, 2014, p. 226).

this shift back to the Church's traditionally non-confrontational and reclusive mode to have been expedited by Pope Shenouda's house arrest under Sadat (Khorshid, 2014; Ramzy, 2015; Sedra, 1999; Zuhur, 2014). While the Church's power and hegemony might have waned at times, the 1950s marked the remarkable beginnings of the success of the Coptic Church's renewal movement and its ability to attract large numbers of Copts and include them in the Church's web through its various services, including its Sunday Schools.

Coptic 'Renewal' and Sunday Schools

While the notion of Sunday Schools was initiated by a Coptic layman by the name of Habib Girgis in 1918, it nonetheless got taken over and institutionalized by the Coptic Church and became its key avenue to attract and mobilize Coptic children and youth especially those hailing from urban middle class congregations (El-Khawaga, 1998; Galal, 2012; Van Doorn-Harder, 2005). Inspired by the model of Protestant missionary schools, Habib Girgis's key motive was to offer young Copts an alternative to the Khedive schools that lacked Christian education (Van Doorn-Harder, 2005, p. 39). While the model of the Coptic Church's Sunday School had initially emerged in response to Protestant movements, it gained growing relevance as a response to the growing, exclusionary Islamist discourse starting in the 1970s (El-Khawaga, 1998; Hasan, 2003; Van Doorn-Harder, 2005).

Sunday Schools represent an extracurricular institution that Coptic children and youth are encouraged to attend at Church during weekends and vacations. Its curricula revolve around Christian theology and moral codes for living a good Christian life, with some brief discussions of the Church's history and good citizenship embedded within them. They are organized by grade level and offer age appropriate materials organized by primary, preparatory and secondary levels, carrying similar names for the grades of the public educational system in Egypt. They are mostly taught by volunteers most of whom were themselves formerly students of the Sunday

School, and who are expected to attend some facilitator preparation workshops and training sessions organized by the Church to qualify them to become Sunday School teachers.

The Sunday School curriculum's content since 1947 covered a range of subjects that mainly engage with the themes of "spiritual and biblical reflections, essays on dogmatics, history, liturgy, sacred music, monasticism, the saints, Coptic celebrations, the Coptic status in Egyptian society, and current events within the church" (Van Doorn-Harder, 2005, p. 41). Based on her analysis, Van Doorn-Harder (2005) explains that the Church's narrative revolves around "the Christian message" as embodied in and reinforced by "stories of the saints," "holy places," and a "glorious past" (p. 35). To ensure their continued relevance, Sunday Schools evolved and adapted their services based on their community's changing needs. Thus, for instance, during the 1980s, when Coptic students had started to face more discriminatory discourses in their schools and society more generally, their Sunday Schools introduced "special groups and classes" for Coptic students to attend in church (Van Doorn-Harder, 2005, p. 39).

Van Doorn-Harder (2005) explains how, building on earlier visions and efforts since 1918, it was not until the 1950s when Sunday Schools gained a real momentum and started expanding exponentially thanks to the vision of Pope Kyrollos VI. It was he who ensured the recruitment of a cadre of well-educated Copts. By recruiting those, he revolutionized the traditional means of recruiting Coptic clergy who were previously recruited from poor socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Among those, for instance, was his successor Patriarch Shenouda III, who had served as the Church's bishop of education (pp. 38-39). Since their inception, Sunday Schools had a crucial role in allowing Coptic youth to become "aware of their religion's foundation, their church's roots, and their community's heritage", allowing them to unearth "a glorious past" that they would seek to revive (Sedra, 1999, p. 224).

El-Khawaga (1998) points to how the rise of Coptic renewal movement – similar to that of the Muslim Brotherhood – has been informed by the need to foster a new sense of identity in

response to modernity and to a common threat felt by both Copts and Muslims towards the "acculturation of the elite (both Muslim and Coptic) and of Egyptian political institutions, caused by affiliation to modern ethics", thus reverting to "religious education to counteract the effects of 'modern' education", seeking a "reassertion of religious identity as a complete point of reference" (p. 180). In response, building on the model of the 19th century "evangelical missionaries", Copts and Muslims alike later started drawing on their religious texts and 'functionalized' them to help guide their practical lives and service (Sedra, 2011, p. 178).

This Coptic renewal movement - with Sunday Schools at its heart - gradually consolidated the Church's position as the focal point of Coptic communal life centralizing "the ways in which they socialize, to compensate for their fragile status – as a minority – in Egyptian society, and to represent them politically in the public sphere" (El-Khawaga, 1998, p. 182). Basically, the Coptic Church became a refuge and a central "authority over the religious and social life of its followers" (Khorshid, 2014, p. 228). Subsequently, generations of young Copts starting the 1980s have become much more closely connected to the Church through the Sunday Schools and thus much more knowledgeable than earlier generations including their parents whom they would possibly view as "slack," or "not Coptic enough" (Van Doorn-Harder, 2005, p. 41). Although most probably not an intended purpose of the Church, the Sunday School institution produced several Coptic lay figures who mobilized their counterparts demanding fundamental reforms in the Church, advocating "greater accountability, transparency, and a voice for the non-clergy in the Church" (Tadros, 2013, p. 30).

To gain a clearer and more nuanced picture of the narrative template of the Coptic Church's narrative, I examine the key elements that commonly manifest across various sites, including Sunday School materials, films, and Church hymns. This analysis aims to offer a sense of the modern Coptic subjectivity that the Coptic Church attempts to construct, as well as offer some insights into how modern Copts view themselves and how they might self-identify.

The Narrative Propagated by the Coptic Church

To attempt to understand key elements that inform modern Coptic identity, it is worth examining the Church's dominant narrative and its recurring and resilient elements - or its schematic narrative template – which are propagated through various forms, including Sunday School curricula (Bortos, 2006; Van Doorn-Harder, 2005); storytelling during religious sermons, and monastery and church visits (Galal, 2012); Church hymns (Ramzy, 2015); and the more recent development of Church-supported films and TV programs (Shafik, 2007). Based on this review, two key themes emerge: an emphasis on the Church's ancient glories, and its endurance throughout history in the face of persecution by various forces; and, the Church's indigeneity and rootedness in Egypt's land and culture.

Ancient Glory, Endurance and Resilience in the Face of Persecution

In her analysis, El-Khawaga (1998) depicts two key elements in the Church's narrative: glory and persecution; she reflects on how the centrality of these two elements translated into how the Coptic renewal movement included a focus on reviving desert monasteries, which, she argues, is a reminder of the Church of Alexandria's early "glory" when it was a center of "religious learning", as well as a reminder of how historically these monasteries represented "the last bastion of the persecuted Copts" (p. 179). These early glories and contributions of the Church of Alexandria that form the key pillars in the construction of the Coptic Church's glorious past, include its contributions to "the first Christian Creed" embodied in the "Nicene Creed" in 325 CE, being "home to the Catechetical School of Alexandria, the oldest Christian education authority in the world" as well as having initiated the "monastic Christian movement" (Botros, 2006, pp. 184-185).

To explain the close attachment to, and overemphasis on, that glorious past, Botros (2006) reminds us that two subsequent milestones then introduced a process of stagnation and decline: the Chalcedon council in 451 CE, followed by the Arab Muslim conquest circa 641 CE.

The former marked the Coptic Church's "separation from the rest of the Christian world" and being labeled a heretic or schismatic church, while the latter marked the beginning of "a legacy of subordination that resulted in [the Copts'] current minority status in Egypt" (p. 186). To construct a narrative of progress instead of one of decline or stagnation, in addition to a focus on the Church's early glories and contributions to Christianity, the narrative focuses on celebrating the Church's "legacy of triumph and survival after the Arab conquest" (Botros, 2006, p. 194). Similarly, the Chalcedon council is narrated in ways to confirm the Church's historical position as the bearer of the "authentic Orthodox Christological faith" (Botros, 2006, p. 176).

Martyrdom and sacrifice.

Within this theme of ancient glory and endurance, the elements of martyrdom and sacrifice are a central building block. Van Doorn-Harder (2005) notes how central to the Sunday School curricula the narratives of martyrs are, including more modern martyrs who were "killed in recent clashes point", presenting self-sacrifice and martyrdom "as the ultimate model of faith" (p. 41). That narrative proposes that adversities are a blessing in disguise that is an opportunity for Copts to strengthen their faith, or even to excel, by reminding themselves that "their church produced its best thinkers, theologians, and desert fathers" during some the most challenging times (Van Doorn-Harder, 2005, p. 53). This theme of martyrdom has permeated the Coptic Church's "sermons, songs, and religious lessons" as early as the eighth century, helping Copts gain a sense of "the final triumph and power in death" (Ramzy, 2015, pp. 8-9).

Mahmood (2013) explains how the historical events that are widely circulated across the Church's various sites reinforce the central place of martyrdom and sacrifice. Those events include the suffering endured "at the hands of the Roman emperor Diocletian in 284 AD", which the Church has chosen to mark the beginning of the Coptic calendar with the "Era of the Martyrs", then the persecution under Byzantine rulers for over 200 years, rendering the theme of

martyrdom and sacrifices of "Coptic monks and priests", against those and later rulers, as a

symbol of the resilience and survival over the centuries (p. 273).

The narrative that emphasizes the resilience of their Church throughout the ages as well

as martyrdom carries a subtle message of hope that promises Copts an ultimate triumph, albeit

possibly in another life. This clearly emerges in Coptic hymns that position the notion of

martyrdom as a marker of "moral superiority and spiritual authenticity", thus clearly serving as a

call for "sacrifice, self-asceticism, and withdrawal to refashion a moral interior" (Ramzy, 2015,

p. 16). To highlight the centrality of martyrs in the Coptic Church's narrative, Van Doorn-Harder

(2005) draws a powerful analogy, proposing that while some Muslims might identify with a

wider Muslim nation or a "universal *umma*", Copts identify with a "universe of those who have

shared their struggle: martyrs, saints" including those from the early Christian days (p. 35).

In analyzing the content of the emerging genre of Church-supported TV and film

production aired on Coptic-owned channels, such as Aghapy TV and Coptic TV, Shafik (2007)

also points to the resilience of the martyr and saint narratives.[26] Shafik (2007) finds that the

majority of those productions "retell the lives and ordeals of Egyptian saints and martyrs…

ending with a graphic Christian martyrdom"; emphasizing "the Christian readiness to sacrifice"

and the divine rewards those martyrs received such as "supernatural powers to overcome

unspeakably cruel treatments" (pp. 53-54).

Galal's (2012) interview results offer us some insight into how those elements of the

narrative might have been internalized by some Coptic youth. She explains that the young people

she met in Coptic churches argued that harassment of Christians is an opportunity for them to

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[26] To elucidate the general omission of Coptic representation from official media, Van Doorn-Harder (2005) notes that - according to some Church figures - Coptic representation, including coverage of Coptic religious ceremonies on official media amounts to a total of "five hours a year … in contrast to 3,000 hours of Islamic teachings" (p. 35). In response to the lack of representation of Copts in public media production, several Coptic TV channels and film production efforts emerged, especially in the 1990s and early 2000s (Shafik, 2007).

'turn the other cheek' and exemplify the true teachings of Christianity which is to serve God, allowing her to conclude that "the narratives offered by the church are internalized on the individual level as a way to ascribe meaning to personal experiences" (pp. 53-54). Similarly, to examine how the Church's narrative is reproduced among Copts, Botros (2006) interviews Coptic clergy in the diaspora, finding that, as opposed to instilling a sense of a "virtuous victim", the Church's narrative has been internalized in ways that emphasizes pride in the Church's "spirituality" and its "resilience to adapt" (p. 192). Van Doorn-Harder (2005) explains that Copts embrace the concept of martyrdom as a necessity for them to refine and improve their faith through facing adversities in this world, including, for instance, Islam which in Coptic theology could be seen as "a temptation that, if resisted, leads one to self-improvement" (p. 40).

Perhaps the internalization of this element of the narrative helps deter Copts from immigrating in large numbers. Despite the large number of Copts who have immigrated to Western countries, the numbers are small when compared to other Christian minorities in the region. Copts constitute the smallest percentage among Christian immigrants in the west who hail from Arabic speaking countries, despite the hardships they face and despite them constituting the largest Christian (and non-Muslim) minority in the whole region (Sabella, 1998).

Indigeneity and Belonging to the Land of Egypt

The Church's narrative, including the ubiquitous martyr stories, offer a sense of the politics of place by reclaiming some of the territory as having been originally the theater where many of these stories took place. In Galal's (2012) analysis of the focus on narratives of martyrs in the Coptic churches and the youths she worked with, there is also a strong emphasis on belonging to the land of Egypt and a sense of pride in the resilience and endurance in the face of successive waves of persecution, whether by the Romans or later on by the Arab and Muslim rulers (although the latter are rarely referred to explicitly). Galal (2012) explains that in her

research it was clear how the stories of martyrs were a means to help connect Copts to their land

and their identity as both Christian and Egyptian. She reminds us that these stories help to feed

> … a Christian collective memory … inscribed in the geography by remembering sacred
> locations… As a result, to remember sainthood and martyrdom is not only to identify as
> Christians but also to identify as Egyptians. The practice of pilgrimages and storytelling
> consequently places Coptic Christianity in a privileged position within the national
> territory. As a result, any potential marginalization of the Copts within the national unity
> is contested and rejected. Pilgrimages recreate and reconstruct the national geography as
> Christian. (p. 54)

In Ramzy's (2015) analysis of Coptic devotional songs about ancient and modern

martyrs, she also finds a strong attempt to affirm the Copts' "national indigeneity and belonging"

(p. 4). However, she points to some nuances in how those songs express "two modes of

belonging, both to an Egyptian nation as well as to a heavenly afterlife as pious Christians"

(Ramzy, 2015, p. 17). Similarly, in her analyses of Coptic-produced films and TV programs,

Shafik (2007) notes how the storylines of these scripts are built in ways to "line up present-day

Copts with their historical predecessors, confirming their religious and (sectarian) national

identity" (pp. 53-54).

Careful Crafting and Safeguarding of the Church's Narrative

The Church continues to closely safeguard that narrative to help it manage its relationship

effectively with the Egyptian state and the Egyptian Muslim majority. It also is keen on

maintaining this sanitized historical narrative intact to serve its various purposes, including

protecting itself against a hostile public discourse and maintaining its hegemony over Copts.

This most clearly emerges in the Church's self-censorship vis-à-vis historical injustices

committed by Arab Muslim rulers, as well as its fierce defensiveness against attempts that

question the sanctity of the Church's history.

Self-Censorship and Omission of the Church's History Under Arab Muslim Rule

One important feature of the narrative is the general omission of the Church's history under Arab Muslim rule and the persecution endured under some Muslim rulers. Botros (2006) explains that, to avoid instigating antagonism between Copts and Muslims, the Coptic Church focuses its narration of any persecution during periods of the Arab Muslim rule on how it signified the Church's resilience and its "miracle of survival" (p. 192). This also entails that more than one thousand and four hundred years are rarely discussed in any detail in Sunday School curricula and when they are, the narrative glosses over "times of sectarian strife and spates of persecution by Arab rulers" (Botros, 2006, p. 176). To illustrate, Botros (2006) contrasts how names of rulers and details are only shared when the persecutors are Roman or Byzantine, but not when they are Arab and Muslim (p. 191). It is understandable that, given their generally vulnerable position as a minority in Egyptian society, the Church would approach that history with "tact, delicacy and diplomacy" (Bortos, 2006, p. 192).[27]

The Silencing of Alternative Narratives

As a persecuted minority and historically sidelined Church, the Coptic Church has understandably been equally guilty of vehemently attacking and silencing alternative narratives that might in any way challenge the Church's historical narrative. Understandably, the Coptic Church would adopt that approach as a defense mechanism against further vilification or prejudices that these alternative narratives might produce among the majority that already knows very little about the Copts or the history of Christianity. Additionally, it would clearly strive to ensure that its own community remains exposed to a sanitized version of history where the

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[27] In an informal personal interview which I conducted with a leader who had been involved with Sunday Schools in several Coptic Orthodox churches for over three decades, he explained that this is the Church's approach vis-à-vis the history of the Arab Muslim conquest and subsequent Arab and Muslim rulers of Egypt. To keep young Copts peaceful and content with their position in Egyptian society, the Church deliberately avoids discussing historical violence instigated by Arabs and Muslims. As he explained, learning about historical injustices might sow seeds of animosity and hatred among young Copts against Muslims, jeopardizing peaceful co-existence (personal communication, March 2017).

Church and its people are the eventually triumphant victims who - thanks to their faith and resilience - have continued to endure and overcome the multiple challenges they have encountered throughout history. Thus, any other narrative that might challenge that narrative is immediately attacked and silenced. This was clearest in the case of the historical fiction novel *Azazeel,* written by Egyptian novelist Youssef Zeydan and first published in Arabic in 2008.

The novel tells of the story of Greco-Roman Alexandrian philosopher Hypatia and her brutal lynching and killing at the hands of angry mobs of early Christians in Alexandria in the first century CE, with the blessing of the Egyptian Church. In response to that novel being published and gaining wide readership, in addition to publishing multiple books including a 400-page volume by one of its top clerics, the Coptic Church filed several law suits against the novelist (Mahmood, 2013, pp. 268-269). One of the Church's key messages in its defence was that it was not pagans who suffered at the hands of Christians, but actually the opposite is true (Mahmood, 2013, p. 273). While the Church failed to ban the novel, it was successful in aborting an important project to produce a film based on the novel, ensuring that this alternative historical narrative would not gain access to a wider audience (Mahmood, 2013, p. 265).

This incident offers some enlightening insights into the significant role that historical narratives play in building the identity and legitimacy of the Coptic Church, prompting it to safeguard them closely. This alternative narrative presented by the novel *Azazeel* puts into question the purity of the narrative that the Church has constructed and closely safeguarded, which highlights its message of peace and love, and clearly attempts to monopolize the meaning of martyrdom, resilience, and sacrifice for the faith and for the nation. Equally important, in an atmosphere governed by suspicion and tensions, the Church interpreted this alternative narrative that highlights the Church's historical violence as a disguised attempt to "discursively level the violence done to them by the Muslim majority" (Mahmood, 2013, p. 275).

The Copts' Engagement with the Church's Narrative

So, how do Copts negotiate their Church's historical narrative with their general sense of exclusion within public education and in society more generally? As emerges clearly from the earlier discussions, Copts have been rendered generally invisible in the public sphere. Ramzy (2015) offers a poignant reminder that "Coptic Christian citizens are invisible and inaudible", except "during instances of sectarian-related strife" when their deaths and injuries are reported in state media and newspapers (p. 17). To negotiate this general "invisibility … in everyday life" with their Church's narrative, Ibrahim (2015) proposes that Copts had to develop what we can call a 'double consciousness' – a term that Du Bois coined in referring to what African Americans had to develop to deal with their exclusion from the dominant American public sphere (pp. 2585-2586). This reality compels Copts, as Van Doorn-Harder (2005) eloquently explains, to negotiate their existence between

> the Coptic universe where they rejoice in their symbols, songs, and beliefs and the Egyptian world, where a Copt covers the cross on his or her wrist. Each world has its own language and symbols, which Copts learn to keep separate from an early age. They are like aliens in their own country, which has been overtaken by a majority that fails to understand the Coptic core beliefs and rituals. (p. 47)

Celebrating martyrs as the forefathers of the Coptic Church is instrumental in shaping the modern-day Coptic identity, offering Copts the strength to negotiate their general marginalization and more specifically the violence, discrimination, and persecution that many of them are exposed to (Galal, 2012; Ramzy, 2015). As Galal (2012) clarifies, telling and retelling the stories of the martyrs, who were persecuted for their faith, yet remained defiant against various persecutors and unjust rulers, offers an inspiration to Copts to endure against the modern-day injustices they face. However, the recent events of 2011 and their aftermath have arguably painted a very different image of Coptic youth, their independent thinking, rebellion against authority, and their ability to defy the Church's hegemony. Thus, those events represent

an important milestone to discuss. However, before doing so, it is important to remember not to approach the analysis of Copts as a monolithic bloc as will be discussed briefly below.

Variations of Self-Identifications Among Copts

It is important to remind ourselves that Copts are not a monolithic bloc, including in how they view themselves, especially how this might vary by socio-economic status. Beshai (1998) reminds us that rich Copts "would probably identify with other rich groups, including non-Copts" while poor Copts and Muslims would more clearly see themselves "in the same boat" (p. 198). Similarly, Sedra (1999) pointed out that there are clear variations among Copts in their identifications by social class, where elite Copts tend to underscore national unity, while middle class Copts emphasize historical religious persecution. In her work El-Khawaga (1998) also offers an important nuance by pointing out that the Sunday Schools has mainly affected urban middle class Copts, while their influence on rural Copts or those of lower socio-economic strata is still a largely understudied question. Thus, in our discussions of the influences of the Church or Sunday Schools we need to be cognizant of these class dimensions as well.

In confirming these proposals, Ha (2016) found that her Coptic respondents from higher socio-economic were encouraged by their parents to make Muslim friends, while those from lower socio-economic classes were more clearly discouraged to talk about religion or to mingle with Muslim colleagues as they were more concerned with issues of "religious persecution based on their historical and ongoing experiences" (pp. 124-125). These variations, especially in the case of informing the national identifications of the Coptic economic elite, seem to have been shaped and informed by that group's interest to maintain its privileged place within the Coptic community and its strategic relations with the Egyptian state. As Hobsbawm (1990) reminds us, such divisions are among the repercussions of nationalistic discourses, which serve to divide societies as well as allegiances and identification of groups horizontally and vertically based on ethnicity and race (as is the case of social strata in the case of India's caste system) (p. 65).

These divisions seem to clearly serve the hegemonic permeation of a nationalist territorial discourse – propagated by both the Egyptian state and the Church – among Copts of lower and middle classes. However, apart from these initial analyses by Sedra and Ha, there is a paucity of analysis of how the class dimension influences efforts of forming the Coptic subject, especially as relates to what constraints it places on non-elite Copts outside of large urban centers, and importantly, how these different social divisions shape interactions with Muslims and the Egyptian state.

The January 2011 Revolution and Its Aftermath

Expressions of an Egyptian and Christian Identity

Before 2011, as pointed out earlier, the general impression has been that Copts, with few exceptions, embody a strong allegiance and obedience to the Church's leadership as well as a general loyalty to the Egyptian state's authority. As discussed earlier, the very few Coptic protests against the government would only occur "under the aegis of the patriarch" (Van Doorn-Harder, 2005, pp. 48-49). The ubiquity of the martyr stories that manifest in multiple forms through the various forms of the Church's narrative clearly contributes to shaping a Coptic sense of agency that is more focused inwardly toward its own community, embodies Christian values, and is clearly more interested in the afterlife or what Ramzy (2015) aptly calls 'heavenly citizenship' as opposed to a civic or political engagement in this life. However, the 2011 events and aftermath challenged many of those assumptions.

In defiance to the expectations of many, when the opportunity arose during the 2011 revolution, many Copts actively participated as Egyptians, and as Christians. Tadros (2013) explains how the uprisings signaled a brief moment of Copts converging with their Muslim fellow citizens reminding us that this was 'Copts protesting' and not 'Coptic protests,' explaining that the former refers to Copts protesting as Egyptian citizens for national demands, while the

latter refers to when they protest for their specific minority rights (pp. xiii-xvi). However, when Copts sensed they were being specifically targeted as Christians – such as during the Maspero massacre - the Coptic martyr narrative was readily deployed, prompting many Copts to carry a label, "a martyr is available" (*shaheed taht al-talab*) during their public demonstrations against the transitional rule of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF); they, thus, mobilize the Church's historical narrative with its central theme of martyrdom as a tool for defiance against that violence and injustice (Ramzy, 2015, p. 3).

These events arguably allowed for a new expression of Coptic identity that challenged the sameness and national unity discourse, proposing one that embraces plurality and where Copts and their differences are made visible. As Ibrahim (2015) explains, these events allowed Copts to "demand recognition of the right to difference", expressing "a unique lay-led Coptic identity, distinct from a shared Egyptian experience of the cross and crescent" and in so doing, clearly starting to challenge the neo-millet state-church arrangement (p. 2592). In doing so, the recent re-imagining of a Coptic identity, also draws on ancient Egyptian symbolism as was exemplified in the use of the "giant Pharaonic boat and ankh cross" in some of their demonstrations (Ibrahim, 2015, pp. 2593-2594), as well as the full ancient Egyptian garbs and head covers that young Coptic women wore as they marched towards Tahrir holding up "images of the Maspero dead, enshrined with halos typical of Coptic iconography of martyrs" (Ramzy, 2015, p. 15).

While some scholars see the use of these ancient Egyptian symbols as a continuation of the Egyptianist tendency that emphasizes the common ancient heritage of all Egyptians, some scholars such as Ibrahim (2015) see such mobilization – especially because of the confrontational context they happened in that was focused on Coptic rights and grievances - in fact as an attempt by Copts to position themselves as the "true Egyptians" versus Egyptian Muslims "who arrived with the Islamic conquest" (pp. 2593-2594). It is also possible, however,

that such mobilization of ancient symbols could be used as a reminder of a common heritage that many Egyptians, of various religious backgrounds, continue to identify with and be proud of.

Coptic Youths' Challenge Towards the Church's Hegemony

The 2011 uprisings and subsequent events also represented an opportunity for many Coptic youths to break away from the Church's authority as a key provider and a sole mediator of Coptic demands vis-à-vis the state, which it had established through its Sunday Schools and other services (Tadros, 2013, pp. xiii-xvi).[28] As outlined earlier, before 2011, although there were movements that called for Church reforms, especially around questions of marital status, much of the activism occurred in collaboration with and sometimes was instigated and called for by the Church. Tadros (2013) likens that resurgence of movements that openly challenged authority – including Coptic laypeople challenging the Church's hegemony over their lives and representation vis-à-vis the state - to the pre-1952 (Nasser) era when "a plurality of actors with different power bases influenced the agenda-setting processes" (p. 15).

Although those oppositional voices became better organized and more vocal through the 2011 mass demonstrations, they arguably built on earlier calls for reforms that can be traced back at least to the mid-twentieth century. Those challenged the Church's quest to maintain acting "as both the political and religious voice for the community" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 2588). More recently, in 2006, some Coptic laypeople questioning the Church's rigid grip on personal status affairs of Copts and its weak response to sectarian violence and discrimination; however, those calls generally attracted little following and achieved limited success (Tadros, 2013, p. 13).

In addition to the general discontent with issues related to the Church's rigidity and control, the 2011 events made it even clearer to many Copts how the Church was complacent with the state and Mubarak's authoritarian regime, even related to demanding basic rights such

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[28] Beyond Church reform efforts, Copts were actively involved in opposition movements, including George Ishaq, the main coordinator and spokesperson of the influential *Kefaya* movement - one of the first movements to challenge Mubarak and his plan to pass on the presidency to his son Gamal openly - being a Copt (Tadros, 2013, p. 13).

as defending Copts against injustices or violence. As Tadros (2013) explains, the Maspero massacre represented a key turning point as it "highlighted the extent of marginalization of the Coptic Orthodox Church's leadership", prompting many Copts to independently take to the streets in clear defiance of the Church's directives (pp. 197-198).

Beyond 2011: A Return to the Church's Flock?

While the 2011 revolution and its aftermath were transformative in various ways possibly inspiring a new sense of agency, especially among many young people, the historical neglect of questions of inclusive and equal citizenship rights, and religious diversity and pluralism in public discourse and educational curricula has resulted in deeply rooted prejudices and intolerance that require more long-term efforts to address the root causes of these phenomena. These unresolved issues have long existed only to be punctuated by exceptional moments of national sentiments when Egyptians united against common modern enemies, such as the British in 1919, and the Israelis in 1948, 1967 and 1973. More recently, in 2011, the common enemy was Mubarak's authoritarian regime and the common national goal for a large majority of Egyptians was his ouster; however, once that goal was achieved the "religiously pluralistic spirit of Tahrir Square faded" (Tadros, 2013, p. 137). As Tadros (2013) elaborates, the fact that the root causes of prejudices and tensions are not addressed through education and other social sites, such as the media and religious institutions, is further exacerbated by the lack of an "honest recognition of the existence of the problem in the first place or acknowledgment that injustices had been committed or that reconciliation was in fact necessary" (p. 137).

The 2011 uprisings and the subsequent events also reinforced the notion that Copts cannot enjoy full citizenship under an Islamist-inspired regime. The brief rule of the Muslim Brotherhood's President Mohamed Morsi (2012-2013) - the country's first-ever democratically elected president - and its exclusionary discourse vis-à-vis religious minorities prompted some

Egyptian scholars to even question "the tyranny of majoritarian democracy" and how it could "seriously undermine social cohesion and generate new inequalities" if it brings to power leaders with visions that challenge pluralistic democratic systems (Tadros, 2013, p. 2). What was being experienced in reality also helped confirm those fears and the negative views of an Islamist rule's stance vis-à-vis religious minorities. Tadros (2014) reminds us that beyond the common "discriminatory policies" or "sectarian attacks", such as those around building or renovating churches, under Morsi's presidency, the attacks reached unprecedented levels including an attack on the main Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Cairo in April 2013 (p. 209).

During Morsi's presidential campaign, he made assurances and attempts to portray a progressive stance, arguing that "Copts should have the right to build places of worship anywhere they want, just as Muslims do;" further, during his first televised speech as president, he reassured Copts that their religious rights will be protected (Khorshid, 2014, p. 238). In reality, during his brief presidency, his discourse and practices were generally exclusionary. For instance, to name but one example, in an indication of how Morsi and his political party's attempt to consolidate power in his own hands, he "canceled the position of vice president entirely", which was in line with the demands from "extremist Salafi party and Salafi spokespersons" (Tadros, 2014, p. 211). These exclusionary discourses and practices, including "a perceived intent to move laws closer to a conservative interpretation of shari'a" helped unite "liberals, Nasserists, socialists, mainstream Muslims, and Copts" together against him (Zuhur, 2014, p. 266).

With those vivid memories in mind, understandably, just as is the case with many Egyptians, the majority of Copts would arguably choose to remain under the tyranny of a military dictatorship that might be accused of clear human rights abuses and a crackdown on freedom of expression and dissent, but that at least maintains basic security and rights. For Copts, the perceived alternative, which they caught a glimpse of through the brief rule of Morsi,

would be an Islamist regime that would seek to 'officially' and 'institutionally' downgrade them to the status of second-class citizens in a more explicit and institutionalized manner than might be the case currently. The violence they see happening across the region, especially carried out against ethnic and religious minority groups, continues to reinforce the fear of that alternative, or change in general. After all, in addition to their lived experiences and ongoing threats of violence, attacks on churches, forced displacements, and acts of discrimination and micro-aggressions, they continue to watch more drastic uprooting and massacres instigated by Islamist-inspired terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq to name a few, as indicated in Chapter 1.

Those images of the alternative chaos are not only front and center across media outlets that they follow themselves, but that message of chaos being the only alternative continues to be conveniently conjured by the current President El-Sisi and supporters of the regime. Thus, in that context, the regime's human rights abuses and crackdown on dissent and civil society spaces become justifiable as necessary sacrifices to serve the ultimate goal of security and stability, to reach eventual progress. Under the current regime of President El-Sisi, it is too early to judge the possible results of the Coptic community's call for equal citizenship and "a right to difference, outside the constraints of the cross-and-crescent national unity myth" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 2594). However, given the current regime's crackdown on civil society and any form of dissidence that might challenge the status quo, it can be expected that these groups will continue to find it challenging to mobilize in any meaningful way to transform the assimilationist, nationalist discourse and its emphasis on sameness.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I attempted to investigate the place of Copts in formal Egyptian education, especially as manifested in their place in educational curricula. The lack of representation and general invisibility of Copts in curricula seems to be reflective of a general invisibility in the public space. The Church has clearly attempted to construct an alternative historical narrative

that focuses on an ancient glory and its resilience despite its enemies over time, including other Christian churches. The central tenets of this narrative revolve around martyrdom and sacrifice, as well as loyalty to the land of Egypt. Through its Sunday Schools, especially starting in the 1950s and gaining more momentum in the 1970s and 1980s, the Church has been able to strengthen its grip on and nurture new generations of young Copts who are loyal and indoctrinated into the Church's narrative.

The few studies that have explored the modern Coptic subjectivity seem to point to an internalization of that narrative which prioritizes Christian values of sacrifice and seeks reward in the afterlife over public or civic engagement that would seek equal citizenship rights. However, the 2011 events and their aftermath seem to point to a different reality, where Coptic youth – along with young Egyptians more generally – revolted not only against the hegemony and brutality of the authoritarian Egyptian state, but also against the hegemony of the Church.

How this newfound sense of agency has allowed Coptic youth, and Egyptian youth more generally, to engage with and deconstruct the dominant historical narratives propagated by those hegemonic institutions is still a generally understudied question, which I will attempt to explore in this current study.

Introduction

This chapter introduces the theoretical perspectives that helped guide me in this study. I am guided by theoretical frameworks that elucidate dynamics shaping constructions of historical narratives, as well as human interactions with those narratives. However, given that my approach in the study is generally guided by a Grounded Theory approach, I start by outlining this approach before I engage the various other theoretical frameworks that I find relevant for this study.

Given my adherence to a Grounded Theory approach which calls on researchers to avoid developing a predefined theoretical framework that might unnecessarily influence the findings emerging from the data collected, my main aim from this chapter is to offer a literature review to familiarize and engage with the key theories and studies that have attempted to understand how youth (secondary and post-secondary students) interact with national master narratives, and their communities' historical narratives exclusion. This includes a discussion of how the omission of minority narratives and perspectives might influence majority and minority students. As will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, since I adopt a largely inductive approach guided by Grounded Theory (e.g., Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978; Morse, 2009), this review is aimed at helping situate my research more clearly within the literature. This proposed framework then allows me to engage with the literature and the results that have emerged in other contexts based on what emerges from the data I have collected.

Some grounded theorists such as Charmaz (2006) go as far as proposing that it might be ideal for researchers following Grounded Theory approaches to actually only start conducting their literature review and theoretical framework after they have collected their data and analyzed it, mainly to try "to avoid importing preconceived ideas and imposing them" unto our

data (p. 165). However, these scholars also realize that in reality, given how academia or grant making for instance is designed, in the majority of cases, realistically speaking researchers do go to their field – and should be expected to - with at least some initial notions based on their literature reviews and earlier readings (Charmaz, 2006).

However, researchers adopting a Grounded Theory approach are reminded to try - to the extent possible - to be as close to the data as possible to minimize the influence that earlier theories might have on coloring our approaches and readings of the data. Thus, in presenting this literature review, I attempt to present a survey of the various theories and studies that might be relevant to the study at hand. However, following Grounded Theory guidelines, I also largely refrain from proposing a specific framework to approach my data. It is then later in the study that, based on my data analysis, that I start discussing the theories emerging from my data putting those findings in conversation with studies and theories emerging from other contexts. This is where, as Charmaz (2006) proposes I engage with "the most significant points of convergence and divergence" with these established theories (p. 166).

Embedded in a critical socio-cultural approach to education and to curriculum, my conceptual framework seeks to elucidate how master historical narratives, situated within dominant societal discourses and knowledge systems, might either be passively internalized or alternatively resisted by individuals. Regarding the analyses of the constructions of historical narratives, as outlined in Chapter 1, I am broadly guided by Critical Theory, and more specifically by Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Pedagogy's approaches to curriculum. In understanding how humans interact with history, I am inspired by both theories of social representations and historical consciousness, as discussed in detail in this chapter.

As outlined in Chapter 1, I find that Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 1970/2000; Giroux, 1983, 2003; McLaren, 2003) and Critical Discourse Analyses (Fairclough, 2003, 2004; Gee, 2011) offer helpful guiding approaches that ensure that the socio-political context and societal power

asymmetries are rightly placed in the center of the analysis. To understand the resilience of dominant master historical narratives and their key recurring elements, I mainly draw on Wertsch's (1998, 2000) notion of 'schematic narrative templates'. In approaching the question of how humans interact with dominant historical narratives, I am mainly guided by Carretero's (e.g., Carretero, 2017; Carretero, Castorina, & Levinas, 2013; Carretero & Van Alphen, 2014) scholarship and the framework he proposes to analyze how 'schematic narrative templates' of master narratives get appropriated by and/or resisted by individuals. I also draw on the theoretical frameworks of social representations (Moscovici, 1988, 2001, 2005; Wagner & Hayes, 2005), and of historical consciousness (Rüsen, 2005; Seixas, 2004; Zanazanian, 2008, 2012, 2015a), since the two approaches complement each other in productive ways.

Fully cognizant that these are largely theoretical frameworks that emerged from Western contexts, I attempt to mitigate the possibility of imposing them on the Egyptian context, thus inadvertently silencing or missing important nuances and particularities of the Egyptian non-Western context. This attempt entailed three key strategies: First, whenever relevant, I engage with critiques that these theories might have been exposed to and the responses of some of their key scholars. Second, this literature review is meant to offer a solid grounding for my research, and to allow me to engage with existing literature and those important conversations, as well as open up possible venues for comparative work. However, my intent of employing a Grounded Theory approach is to give precedence to findings emerging from the data collected in Egypt, analyzed taking the Egyptian context into full consideration. Third, related to embedding my analysis in the Egyptian context and in closely adhering to critical socio-cultural approaches, I attempt to pay close attention to the Egyptian educational context, as it has evolved over the past two centuries, as is detailed in the two previous chapters and as becomes clear in my two data analyses chapters.

In this chapter, I start by outlining the theoretical perspectives that guide my understanding of how dominant historical narratives of the past are constructed, mainly through engaging with the concept of Schematic Narrative Templates. I then dedicate the rest of the chapter to outlining theoretical approaches to understanding how humans interact with historical narratives, namely through discussing key aspects of the theoretical frameworks of Social Representations and Historical Consciousness. I then conclude the chapter with a brief discussion of synergies between the various theoretical approaches outlined.

Understanding Constructions of the Past

How a nation's history is narrated, whether through formal history education or through other social sites, has been among the most effective tools sought and used to help build and shape national identities and hence views of self and the other (Anderson, 1983/2006; Barton, 2012; Hobsbawm, 1990; Lopez & Carretero, 2012; Lukacs, 1968). In terms of their influences on defining subjectivities and civic attitudes, Carretero (2017) eloquently captures the power of master historical narratives:

> National historical narratives, both in and out of school, play an important role as moral vectors, because they are designed with that goal in mind. This purpose is accomplished in at least two ways: First, the master narrative established the distinction between "good" and "bad" options, people, and decisions. Typically, the first one is associated with the national "we", and the second one is related to "they". Also master narratives offer living examples of civic virtue, particularly of loyalty. As it can be easily inferred, this loyalty function was essential in the construction of the nation, and it can still be found in many symbolic forms out of the school like sports for example. (p. 519)

Schematic Narrative Templates

Whereas a master narrative refers to a nation's widely circulated and accepted story, its 'schematic narrative template' – a term coined by Wertsch (1998) - refers to the common structure recurring across diverse historical narrations each of which might have its "particular setting, cast of characters, dates" (Wertsch, 2004, p. 57). Carretero and Van Alphen (2014)

elaborate that a schematic narrative template represents the underlying "common narrative theme" that manifests through different historical narratives (p. 293). Thus, individuals would often retain elements of a specific narrative only if it "can be blended with or subsumed by the … narrative template" (VanSledright, 2008, p. 123). Thus, giving their significant influences on individuals' approaches to and understanding of the past, Wertsch (2004) draws our attention to the importance of not only analyzing the 'specific narratives' which he defines as entailing the specific historical events and actors presented in narratives, but to also seek to analyze the 'schematic narrative templates'.

Consistent with Wertsch's proposal, some studies illustrate how human subjects, including young people or students, place information they receive into pre-defined narrative templates, which reflect the dominant schematic narrative templates. In this section I offer a number of examples of how these schematic narrative templates have been analyzed and their various manifestations. I start with the context of the Canadian province of Quebec, where counter to the content of textbooks, French-speaking secondary school students internalize a narrative characterized by a regressive "melancholy, nostalgic awareness … of a conquered, reclusive people" (Létourneau & Moisan, 2004, p. 117). Similarly, Lévesque, Létourneau, and Gani (2012) argue that secondary school students in Quebec develop a predictable pattern of meaning making, which the authors refer to as the *survivance* template, which simplifies past realities into a dichotomous story of 'us versus them'. Highly influenced by leaders and public figures, including pop artists, students seem to make use of those narrative templates because they provide them with an affordable tool to simplify and comprehend past complexities. Elsewhere, Létourneau and his colleagues (Létourneau, 2007; Létourneau & Moisan, 2004) argue that these templates or matrices are shaped early during a child's formative years and that these original narrative cores, their basic matrix and general notional structure, will remain unchanged unless families or teachers intervene to replace that representation with another.

These schematic narrative templates, or what Liu and Hilton (2005) call "charters", constitute a nation's "account of its origin and historical mission, which will have been amended and renegotiated over time to reflect changing circumstances, and frame its responses to new challenges", thus will clearly aim to also explain "the group's present", and "its future" (p. 537). Clearly, these charters have a "prescriptive" nature thus defining "roles for a group ('defender of the free world', 'light of civilization', or 'beacon against militarism', etc.)" and legitimizing "actions… justified as the 'right thing to do' through reference to historical experience" (p. 537). Through the general public's informal acceptance of those "charters", "social representations of history legitimize a society's current social and political arrangements" (p. 539).

As would possibly be the case in most nation-states, studies have shown how powerful and enduring the schematic narrative template could be in some contexts. For instance, in the case of the US, even when individuals did not remember specific historical narratives or details, high school students exhibited a strong familiarity with the dominant "story arc" using it to approach and interpret the various US historical events or actors they were confronted with (VanSledright, 2008, p. 125). A schematic narrative template often endures across generations, as in the case of Russia. To illustrate, Wertsch's (2004) comparative analysis of historical narratives of Soviet era and post-Soviet individuals reveals that while their specific narratives appeared to be different in terms of the content or how they emplot them, a closer analysis showed how the schematic narrative template remained mostly unchanged, consistently adhering to the Russian template of "triumph-over-alien-forces" (p. 57).

Engaging with schematic narrative templates.

It is far from true that citizens are simply passive consumers of these templates. Similar to the case of Quebec students whose narrative template diverged from that presented in their curricula, in cases where a dominant Soviet narrative was imposed on Estonian students, they

mastered it; however, they did not internalize it (Ahonen, 2001; Wertsch, 1998, 2000). Being exposed to two competing narratives, Wertsch's (2000) study of post-Soviet Estonia shows that Estonian students grasped the official narrative on a cognitive level. However, instead of "believing or appropriating" it, they were able to resist it by reverting to competing narratives which they were exposed to through "alternative, unofficial accounts" such as family (p. 42). Further, different groups within the same society can have varying narrative templates based on the sources of historical knowledge that they find credible and trustworthy (Seixas, 2004).

Similarly, based on her research with Black students in UK schools, Howarth (2004, 2006) argues that knowing a particular social representation and encountering it does not mean that we passively accept it or internalize it. Thus, Black students - misrepresented in British curricula – take a critical stance from the dominant social representations of the 'troublesome Black youth' which is "institutionalized within the material and symbolic curricula at school" and are able to articulate how these representations "inform the realities they experience", and simultaneously find means to "resist and reject such representations or 'versions' of themselves and their position at school" (Howarth, 2006, p. 68). Thus, similar to the case of Estonian students (Ahonen, 2001; Wertsch, 1998, 2000), students who were excluded or misrepresented mastered that dominant narrative and understood it, while finding ways to critique and resist it.

Students would continue to revert to their community or family narratives either when these are not being challenged in the classroom by teachers, as in the case of Quebec (e.g., Létourneau, 2007; Létourneau & Moisan, 2004), or when a history education presents a neutral multi-perspectival approach but lacks a clearer guidance regarding the desirability of particular narrative approaches, as in the case of Northern Ireland (e.g., Barton & McCully, 2005). Commenting on these findings that emerge from Quebec and Northern Ireland, Barton (2008) points to the powerful socio-cultural influence on students' attitudes, where narratives and

narrative templates acquired outside school lead students "to discount or transform the content of the curriculum" (p. 247).

As outlined in Chapter 2, based on an analysis of recurring themes of how ancient and modern Egyptian histories are narrated in contemporary Egyptian history textbooks, I find that the Egyptian schematic narrative template (Abdou, 2017a) is largely one of both stability and progress. The template is informed by the key elements of fear of foreign intervention and enemies, fear of chaos, valorizing and revering a stable nation-state, and seeking a unifying leader or savior who is most often expected to emerge from the military establishment to restore stability, even if at the expense of human rights and freedoms.

Analyzing and deconstructing master narratives.

As Al-Azmeh (2002) eloquently explains, religious and nationalist master narratives are constructed in ways that "constitute eddies within a grander linear flow of time to a meeting with destiny, this being the Eschaton[29] or national sovereignty" (p. 61). States continue to - albeit to degrees that vary by context - control schools. Schools, as Hobsbawm (1997) reminds us, are "the most important channel of imparting historical information", where "history – mainly national history – occupies an important place in all known systems of public education" (p. 275). However, with the emergence and evolution of multiple sources of historical knowledge, expectedly that master historical narrative is clearly being challenged and has lost much of its earlier power, we need to look beyond curricula and textbooks to the various sites that help propagate the master narrative, including, for instance, "writers of fiction, film producers or the makers of television and video programmes" and especially how they have reproduced that narrative in various ways (Hobsbawm, 1997, p. 276).

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[29] Eschaton is an Abrahamic religious reference to the end of the world or final events of history.

Based on Carretero's long career dedicated to studying master historical narratives and their influences on students' understandings of history and their subjectivity formation - especially in contexts such as those of Spain, Greece, Mexico and Argentina - Carretero and his colleagues (Carretero, 2017; Carretero, Castorina, & Levinas, 2013; Carretero, Lopez, Gonzalez, & Rodríguez-Moneo, 2012) offer a framework that helps us analyze, and mostly problematize, key elements that inform and shape dominant historical narratives.

According to Carretero and his colleagues, there are key features that are to be commonly found across master historical narratives. Those include the "historical subject" and how it is constructed through a process of exclusions and inclusions. Thus, the national "we" is attributed the positive aspects, while "they" receive the "critical or negative" aspects, clearly implying what characteristics and actions are "logical" and desirable and which are not actions for that national subject". Importantly, another key element is that "the territory is presented as having no differences with the present one". Thus, generally, the master narrative presents a romanticized and "essentialist" understanding of "the nation" and "the nationals", presenting it as a "pre-existing" entity, having an "eternal and "ontological" nature" (Carretero, Lopez, Gonzalez, & Rodríguez-Moneo, 2012, p. 157).

Consequently, master narratives "contain basic moral orientations"; thus, they provide "tautological legitimization for the nation´s main acts", justifying "violent acts and political decisions devoted to achieve it" (Carretero, Castorina, & Levinas, 2013, pp. 8-9). To examine how humans make sense of these elements of the schematic narrative template, Carretero and Van Alphen (2014) invite us to look to how individuals define the historical subject (homogenous or heterogeneous); historical events (simple or complex); and whether their understanding of "nation building" is essentialist or constructivist (p. 298). Such an outline offers some helpful elements that can inform an analytical approach to how the master narrative is being internalized or critiqued and resisted by individuals.

Human interactions with master narratives.

In elaborating on these key elements and tying them with how they would manifest among individuals who would have passively internalized them, Carretero (2017) outlines the five dimensions that characterize those citizens' narrative representations of national history. Those include whether "the historical subject" was defined as "a pre-existent and everlasting historical subject", rendering nationals as "a coherent and homogenous group" or an "imagined homogeneity" to the exclusion of non-nationals or the 'others'. Naturally, such an emphasis on this essentialist historical subject understanding comes to the exclusion of "considering the possibility of different and heterogeneous groups of nationals" (p. 518). Second, in explaining the identification process, Carretero (2017) explains that someone who accepts the master historical narrative would develop an uncritical understanding of continuity that attaches "the present storyteller and the past historical subject"; thus, in their understanding these "(national) origins would be considered ontological instead of constructed through precisely a historical process" (p. 518). Third, in a traditional approach to the master narrative, "historical events are simplified around one common narrative theme, such as the search for freedom or territory". This would manifest in a person's explanation of cause and consequence as "a monocausal explanation instead of being multicausal" (p. 518). An individual who internalizes that understanding or approach to the past would lack an ability to contextualize or historicize the nation or the nationals: he/she sees the geographical territory as having forever belonged to the nation, instead of viewing this national territory and the formation of national identities "as the result of different complex political, social, and historical processes" (p. 519).

Fourth, Carretero (2017) invites us to examine "the application of moral features that legitimize the actions of the nation and the nationals … in relation to national territory and all the actions related to its developments and changes" (p. 519). Finally, in pointing to the resilience of the master narrative and the template it is embedded within, he notes that both individuals who

relate to or problematize the romanticized and essentialist understanding of the nation and nationals, still explained "historical concepts" and events such as "nation, revolution, and independence" within the "framework of the general structures provided by master narratives" (p. 520).

Theoretical Approaches to Understanding How Humans Interact with the Past

A growing body of literature aims to understand how humans interact with the past and with dominant historical narratives. In this section I focus on two of those influential theoretical frameworks: social representations and historical consciousness. As I discuss at the end of this section, I believe that those two frameworks – along with the other theoretical frameworks discussed above - introduce productive complementarities and synergies.

Social Representations Theories[30]

Given that my research focuses on the question of the omission or misrepresentation of minorities in Egyptian curricula, French theorist Serge Moscovici's social psychology theory of social representations offers helpful insights and tools. Moscovici (2001) explains that 'social representation' can be defined as "a certain recurrent and comprehensive model of images, beliefs and symbolic behaviours … a series of propositions which enable things or persons to be classified, their characters described, their feelings and actions to be explained" (p. 152). Moscovici (2001) further elaborates that "social representations appear as a 'network' of ideas, metaphors and images, more or less loosely tied together" (p. 153). This 'network' allows "people of one group or society to understand their world clearly and distinctly, to interpret

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[30] Howarth (2006) notes that over the past 40 years, the theory of social representations has been expanding and attracting researchers globally. There is also a relatively new academic journal entitled *Papers in Social Representations* and a doctoral program focused on "social representations and communication" (pp. 66-67)

fortunate or unfortunate events, and to predict and judge the behaviour of others" (Moscovici, 2005, p. xii).

These social representations can be said to be codified and "standardised", in "myths, religions, art works, mass media", among other social sites (Moscovici, 2005, p. xii). Howarth (2006) further elaborates on what social representations theory aims to understand and explore:

> … in learning about the world in which we live, we take on particular 'presentations' of that world and reinterpret them to fit with what we know 'already'. That is, we take on 'presentations' and re-present them. In this process, the social representation may be confirmed or perhaps re-articulated or re-enacted in various ways … Social re-presentation gives us a way of making sense of, and so constituting, socially significant phenomena. It is not that social representations simply reflect or inform our reality, but that in doing so they become what reality is inter-subjectively agreed to be. (pp. 68-69)

In contrast to other approaches that focus, for instance, on "individually learned abstractions or stereotypes", social representation is more interested in the 'socio-cultural' dimensions of both the production as well as that meaning making process of those representations (Wagner & Hayes, 2005, p. 196). Thus, it attempts to gain an understanding of those "top-down processes" which help shape those social representations that constitute a "socially shared construct" and that are embedded within "the discourse and social structure of groups". Thus, social representation theories are interested not only in how representations shape self-identity but also "social identity", both of which are closely connected in an arguably cyclical fashion, since social identity is defined by an "individual's place and embedding in its social group" which in turn defines "the content and structure of the available representations" (Wagner & Hayes, 2005, p. 196).[31]

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[31] French sociologist David Émile Durkheim is generally credited for being the "most direct forefather of social representation theory", especially in his debates around the "theory of symbolic systems", where he used religion as an example (Wagner & Hayes, 2005, p. 117).

Further, social representations play an important role in shaping intergroup behaviors, as Wagner and Hayes (2005) elaborate:

> Since these shared ideas contain both judgmental and action-directing elements, they orientate the way members of the group act, both between one another and with respect to outsiders. The background knowledge shared by members of the group distances it from other competing groups and individuals, who lack the associated interpretative schema. The relative uniformity *vis-à-vis* others lends the group member security and identity. At the same time, the social representational system essential for the social identity of groups reinforces the marginalisation of others, and justifies discrimination. In this way, social representations also play an important role for intergroup behavior. (p. 123)

Social Representations, Culturally Available Models, and Schemata

Moscovici (2001) explains that interactions, which often entail "implicit negotiations", serve to orient people "towards particular symbolic models, images and shared values". These interactions help individuals "acquire a common repertoire of interpretations and explanations, rules and procedures which they can apply to everyday life" (p. 151). Multiple terms have been used to refer to these repositories of interpretations that individuals acquire through their social interactions and that help shape their social identities, subjectivities, and civic attitudes. For instance, Moscovici's explanation clearly resonates with the concept of "figured worlds", which, as Gee (2011) explains, offer individuals "simplified, often unconscious, and taken-for-granted theories or stories about how the world works" to guide their "daily lives"; importantly, these theories and stories are "guided, shaped, and normed by the social and cultural groups to which we belong" (p. 76). Figured worlds - or what Gee (2011) used to refer to as 'cultural models' or 'Discourse models' in some of his earlier contributions - are frameworks that essentially "mediate between the local interactional work we humans do … and Discourses as they operate to create the complex patterns of institutions and cultures across societies and history" (p. 76).

The fact that they are shaped by interactions with social and cultural groups means that they potentially vary across those various groups. This explains why narrative theorists refer to

those as culturally available plots or storylines. Culturally available narratives and stories help reinforce culture and subjectivities in a dialogic relationship (Berger, 1997; Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 2008). Polkinghorne (1988) further elaborates that these plots or storylines are "specific types of plots" produced by a culture "for adoption by its members in their configuration of self"; usually propagated through "mythic stories and fairy tales, by tales of heroes, and by dramatic constructions" (pp. 153-154).

Along with Gee, other critical discourse analysis theorists also propose that discourses offer "cultural models" that serve – oftentimes unconsciously - as 'storylines' or 'scripts' that individuals and social and cultural groups deploy in their meaning-making processes (Rogers, 2004, p. 251). These 'cultural models' are basically "everyday theories (i.e., storylines, images, schemas, metaphors, and models) about the world that tell people what is typical or normal" from viewpoint of a particular discourse (Gee, 2004, p. 40). Importantly, Howarth (2006) reminds us that these social representations are not "static templates" pulled out of "our cognitive schemas", but dynamic templates that allow for "re-acting, rejecting or re-forming a presentation of the world that conflicts with one's stake, position, and self-identity" (p. 68).

Thus, arguably, the schematic narrative template or the more specific dominant historical narrative - available and propagated through various media and social sites – have a strong influence on shaping these individual "formula stories" (Loseke, 2012, p. 253). What defines these stories is that "their plots, characters, and morals are recognizable and predictable to audience members"; they gain that familiarity by mobilizing "symbolic codes and emotion codes". Symbolic codes are "systems of ideas about how the world does work, how the world should work, and about the rights and responsibilities among people", while emotion codes help individuals develop ideas about "when and where and toward whom or what emotions should be inwardly experienced, outwardly displayed, and morally evaluated" (Loseke, 2012, p. 253).

Social representations and shaping of civic attitudes.

As Wagner and Hayes (2005) clarify social representations and "schemata" serve the function of orienting us "in a manifold and complex social world"; they do this through giving "meaning, weight and structure to phenomena that are relevant in everyday affairs", which would otherwise remain "unfamiliar, undefined, unexplained and unreasonable" until these phenomena have been integrated into our "existing cognitive and representational system"; only then do they become "a part of our personal world" (p. 194). Thus, schemata or "social representations" serve as "theory-like structures", whereby individuals "categorise and name experience" thus, "allocating meaning and for understanding social phenomena" (p. 195).

Importantly, social representations theorists contend that social representations of historical events offer individuals and communities schemata through which they can understand and process historical events and narratives. Wagner and Hayes (2005) argue that social representations of historical experience comprise of "a condensate of events … the causes, reasons and consequences of past facts" (p. 152). Those representations of historical events not only shape content that is shared and maintained, but - arguably more importantly - they help shape "historically substantiated explanatory models", which through their replication numerous times have the power to shape "the mentality of entire peoples" and their approaches to the past (Wagner & Hayes, 2005, p. 152). This explanation can start to help us unpack and shed more light on the power and resilience of schematic narrative templates, which have been detected among individuals in various contexts.

Social representation theorists seem to generally focus on analyzing how social representations shape individuals' and groups' understandings of the past and the present. However, as will be discussed in the next section, they generally seem to lack a critical approach that acknowledges the role of power dynamics in shaping those interactions. Additionally, these

models seem to propose a passive relationship where individuals might internalize these social representations imposed on them by various social sites.

Critical Approaches to Social Representations

As mentioned above, research guided by social representations has been critiqued for not giving enough attention to questions related to "the relationship between representations and (a) social practices and (b) power" (Howarth, 2006, p. 67). Thus, Howarth (2006) calls for researchers to adopt a more "critical perspective" that brings those questions to the foreground in their analyses to confront and address "social inequalities" that are being studied and experienced (p. 66). Given my interests in overcoming some of these potential 'blind spots' and to make sure that power dynamics are problematized in this study, in this section, I discuss Howarth's insights and proposals in further detail.

Attention to questions of power.

Howarth (2006) reminds us that all social representations are political and serve particular interests:

> … the reproduction of power relations depends on the continuous and creative (ab)use of representations that mystify, naturalize and legitimatize access to power … Different representations speak to different interests and so silence, or at least muffle, others…They are drawn on both to naturalize and legitimize exclusion and othering as well as to critique and challenge such stereotypes and marginalizing practices. (p. 79)

Thus, Howarth (2006) challenges researchers to move beyond the description of these social re-presentations and thus inadvertently "consolidating the divisive practices" they describe, towards asking more structural and critical questions related to why particular 're-presentations' are reproduced and how they are processed by individuals and groups, thus allowing us to provide a "potentially transformative account" (p. 66).

Resistance and agency as social identity.

In citing leading critical pedagogy theorist Freire's discussions of collective people's agency and resistance, Howarth (2006) also points to the importance of paying close attention to

how individuals are able to resist inequalities and injustices and how that is an important

component of the process to constitute the social identity of individuals, which they co-construct

with others. For instance, through her research with Black students in the UK - cited earlier - she

is able to demonstrate how individuals are able to "find strategies that resist and reject" others'

negative representations of them and their ethnic or cultural group (p. 78).

This process of resistance, contestation, and re-representation of exclusionary "racist

ideologies and racist practices" that might position a group as "dangerous, deviant and 'other'",

for instance, are key in allowing for "co-constructions of self-identity" (pp. 78-79). Since only

few studies using a social representations framework adopt this approach of problematizing

power dynamics or pointing to strategies of resistance and agency, Howarth (2006) calls on

researchers to find ways to understand strategies that individuals adopt to resist and confront

through their social representations, rather than assume that they uncritically or passively 're-

present', for instance.

Historical Consciousness Theories

As a concept and theoretical approach, historical consciousness reached Western and

European history education only in the 1970s, via Germany, and has witnessed a growing

scholarly interest ever since (Kölbl & Konrad, 2015; Laville, 2004). One can mark an important

shift whereby the field moved from 'metahistorical' efforts seeking to analyze societal historical

consciousness (e.g., Gadamer, 1987; Lukacs, 1985; White, 1973) to frameworks that theorize

historical consciousness and its development on the individual level (e.g. Rüsen, 1989/2004,

2005; Zanazanian, 2012, 2015a).[32] In that respect, Rüsen (2005) and others who have theorized

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[32] While most of the studies reviewed focus on the historical consciousness of individuals, national and regional
studies do venture into making generalizations regarding 'collective' historical consciousness. For example, in
discussing the similar findings emerging from the Canadian, American, and Australian national studies including an
increased interest in, and engagement with, the past, the Canadian authors (Conrad et al., 2009) note that the
'historical turn' seems to be a result of contemporary challenges to cultural identities and social authority in the
context of globalization and rapid technological change experienced by these societies. They, thereby, allude to the

about how humans make sense of the past, see their historical consciousness work as building on and supplementing leading Swiss scholar Jean Piaget's work which provided foundations of understanding "the category of time … within the framework of the natural sciences", but was largely silent on questions of the historical consciousness of individuals (p. 35).

Defining Historical Consciousness

According to Seixas (2016) - who is credited for having introduced the concept of historical consciousness within North American academic circles - Rüsen's theory filled an important gap by offering "a scheme" to help us understand how "people in the larger culture looked to the past for orientation in the present" and to define their expectations of the future (p. 429). Basically, historical consciousness is a framework concerned with how that understanding of the past shapes an individual's sense of the present and his/her orientation towards the future, based on moral values (Ahonen, 2005; Rüsen, 1989/2004, 2005; Seixas, 2004; Straub, 2005; Zanazanian, 2008, 2012, 2015a). Importantly, historical consciousness is concerned with how such interaction with the past shapes intergroup dynamics. As Zanazanian (2010, 2015a) explains, historical consciousness allows us to examine "the role history plays in informing human identity and agency", and thus, how that defines the "means of knowing and acting in instances of group interaction" (2015a, p. 116).

Among the key elements of this historical consciousness is the notion of human awareness of temporal continuity across generations (Rüsen, 2004, p. 66), which is achieved through narrative. This explains why Rüsen (2005) stresses that a 'narrative competence' is crucial to achieve a historical consciousness. Narrative competence is "the ability to narrate a story by means of which practical life is given an orientational locus in time" (Rüsen, 1989/2004,

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influence of such conditions on these nations' connections with the past and the growing historical consciousness among these populations. Potentially, these observations about a collective historical consciousness and its characteristics can help inform the general and initial observations I made in Chapter 1 about the seemingly growing interest in, and awareness of, the country's history, especially among young Egyptians.

p. 80). It allows individuals to place themselves temporally between the past, present and future (e.g., Carretero & van Alphen, 2014, pp. 290-291). Such competence enables us to make "narrative connections" and construct "coherence" of events and actors (Straub, 2005, p. 54). This human ability to temporally connect past, present and future through narrative is informed by a "pull of the future" which influences our decisions and actions (Lukacs, 1985, p. 158). As White (1973) reminds us, German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's earlier definition of historical consciousness emphasized that specific temporal connection and orientational function of historical consciousness, explaining that it entails how humans "look back" at the past in ways that help them launch into the future (pp. 348-349).

An individual's self-awareness and critical connection to the past are also essential elements in defining historical consciousness. Lukacs (1985) argues that such "self-consciousness", which, according to him, marked the historical evolution of Europe in the mid 20th century, is an essential component of historical consciousness (p. 14). Gadamer (1987) does not seem satisfied with stopping at an individual's ability to attain self-awareness or consciousness. Instead, he argues that to be able to achieve a deeper historical understanding, individuals need to exercise "self-criticism" (p. 86). Such self-criticism would translate into an individual's critical approach to history so that he/she "no longer listens sanctimoniously to the voice that reaches out from the past" (p. 90).

Closely related to the self-awareness and self-criticism components of an evolved historical consciousness, is the element of reflexivity. Gadamer (1987) sees that it is this skill that enables individuals to appreciate "the possibility of a multiplicity of relative viewpoints", to see events in their own context, realize their significance and attribute the proper value to them (p. 89). The level of an individual's critical self-reflection – reflexivity - is important in shaping his/her historical consciousness, since it informs how an individual engages with and organizes experiences and expectations, as well as deals with change (Kölbl & Straub, 2001; Straub, 2005).

This becomes apparent in discussing Rüsen's typology – as I will do below - which clearly attributes higher and more sophisticated levels of historical consciousness to individuals exhibiting such critical and self-reflective abilities and competencies.

Jörn Rüsen's Historical Consciousness Typology

While Nietzsche's pioneering work on historical consciousness in late 19th century Europe remains influential (e.g., Seixas & Clark, 2004), German historian Jörn Rüsen's (1989/2004, 2005) work has become central within recent scholarly efforts to theorize historical consciousness, especially on the progression of individuals' historical consciousness. Rüsen (2005) proposes that individuals exhibit a structural development of four types of historical consciousness: the traditional, exemplary, critical, and genetic types. Progressing from the traditional to the genetic type, his model proposes "a process of changing the structural forms by which we deal with and utilize the experience and knowledge of past actuality" (p. 37). Although organized in a logical sequence where each stage is the precondition for the next, Rüsen proposes that the stages are not mutually exclusive and that they effectively co-exist in "complex admixtures" (2005, p. 37). Emphasizing this non-linearity and co-existence of the different types, German historical consciousness theorists Kölbl and Konrad (2015) remind us that even if an individual attains the higher stages of Rüsen's historical consciousness, this does not mean that they should ever abandon "the lower levels" (p. 19).

In Rüsen's (2005) model, the traditional type is characterized by a sense of continuation of "an obligatory life form in temporal change" based on traditions, thus rendering the past extremely significant and influential for the present and future. The exemplary type entails looking at specific past cases and examples to distill "messages" or "lessons" relevant to the present and future. The critical type, meanwhile, rejects and denies validity of such patterns, proposing a "counter-narrative". Lastly, the genetic type situates change at its core and values such change for giving history meaning. In that genetic type, even permanence - in contrast to

the other three types - is appreciated for its dynamic nature and "internal temporality" (p.32). With such an ability to engage with the past and appreciate its dynamic changing nature, the genetic type presents an approach to history where diverse perspectives and narratives become "integrated into an embracing perspective of temporal change" (p. 33).

In terms of what these types of historical consciousness mean for an individual's sense of citizenship or how individuals might choose to enact such a sense of citizenship, Rüsen (1989/2004) offers some general but helpful insights that could be further built on. Perhaps it is helpful to especially examine the three categories that are most relevant to the question of how historical consciousness influences the external orientation of individuals - namely, what Rüsen (2004) refers to as: *orientation of external life; relation to moral values; and, relation to moral reasoning* (p. 72). A traditional historical consciousness translates into an external orientation that is limited and defined by affirming "pregiven orders by consent about a valid common life" and "moral validity" achieves "an unquestionable stability by tradition" (p. 72). Significantly, and in clear contrast to traditional historical consciousness types, individuals embodying a critical historical consciousness delimit their "standpoint against pregiven obligations", and break "the moral power of values by denying their validity" (p. 72). In contrast, those embodying a genetic historical consciousness would exhibit tendencies of accepting "different standpoints within a comprising perspective of common development" and would take into full consideration temporal changes, thus ensuring a historicization and contextualization in their approach to moral values (p. 72).

Scholars have proposed helpful delineations between the first two (traditional and exemplary) and the latter two types (critical and genetic) in Rüsen's typology. For instance, Duquette (2015) labels the first two types "non-reflective," whereas the latter two are only attainable through an individual's knowledge of one's "own subjectivity vis-à-vis his understanding of the past" (p. 53). Duquette's argument accentuates the importance of self-

awareness and reflexivity in attaining evolved levels of historical consciousness as proposed by other scholars discussed above (e.g., Gadamer, 1987; Lukacs, 1985; Straub, 2005). Thus, the critical and genetic historical consciousness types – or approaches to the past – would exemplify what Trofanenko (2008) meant when she described historical consciousness as characterized by "a reflexive and metaperspective engagement with history", as opposed to general approaches to the past such as collective memory, which are often not intrinsically characterized by a reflexive or scrutinizing nature (p. 584).

Bringing the discussion to questions of intergroup dynamics and boundaries, Zanazanian (2012) contends that the 'genetic' type would be more qualified to consider "the significant Other's realities and experiences when developing one's own perspectives of the past" (p. 229). Similarly, he proposes that the critical and the genetic types exhibit abilities to embrace diverse perspectives, which manifests in how they would structure intergroup boundaries more flexibly and have a better ability to historicize events and ethical considerations (Zanazanian, 2015a, p. 118).

Historical Consciousness and External Orientation

Of central importance to this study is the question of how understandings of the past help inform an individual's outlook and external orientation towards others and towards society at large. Regarding the important role that an individual's historical consciousness plays in serving those purposes, Rüsen (2005) clarifies that historical consciousness gives "practical life a temporal frame and matrix" or an understanding of the "course of time". It is that conception which guides "human activity" and "course of action" (pp. 24-25). This requires a narrative competence, which is a key prerequisite for individuals to be able to develop their historical consciousness and orient them in time.

Informed by historical narratives, this orientational function also closely relates to shaping individuals' identities and interactions with others. Stories of the past help "people form

conceptions of themselves regarding the status of their lives in the process of the temporal changes of their world and themselves" (Rüsen, 2005, p. 86). These narratives also help individuals "come to an agreement with themselves about who the other people are with whom they have to live" (p. 86), thus playing a formational role in stipulating intergroup relations. As Rüsen (2002) eloquently argues, historical memory and historical consciousness "delimit the realm of one's own life – the familiar and comforting aspects of one's own life-world – from the world of others, which usually is an "other world", a strange world as well" (p. 1). Importantly, Rüsen (2002) points out that this entails a conscious mental effort "to keep the world and self familiar", suggesting that in cases of "extraordinarily disturbing experiences of change" individuals seek ways to redefine themselves and "to reacquire this familiarity" (p. 1).

Introducing Additional Nuances to Rüsen's Typology

Some research has challenged the consistency and clarity of Rüsen's typology especially when it comes to attempting to explore their relationship and influences on other dimensions such as social interactions, thus adding important and helpful nuances. For instance, Zanazanian's (2012) analyses shows that while two Francophone Quebec teachers both exhibit "an equal capacity to problematize and somewhat transform pre-established meanings of the past" – thus potentially pointing to a genetic tendency - they diverged in how they made sense of "the Other" (p. 225). Zanazanian (2012) explains those divergences as being potentially caused by individuals' "ethical, practical or political" considerations (p. 225).

Based on assessing the participants' categorizations across various thematic contexts, he finds it important to create sub-categories of "Quasi-Genetic" and "Genetic-Resistant", both of which cannot be considered fully genetic for various reasons: The 'Quasi-Genetic' exhibits genetic tendencies under most of the thematic contexts, but not all. The 'Genetic-Resistant' was created to include respondents who exhibited 'Quasi-Genetic' tendencies, but who, importantly, seem to consciously "refuse either to recognize the complexity of a certain aspect of the past or

to seek to better understand it" (Zanazanian, 2012, p. 224). Such an approach helps capture nuances that Rüsen's proposed four categories of historical consciousness types alone might miss when applied in various contexts.

Based on his extensive research in the context of Quebec over the past years, Zanazanian (2010, 2012, 2015a) offers especially helpful insights into how minority students or group members negotiate their potential misrepresentation or full omission from the dominant narrative. Based on his research, Zanazanian (2015a) proposes a 'repertory of ideal-type tendencies of historical consciousness', which builds on Rüsen's typology, demonstrating connections between the various historical consciousness 'types' and how those would translate into individuals' civic attitudes. The repertory proposes how individuals embodying the different types would understand and structure intergroup boundaries. Away from prescribing those as definitive categories, the repertory refers to those as 'tendencies', thus, encouraging scholars to capture other nuances and tendencies that might arise from other contexts.

Connecting that with the historical consciousness framework and his proposed repertory, Zanazanian (2015a) explains that minority group members exhibiting 'traditional tendencies' are more likely to passively accept the past as is with its "pre-given identity narratives or symbols" which would help connect them "to their fellow group members" (p. 117). Those exhibiting 'exemplary tendencies' are more likely to approach the past as "unquestioned rules of life patterns that extend across similar (historical) contexts" which helps them "construct reality and to guide conduct" (p. 117). Clearly, individuals with these two types of tendencies would most likely maintain a strong sense of "We-They dichotomies" (p. 117). Their uncritical approaches to the past and historical narratives could either mean that they seek to 'integrate' or 'assimilate' into the "dominant community", or alternatively revert to their "own community's essentialized historical memories as a form of resistance, and thereby mobilize them for sustaining differences and structuring boundaries rigidly" (p. 118).

As for the two other types - exhibiting more self-awareness and reflexivity – they would demonstrate a general interest and ability to transcend the dominant narrative and their own community's narratives in "acquiring a diversity of viewpoints" in an attempt to "grasp reality in all its totality", thus potentially challenging the "We-They dichotomies" and "pre-defined Self and Other" constructions (Zanazanian, 2015a, p. 118). More specifically, those exhibiting critical tendencies do that through deconstructing these "pre-given means", while individuals with genetic tendencies "go further and are more prone to transcending their own positionality in the world and thus their own imposed limits for grasping the many realities around them" (p. 118). They clearly recognize "the complexity, temporality, and variability of both knowing and acting in the world" realizing that the temporality of "one's moral obligations" fundamentally entails a "sincere openness to different viewpoints if a more complete vision of reality is to be attained" (Zanazanian, 2012, p. 219).

Based on his findings, Zanazanian (2015a) proposes that those exhibiting traditional tendencies uncritically see a space to include their omitted or misrepresented minority narrative within the dominant "storyline" which they have "appropriated affectively" and within which "group differences are maintained" (p. 131). Those with clear critical approaches to the dominant narrative showed two 'sub-tendencies' as some were critical by aiming to "overcome important narrative gaps", while others focused on a critique of "the narrative for its emotive tone, consequent shortsightedness, and misleading hold over Francophones" (p. 131).

Lack of Acknowledgment of Societal Power Dynamics and Structural Issues

Wertsch (1998) reminds us that "sociocultural settings inherently involve power and authority" and therefore, for an analysis to be as comprehensive as possible, it needs to go beyond the consumption side or what he calls the "cognitive-instrumental rationality" (p. 64). Historical consciousness theorists, such as Rüsen, are generally aware of the role of power dynamics in shaping historical narratives, which he argues are often manipulated according to

elite groups' interests to "construct, deconstruct and reconstruct collective identity" (Rüsen, 2005, p. 130). Despite this recognition however, few historical consciousness scholars – including Rüsen himself - situate the questions of power as centrally as they need to be in their theories or sociocultural analyses.

Thus, within the historical consciousness framework, there is little discussion of structural questions pertaining to societal power relations and dynamics shaping competing historical narratives. For instance, Rüsen's critical type potentially provides a framework to start problematizing such societal issues and dynamics. However, in his model there is little discussion of how individuals might in their awareness of the past, develop a critical historical consciousness vis-à-vis structural issues or historical injustices. In making a case to connect a historical consciousness framework to questions of power and injustice, Kölbl and Konrad (2015) stress the urgent need for such theorization that ties these questions to their potential influence on intergroup dynamics, reminding us how "differences are used to exercise power and justify social, political, and economic inequalities" (p. 21).

Resonating with the critique against critical pedagogy and its lack of attention to questions of intersectionality, outlined in Chapter 1, there is a similar critique posed to the historical consciousness frameworks. Frameworks and studies inspired by historical consciousness have been accused of focusing on particular aspects of marginalization at the expense of missing important issues of intersectionality that inform or exacerbate the marginalization of particular individuals or groups. For instance, Kölbl and Konrad (2015) draw our attention to the fact that, while there seems to be a recently growing attention towards researching the historical consciousness of minority students, these studies rarely address the multiple identities that students bring into the classroom including "intersections of various social categories" (p. 23).

Key Findings About How Human Subjects Interact with the Past

In this section I present a literature review of some of the key studies that have attempted to understand how students interact with the master narrative, especially its misrepresentations or omissions.[33]

Studying the Historical Consciousness of Individuals

In referring to his typology, Rüsen (2004) proposes that 'traditional' narratives are the easiest for students to grasp. 'Exemplary' ones, meanwhile, remain the most widely used in history curricula. Critical and genetic perspectives are the most challenging for both students and teachers to deal with, and hence are largely avoided in history classrooms (p. 80). Some recent studies show how students internalize these dominant pedagogical approaches and clearly use them in interacting with historical narratives they are exposed to. For instance, the Seixas and Clark (2004) study of Canadian students and Löfström's (2013) study on Finnish students both conclude that, while most students were found to exhibit tendencies of the exemplary or critical types, very few questioned historical methods or aimed to historicize the historical events and actors in discussion; these actions would have been characteristic of the genetic type.

While these studies and others begin to give us a sense of the relationship between history education and students' historical consciousness, along with other historical consciousness scholars, Seixas (2005) has warned that there still is a "huge gap" in understanding how history education influences students' historical consciousness (p. 141). An additional gap relates to understanding the role of extracurricular social sites - or what we might refer to as 'historical culture' - in shaping students' ideas and approaches to the past (e.g., Ahonen, 2001; Barton & McCully, 2005; Epstein, 2000; Frisch, 1989; Kölbl & Straub, 2001;

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[33] Although my study focuses on post-secondary students in Egypt, given that there are only few studies conducted with that age group, I found it helpful that my literature review includes studies that have engaged with students in secondary schools, as well as younger students in elementary or primary schools.

Létourneau, 2007; Létourneau & Moisan, 2004; Lévesque et al., 2012; Seixas, 2004; Wineburg, Mosborg, Porat, & Duncan, 2007).

Such a socio-cultural approach that acknowledges that students' realities are embedded in a wider historical culture is particularly useful as research is increasingly revealing that students' connection to, and understanding of, the past are significantly influenced by extracurricular activities and social institutions, such as the family.[34] Especially minority students have been found to revert to their family stories, since they find other sources of historical knowledge less trustworthy. Given that many of the indigenous and minority histories are largely missing from the classroom and other memory institutions, such as museums, it is understandable that these communities revert to their families and other communal institutions.

To illustrate, I briefly discuss the contexts of Argentina, Austria, Palestine, and Latin America. In an effort to study the influence of master narratives presented in history education on Argentinian students' subjectivities, Carretero and Van Alphen (2014) apply their model that analyzes how historical narratives are produced and consumed, which was discussed earlier. They conclude that most students have internalized the dominant narrative. While in comparing Grade 8 and 11 students they detect progressively more sophisticated historical accounts, which was reassuring, they still find that in both cases the master narrative has been "reproduced wholly or in part by students … indicating its perseverance" (p. 307).

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[34] In the case of the four large studies in the US, Europe, Canada, and Australia, museums and families were ranked among the most trustworthy sources about the past, in higher positions than history teachers and textbooks. This is especially true among minority groups such as African-Americans (Epstein, 2000; Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998), some immigrant communities in the United Kingdom (Harris & Reynolds, 2014; Hawkey & Prior, 2011; Wilkinson, 2014), and Aboriginal communities in the United States (Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998), Australia (Hamilton & Ashton, 2003), and Canada (Conrad et al., 2009). However, there have been some studies, such as An's (2009) study on Korean American high school students, which revealed a more positive pattern of these minority students' interaction vis-à-vis the US master narrative, challenging that broad generalization about the relationship between racial/ethnic minorities and official master narratives (p. 773).

Wodak - a leading Austrian critical discourse theorist - and her colleagues also provide a model to analyze how macro national discourses manifest in micro discourses in daily social interactions. In their multi-year national study of the discursive construction of Austrian national identity, Wodak et al. (2009) explore what they frame as "the recontextualisation of elite discourse" in "everyday discourse" (p. 4), finding that in many instances these elite discourses were being internalized and reproduced by citizens to the extent that even the "formulations or rhetorical set pieces" seemed to have been borrowed directly from Austria's "official political discourse" or school curricula (p. 191).

In another effort, Hammack (2010) provides an interesting cultural psychology perspective in his analysis of the Palestinian master narrative and how it manifests in young Palestinians' personal narratives. Again, in line with the Argentine and Austrian cases, he demonstrates how personal narratives "reveal the positions of subjects within a matrix of power relations and the *internalization of discourse* [emphasis in original]", which provide important insights into the process of "person–culture co-construction" (pp. 509-510). In the context of Latin America, studies have identified narrative templates that students develop and maintain such as the defeatist and victimized narrative in the case of Brazilian students' view vis-à-vis Europe's colonial legacy of Latin America. The authors make an important connection between that narrative and students' civic attitudes, arguing that this narrative contributes to shaping these students' weak sense of agency or interest to contribute to solving current societal challenges (da Conceicao & Sabino Dias, 2011). While these discussions begin to provide general insights into students' interaction with, and internalization of master historical narratives, some literature more specifically sheds light on the question of minority groups' interaction with master narratives, which usually omit or misrepresent them.

The Experiences of Minoritized Students

Zanazanian's (2015a) study of English-speaking students in Quebec concludes that most of these students exhibited traditional and critical tendencies, and not exemplary or genetic ones. The students mostly exhibited critical tendencies, employing different strategies that stopped at challenging or opposing the dominant French Quebec narrative. Other studies have also shown that minority students resist their communities' narratives exclusion by becoming disinterested in a national historical narrative, instilling within them a sense of apathy and alienation (e.g., Epstein, 2000; Harris & Reynolds, 2014; Wilkinson, 2014).

Based on their study in the UK, Harris and Reynolds (2014) find a heightened sense of awareness among minority students, such as Muslims, who worry about how such omission from the curriculum does not allow their white colleagues a chance to understand these minorities' backgrounds. As these secondary school students argue, such lack of understanding would be detrimental to how different groups interact and co-exist. Interestingly, some majority white students confirmed that they did not want to have to learn Islamic history, which they felt was irrelevant to British history (p. 14). In her study of post-Soviet Estonian history education that excludes Russian perspectives, Ahonen (2001) also warns that minority Russian students in Estonia found it difficult to identify with the country's future simply because they did not agree with the revised national Estonian history curriculum and its negative depiction of the Soviet era, which contradicted and excluded their community's historical perspective.

Although the study on young Europeans' historical consciousness (Angvik & Von Borries, 1997) does not attempt to analyze the reasons behind it, perhaps the exclusion from the national narrative is also why in France, Germany, and Scandinavia, young Muslims demonstrate weaker chronological knowledge of European and Christian topics and history. Interestingly enough, however, in contrast to that weaker historical knowledge, the study also finds that Muslims are not only more engaged in religion, but also slightly more interested in current

European and global politics than majority youths in the European societies. According to the authors, any marginalized group under pressure has to produce a higher sensibility and interest in current affairs. That said, the study also finds that in Eastern Europe there are some examples of increased apathy among other minority groups (Angvik & Von Borries, 1997, p. A226). So, among some minority groups while a rejection of the historical narrative that omits them becomes an expected resistance strategy, perhaps some compensate by an interest in, and, where possible, a strategically calculated civic and political engagement in the society they live in.

As discussed earlier, studies have shown that minority students resist dominant narratives by rejecting them and resorting to their community or family narratives instead. Expectedly, family is an important source of an individual's historical narrative for minorities in general, but especially for groups that have faced traumatic situations. In their work with Middle Eastern refugees in Denmark, Bek-Pedersen and Montgomery (2006) find that family narratives play an important role in shaping young people's historical consciousness and hence, for instance, their sense of orientation in their new homes. Family history seems to act as the refuge for narratives, realities, and perspectives denied and excluded by the master narrative. This seems to be the case whether for minorities or for oppressed peoples in general. For instance, in Estonia, to resist the grand narrative imposed by the former Soviet Union, ethnic Estonian students resorted to their family historical narratives (Ahonen, 2001; Wertsch, 1998, 2000).[35]

Resisting the Dominant Narrative Template, but on its Terms?

It seems that even when students are employing resistance strategies, they mostly only have the elite or master narrative available as a cultural tool to use, which is limiting to even those who want to challenge it, including minority groups. In applying this distinction, Wertsch finds that the vast majority of students in the US fully appropriated the country's master

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[35] Studies conducted on southwest England families and their historical consciousness (Green, 2013), Northern Ireland (Sakai, 2009) and a study of Finnish children's historical consciousness (Rantala, 2011), reached the same conclusion that individuals were able to find a connection to the grand narrative through their family narratives.

narrative of the 'quest-for-freedom'. Emblematically, the few American students who attempted to resist that narrative were only able to do so through the dominant master narrative or cultural tools available. In this way they were limited in their ability to tell their 'counter-narrative', or name their experience in terms that are liberated from the discursive terms and restrictions imposed by the master narrative. In that regard, Wertsch (1998) makes a powerful argument about the overpowering role of the dominant historical narrative that we need to be cognizant of:

> [T]he official account can be viewed as continuing to occupy a dominant position, even as it was being resisted and rejected. It set the terms for what had to be addressed in the unofficial historical accounts. What lends coherence to … the unofficial accounts is … that they stood in opposition to the official version. (p. 162)

Similar to Wertsch's argument that we need to bring awareness of how limited our opposition of the dominant discourse might be if we continue to use its own perspectives and language to present alternative narratives and perspectives, Ball (1993) warns that oftentimes the "struggle, dispute, conflict and adjustment" happen "over a preestablished terrain" or a "discursive frame" which sets the limitations and thus "articulates and constrains the possibilities and probabilities of interpretation and enactment" (pp. 14-15). Similarly, in problematizing how dominant discourses shape the boundaries of people's understandings of the world, social representations theorists Wagner and Hayes (2005), remind us of how such societal discourses are equivalent to a "mental macro-system", which defines for us "the boundaries of what is conceivable as well as the boundaries of conceivable meanings" (p. 2). Lears (1985) also highlighted how the success of cultural hegemony depends on its tacit permeation of the public sphere, thus making it difficult for those challenging the dominant discourse and its hegemony to develop a coherent counterhegemonic vision.

Synergies Between the Various Theoretical Approaches Outlined

Although the synergies might be already obvious and implied, in this section I provide some additional insights into the potential synergies and complementarities between the various

theoretical frameworks outlined. First and foremost, it is important to acknowledge that, as I sought to illustrate, like historical consciousness and social representations theorists, critical pedagogy theorists such as Giroux (1994) are also concerned with how students' exposure to "images, text, talk, and action" of the past or the present produce meaning and shape their understandings of "individual and collective futures" (p. 64). Thus, they seek to challenge that indoctrination through problematizing how dominant historical narratives are produced in ways that make them appear "objective, universally valid, and consensual" (Giroux, 1994, p. 88).

As demonstrated above, the two frameworks - social representations and historical consciousness – offer insights into analyzing how various groups interact with the past and how such differences might be informed by their ethnic, cultural, or social identities. In other words, together they offer a helpful approach to investigate questions related to intercultural variations to understanding and interacting with the past, which is helpful for my investigation of variations that might occur among Egyptian participants, across religious divides or other identity markers.

Given the two frameworks' general lack of focus on power dynamics and structural inequalities, a critical approach enhances a historical consciousness and social representations approach by foregrounding the important structural dimension, as well as giving student agency a more central place in the analysis. To illustrate, it might be helpful to briefly discuss how a critical pedagogy lens would synergistically work with, and enhance, Rüsen's proposed historical consciousness typology. While, as discussed, some scholars have classified the first two historical consciousness types as 'non-reflective' for instance, critical pedagogy would find these first two types (traditional and exemplary) altogether problematic. With its assumption that history repeats itself through a set of rules and patterns, an exemplary historical consciousness could be seen to promote a disempowering narrative for those consuming and internalizing it. By overemphasizing historical continuity, these two types would be seen to leave little room for questioning the permanence of certain power structures that maintain historical and existing

injustices. Accordingly, they downplay the potential of human agency in disrupting historical power inequalities. So, in its contribution to a historical consciousness framework, critical pedagogy would clearly problematize these two levels and would provide an analytic lens to how they are being nourished among students in schools, for example, as tools to serve particular hegemonic agendas that aim to maintain students' submissiveness and passivity vis-à-vis historical and contemporary inequalities and injustices.

Reciprocally, Rüsen's typology would significantly contribute to the evolution of a critical pedagogy approach to critiquing history education, curricula, and pedagogical approaches. Rüsen (2005) states that the critical type of historical consciousness is characterized by an individual's ability to rupture, deconstruct and decode history so that "it loses its power as a source of present-day orientation" (p. 32). A critical pedagogy model calls for the same, but would generally stop at that stage, not necessarily progressing to recognize the significance of Rüsen's proposed fourth genetic type. A strong critique that has been fielded against critical theorists over the years is that they stop at critiquing, without providing viable alternatives or visions (Apple & Buras, 2006; Armento, 1991; Eisner, 1992; Newmann, 1985; Schrag, 1992). In that sense, a historical consciousness framework also enriches critical theorists' approaches to education by providing an evolution that it might aspire to, beyond the critical type and the deconstruction of current narrative or only presenting counter-narratives.[36]

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[36] This lack of concrete practical vision is ironic since critical pedagogy is strongly influenced by Critical Theory with its strong commitment to connecting theory and practice to support the struggle against different forms of domination (Cherryholmes, 1991; Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003; Giroux, 2003). However, in response to this general critique of critical pedagogy, there are two nuances that are important to note here: First, in defense of critical pedagogy theorists, it could be argued that not 'prescribing' a specific model is actually part of their philosophy. For instance, Schrag (1992) argues that some critical theorists avoid being prescriptive in their curriculum analysis to avoid playing the "role of cultural imperialist" (p. 295). Similarly, Darder et al. (2003) see this as part of the nature of critical pedagogy, which represents a heterogeneous set of ideas, diverse in many ways but united in their commitments to fight oppression (p. 10). Second, it is perhaps more accurate to specifically critique critical pedagogy theorists, since critical pedagogy educators and practitioners, such as Bill Bigelow, have gone further by developing full alternative curricula and guides for alternative histories and more inclusive schools, etc. Those include developing alternative curricula such as *The Power in Our Hands: A Curriculum on the History*

Thus, I am hoping to bring questions of power and inequity to the foreground of my analyses. In the case of historical consciousness, I am guided by Kölbl and Konrad's (2015) call for more critical approaches to studies adopting historical consciousness frameworks; and in the case of social representations theories, I am attempting to respond to Howarth's (2006) call for researchers to more explicitly focus on engaging with and problematizing questions of power and "unequal social relations" (p. 72).

Chapter Summary and Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I attempted to present a literature review of some of the key works of scholars who have been examining questions related to how master narratives are constructed, as well as how individuals interact with those master dominant narratives. In my research, which is generally informed by theories of social representations and historical consciousness, I am guided by critical theory (as manifested in critical pedagogy and critical discourse analysis, discussed in detail in Chapter 1).

Given that I adopt an inductive Grounded Theory approach to examine what might emerge from the Egyptian context in terms of how young Egyptians (post-secondary students) interact with the dominant narrative – as will be outlined in detail in the next chapter – the above literature review serves two key purposes: First, it helps better situate my study in the literature to determine and articulate how other scholars have explored similar questions in other contexts. Second, such an understanding of other scholars' efforts and approaches enables me to draw some comparisons to where the Egyptian context overlaps with or diverges from other contexts and why. This becomes clearer in Chapter 8 in which, after presenting my data analysis and the

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of Work and Workers in the United States (1988). Other history-related efforts come from critical pedagogy theorists, such as Michael Apple and Kristen Buras (2006), who in their edited volume *The Subaltern Speak*, present several models and approaches to effectively include missing subaltern narratives, such as the Citizen School (Escola Cidadã) project in Brazil – presented earlier - or the East Los Angeles Blowout project.

emerging theory, I engage with some of the theories outlined above and the "significant points of convergence and divergence" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 166), using some of their elements to help propose a framework that could contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the Egyptian context and potentially similar, non-Western contexts.

It is also important to note that in my approach to this study, given that I am applying the concept of historical consciousness and Rüsen's typology to a non-Western context, I draw on historical consciousness only in as far as it offers a broad analytical approach, as clarified by Körber (2016) and as discussed in detail above. I also draw on Rüsen's typologies and Zanazanian's repertory as guiding starting points to help engage with the findings that will be emerging from my data analysis.

What this literature review has revealed is that there is still a general paucity of studies investigating how youths interact with the past, especially in non-Western contexts. Additionally, most existing studies seem to focus on the experiences of either majority students or minority students. However, very few studies have tackled the question of how interactions with the master narrative - and especially the omissions and misrepresentations of minorities in educational curricula - are interpreted by, and thus influence both majority and minority post-secondary students' subjectivities, intergroup dynamics, and civic attitudes. Thus, I hope that this study contributes to our understanding of those dynamics, especially in a non-Western context that is emerging from some major political upheavals that started in January 2011.

Chapter 5: Research Methodology and Methods

So, how do young Egyptians interact with the past? And, how might we go about exploring those interactions and understandings? How do they understand and 'represent' their history, realities, and those of other Egyptians? Do they passively internalize and reproduce the master narrative, as has been found in some other contexts? Within that understanding, how do majority Egyptians (e.g., Muslims) understand minorities (e.g., Copts) whom they have very little 'social representation' of, as was revealed in Chapters 2 and 3? Conversely, how do Copts view themselves, and how do they attempt to 'reinsert' themselves in a master narrative they are largely omitted from or, at best, misrepresented in? And, how do these interactions shape their subjectivities and civic attitudes?

Guided by my adherence to constructivism and a socio-cultural approach, in this chapter I present my research methodology and data collection strategies. I start by presenting the overall rationale guiding my inductive Grounded Theory approach which draws upon critical discourse analysis, both of which have similar commitments and supplement each other, as will be elaborated further. After I briefly discuss my positionality as a researcher (parts of which have already been outlined in Chapter 1), my participant recruitment strategy, and my participants' profiles, I then describe the data collection methods and tools employed and the logic behind them. In this study I employ multiple data collection methods, which I believe supplement each other and offer important synergies and contribute to the study's trustworthiness as outlined below. I then present how I conducted my data analysis and how I was able to distill the key findings that will then be presented and discussed in the next few chapters.

Overarching Rationale and Approach: An Inductive Grounded Theory Approach

In this study I seek to explore how young Egyptians interact with the country's master narrative. Additionally, I am interested to explore how such an interaction might help shape their

sense of identity and subjectivities, as manifested in their choices for civic engagement. Within those two questions, I am further interested to see if there might be any variations in that interaction or the sense of identity and subjectivity among Muslim and Coptic participants.

Investigating socio-cultural influences and how they shape meaning making mental processes among individuals and groups calls for a socio-cultural approach that falls at the nexus of cultural production and consumption (Wertsch, 1998, 2000). Within this socio-cultural approach, as stated earlier, I approach this study with a constructivist view of knowledge as being constructed by the knower and the researcher, and thus, open to interpretation and contestation; additionally, I fully acknowledge that in engaging in this study, collecting the data, analyzing, and presenting it, I am engaged in "the production of reconstructed understandings of the social world" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 184).

As discussed in Chapter 4, I am guided by social critical theories and approaches. While I approach the data with that critical lens, I found the inductive approach of Grounded Theory to be the most suitable as it allows me to avoid imposing Western theories and perspectives unto the data emerging from the Egyptian context and this study. Thus, for instance, while generally informed by social representations and historical consciousness theories, I am not imposing any specific typologies or categories upon my data from the outset. This is largely inspired by Zanazanian's (2012) call to use historical consciousness typologies as an "open-ended interpretation key", allowing the data emerging from our studies through inductive Grounded Theory approaches to challenge, "confirm, transform or refine those pre-conceived understandings of historical consciousness" (p. 220).

As will be elaborated further in the section outlining the coding process below, Grounded Theory entails an attempt to be totally open to what emerges from the data (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded Theory, as Glaser (1978) - one of its two key founders along with Strauss - explains, "is based on the systematic

generating of theory from data, that itself is systematically obtained from social research"; it thus offers "a rigorous, orderly guide to theory development that at each stage is closely integrated with a methodology of social research … guided and integrated by the *emerging* theory [emphasis in original]" (p. 2).

Thus, as the name indicates, in Grounded Theory approach, "the analytic categories are directly 'grounded' in the data" (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 187-188). In this approach, we "create our codes by defining what we see in the data", while attempting to limit the influence of superimposing "*preconceived* categories [emphasis in original] or codes" (p. 46). Consequently, it entails "iterative processes of going back and forth between progressively more focused data and successively more abstract categorizations of them", which then subject the "most significant categories" to more analysis then "raising them to concepts in their emerging theories" (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 25). A defining feature of Grounded Theory is its adoption of an 'abductive inference', which entails "considering all possible theoretical explanations for the data, forming hypotheses for each possible explanation, checking them empirically by examining data, and pursuing the most plausible explanation" (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 103-104). As Glaser (1978) explains, at its core, the Grounded Theory method aims to "free analysts from the empirical bond of the data…which is so easy to get lost in" (p. 55).

In proposing a 'critical' Grounded Theory embedded in critical pedagogy, Denzin (2007) elaborates how Grounded Theory allows critical pedagogy to subject "structures of power, knowledge, and practice" to inquiry, thus, through its critical reading and analysis, it attempts to hold to account those "systems of authority" (p. 462).

Inspirations from Critical Discourse Analysis

While mainly adopting a Grounded Theory approach in my analysis, my data collection methods and data analysis were generally inspired by elements of critical discourse analyses scholars and their calls to pay attention to particular aspects, such as context. As outlined in the

previous chapter, critical discourse analysis has inspired me to pay close attention to analyzing

the context as well as to focus on the relation between "the 'micro' analysis of texts" in terms of

the data I am collecting and "the 'macro' analysis of how power relations work across networks

of practices and structures" (Fairclough, 2003, pp. 15-16).

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Participants

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Field Research

During my field research, that took place in Cairo between November 2016 and March

2017, I was affiliated with the American University in Cairo's Graduate School of Education

(AUC GSE) as a 'Scholar Without Stipend'.[37] As part of this arrangement, in addition to

working closely with, and receiving constant support and guidance from, Dr. Nagwa Megahed of

the AUC GSE, I had access to a fully equipped office space at the AUC GSE's premise. I also

had access to the university's facilities both in downtown Cairo and New Cairo campuses, as

well as ongoing administrative support.

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Participant Recruitment

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I had set out to recruit approximately 50 participants all of whom would be Egyptian

citizens who have completed their general secondary school diploma (*Thanaweyya 'Amma*) and

most of whom would have specialized in the *Adabi* (Literature and Humanities) track since those

are the ones who are required to study history until Year 11 or Year 12 of their schooling, while

other tracks would stop receiving history education earlier in their schooling (Year 9 or 10).

They would have ideally completed their high school diploma within the last 10 years. However,

it became clear from the study that all of the participants, whether they followed the *Adabi* track

or the Sciences tracks, continued to be exposed to historical narratives that were embedded in

other subject matters, such as Arabic language, religious studies or civic education until their last

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[37] For more information about the American University in Cairo's 'Scholar Without Stipend' stipulations, please visit: www.aucegypt.edu/research/graduate-research/scholar-without-stipend

year of schooling, as most of them stated. I was also aspiring to ensure a good balance of participants' demographics, including a gender balance and religious affiliation.

The ongoing investigations into the brutal torture and highly suspicious murder in Egypt of the young Italian researcher Giulio Regeni during his field research on labor movements in Egypt in 2016 (The Guardian, 2018) have justifiably resulted in additional restrictions for researchers conducing field research in Egypt.[38] For instance, given that situation, AUC has understandably placed restrictions on its researchers, especially those pursuing their degrees at foreign universities and who are affiliated with AUC temporarily and not enrolled in its undergraduate or graduate academic programs. Among the new restrictions is that the university stopped issuing letters for researchers affiliated with foreign universities, and not enrolled on a full-time basis at AUC, to seek needed research permits from Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), which in my case I would have needed to be able to seek approval to conduct additional interviews with the Egyptian MOE officials and curriculum developers. Thus, this aspect of my initial research plan had to be discarded. Additionally, in recruiting participants, these restrictions required that all data collection by researchers like myself be carried out on AUC premises.

While these regulations and guidelines could have affected my ability to recruit a diverse group of participants, through the combined use of purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2014) and snowball sampling (Lichtman, 2013) techniques, I was able to move beyond the confines of AUC to recruit participants who did not necessarily have academic ties with AUC. To recruit as diverse a sample as possible within these tight security regulations and limitations that could have confined me to AUC students, the majority of whom are from privileged socio-economic backgrounds, I attempted various unconventional recruitment strategies, such as word of mouth

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[38] The late Giulio Regeni was a doctoral student at the University of Cambridge who, for his field research, was also affiliated with AUC through the same 'Scholar Without Stipend' arrangement.

and social media. Thus, after having received the McGill University Research Ethics Board (REB) approval (received in July 2016) and the AUC Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals (received in October 2016) (see Appendix I & Appendix II), I drafted an announcement that I asked friends and colleagues to circulate within their networks and circles of friends and acquaintances through email and social media. The announcement offered a general background of the study, the key criteria I was looking for in participants (outlined above), the expected time commitment, location of the research activities, and my contact information (email address and local Egyptian mobile phone number).

To ensure diversity in terms of representation from different governorates (provinces) across Egypt as well as participants' socio-economic backgrounds, I actively attempted to recruit participants from outside AUC through circulating this announcement as widely as possible among networks of friends and acquaintances. Additionally, when recruiting from within the current AUC student body and alumni networks, I targeted students or recent graduates who had received full tuition scholarships, since those scholarships - which are both merit and needs-based – ensure more diversity in terms of socio-economic backgrounds and geographical representation across Egypt's governorates among their recipients.[39]

It is worth noting that most of these scholarship programs require that the recipient students be actively engaged on campus through voluntary clubs and activities and commit

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[39] The AUC Office of Student Financial Affairs and Scholarships team, which is responsible for administering all undergraduate student fellowships and scholarships, shared the 'call for participants' with its current scholarship recipients and recent graduates encouraging them all to participate in this study. The office leadership did that through sharing this announcement with the office's alumni email list, which includes all of the office's past scholarship recipients all across Egypt, as well as through the closed Facebook page dedicated to this alumni community. To avoid any conflict of interest and to avoid giving the students the false impression that they were 'expected' to participate, however, it was clearly communicated that I would personally not report back to the office on any names of those who might have chosen to participate in the study. Thus, participants were assured that their participation is voluntary and would not affect their scholarship standing in any way. For a full background of some of the scholarships and fellowships that covered some of the participants' AUC university tuition and other expenses please visit: www.aucegypt.edu/offices/office-student-financial-affairs-and-scholarships

specified numbers of hours to those activities. On the one hand, this was advantageous for the study as it guaranteed that many of the participants would be actively engaged in the community and thus would have experiences to share that could offer a sense of the range of activities, as well as how and why they engage in them. On the other hand, however, such scholarship requirement could interfere with and distort our understanding of the real motives for these participants' engagement in these activities which could simply be to fulfill this administrative requirement to maintain a good standing in their scholarships.

As part of the snowballing strategy I followed in my recruitment, I also asked the recruited participants at the end of each interview to feel free to tell others they might know who might fit the criteria I was looking for, and who might be interested and available to partake in the study. This strategy resulted in helping recruit additional participants. Through employing this strategy I was able to recruit a total of 51 participants, but ended up with a total of 39 participants, as I outline in the next section.

Participants' Profiles

A total of 51 participants completed the written narrative exercise (described in detail in the next section below). However, 3 participants' data were discarded from the analysis. Since I was seeking participants who had graduated within the past 10 years, I discarded 2 written exercises that were completed by participants who had completed their high school degrees prior to 2006. Additionally, since I was focusing on *Thanaweyya 'Amma* graduates, I discarded an additional written exercise of a participant who had graduated from the International Baccalaureate (IB) system, which requires students to study some of the MOE's *Thanaweyya 'Amma* subject matters (Arabic, religion, and social studies), however, with a pass/fail objective. Thus, within the IB system these curricula do not receive the attention they would receive among students fully enrolled in the *Thanaweyya 'Amma* system.

Out of the remaining 48 participants who had completed the written narrative exercise, 39

were available and interested to be interviewed. Thus, while I reviewed all of the 48 written questionnaires closely, I focused my analyses on the data collected from the 39 participants who completed both the written exercises and the interviews. Five of those who had completed the written exercise apologized for not being available to do the interview due to personal or professional commitments. Only one participant, after completing the survey, specifically expressed that he would prefer not to continue in the study. When asked for the reason, the participant chose not to provide a clear justification for his decision. The remaining 3 participants, although having initially expressed interest to be interviewed, did not return calls or respond to emails that I had sent them to agree on a date and time for the interview. For a detailed breakdown of participant profiles and their demographics, please refer to Appendix III.

It is worth noting that I strived to ensure that my participants be as diverse as possible in all aspects of the demographics I was targeting, and as is demonstrated in Appendix III which shows the variety of governorates (i.e., provinces) participants did their schooling in, and so on. For instance, my participants included several who are enrolled in or who have already graduated from various private or public universities, in Cairo or in other governorates across Egypt. The participants have completed their schooling in 12 different governorates out of Egypt's 27 governorates.

However, as could be seen in the Appendix, especially regarding gender and religious affiliations, I believe I would have ideally had more representation of Copts and of males. As appears in Appendix III, 72% of my participants were female and only 28% male; and only 18% of my participants identified as Coptic Christian, while the rest identified as Muslim. Both Muslim and Coptic participants included males and females. Perhaps this was self-selection at play where more females were interested in history as a subject matter in school, for instance, and were thus possibly more interested to share their insights about it. The participants' ages ranged between 18 years old and 29 years old.

Similarly, in terms of the disproportionately small number of Coptic participants, this could have been the result of the snowballing recruitment strategy where most of the initially recruited Muslim participants in turn recruited mostly Muslim friends and acquaintances. It could also be due to the reluctance of Coptic participants to join the study. However, it could also be simply representative of the general population where Copts are said to represent between 10 and 15% of Egyptians.[40] Generally speaking, I believe the diverse pool of participants offered perspectives and lived experiences that varied enough from each other allowing for a rich analysis. For instance, I was extremely privileged to have two participants who had graduated from the Al-Azhar system schools, managed by Al-Azhar Islamic education system, which – as discussed in Chapter 2 - is the largest semi-autonomous educational system.

The significance of having participants who have studied through this system lies in the fact that they provide important insights into the religious-based historical narratives and how students interact with them. In addition to studying all the curricula of subject matters that other Egyptian schools would normally study, the students enrolled in that system are expected to study some additional religious subject matters. In the case of history education, in addition to studying the full *Thanaweyya 'Amma* history curriculum, students of Azharite schools are required to study additional materials mainly focused on Islamic history, including the biography of Prophet Muhammad's history (*sirah*) and the historical evolution of Islam as a religion in terms of how it got documented, and so forth. Given that they also both continued their higher education at Al-Azhar University, they brought some unique perspectives to the study based on their exposure not only to the MOE's curricula, but also to the Al-Azhar system's curricula (please see Chapter 2 for a discussion of the Al-Azhar educational system).

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[40] As mentioned in Chapter 1, the exact percentage that the Copts constitute of Egypt's population continues to be contested. Some Church figures reach 20%, while official figures remain around 6% (e.g. Tadros, 2013, pp. 30–35).

Data Collection

General Approach

The main purpose of the methods employed was to collect data that would help explore students' understanding of the history of the nation, their understanding of narratives that are absent from - or misrepresented in - their history education, and how such understandings might inform their current or prospective understanding of their identities and thus, their civic attitudes.

Past studies that have attempted to explore students' historical consciousness and understanding of their nation's history through utilizing a written narrative exercise seem to have mostly depended on that tool for their data collection. For instance, Létourneau's (2007) and Zanazanian's (2013) studies on historical consciousness in Quebec, as well as Angier's (2017) in South Africa, solely depended on employing written narrative exercises. Sant et al. (2015) used the same method in their analyses of Catalonian students' understandings of the history of Catalonia. However, one of Zanazanian's (2012) studies used multiple data collection methods to analyze teachers' historical consciousness. Those entailed "a problem resolution exercise" requiring participants to justify the space and attention they would give to various minorities; an "open-ended narration" that requested that participants "orally narrate the history of the Anglo-Québécois" as inspired by Létourneau and Moisan (2004); then "a series of semi-structured questions" (p. 222). Thus, my use of multiple methods draws inspiration especially from how beneficial this has been in such past studies.

Thus, in this study, I invited participants to complete a written narrative exercise; I then followed that by a semi-structured interview to probe further and discuss what the participants wrote in their written responses. The interview entailed asking participants to hand-draw their understanding of Egypt's history, which I found important in capturing nuances that the narrative writing exercise might not have captured. Additionally, interested participants were invited to a participatory visual methods workshop where I had a chance to further probe some of their

understandings of Egypt's master narrative and omissions or misrepresentations of different perspectives or minority narratives.

Data Collection Methods

As presented in Chapter 1, the overarching research question that guides my research is: *How do young Egyptians' interactions with the country's history inform and influence their social identities and civic attitudes?* Two sub-questions inform the research agenda: (a) How do young Egyptian Muslims and Christians interact with Egypt's master historical narrative, especially the narrative presented in the official curriculum, including its omissions and misrepresentations? and, (b) How do young Egyptians' interactions with that master narrative and competing narratives - such as the Coptic Orthodox Church's Sunday School curriculum - shape their social identities and civic attitudes? Different parts of the data collection methods were designed with specific purposes in mind. In Figure 5.1 below, I illustrate the sequence with which I used those methods, and in Table 5.1, I outline how specific questions within each of those methods corresponded with parts of the research question.

Figure 5.1: Summary of data collection methods and process:

To further elaborate on the above figure, Table 5.1 below presents the various data collection

methods with the corresponding parts of the research questions that they were designed to

elucidate:

Table 5.1: Summary of research questions and the dimensions of data collection tools that correspond to them:

Research question	Aspects of written narrative exercise	Aspects of participatory visual research exercises	Aspects of interview questions
1) How do young Egyptians interact with the country's master narrative (including omissions and misrepresentations)?	Questions about understanding of historical narrative and role of history and history education (Questions 21-27)	Pre-interview hand-drawing of Egypt's history	Questions about pre-interview hand-drawing (Questions 1a-1c) Questions on history curricular reform participant would introduce if in position to (Questions 8-9)
2) How does that interaction influence participants' social identities and civic attitudes?	Questions about participant's civic engagement, current and envisioned future societal roles (Questions 11-20)	1) Workshop hand-drawing (of an omitted or misrepresented narrative or perspective) 2) Workshop storyboard drawing exercise (of an omitted or misrepresented narrative)	Questions about connection participant sees between understanding of history and civic engagement (Questions 6-7)
Variation of responses by religious affiliation (to capture any variations between Muslim and Christian participants)	Information sheet with participant demographics (Questions 1-10)		Questions about personal sense of inclusion in/exclusion from the master narrative presented in history curricula (Questions 4-5)

Written narrative exercises.

The participants were invited to complete a guided handwritten narrative exercise. The design of the questions included in the exercise were largely inspired by past studies especially those of Létourneau's and Zanazanian's studies. In his approach, Létourneau (2007) gave students in Quebec approximately 45 minutes to write two to three pages in response to one open question/prompt inviting them to narrate the history of Quebec since the beginning as they remember or understand it. In his approach, Zanazanian (2013) offers his participants several guiding questions, requiring possibly shorter written narrative responses to each of those questions, one of which included asking participants to present their understanding of the history of Quebec and its key milestones, as well as asking them to narrate a situation that embodies their civic engagement.[41]

Based on guidance from my doctoral committee, the questions in the written narrative exercise data collection tool were revised to be clear yet open and general enough, not to influence or steer participants' responses whether in terms of how they narrate the country's master narrative/history, the missing narratives they choose to focus on, or their choice of how they define and articulate their understanding of engagement in their community or society at large. More specifically, the questions were also carefully worded in a way not to give the false impression that I was testing the participants' retention of that information or assess and evaluate their historical knowledge. Thus, Question 21 was modified to ask them to narrate the key milestones in Egyptian history as they remember learning them in school.

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[41] As noted, asking participants to narrate Egypt's history or key milestones that they remember from school is clearly influenced by earlier efforts (e.g., Létourneau, 2007; Zanazanian, 2013). Additionally, the design of the written exercise questions of Zanazanian's (2013) SSHRC-funded study informed and inspired my decision to include the questions related to asking the participants to narrate a situation which they felt embodied their sense of being an Egyptian citizen, their current and envisioned role in society. Additionally, to address my research sub-questions, I designed and included additional questions related to participants' past, current, and future civic engagement as embodied in their non-political community activities and political activities; their understandings of omitted narratives and perspectives; and their proposed reforms of history curricula.

In each of the cases, I briefly introduced myself, the overall objective of the study, and read the consent form out loud before asking the participant to read it closely and sign it. I also reiterated that all participants will remain anonymous throughout the process. I also answered any clarifying questions they had. I also made sure to read out the guidelines listed at the beginning of the printed written exercise and encouraged participants to read them again. I also made sure to let them know that they can ask for extra sheets of paper if they needed and that they were totally free to cancel their participation in the study at any point during the process. **Key questions/prompts.** The exercise requested them to fill out a personal information sheet that requested their gender, which city or governorate they have lived in most of their lives, their religious affiliation, etc. Please see Appendix IV for the original Arabic narrative exercise and an English translation of all 27 questions. As outlined in Table 5.1 above, reflecting the overarching research question of this study, the narrative exercise questions were designed with the two main questions of the study in mind.

Questions to probe participants' understanding of the master narrative.

The written exercise asked participants to list, in as much detail as possible, what they remembered were the key milestones of Egypt's historical narrative from their formal history education at school. Other questions also asked them to critique that narrative, especially in terms of what missing perspectives or minority narratives they could identify. The question about what modifications they would introduce to the history curriculum provided important additional insights in that regard.

Questions to probe participants' social identities and civic attitudes.
To gain access to the participants' understandings of their role as community members and as citizens I requested participants to write about their civic engagement activities in school and university. The written exercise also asked them to reflect on one specific situation where they felt the most engaged with their sense of being an Egyptian citizen. Regarding their civic

attitudes, I probed their awareness of omitted and misrepresented minorities and perspectives, through asking them to reflect on historical events, figures or perspectives they might feel are excluded and through looking at the means they might have gained their current knowledge about those from. Further, the exercise asked the participants to explain why they found it significant to include those particular missing narratives in history curricula.

Modifications based on pilot study.
I made sure to pilot the written exercise with three of the participants whose written narrative exercises were scheduled a few days before the rest of the participants.[42] This gave me a chance to especially revise the language of some of the questions that might not have been as clear, and to update the written exercise questions before the rest of the other participants were asked to complete it. For instance, some of the pilot participants complained that they had to leave some responses empty because they had included some of those responses in prior questions. So, I made sure to emphasize in the written guidelines and to verbally communicate to all subsequent participants that they needed to first read all questions to avoid redundancy in their responses, emphasizing that they needed to respond to all questions, even if it entailed explaining why they felt uncomfortable answering some questions.

Also, during the pilot study, one Muslim female participant refused to answer Question 18, because she took issue with how the question assumed that she identified as an 'Egyptian citizen' or that this was the motive for her civic actions. She explained that she self-identifies as a "human being" or a "global citizen" and thus, in reality, her civic engagement was mostly motivated by, and directed towards, serving humanity at large, including, for instance, non-Egyptians and non-Muslim refugees living in Egypt. I was tempted to rephrase the question. However, to provoke some reactions whether similar or different from that of this participant, I

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[42] Given that the changes introduced based on the pilot phase were insignificant in nature, I still included the data collected from those three participants in my analysis.

kept the question as is, but made sure to request that subsequent participants express any possible contestations in writing, so we can then discuss and unpack those further during the interview.

Importantly, during the pilot study, there was an informal setting where participants got to interact with each other while completing the exercise. I suspected that this could have influenced some of their responses, especially if they were sharing out loud some of what they wrote or asked me clarifying questions that others could easily overhear. Thus, in the instances when there was more than one participant filling their written narrative exercises simultaneously in the same room, after giving the general guidelines to all, I made sure to ask participants to be as quiet as possible so as not to distract others or influence their thinking. When clarifying questions were asked I made sure that this happened in private and in cases when those questions were relevant to the rest, I made sure to share the responses with all participants.

Duration. Participants were given time slots of 2 hours (120 minutes) to write their responses to the questions/prompts. On average, participants spent 1 hour and 30 minutes (90 minutes) completing the written exercise.

Data collected/transcription. A total of 39 written narratives were collected and analyzed.

Semi-structured interviews.
Given that my study is generally inspired by narrative approaches to qualitative research, it followed naturally that interviews would be an important tool to employ in my data collection. After all, as Chase (2011) reminds us, despite the growing use of other forms of data collection, because of their effectiveness in capturing nuances that might otherwise go unnoticed, interviews remain the most dominant and commonly used format within studies employing narrative approaches, which inspire my overall methodological approach in this study, as outlined earlier. Thus, as a follow-up on the written narrative exercises and the initial analysis, semi-structured interviews were scheduled with the participants to probe any additional insights they might have.

The interviews offered an important opportunity to allow participants to elaborate on or

provide additional insights that they might not have had a chance to share in the written narrative exercise, as well as explain why they might have chosen to leave some questions unanswered or answered very briefly. The interview was 'semi-structured' around key questions that I initiated and probed to help address some of this study's key sub-questions outlined earlier (see Appendix V for a detailed list of the interview questions).

I attempted to schedule all interviews no later than a week after each participant's written narrative exercise was completed to ensure that participant remembered some of their responses and to build on some of the initial interaction and momentum that would have been built during the written exercise phase of the study. Several participants expressed how having a few days in-between allowed them to further reflect on some of the responses they had written. Thus, the interview was a good opportunity for them to revisit, clarify, or elaborate on some of the responses they gave in writing.

Importantly, it was through the semi-structured interviews that I explicitly and rigorously probed with the participants on their written narrative responses and any other views and insights they might not have included, especially pertinent to the research question focusing on the Coptic era and its omission and misrepresentation in history curricula, for instance. These follow-up interviews proved crucial for further probing, given that discussing the Coptic era is an extremely sensitive and contentious topic and that many of the Muslim and Coptic participants might feel uncomfortable discussing. Consequently, many participants would be expected to practice self-censorship especially in their written responses – arguably perceived as more 'formally' documented and binding.

Before starting the interview, I presented the objectives of the study (which I had already briefly presented during my first encounter with each participant when they completed the narrative exercise), my approach to it, offering a short autobiography (including my past civic engagement, my current study, etc.). I encouraged the participants to ask clarifying questions.

During the interview, I probed further on whether participants saw a connection between their understanding of history – especially their sense of being included in or excluded from the master historical narrative – and their vision of present and future role in society. In addition to capturing the content of what the participants were saying, I put a conscious effort into fostering "a narrator-listener relationship" (Chase, 2011, p. 423). This entailed attempting to capture aspects beyond the content such as the participants' emotions that might manifest in their voices, gestures, or body language (e.g., Chase, 2011; Riessman, 1993, 2008).

Duration. The average interview lasted approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Data collected/transcription. A total of 39 interviews were conducted and analyzed. Given that one participant was uncomfortable to provide a drawing, a total of 38 drawings were collected. All interviews took place on the premises of either of AUC's two campuses. Upon receiving the participant's consent, I audio-recorded the interviews through a handheld recorder. In one case, where the participant preferred that the interview not be audio-recorded, I took extensive written notes of the responses she gave during the interview instead. In all other interviews, in addition to the audio recording I took brief hand-written notes of additional insights that I wanted to reflect on or additional emerging questions or clarifications that I would want to probe based on the dialogue that was occurring. After each interview I made sure to make an entry into my written fieldnotes.

Drawing exercise.

Before the interview started, I asked participants to hand-draw Egypt's history from their perspective. This was largely inspired by participatory visual methodologies (e.g., Mitchell, 2011; Mitchell & De Lange, 2013; Theron, Mitchell, Smith, & Stuart, 2011). It was also inspired by studies that had explored students' approaches and understandings of history through the use of a variety of methods, including drawing. For instance, inspired by Seixas' use of drawing exercise in a study on young people's thinking about historical significance, a key part of

Duraisingh's (2012, 2017) studies of young people in the United States entailed asking her participants to draw diagrams about their personal connections to the past, based on which she then conducts in-depth interviews. Duraisingh (2017) notes that she has found that combination of data collection tools to be beneficial in allowing her participants to "synthesize their thinking about their personal connections to the past in a relatively open-ended manner" that she could then probe in a more structured manner in her follow-up interview (p. 189). Similarly, in his research study, Lee (2004) complements his writing exercise with additional activities, including asking respondents to draw arrows to depict their impression of the trajectory and evolution of time and history.

As Mitchell (2011) reminds us, given that "the drawing is produced by a specific individual in a particular space and time", it was crucial to allow the participant to verbalize and explain what they drew which encouraged the drawer "to give voice to what the drawing was intended to convey" allowing for a collaborative meaning-making between the participant and the researcher (p. 20). This collaborative and participatory interpretation ensured that the "producer's intended meaning is central" to the conversation (Mitchell, 2011, p. 31).

The drawing exercise prompt and the subsequent discussion were designed with three key objectives in mind: First, I wanted to probe on the participants' understanding of the 'nature' of history, i.e., whether they saw it as linear, cyclical, or if they perceived it as following other patterns. Second, the drawing facilitated a discussion of the participant's sense of the country's trajectory (whether it is one of progress, stability or decline). Importantly, probing the direction the participant felt the trajectory was heading, I wanted to understand whether it is a trajectory of progress possibly led by, or because of the protagonist being the Egyptians people, or alternatively a particular group or leader. I also sought to explore participants' awareness of how understandings of that trajectory might be defined by which perspective one takes. Finally, the

drawing and subsequent discussion helped me gain some insights into 'if and how' participants felt they were 'represented' in this grand narrative, or any parts of it.

To collaboratively analyze the drawing, I first asked the participant to: 1) narrate what this drawing was supposed to represent and convey; and, 2) compare how the drawing would have been different if they were asked to represent the history they were taught in school. In case this did not emerge in their narration, I then probed the participants about: 1) why they chose this particular way to represent the country's history (for instance, a symbol as opposed to a timeline as some chose)? and, 2) where applicable, if their choices of color had a particular significance for them?[43]

Duration. The drawing exercise lasted for an average of 10 to 15 minutes for each participant.

Data collected/transcription. As mentioned, 38 drawings were collected since one participant felt very uncomfortable with her drawing skills and was getting quite anxious about the prospect of having to draw something. Thus, I did not want to push her any further or make her feel uncomfortable before her interview.

Participatory visual methods workshop.
While the bulk of the data were already collected through the written narrative exercise and the subsequent semi-structured interviews, the participatory visual workshop also offered a good opportunity to continue to observe how participants make sense of dominant and missing historical narratives, as well as how they choose to communicate and enact these views in a group setting. Thus, based on the participants who had participated in both the written exercise and follow-up interview and who expressed interest and availability, two participatory visual methodology workshops were organized. The workshops were intended to create a space to produce these visual products in a participatory manner that allowed the engagement in a

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[43] Through this collaborative interpretation and participant description, I attempted to mitigate the limitation that some scholars have warned against in terms of the possibility of the drawing being left for interpretation "through the human perception of the researcher" (Ganesh, 2011, p. 238).

reflexive discussion about the process and outcomes, to gain additional insights that are pertinent to this study (Mitchell, 2011; Mitchell & De Lange, 2013). One of the unique aspects of participatory visual methods is that they allow for reflexivity by encouraging participants to "look back at their experiences in relation to others and in a broader social context" (Yang, 2013, p. 113).

Given the different availabilities of the participants, I had to organize two identical workshops on two separate dates. The first was organized at the AUC New Cairo campus, and the second was organized at the AUC Cairo Downtown campus. Since the first workshop was only attended by three participants, who had signed up for that date, I considered it as a 'pilot' workshop. Thus, based on the first workshop, I further refined my instructions before the second and final workshop, which was attended by 16 participants.

At the workshop I offered a brief presentation on participatory visual methods and their various techniques, including drawing (Mitchell, 2011; Mitchell & De Lange, 2013). The workshop entailed two key participatory activities: the first was an individual drawing activity where each participant was asked to individually draw and present a snapshot of a key historical figure, event, or an era that he/she believed to be unjustly omitted from Egyptian history curricula. This drawing activity was different from, and intended as supplementary to, the pre-interview drawing exercise which probed participants to specifically draw their understanding of Egypt's dominant historical narrative. The participants were then asked to present their individual drawings to the larger group.

After listening to the participants' presentations to the group where they presented their individual drawings and offered any needed clarifications, the second activity asked participants to form groups with other workshop participants to jointly develop a 'storyboard' for a short film that would convince Egyptian curriculum developers of the importance of including a currently missing narrative or perspective that they together agree needs to be included in history

curricula. Empty white papers and crayons were supplied for the first activity; and empty

storyboard templates and crayons were supplied for the second activity. In both cases,

participants were expected to present their work to all other participants attending the workshop.

Please refer to Appendix VI for the detailed prompts and guidelines of those two activities.

Storyboards.

The participants were asked to work in groups to further develop their initial ideas to

draw s storyboard representing an omitted or misrepresented narrative from the Egyptian history

curriculum that they could potentially develop into a short film to convince curriculum

developers of the importance of including that narrative. In framing the storyboard as potentially

a means to achieving actual curricular change, I was invoking Mitchell, De Lange and

Moletsane's (2011) approach to storyboarding as "drawing-into-social-change" (p. 222).

Storyboarding entails visual researchers working with their participants to create the

various scenes as frames with drawing and detailed notes of how the scene would look and what

it intends to communicate, if a film were to be made (Labacher et al., 2012; Mitchell, 2011).

Importantly, a storyboard exercise encourages full deliberation among members of the group to

"sketch, write, and rearrange scenes, change descriptions, and modify, add, or delete parts to

create the complete story" (Labacher et al., 2012, p. 150).

In most studies participants develop storyboards "as a planning device for making and

discussing a video production" (Labacher et al., 2012, p. 150). Thus, while typically used as a

prerequisite step within the process of participatory video production (Labacher et al., 2012;

Mitchell et al., 2011), in this study I used the storyboard development exercise as the main

activity in and of itself. As Mitchell, De Lange, and Moletsane (2011) have reminded us, and

shown in the context of working with communities in various sub-Saharan African contexts, a

storyboard represents "a visual text in and of itself" that offers important data to analyze and

work with (p. 222). Storyboards are clearly "visual narratives" which "lend themselves to close

readings" (Mitchell et al., 2011, p. 225). Thus, storyboards have their intrinsic value as a potential "legitimate data in visual research" (Labacher e al., 2012, p. 150).

The prompt and three steps that followed were inspired by and adapted from the process outlined by Labacher at al. (2012) which entails: planning and selection of the topic and possible storyline; developing and drawing the storyboard; and, carrying out a group reflection during which various groups present and discuss their storyboards (p. 153). In our joint analyses of the storyboards, we focused on the 'content' of the storyboards as well as the ensuing discussions whether among members of the same group or between members of the different groups. In collecting the data from the storyboards and the workshop discussions, I sought to examine what histories participants might have seen as a priority to include, and what that might say about their understandings of the master narrative and the significance of the various misrepresented or omitted narratives. Thus, it was as important to discuss how the group came to a "resolution", whether on the topic of choice, or the shape and sequencing of the final storyboard they produced (Mitchell et al., 2011, p. 227). Guided by my understanding of theories of social representation, I believe that the pre-interview drawing exercise, along with the two workshop drawing exercises, helped elucidate how participants viewed and understood their own realities and experiences, as well as those of other actors and groups in society.

Duration. Each of the two workshops lasted for approximately 5 hours.

Data collected/transcription. A total of 19 individual drawings and 6 group-produced storyboards were collected. Since some participants did not feel comfortable with audio recording, I captured the workshop discussions through taking extensive handwritten notes during and after the workshops.

Fieldnotes and reflection journal.
Finally, I took extensive fieldnotes that were captured in a reflection journal during the whole period of my field research, which was an extremely helpful tool that encouraged me to

reflect on a daily basis. Such fieldnote entries helped me capture details of the research process

as well as my personal reactions, observations, and emotions (Thompson, 2014).[44] Those proved

extremely helpful after interviews as I was starting to make some initial connections across

different interviews and to capture some initial reactions and important informal interactions that

were occurring with the participants before or after the interview and before I had turned on my

audio-recording device during the interviews, for instance. These fieldnotes proved additionally

helpful in the cases of the one interview where the participant refused that the interview be

audio-recorded, as well as the workshop where participants seemed to prefer for the proceedings

not be audio-recorded. It is worth noting that I had effectively started using this journal before

my fieldwork and continued to use it for few months after. Thus, the data that I included in my

journal were used alongside the other data collected from the three other data collection tools

outlined above.

To offer a sense of the kind of entries and level of reflection in my journal entries, here

are some sample excerpts from my fieldnotes:

On November 24, 2016, I reflected on how I need to be conducting my interviews in ways that

are true to personal commitments as a critical research and educator, as well as how limitations

pertaining to my recruitment strategy:

> "What does being a Critical Pedagogy person who aims to empower participants as 'co-investigators' mean for how I need to continue to conduct the research? When I do my interviews for example and the potential workshop? Important to be aware and put forward my potential power issues or potential biases and come clean – I come from a particular background class-wise, age/generation, male, Muslim, etc. so I only claim to understand that reality and am limited by it – so want to learn from your perspective which might be different. Although I strove for my sample to be representative and balanced and I believe I have mostly succeeded in terms of the governorates, public schools, gender balance, religious balance, I am also cognizant of some limitations: 1)

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[44] I arrived in the field well prepared with keeping a reflection journal which Claudia Mitchell had encouraged me to start using, even before I was physically in the field. I had developed this habit of regularly making entries into my reflection journal during the DISE PhD Colloquium, which I had taken with Claudia in 2014.

Being AUC students many of them – even if they are socio-economically varied as many of them are on need-based scholarships, etc.; 2) Self-selection bias? Many of those attracted to participate in the study might already be interested in history and thus bring in a sophisticated and critical vision of Egyptian history curricula? I might want to deal with this in asking in the interviews for them to elaborate their relationship with history or elaborate on the question of the sources."

On December 1, 2016, I started to reflect on some of the findings emerging from my initial analysis:

"In the analysis would be interesting to question how some events such as Oct 1973 occupy a big space in their analysis – even if it is negative or positive analysis, it seems to show how students have internalized the significance of some events. In terms of general attitude in my writing, I want to raise an alarm that there seems to be a strong 'critical' tendency but how do students move from this to building their knowledge of the different historical narratives, etc. There is also an element where some see 'Egypt' and 'Egyptians' as primordial and has always been like this and will continue to be – but a few others seem to question that: we are not necessarily the same people or are we? Question that I want to keep asking to myself when writing is: Coptic or general minority students although they have their own narratives that are critical and they feel left out – they feel they want to defend the governmental educational system (example: Teresa?). Need to bring in 'memory studies' and Assmann's ideas around that".

On December 2, 2016, I was starting to reflect on the field research process and some of my initial emotions and anxiety about it:

"I found myself in the beginning (may be the first 2 or 3 interviews) feeling a bit tense and closely following the script of the interview prompts. However, with time, I started feeling more confident and after starting with the drawing, it becomes more of a conversation that flows from the drawing and to the questionnaire and back to the drawing or what they are saying. I found myself in some instances feeling the need, especially with Coptic participants, to highlight my engagement in work such as Ana Masry that aims to bring the two faiths together, etc."

Advantages of Using Multiple Data Collection Methods

The use of multiple data collection methods helped me, and the participants delve deeper into and appreciate some of the nuances and multiple layers of the experiences being captured. Through offering diverse mediums of communication and self-expression (i.e., through writing, hand-drawing, and verbal communication), it was also a strategy to accommodate participants' diverse communication preferences and needs. I believe that the more data collection tools used

and settings offered, the richer the data collected allowing for more nuanced analyses, understanding of, and theorization about human experiences and realities. Simply put, using multiple data collection methods helps strengthen a study's "rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 5). Scholars exploring similar questions, such as those using a social representations theoretical approach, stress the importance of using various methods of data collection to be able to capture nuances and offer a rich and textured analysis that using one or two data collection methods might not offer (Flick & Foster, 2008).

Beyond the benefits of the use of multiple data collection methods, some scholars have actually warned against the possible limitation of using specific data collection tools solely. For instance, some scholars specifically highlight limitations inherent in solely depending on written narratives. For instance, McVee (2005) reflects on how solely depending on a written narrative could have negatively affected the depth of data she was able to capture, given that her respondent was possibly confined within the word limit dictated and by knowing that the response would be made available to peers; additionally, using written narratives alone limit the researchers' ability to probe and explore more "difficult questions" (p. 182). Similarly, highlighting the importance of supplementing interviews with other methods, in their study, Borup et al. (2013) discuss how, in addition to their interviews, other methods could have included "online and face-to-face observations" as well as additional interviews of other stakeholders (p. 61).

While some participants found it difficult to narrate the history of Egypt in narrative form in the written narrative exercise (Question 21), being prompted to draw a diagram that depicts that narrative and to be required to verbally explain it – as I did in the interview – helped some of them to more easily develop and present a 'storyline' to narrate that national history. Further, it triggered them to articulate and express their perspectives of it and sentiments towards it. More specifically, in several cases, the pre-interview drawing exercise captured important nuances,

especially related to the narrative structure and how participants viewed the 'narrative arc' of the country's history and its trajectory from ancient times until present day. Also, the interviews were important opportunities for me to observe particular tones and body language that added important nuances that could not be captured through analyzing the written exercise alone.

The use of multiple data collection methods was also intended to help me capture a fuller image of the Egyptian context, which – as outlined earlier – is an understudied context especially as relates to the question of individuals' interactions with historical narratives. Further, being guided by a Grounded Theory approach, using multiple data sources and following a thick description was also aimed at capturing nuances that might otherwise go unnoticed.

My Positionality and Ways It Influenced the Study

Adopting a constructivist Grounded Theory approach brings with it an important emphasis and a responsibility to strive "to make everyone's vantage points and their implications explicit" including not only our participants', but also ours as researchers (Charmaz, 2006, p. 184). Realizing that the emergent data and the analysis are "created from shared experiences and relationships with participants" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 130), I attempted to be forthcoming with my participants, as well as in my own analysis and description of it, regarding my "presuppositions" and "how they affect the research" (p. 131). Thus, for instance, in my data analyses and discussion chapters, wherever relevant, I critically reflect on some of my initial assumptions that were clearly challenged during this process. Building on what I outlined in Chapter 1, where I presented a detailed account of my motivation to conduct this study and various aspects of how I self-identify, in this section I reflect on how some of those dimensions might have affected my interactions with the participants either positively or negatively.

Being Egyptian myself, I shared several cultural commonalities with the participants, which arguably helped them feel generally comfortable and find a sense of affinity. Given that I had graduated from AUC, albeit two decades ago, also helped create an additional sense of

affinity and possibly a shared frame of reference, to many of the participants who are affiliated with AUC. However, my age difference, and my gender as a male who has lived in North America since 2009 have certainly affected my stance vis-à-vis the participants, and how they potentially perceived me. In terms of the age difference, that worked both as an advantage and a disadvantage: as a disadvantage, it did create some formality – at least initially with most of them - which might have inhibited the participants from sharing some of the aspirations, fears, or experiences that they might think are specific to their generation, for instance, and that I would not have easily understood or identified with. Given the age gap or the fact that I have lived outside Egypt for several years, I believe some participants might have also used some formal language to facilitate my understanding that they might otherwise be more casual about expressing, replacing the slang terms that might have more accurately captured nuances of what they were attempting to convey. Thus, possibly some of those nuances might have been lost.

Being identified as Muslim raises some questions and suspicions among some Copts, and Muslims alike, regarding my motives in studying such an arguably contentious question. In addition, I realize that the Coptic question is surrounded by hypersensitivity (Sedra, 2009). Coming to this study I was and still am fully cognizant of how sensitive this topic is and how those working on it, whether Egyptian Muslims, Copts, or non-Egyptians – are generally viewed with suspicion and as having hidden agendas. Sedra (2009) has eloquently reminded us that those working on this question would be accused of harming national unity or instigating sectarianism, which are the exact opposite of my intentions. Thus, understandably, many have generally avoided exploring that question to avoid being accused of harming the national fabric and unity or sowing "factionism" (Zuhur, 2014, p. 250). As a result, it is telling that only very few studies had investigated the experiences of students from minority backgrounds in the context of Egyptian education. One of the few exceptions remains South Korean scholar Ha's (2016) recent study on Coptic students' experience of exclusion in religious studies classrooms.

Regarding gender, I believe that the fact that most of the participants were female could have also posed a limitation on their level of comfort in sharing some of their critiques of the patriarchal society and the place of women in society with a male researcher. However, explicitly explaining that I am strongly committed to gender equality has helped most of them to open up about their lived experiences and fears. Consequently, most female participants were comfortable to point out how the curricula excluded the role of women and how they felt uneasy about how several of their teachers would ridicule and mock female rulers in Egypt's history. Some also reflected on the role of their families and society at large in seeking to confine them within certain traditional roles.

In terms of having lived in North America for a few years, I tried to use that as an excuse to ask for more clarifications and elaborations, especially when participants said things they assumed I would understand or that I would have experienced myself. For instance, in response to some incidents or places that some of the participants referred to that I might not have been familiar with due to living abroad for several years, I would stop them and ask them to elaborate.

The religious divide could have clearly inhibited participants - especially Coptic participants - from fully sharing details about their lived experiences or sense of exclusion. This could have posed a real challenge against collecting data from my participants. My name - 'Ehaab Dyaa Abdou' - is largely religiously neutral and thus, could be perceived as either a Coptic or a Muslim name (although potentially more Muslim). Thus, from the outset, I clarified that I was brought up Muslim. Especially with Coptic participants, I made sure to hint to some of my several efforts to promote tolerance and respect for diversity among Egyptians whether in Egypt or North America, such as the 'Ana Masry' musical ensemble's efforts and its various educational activities. I also explained how these efforts aimed to overcome the existing gaps in Egyptian education and media regarding the country's rich cultural, religious, and ethnic

diversity. This arguably helped put Coptic participants especially at ease and I believe encouraged them to be more forthcoming and relaxed in sharing their experiences more fully.

In addition to being forthcoming about my positionality in writing this study, I also made sure in the beginning of each of my interviews to clearly articulate the ultimate objectives of my study, what I am seeking to explore, as well as various aspects of my identity and views, emphasizing that I realize how those would influence and limit my understanding and worldview. I used this as an opportunity to break the ice with participants as I made sure to clarify that this made me curious to learn about their worldviews and to seek clarifications of nuances that I might not have been able to grasp in their written exercise due to the constraints or 'blind spots' dictated by my positionality.

I also tried to develop a rapport and a human connection with my participants. For example, during my field research, and specifically on December 11, 2016, a suicide bomber attacked the main Coptic Cathedral in Cairo, killing 24 Coptic worshippers and wounding 30 others who were partaking in a religious service (Abdul-Hamid, 2016). One of the Coptic participants is actively involved as an instructor in the Sunday School affiliated with this Cathedral. So, I made sure to write her a note asking how she and her family were. Fortunately, she was not hurt during the attack; however, some of her friends and acquaintances from church were. Such gestures of reaching out to participants and building a friendly relationship, as well as offering refreshments and snacks during the interviews and workshops, helped create a generally welcoming and comfortable atmosphere for the participants.

Data Analysis

To explore my guiding questions, I broke my analysis initially into two main parts, based on the two key components of the research question, as summarized and illustrated in Table 5.1 above. Since the data collected from the written narratives was mostly in modern standard and

Egyptian Arabic, it was all coded and analyzed manually.[45]

Data Collected from Written Exercise and Interviews
    Coding.
        In my coding, I attempted to follow the logic of coding outlined by Grounded Theory

scholars (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978). In Grounded Theory, coding basically entails

"fracturing the data, then conceptually grouping it into codes that then become the theory which

explains what is happening in the data" (Glaser, 1978, p. 55). Thus, I started with attempting to

produce a list of 'focused codes' - sometimes referred to as 'substantive' codes as well - which

are meant to "make the most analytic sense to categorize … data incisively and completely"

(Charmaz, 2006, p. 58). Bryant and Charmaz (2007) further elaborate that such a "higher level

code" or category is a code that "has grown in complexity and abstraction, so subsuming other

codes" (pp. 17-18). Those categories could also be seen as 'analytic concepts' because of what

they exhibit in terms of having "overriding significance or abstracting common themes and

patterns in several codes" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 186). Following that, the 'theoretical coding'

helped explore the possible relationships between the 'focused' and 'substantive' codes that had

emerged from the data. Theoretical codes "conceptualize how the substantive codes may relate to

each other as hypotheses to be integrated into the theory" (Glaser, 1978, p. 55).

        Following a 'constant comparative methods' approach, I developed a list of initial codes,

which started with reading data from my first participant and expanded as I continued to

carefully read through the other participants' responses (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I made these

comparisons between the various data collected for each participant (comparing their written

narrative exercise responses with their semi-structured interview responses, for instance) as well

as across participants (Charmaz, 2006, p. 54). Thus, following the logic of "a continual re-

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[45] I conducted the coding manually since available computer software programs, such as the NVivo software, are currently designed to code data transcribed in Western languages only.

examination of text to develop tentative themes", as new data was collected and analyzed, I continued to re-examine them to "verify or disconfirm" my coding (Braun & Crumpler, 2004, p. 63).

Given the large amount and wealth of data that I gathered, and the numerous codes that emerged that might not be necessarily relevant to this specific study, while drafting the analysis, I had to make some important - and oftentimes difficult - decisions about which categories to include and which to exclude. As Charmaz (2006) advises us, I examined all the categories for "their power, purpose, and patterns", collapsing or simply removing those that were irrelevant to the purposes of this study (p. 159). For instance, while my data included several important insights about the 'sources of historical knowledge' among my participants, and although they might offer some helpful insights, given the space this would have taken at the expense of more in-depth analysis of the other more relevant categories, I had to remove that category and related subcategories from this manuscript. However, for the sake of this study I maintained the references regarding the relevant sources of family oral history and the Coptic Church's Sunday Schools (for Coptic participants). In addition to having emerged prominently from the data, they also offer important insights into how participants' understandings of, and interactions with, the master narrative were shaped and mediated by some of these curricular and extracurricular sources that often offer competing historical narratives.

Data Collected from Participants' Drawings

Pre-interview drawings.

This entailed analyzing the pre-interview drawings, in which they had been requested to present a drawing that represents their understanding of Egyptian history. The drawings were co-analyzed with the participants at the beginning of the interview and continued to serve as a 'touchstone,' which we frequently revisited throughout the interview process. For instance, when I asked them whether they 'saw' themselves represented in the country's master narrative in any

way, several went back to their drawings to point to particular historical narratives that they felt they might have felt represented in or those that they would have wanted to see more representation of people like themselves in. A Coptic participant pointed to the 1973 war in her drawing, explaining how she would have wanted to learn more about the role of the Coptic engineer who had a pivotal role in this war. My role in this was largely one of probing to seek clarification and jointly reflecting on what the participant has drawn.

As illustrated in Chapter 6 where I present several of the participants' drawings, in some cases the drawings were self-explanatory; for instance, some participants drew a clear timeline including handwritten explanatory notes next to each of the turning points they drew. In other cases, the drawing was more abstract and symbolic, such as in one case where the participant chose to draw a large cross and crescent, then colored them with red, black and white - the colors of the current Egyptian flag (Figure 20). This could initially be understood as a highly patriotic representation of Egypt's history, being defined by tolerance and national unity between Muslims and Christians, potentially pointing to a participant who might have passively internalized the master narrative. However, upon probing, the subsequent discussion revealed very different insights, including the participant's high level of cynicism, as will be elaborated in Chapter 6. Thus, the joint analysis and reflection where participants became 'co-investigators' proved extremely insightful, especially when analyzing pre-interview hand-drawn drawings.

Workshop drawings and storyboards.

Similar to the joint analyses of pre-interview drawings, this step entailed co-analyzing the individual diagrams as well as the storyboards the participants produced during the two participatory visual methodologies workshops. In addition to that co-analysis, after the workshop I also reflected on some of the discussions as well as closely studied the drawings collected for any additional nuances that might not have been discussed during the workshop. Advantages of the individual drawing exercise in the workshop included that it actually helped some

participants realize that the omission of various historical narratives that they were trying to draw and represent was also omitted from the collective visual imagery, as I further elaborate in my data analyses and discussion.

Trustworthiness

The use of multiple data collection tools allowed for triangulation to improve the trustworthiness of the analysis. As Polkinghorne (1988) reminds us, in qualitative research, including in narrative research, reliability - which refers to the dependability of data - mainly relies on offering a detailed account of the procedure to prove trustworthiness. Riessman (1993) also brings to our attention that 'correspondence' is key in the work of narrative researchers; it entails that we "take work back" to our participants to find out what they might think and also to provide "theoretical insight" (p. 66). Although it might be challenging to apply sometimes due to time or resources constraint, for example, Riessman (2008) reminds us that such participation would contribute to the "catalytic validity" of the process (p. 199). Thus, once my draft dissertation was ready, I offered all 39 participants the chance to review the whole draft dissertation, including the data analyses chapters. Thirteen of the participants expressed interest to review the dissertation; and six of them shared specific and critical comments and suggestions. I found that feedback to be extremely helpful and insightful. Additionally, several of the participants, even those who were unable to provide comments, expressed their strong appreciation and gratitude for my offer. I took this step of offering to share my whole draft dissertation for my participants' review not only to seek to achieve that 'catalytic validity', but also to potentially contribute to the participants' own "self-understanding and self-direction" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 324)

The multiple data collection methods employed, especially the written exercises and subsequent interviews, offered an opportunity to also check for consistency or discrepancies within participants' responses. Thus, using multiple data collection methods, offering detailed

and 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973), and being forthcoming about the possible limitations imposed by my positionality as a researcher, have all together contributed to improving the validity and reliability, as defined by the standards of qualitative research.

Relatedly, in discussing how, as researchers, we can improve the validity and trustworthiness of our research, Riessman (1993) prescribes a succinct list of steps: "(a) describing how the interpretations were produced, (b) making visible what we did, (c) specifying how we accomplished successive transformations, and (d) making primary data available to other researchers" (p. 68). I believe that the period of fieldwork (four months), my use of thick description of my analysis and detailed fieldnotes, and the use of multiple methods that allowed for triangulation of data, together helped strengthen both the validity and reliability of results obtained from this research project.

As Bryant (2009) eloquently points out, "defining the contours of the lens that shapes the story we tell enhances the transparency and trustworthiness of our work" (p. 555). This is what I attempted to achieve through explicating and making visible my positionality and ideological convictions to help both participants and hopefully future readers of this study understand my epistemological commitments and possible bias and limitations that would influence my analyses. Clearly, there were limitations and challenges with some aspects of this study whether in the design, the data collection methods, or analytical process.

Limitations

In this section I present a few of the challenges or limitations, and how I attempted to minimize their influences or mitigate them:

Influence of University Education on Participants' Approaches to History

Given the security situation discussed above and the fact that all of my participants were either university students or university graduates, it is important to note that I am aware of how my participants' university education (all participants were either in university or recent

graduates of university) might have influenced their approaches and understandings of history, their identities, and civic attitudes. Given that my main interest is to help understand how school curricula shaped my participants' understandings and interactions with the master narrative, their university education was potentially a limitation. Earlier studies have pointed to the significant influence of educational levels on shaping individuals' critical approaches to the past. For instance, in the Canadian national survey, Conrad et al. (2009) found that their respondents who attended educational institutions beyond high school had a more active and questioning attitude towards historical sources. Likewise, the American national study found that those with a college degree engage in historical activities at a much higher rate (Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998). While this could generally be seen as a limitation, conversely, as mentioned in Chapter 1 as well, the students' university education allowed many of them to develop a critical distance vis-à-vis their schooling, which allowed them to provide helpful insights that enriched the research.

Thus, my data collection tools included components that helped participants reflect on how their approach to the past might have changed because of their university/higher education or because of other personal or national events and social sites they were exposed to. For example, I specifically ask about sources of knowledge of misrepresentations and omissions (see Question 25 of the written narrative exercise) and made sure to further probe on that during the interview (see Question 3 of semi-structured interview). Another strategy to mitigate and minimize the influence of this limitation is that in my recruitment I was determined that my participants had graduated from high school over the past few years so their memories of their school experiences and curricula was arguably more vivid (as Appendix III shows, most participants had graduated only 1 to 5 years at the time of their participation in the study).

Building Trust with Participants

Generally speaking, being Egyptian and being affiliated with a Canadian university, as opposed to a US university for instance, was a facilitating factor, in building trust and mitigating

some suspicions vis-à-vis researchers, especially those affiliated to Western universities. Canada is still largely perceived as a neutral global player that promotes global good and peace, thus it is viewed with much less suspicion regarding its political agenda in Egypt and the Middle East. This is very different from the US, which is widely seen to have its clearly self-serving, often harmful and destructive, agendas in the region.

However, there were several factors that could affect trust building in any research study. In this specific case, two other specific challenges emerged because of the generally highly polarized nature of Egyptian society after the 2011 revolution and its aftermath, as well as the highly contentious nature of probing on questions related to history and misrepresentations of minority narratives more specifically. I was aware of the potential suspicion of my participants in general about what my political inclinations and motives were, and whether I was pro-regime or more critical of it. Given the nature of the participant recruitment being based on a 'word of mouth' snowballing strategy through friends and acquaintances, however, I imagine that my participants generally had the impression that I would have similar political views and inclinations to theirs. In all cases, I made sure to show that I am open to all view points and that, despite any of my own political and ideological convictions, I attempt to suspend judgment and capture all the what participants are sharing as fully and as accurately as possible.

In addition to the politically charged question of history and its constructions, I was aware of the potential fear and reluctance of the Coptic participants to be forthcoming with openly criticizing the dominant societal narrative, especially regarding the Islamization of various facets of society and the general sense of exclusion of the Copts as a non-Muslim minority, for instance. Thus, especially with Coptic participants, I shared how I had personally felt alienated by the increased Islamization of the public sphere and how, as a Muslim, I grew up learning very little about Coptic history with the exception of what I learned from Mark, my neighbor who was active in his Church's Sunday School. The use of multiple data collection

tools also helped in this regard. So, for instance, several participants (Copts especially) only hinted briefly at the exclusion of the Coptic era in their written exercise, but when I brought this up and probed further during the interview, the participants felt more comfortable to expand verbally and were more forthcoming with details and elaborations on their initial responses, and their sentiments about such misrepresentation or omission.

Arabic to English Translation: Losing Some Nuances

Given that my data were mostly collected in Egyptian Arabic (interviews and workshop presentations) and modern standard Arabic (some of the written narrative responses), some nuances could have been lost in translating the data and presenting it in English. Van Nes et al. (2010) remind us that in cases where both researcher and researched speak a non-English language and where the final research is being presented in English, as is the case in this research, there is a high probability that some richness and nuances might be lost in translation. This is especially the case when participants use "narratives and metaphors" to explain or elaborate on an idea or concept, which might be distinctly different across cultures and are "language-specific" (Van Nes et al., 2010, p. 314). This poses serious challenges since translating, often performed by the researcher her/himself, involves also a strong element of "interpretation" which becomes even more complex when "cultural contexts" of the ultimate readers – such as the doctoral committee members and reviewers in this case – differ, which risks "loss of meaning and thus loss of the validity of the qualitative study" (p. 314).

To minimize the negative influences of such factors, wherever possible I attempted to present Egyptian Arabic words or expressions between brackets for Arabic readers to be able to capture nuances that an English translation might not have captured in its fullness and richness. In doing this I was also guided by Van Nes et al's. (2010) advise to pay special attention "when

metaphors are translated" (p. 316).[46]

Chapter Summary

In brief, I believe that my choice of a Grounded Theory approach, while drawing on elements of critical discourse analysis worked productively for the purposes of this study. Furthermore, the multiple data collection methods employed have supplemented each other in synergistic ways that offered participants a range of ways to express their experiences, understandings, and perspectives. Such strategies and approaches offered several advantages, including allowing me to capture nuances that I might not have been able to access were I to depend solely on one or two of these methods.

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[46] Additionally, I have been fortunate to have two Arabic-speaking scholars on my doctoral committee (Dr. Khaled Fahmy and Dr. Khalid Medani), who would both play an important role in posing questions to challenge meanings that might have not been captured in full or nuances that might have been missed, for instance.

Chapter 6: Data Analysis (1/2): Participants' Interactions with the Dominant Historical Narrative and Their Approaches to History

In this chapter I present and engage with the key themes that emerge from my data analysis related to participants' understandings and approaches to history. I present the emerging themes and, wherever relevant, I explain how common the themes were among different participants and also whether there were clear variations, especially based on the participants' religious backgrounds, which is of key interest in this study. Inspired by Grounded Theory scholars' approaches to presenting their data, I also include several extensive excerpts from the participants' responses throughout the chapter to offer a sense of the commonalities of some of the themes and their manifestations, as well as to offer a sense of the logic that guided the coding. The excerpts have been carefully selected to offer insights into the nuances and variations among the individual responses.

Under each of the overarching themes the emerged and that I present below, I include some of the key 'substantive codes' that informed the 'theoretical code'. Additionally, wherever relevant, I present some of the 'codes' (sometimes referred to as 'sub-codes') that informed these 'substantive codes'. In presenting those under each theme with long and rich excerpts from the various sources of data collection, I attempt to unpack the themes' elements as well as offer a more textured and nuanced understanding of each of the themes.

Purposes of Analyzing Various Data

As outlined in the previous chapter, I adopted an inductive Grounded Theory approach (Charmaz, 2006; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). While my analyses draw on the various data collected, including my observations that are captured in my fieldnotes, there are specific data sources that more directly helped inform my analysis and thus my discussions of the various parts of my research question. I have summarized those in Table 5.1 presented in the previous chapter.

As outlined in detail in Chapter 5, for the data analyses and findings presented in this chapter, I started by analyzing each participant's data separately. I then conducted a cross-case analysis to distill commonly emerging patterns across the various participants. Based on those, a series of codes emerged, some of which – based on the frequency of their occurrence - were then elevated to 'focused' or 'substantive codes' that included a few codes under them, as will be illustrated wherever applicable and relevant throughout this chapter and the next chapter. After all the coding was done, I went back to each of the participant's data and studied those vertically across the codes to distill some of the emerging patterns or 'theoretical codes' to capture connections and relationships between some of these codes. Such vertical analyses especially helped inform the development of the various types that characterize the participants' interactions with the dominant narrative.

Chapter Organization

This chapter focuses on the codes pertaining to the first part of the research question, i.e., how participants interact with the dominant narrative. Under each I present the codes that emerged and what they tell us in response to that question. While it might have sufficed to present the theoretical codes and substantive codes, in several cases to offer additional insights I went as far as including some of the 'codes' or 'sub-codes'. I include various excerpts from participants' narratives and, wherever relevant to the theme presented, I specify some of the participant's attributes such as gender, religious background, and which Egyptian governorate they did their schooling in. In doing so, I strive to be as transparent as possible about the analytical process as well as the logic I followed; I also believe such an approach in presenting the findings helps provide insights and nuances that might otherwise be overlooked.

I start by presenting how participants interact with the dominant narrative and some its key elements; I then present how participants interact with history education, as embodied in the history curriculum. I then focus on the analysis of some of the key sources of alternative

historical knowledge that emerged from some of the participants' responses and how those might have contributed to shaping their interaction with, and views towards, the dominant narrative. Finally, I conclude by analyzing participants' approaches to history, based on which I propose a typology that emerges from the data analysis. In this chapter and the next chapter (Chapter 7), I mainly focus on presenting the key theoretical themes and related substantive codes emerging from the data. Then, in Chapter 8, I discuss those theoretical themes in more detail drawing connections on how they might help elucidate the research questions of this study.

Participants' Interactions with the Dominant Historical Narrative

First, it is worth noting that, perhaps for ease of periodization, or communication, all participants followed the same milestones when, in response to the pre-interview prompt, they hand-drew Egypt's history and its key milestones. Analyzing the participants' written responses and drawings shows that they generally followed the same narrative structure or 'schematic narrative template' in terms of the historically significant turning points or milestones. Those could roughly be reduced to the following skeleton structure:

> Unification of Egypt by King Menes > Greco-Roman Period > Arab Muslim Conquest > Ottoman Rule > Memluks > Mehmed Ali > Royal Family Rule > 1952 Coup d'état > Nasser > Sadat > Mubarak > 25 January 2011 Revolution > 30 June 2013 Events > President El-Sisi.

While this was the general template followed by most participants, there were a few participants who started with the modern era. For instance, they started with Mehmed Ali's rule as they explained that they did not remember much before that period. Among those is Ghada, a female participant from Cairo, who explained:

> Although I have a pretty good memory and I did very well in school, I barely remember ancient Egyptian history before Mehmed Ali and that is why I started with him.

Significantly, several of the participants totally omitted the mention of the Greco-Roman period (approximately 30 BCE-641 CE) or any variant appellation of that era (such as the 'advent of Christianity' or the 'Coptic era,' as this era is referred to by some scholars, historians, and the official curricula). This point will be analyzed and further discussed with the analysis of the data pertaining to the second part of the research question concerned with participants' interactions with the omission and misrepresentation of Coptic history.

Seeing the Country's Historical Narrative as One of General Decline

When asked during the interviews to draw or explain the 'narrative arc' of Egypt's historical narrative, the majority of participants drew a trajectory of a general decline. Many presented the decline as encompassing various aspects of society, while some specified the particular aspects of decline in that history, as will be further discussed later. The turning points where that decline would have started varied by participant but offered some general patterns. As illustrated in Appendix VII, which offers a summary of the number of participants selecting each of the various turning points, six of the participants cited the 1952 revolution (advent of the Free Officers and Nasser to power) as the turning point that started this decline process, making it the single most cited turning point. Others explained that the decline started with Mehmed Ali's rule, while some chose Mubarak's rule as the beginning of the decline. Two participants (one Muslim and one Coptic, both from Cairo) cited the advent of Islam as the clear start of the sharp decline. While the rest gave generic responses including an inability to specify when the decline started exactly (four participants), in contrast a few were as specific as mentioning that the decline started during the last 15 years of Mubarak's rule.

This depiction of a decline narrative, which clearly departs from the dominant narrative's constructed progress trajectory, starts to point to the prevalence of a reflective approach to history among several participants. This reflective approach is what enables them to critique the dominant narrative and present alternative storylines or trajectories. However, this large number

of participants who presented a narrative arc that unsettles and contests the dominant narrative arc might offer a misleading conclusion that these participants all had critical tendencies towards the dominant narrative. When probed further, some of those who drew a narrative arc of decline blamed this decline on the Egyptian people, not on the regime or a ruling elite. This will be discussed further below when discussing the various approaches to history. But to give a sense, I offer an illustrative example here: in explaining why she would draw a narrative arc of decline, Wafaa, a female participant from Cairo who graduated from a public university where she studied linguistics, explained:

> I would draw a decline narrative as opposed to what was taught to us because I believe we have been in decline because of us [as Egyptians]. If we [as Egyptians] were to work and try harder we could become as great as we were before. After all we are the same people and this is the same country. So we can be as great as we were when we were a Kingdom [King Farouk's era] or during the time of the Pharaohs (*wa'at el faraa'nah*).

To capture some of the trajectories the participants drew and their logic, I offer some illustrative examples below. Rana, a female participant from Cairo, presented this very detailed diagram starting with the ancient unification of the country under King Menes until the present day (Figure 1). In her explanation, she elaborated:

Figure 1

> I would say that the country has been in a gradual decline starting with the 1952 revolution, but we have been witnessing the worst decline (*inhidaar*) starting with the time of El-Sisi.

This is the drawing that Hassan, a male participant from Minya, drew (Figure 2). To elaborate on his drawing, Hassan explained:

> I drew a symbol for each of the eras that I see as important in Egyptian history. In terms of colors, I

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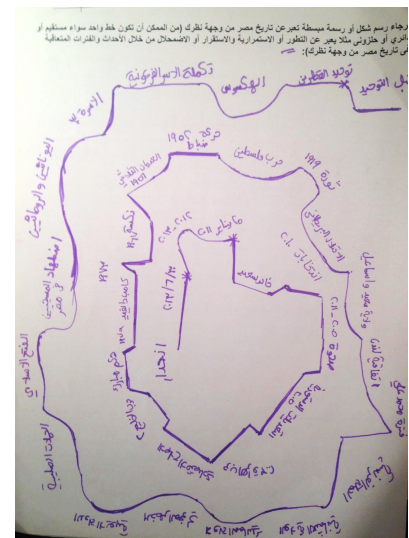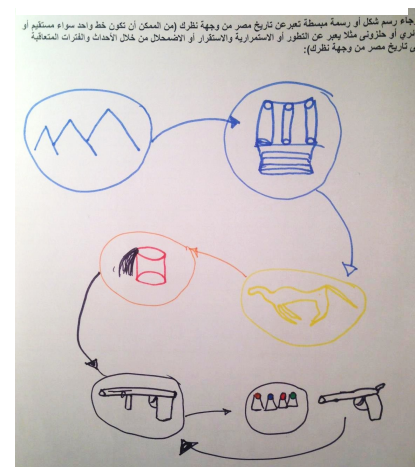
Figure 2

deliberately chose the black color to draw the weapons in reference to the Nasser era's military rule [starting 1952] and mark that this was the beginning of the decline that the country experienced since then. I also chose various cheerful colors to represent the colorfulness and diversity of people who were in Tahrir [referring to the Tahrir square during the January 2011 revolution].

Ibrahim, a Muslim participant from Cairo, provided the following drawing (Figure 3) and a subsequent explanation:

> I believe that after the Coptic period, Egypt lost its independence and all history that followed is really not even worth discussing. That is why I drew the pyramids to represent ancient Egypt, then a big cross to represent the Coptic era, then for what came after I wrote the words *la yuugad* (nothing here) and crossed it out.
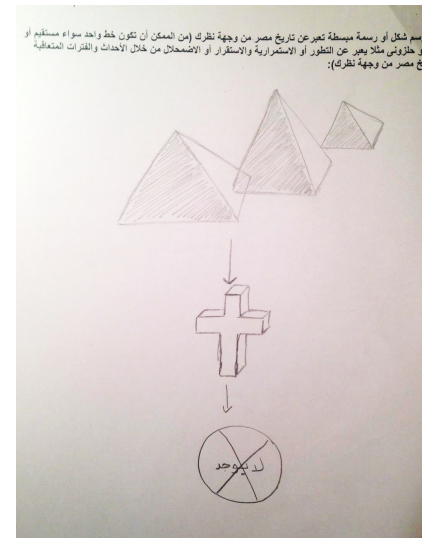
Figure 3

Shenouda, a Coptic participant from Cairo, agreed with Ibrahim's representation in that the decline started with the advent of Islam in the year 641 CE (Figure 4):

> Well, I used green to show the short periods of prosperity and to say that there was a civilization. I then used yellow to point to the long periods of drought including the one we are living in currently. And the red could be the bloodshed and conflict during the Islamic era and the crusade wars (*el fatra el Islamiyya wel Salibiyya*). I do not know if you have noticed, but if you turn the page [anticlockwise] you'll see that my drawing also spells out the English word 'a lie'. I believe that all history we have been taught about the advent of Islam to Egypt and the subsequent eras is a big lie… [Ever since] Egypt has been ruled by a bunch of crooks. Take Mehmed Ali. He was a crook but he was great (*haraami bass 'azeem*). The same with Sadat and other leaders. I actually admire how intelligent they were. Then there is the orange color where you're not really dead and not really moving up.

Figure 4

In her drawing, Alia, a female participant from Sharqiyya, offered the following (Figure 5). She explained:

> I feel our history has generally been one of decline. I cannot clearly point out when this started but it clearly has been progressing negatively. But for sure Mehmed Ali's rule was a cruel one with his expansionism to different parts of Hijaz and the Levant and how his army was largely based on forced conscription (*sokhra 'askareyya*). Then the Sykes Picot agreement… then starting 1948 and from this defeat starting Egypt's decline until today… Then next to January 25, 2011, I drew various colors to try to say that this was the first time Egyptians really saw each other and got exposed to problems such as sectarian tension, the demands of the Nubians, Bedouins, and so on. This was the first time they got to learn about the different components of society. It shattered the idea that we're all homogenous. They realized that we need to recognize and embrace diversity and plurality instead of trying to erase them.
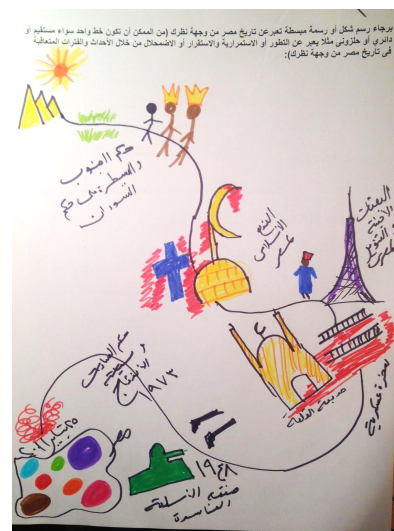
Figure 5

Maria, a Coptic participant from Fayoum, represented another narrative, which depicts several ups and downs but following a general decline (Figure 6). She elaborated:

> I would say our history is one of ups and downs. If I were to draw a line to show the general direction, I would say we had started the general decline during Mubarak's era, especially the last 15 years of his rule.
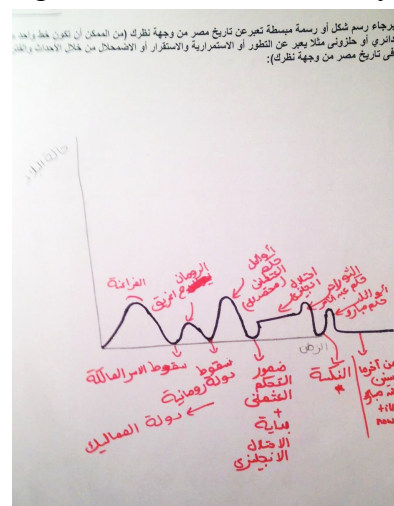
Figure 6

In contrast to this clear prevalence of the decline narrative, only one participant, Mahmoud, a male participant from Cairo, marked the country's history as one of a linear
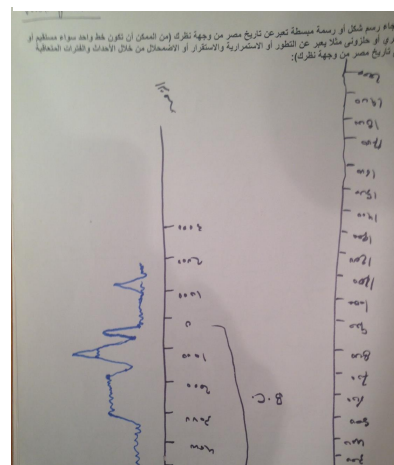
Figure 7

progress (Figure 7). In explaining his drawing, Mahmoud remarked:

> Normally there were some ups and downs for sure but in general I believe the country has been moving in the right direction. So if I drew a line to show the general trend it would certainly be an upward looking line.

Understanding History as Cyclical in Nature and Governed by Repetitive Patterns

Within that understanding of the country's history as one of general decline among the majority of the participants, there was a strong sense of the cyclical and repetitive nature of history. In her pre-interview drawing, Maha, a Muslim female participant from Cairo, presented the following (Figure 8). In the interview, she explained:

> I drew three symbols: a fist to represent resistance, handcuffs to represent oppression, and a chair to represent power or authority. This is the cycle we have been living in as Egyptians throughout history. It has been a continuous struggle repeating itself all the time. I basically wanted to say that Egyptians have always wanted change but are either taken advantage of or fooled by rulers. Nowadays, even if we're not a royal system, it is the same. It's the same theme for tens or even hundreds of years.

Figure 8

Shenouda (see his drawing in Figure 4 above) offered a similar understanding of this cyclical nature of history, characterized by a dominant group attempting to unjustly control another group:

> Again, the cycle goes back to the fact that there is always someone who is trying to steal something or fool people *(dayman hadd beyhawwil yesra' hadd)*.

Similarly, although she tries to explain the power dynamics shaping that trajectory,

Nadine, a female participant from Cairo, has clearly internalized an understanding of the nature

of history as repetitive and cyclical:

> [Learning history] is extremely important because we are not unique. History goes in cycles and if we reflect on some of what happened in the past we can learn from previous mistakes. For me, Egyptian history is a series of trying to "breathe" and then they pull us back down. The Egyptian people keep trying but may be the issues we have to deal with are much bigger than us. Even during times and revolts of Mehmed Ali, he was part of a larger context. So even in 2011 when we were able to get rid of Mubarak, Egypt was not alone. It is part of a world with interests that shape the political status. We are fighting a global system, which leads me to think ..oh maybe we could change the world.. But you reach a conclusion… may be those before us would have been able to change it, if it was at all possible. May be it needs to be the revolts of several peoples united together against these global interests. So may be after all, Egyptians did what they could but there are things against them that are outside of their control.

Hussein, a participant from Damietta, offered a very

similar understanding of the nature of history, as illustrated in

his drawing (Figure 9):

> I wanted to show how history is simply made up of a pattern. Although it might differ from time to time in terms of the type of ruling class, [the pattern] keeps repeating itself. I cannot necessarily decide what direction [this spiral] might be going in. But, I see that the current events follow patterns very similar to those of the historical events. So, I believe that we can learn much from history.

Figure 9

Sandy, a female participant from Minya, drew the following (Figure 10) and this is how

she referred to the drawing at the beginning of and during her interview:

The way I learnt history is that especially in ancient Egypt there were always periods of prosperity followed by periods of decline (*'usur el idmihlal*). But I do not find this logical. Did they [ancient Egyptians] not learn from their mistakes? As for the current period I cannot really decide. I feel we are in a state of chaos that is quite unclear… But I wonder for instance when I watch news about the New Suez Canal project, how we are not learning from our past mistakes and all the high debts that Egypt incurred because of the [original] Suez Canal project?

Figure 10

Randa from Bani Suef reflects on how during the 2011 events she and her family were extremely hopeful that real change was imminent, and how that was replaced by a strong sense of pessimism:

During Jan 25th I felt that I was part of making history. Now, I have a pessimistic vision because it's not fair all the lives that are wasted because nothing will really change (*mafeesh haaga hatettghayyar*)…so why waste all the energy and precious lives? Jan 25th was a peak … but then the events were beyond the people … Yes, the events were beyond the people (*el ahdaath kanet akbar men el sha'b … aiwa, el ahdaath kanet akbar men el sha'b*).

Key Elements and Representations of the Dominant Narrative Challenged

Among the key themes - or theoretical codes - that emerged regarding how participants interacted with the dominant narrative, participants seem to have been able to problematize and challenge specific symbols and representations associated with the dominant national narrative. I present below the various substantive codes that informed this theoretical code:

The infallibility of the Egyptian military questioned.

This emerged very clearly through the responses regarding omitted narratives. As illustrated in Appendix VIII, several of the participants chose to focus on historical figures, such as President Muhammad Naguib (17 participants), King Farouk (8 participants), and Saad Al-

Shazly (2 participants). As some of the participants elaborated when listing these historical figures, if represented in more balanced ways, these historical figures' narratives would expose the weaknesses of the Egyptian military's leadership and how it has often been governed by personal interests, agendas, and egos.

When probed during later interviews and in the workshops on why they believed Muhammad Naguib emerged as such a common response as a misrepresented historical figure (among close to 50% of the participants), several participants explained that it was curious for them how in their history textbooks the narrative about President Naguib was always confined to one or two sentences. As they explained, the textbooks briefly referred to him as Egypt's first president after the 1952 revolution and that he ruled for a very short period. This brief mention actually fueled the curiosity of several participants regarding why he did not continue to rule, and what might have happened to him after that. Additionally, some cited that his autobiography was released few years ago in Cairo and thus, they started learning more about him and how he was sidelined and mistreated by Nasser who took over power in 1954.

The drawings produced during the participatory visual workshop also focused on some historical events, a fuller and multi-perspectival narration of which would clearly serve that same purpose of exposing the military institution's potential weakness and lack of transparency. In the workshop, Hassan, a

Figure 11

participant from Minya, provided this drawing (Figure 11) on which he wrote in Arabic, "How did 1973 [war] end"?

Hassan further elaborated:

> Here, I am referring to the failure of the Egyptian military to achieve a full victory against Israel. I think school curricula need to include a full discussion about the 1973 war because this will only be the fair and balanced way to present history.

Karim from Ismailia, highlighted several misrepresented and omitted narratives (as listed in his handwriting within his drawing). Similar to Hassan, he also chose, to highlight the need to learn more about the Egyptian military's failure during the '*thaghra*' event. This is how he described his drawing (Figure 12):

Figure 12

> There are so many parts of our history that need questioning and revisiting. …However, most importantly for me, I have another map that shows the place where the 'thaghra' (gap) during the 1973 war happened due to the military's failure and lack of ability. And as you can see, at the bottom of my drawing I wrote that I feel we need to teach our students about the "tools used to reproduce the [historical] narrative" (*wasaa'el i'aadat intaag al-ruwayah*)...
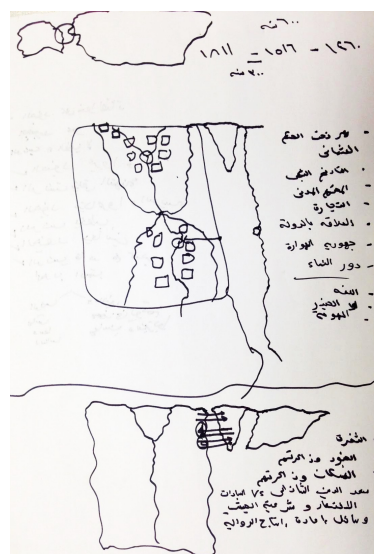
Fatima, a participant from a village near Giza who has been active in a pacifist non-violent movement, also noted how her understanding of the nation and the military have shifted and how she is seeing the military as a source of fear and violence. In explaining why she wrote 'Egypt' using the colors of the Egyptian flag and her contestation of some of its symbols such as the golden eagle, that she deliberately omitted from her drawing (Figure 13), she noted:

Figure 13

I chose the flag of Egypt as I love its colors that I grew up with. I used to love the symbolism and that the red signifies blood but now I am against violence. Now actually the symbol of the eagle (*el-nesr*) [the golden eagle placed in the middle of the Egyptian flag] signifies authority. It reminds me of the police or the army and now I have strong negative feelings against them.

The omission of people's histories and struggles problematized.

This substantive code emerged clearly in several of the participants' written exercises and subsequent interviews (Appendix VIII offers a detailed list of omissions that were identified by participants). But it emerged most clearly in the participatory visual workshop where at least one third of all drawings produced by participants represented the struggle of 'ordinary Egyptians' whether students, women, poor segments of society or often marginalized and stigmatized groups, such as belly dancers.

However, the most prominent misrepresented people's narrative was clearly the historical role of youth and student struggles against injustice, whether by foreign occupiers or national leaders. In the workshop, Fatima, a female participant from Cairo, presented this drawing (Figure 14). She explained that it represented several omitted narratives (and I paraphrase based on my handwritten workshop notes):
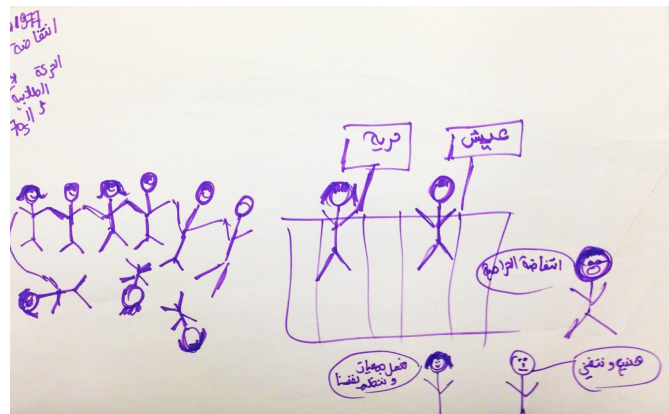
Figure 14

I wanted to present the omitted narrative of student revolts throughout Egyptian history. So, I drew some people demonstrating in 2011 with the slogans of Bread ('*Eish*) and Freedom (*Horeyya*). In the background I drew what the Sadat regime called 'the 1977 uprising of the thieves' (*intifadet el harameyya*) and also the student movement of the 1970s. In front I drew a couple of individuals saying different things. One is saying that "this is the time to be rich" and another is saying "we will create associations to organize our efforts". We do not learn much about any of those movements or their details. I believe that learning about them and how the state dealt with them, and often oppressed them, can give us some very helpful lessons for the present.

Along the same lines, at the workshop, a group of participants chose to create a storyboard that tells the story and depicts a continuity of the role of youth and students throughout Egyptian history (Figure 15).

Figure 15

The participant representing the group explained what the group members were aiming to achieve (paraphrased based on my workshop notes):

> We wanted to show the continuity of the struggles of Egyptian students. We start by the 1919 revolution then the period between the 1967 and 1973 wars. We then show the demonstrations that came out in support of the [Palestinian] uprising (*intifada*) in the early 2000s. Then we show the 25th of January revolution and how it instilled a spirit of ownership and social responsibility among young people towards society. We saw that in voluntary street sweeping and cleaning initiatives, for example. Then we show statistics that show the large percentage that youth represent of the Egyptian population and show statistics about the large number of voluntary initiatives they had established. We then fast forward to the future (2030) to show that if we include those omitted narratives then students will be more aware of their role and responsibility towards society. We are aware that there will be resistance from the government to include those events as it might not want to give students 'ideas'. So, we will argue that those events are important to include to mainly encourage students to set up initiatives to serve the community.
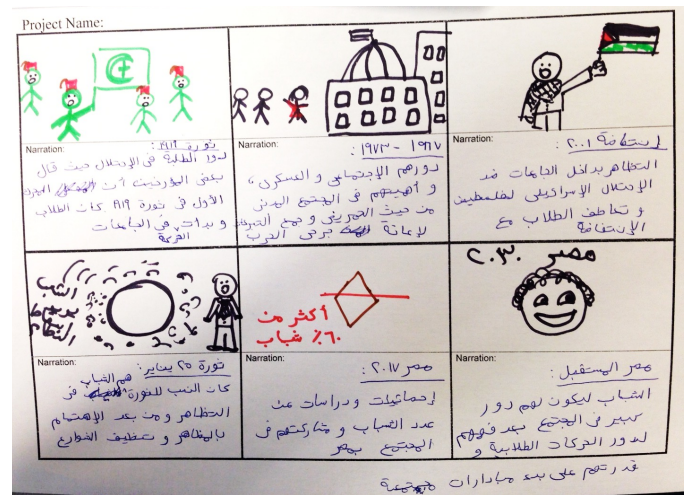
While the two examples above might have deliberately and pragmatically kept the state (as embodied in the police and the military) 'out of the picture', this drawing by Abdel-Kerim (Figure 16), a participant from Daqahleyya, more
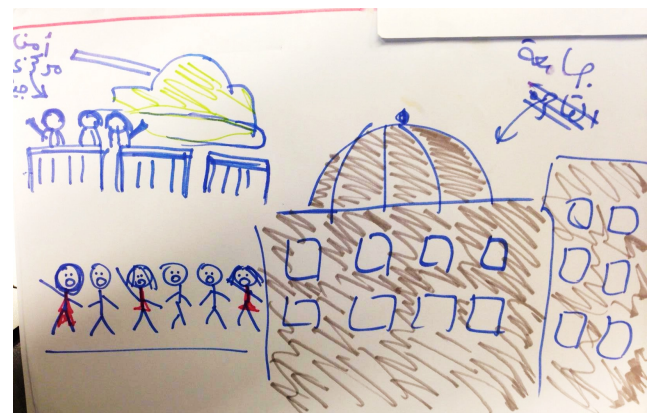
Figure 16

explicitly condemns the police and military, presenting them as oppressors of student activism and movements. He explained:

> I drew student demonstrations and how they are usually oppressed by police forces and the army (*el amn el markazi wel geish*). This dome is supposed to symbolize different Egyptian universities.

Within this substantive code related to peoples' histories and struggles against injustice, in addition to the role of students, some participants wanted to highlight the role or suffering of specific segments of society. Nesrine, a female participant from Bani Suef, wanted to emphasize the role of belly dancers and the Egyptian people's passive resistance against forced conscription during Mehmed Ali's era. In elaborating on her drawing (Figure 17), she explained:
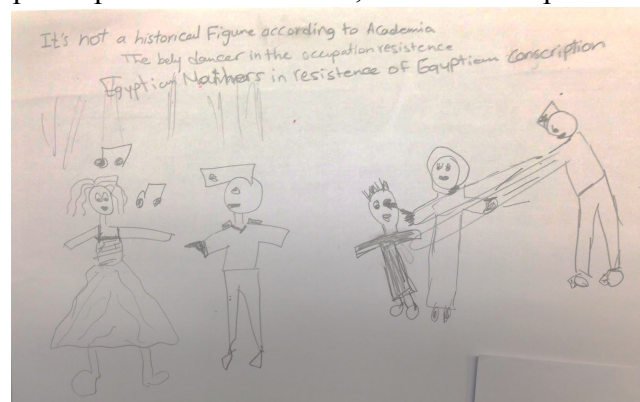
Figure 17

> I specifically wrote here that these are NOT historical figures as would be defined by academics. On the right hand side [reader's left], I chose to present a belly dancer as I believe that their role in resisting the British occupation is rarley discussed in our history education or anywhere else. To the left [reader's right] I drew a mother plucking out the eye of her child so that he does not get forcibly conscripted by the Mehmed Ali army. This is another version of history we rarely learn about.

Only a few participants focused on ancient acts of resistance, such as Safa, a Muslim female from Cairo, who chose to present the uprisings of Delta region peasants against the unjust Roman ruler (Figure 18). Safa explained:

Figure 18

I chose to draw this story of the Roman era (*el 'asr el romani*) and the persecution of Egyptians under the Romans. It starts with describing how the Romans enjoyed the country's many resources through collecting taxes. Then I show how they manipulated Egyptians and dealt with them simply as a tool for work. Then I show how the Roman Emperor used to consider Egypt part of his possessions. Then I show how Egyptians fled to the various monasteries across Egypt. Then persecution of Christians. This is followed by the Delta revolution against Emperor Marcus Aurelius (161-180), known as the Bucolic War (*al-harb al bukuliyya*).

People's agency misrepresented.

This code - or sub-code - emerged to capture the participants' reflections on the specific

strategies and characteristics that possibly make such omission effective in influencing people's

understanding of the role of people and their agency. In her interview, Randa, a Muslim female

from Bani Suef, explained how Egyptian students do not learn about the role of ordinary

Egyptians, such as workers and peasants, further problematizing how this omission and lack of

acknowledgment of their roles has translated into Egyptians of more privileged backgrounds

even mocking and disrespecting them:

> I feel that there is a particular class [of Egyptians] that is always stuck in its place. Those are workers and peasants (*fellahin*). We make fun of them, but they are the real thing and the core of what Egypt is and have remained oppressed. Those people are the continuous straight line which I drew. [In the curriculum] we see them briefly in the story of Port Said in 1956 [tripartite British-French-Israeli aggression against Egypt] and a little during the 1919 revolution. But, in general, we only hear and see very little of them.

Nadine, a female participant from Cairo, offered an interesting analysis as she reflected in

her interview on how Egyptian people are constructed in curricula:

> Egyptians as a generally passive people (*sha'b khane'*) is the image that was given to us through curricula and even in other sources, such as [Egyptian novelist] Alaa Aswany's book 'Why Don't Egyptians Revolt?' (*Lematha La Yathur Al-Misreyun*). But still people keep trying.

Questioning the prominence of leaders or 'saviors' vis-à-vis 'the people'.

Another code or sub-code that emerged and informed this substantive code related to the

omission of social movements, which captured some of the participants' questioning of the how

Egyptians have been trained to await a leader or a savior (which clearly relates to problematizing the negation of people's agency and movements). Some participants articulated how these missing narratives negatively influence the sense of agency among people. For instance, in his interview, Shenouda, a participant from Cairo, problematizes the influence of the dominant historical narrative on the sense of agency among Egyptians:

> The influence of history is very psychological. Let me explain. We [Egyptians] are paralyzed between negative and positive aspects of our history. We are taught that we are a civilization of 7,000 years and that Egypt will never fail as a state. We are the best and did everything we could. There is always a 'savior' (*mokhaless*) who will come and save it at the end of the day even when things go badly. People love symbolic figures (*el rumuz*). This means that we become negative and apathetic or lazy. Nothing will happen to Egypt. It is the mother of the world. So, people don't try to do much. So, it's a psychological emotional circle. A lot of people are aware [of societal issues] but very very very few (*safwet el safwa beta'et el safwa*) who want to really try to affect a positive change.

Here, Shenouda seems to be specifically targeting one of the key elements of the template: 'the savior' component. However, and while many implicitly questioned it by calling for the inclusion of peoples' histories and revolts, it is worth noting that very few other participants have explicitly problematized this specific aspect or used this specific term.

Similar to Shenouda's argument, Shams, a female participant from Cairo, problematizes the centrality of the figures of rulers:

> What we get in school is a history of rulers but since we don't know much about how Egyptians were living I feel like leaders become so familiar as if they are members of our family or a friend even. So, we do not know the context and how Egyptians were living. Without that context, students see the ruler as a deity who can do nothing wrong.

The authority of older generations, including parents, challenged.

Another substantive codes that emerged and informed the theoretical code of 'Challenging Key Elements and Representations of the Dominant Narrative' is this substantive code, which captures how several of the participants seem to be clearly challenging the authority of their parents, and older generations more generally. Teresa, a Coptic female participant from

Cairo, in her interview eventually became comfortable enough to explain that she wants history education to help students think independently and critically and to even question figures that might otherwise be presented as absolute villains or absolute angels:

> My parents say that Sadat was not good for Christians in Egypt. But I personally like Sadat because he was a realistic and pragmatic man. He was also extremely intelligent. Generally, we need to be able to have our own opinion and be critical and we need to voice them. For example, even our master (*sayedna*) Pope Shenouda [the former Coptic pope] I would say had positives and negatives in his personality, although my parents would of course find this something totally unacceptable and very offensive to say.

> Other participants were more reflective on why their approach to history might be very different from that of older generations. Two of the participants commented on what they believe is a different consciousness that their generation might be developing and experiencing compared to that of their parents' generation, mainly due to the January 2011 events. Somaya, a female participant who did all her schooling in Ismailia and recently graduated from the Suez Canal University, explained:

> I feel my parents have a lot of givens that they take for granted. They grew up at a time with no awareness, during Nasser's and later Sadat's time, they simply waited for the governmental letter to assign them a job. We have a different experience. We lived a different experience during January 2011 with a different awareness that this instilled within us.

> Similar to Somaya, Khadiga, a female participant who studied law at Cairo University, explained that her former university professor - who she explained has also been appointed head of the Egyptian parliament at one point – could not "think outside the official narrative." As she explained, although he is an extremely well-educated person who one would assume is a critical thinker, he must unconsciously be loyal to the system that he believes made him who he is and offered him that education and societal standing. She further elaborated:

> He is a product of the Nasserist socialist system. He was raised to believe that the Nasserite regime gave him everything. And since the successive regimes were continuations of the Nasser military regime, [my professor] seems to have developed a blind allegiance and loyalty to the state and its official narrative.

Shenouda also spoke about how he is learning to embrace various perspectives, which is influencing the ways he is viewing other groups in society:

> Through my interviews with [Muslim] Sufis [for a university paper on music and spirituality] I started learning more about them and asking questions about religion, and so on. I started learning new opinions and perspectives. This exploded and opened up my horizons.

Importantly, Shenouda then compares his newfound appreciation of diversity to that of his parents' generation:

> My mother and older generations are fixed in their beliefs. They choose one path to focus on (*tahdeed el massaar*), which I believe is much easier to do. For instance, [they would argue] the Muslim Brotherhood are bad … kill them.

He also explained how as he grew older most of his church's Sunday School classes became less interesting, especially those that were delivered by older teachers who were out of touch with the younger generations' realities:

> My mother used to take me to attend the Sunday School classes when I was younger. But in later grades, they started assigning older teachers, so there was a big generational gap. As a result, I often skipped those classes or simply went there to make fun of the teachers (*el khoddam*).

The prevalence of a Cairo-centered narrative problematized.

Another key substantive code that problematized a key feature of the dominant narrative emerged from how several of the participants, many of whom come from outside of Cairo, expressed a sense of marginalization from the generally Cairo-centered dominant narrative. Somaya, who comes from the Suez Canal region city of Ismailia, complained that:

> We usually assess people by how they're treated in Cairo or are viewed through Cairo's lenses. For instance, we measure the Upper Egyptian (*se'eedi*) through looking at how he/she does in Cairo, or the Nubian by how he/she is in Cairo.

Similarly, Hussein from Damietta, explained that:

> In Cairo, people are very individualistic and know very little about any other parts outside of Cairo. Part of the problem is that we learn very little about contributions of other parts of the country.

Abdel Rahman, from Daqahleyya, took this sense of omission a step further explaining that such marginalization is not an unintended omission. He suggests that regionally marginalized narratives are omitted because including them could in fact shake some givens about the resilience and timelessness of a common sense of Egyptian identity that the dominant narrative aims to essentialize and normalize:

> And in our history education we do not really learn much about the reactions of the ordinary people. For example, did they really feel 'Egyptian'? Especially people outside of Cairo or Alexandria… I mean, was there awareness or national sentiments among people? And how did that awareness look like? Because if it was nonexistent, then this might demolish the idea of the Egyptian identity, and that narrative of an awareness among Egyptians, and their voluntary defense of their country.

Perhaps as a result of the master narrative's omission of narratives or roles beyond urban centers, such as Cairo or Alexandria, several participants from outside Cairo expressed that sense of alienation that they felt when they started to interact with people from Cairo. Hassan from Minya presents a powerful analogy:

> How people from Cairo look at those from Minya is very similar to how Hollywood and the West look at Egypt, as backward or still living a primitive lifestyle. Even with nationalistic projects such as Toshka, it was like we [Egyptians from urban centers] are going to come and reclaim your land [in rural areas and other governorates]. But who are these people? How do they live? Egypt is not Cairo! We need to learn about that diversity.

Similarly, in explaining his drawing (Figure 12), Karim remarked:

> I have attempted to draw a map of Egypt with a mirror image that shows the significance of the South (*el se'eed*) which we never hear about in our history education. For instance, we need to learn about the history of the [semi-independent] republic of al-Hawarah (*gumhuriyyet el-Hawarah*) in South Egypt.

Skepticism towards the self-aggrandizing tone of the dominant narrative.

As can already be detected in some of the excerpts presented above, several participants in various ways problematized what I would call the generally unsubstantiated, 'self-aggrandizing' dominant narrative that exaggerates the country's historical achievements and contributions. To illustrate, one of the clearest contrasts was presented by Laila, a participant from Cairo. She critiqued that self-aggrandizing tone that consistently places Egypt at the center of events, providing no context of the history of other parts of the world or their influences on Egypt's history. She drew the following (Figure 19), then elaborated:

Figure 19

> In our school curricula Egypt has always been at the center surrounded either by enemies or allies. It is only when I got into university that I started viewing Egypt in the global context. It is part of this interconnected history of humanity. Egypt is only one part of this history unlike how school curricula have presented Egypt as center of the world.
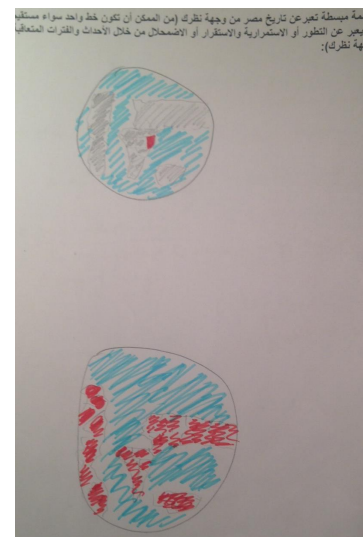
Dina, another participant from Cairo, explained that it was not until she started interacting with foreigners that she realized how little she knew about Egypt's history, compared to how much they knew about their own countries and cultures. This provoked her to start questioning the depth of her historical knowledge beyond that superficial sense of pride:

> We wake up every day feeling proud! It is like in our DNA or something as Egyptians… but what are we proud of exactly?

Ibrahim from Cairo (Figure 3) took the reaction to the dominant self-aggrandizing Egypt-centric narrative to another extreme, sharing that, based on his own extracurricular readings, he came to the conclusion that:

Beyond the Greco-Roman period, Egypt made no significant contributions to the world. Basically, I discovered that Egypt had a non-existent role in human history (*iktashaft 'adameyyet wuguud musr min el asaass*).

Problematizing the omission of sectarian tensions.

Within the above substantive code, this code or sub-code emerged, although only among very few participants. Randa, a participant from Bani Suef, drew the following (Figure 20) and offered the subsequent explanation:

> I drew the symbol of national unity between Muslims and Christians. I chose it as it has been strategically used to conceal sectarian tensions (*el fitna el ta'ifiyya*). Similar symbols and strategies have been used and applied to writing Egyptian history in general to create a fake national history.

Figure 20

While other participants might have implicitly problematized this 'national unity' rhetoric that underplays or totally omits sectarian tensions and violence, it is worth noting that Randa was one of the very few participants who openly critiqued the fact that this strategy of overemphasizing national unity helps overshadow many of the existing religious-based tensions and injustices.

With this understanding of participants' general interaction with and their attitudes vis-à-vis the dominant narrative more generally, I now turn to the themes that emerged regarding the participants' specific relationship with history education as embodied in their experiences of the history curriculum.

Interactions with the Formal History Education Curriculum

Strong Critiques and Negative Sentiments Towards History Education

The general cynicism vis-à-vis the master narrative – as embodied in their history textbooks and traditional teaching methods - emerged clearly in several participants' responses

and thus became one of the key theoretical codes, informed by several substantive codes. Such critique was directed against how history education was largely based on rote memorization and not presented in an interesting or engaging manner that can stimulate critical thinking, for instance. Several participants criticized how the way history was taught, with its emphasis on learning dates and details, made them "hate" particular eras. They especially referred to hating ancient Egyptian history, because the curriculum required them to learn numerous names of rulers and their achievements, without feeling any affinity or identification with them or their lives. Another source of that cynicism is the newfound sense of how these curricula were designed to deceive them and fabricate history, which they mostly discovered through comparing their own personal encounters with, and understandings of, the January 2011 revolution and its misrepresentation in the media and history textbooks.

Some of the participants expressed strong negative emotions such as being angry, feeling betrayed and 'fooled' by their history education. For instance, Ismail, a participant from Cairo, articulates that sentiment:

> I felt simply fooled by (*etdahak 'alayya*) my educational system that portrayed the 1952 revolution as solely positive. It was not until after I graduated from school that I learned that there were several negative dimensions and consequences to that revolution.

Similarly, Randa from Bani Suef expressed how she felt 'humiliated' by having to write things she knew were untrue simply to pass her history exams:

> I felt like a hypocrite and was not very proud of having to write things in the exam I knew were not true about 30/6 [the popularly-backed military coup d'état of June 30, 2013] for instance and how the new regime was able to liberate Egypt from the bad Muslim Brotherhood. It was humiliating (*kanet moheena*) that I had to write that narrative to get the grade which is actually my right! I felt humiliated having to learn and sometimes repeat things I didn't necessarily believe at all.

Lack of interest in (or personal connection to) the historical narrative presented in textbooks.

Informing this theoretical code of the generally negative sentiments were a few substantive codes, including that most participants expressed a lack of personal connection with their history education and curricula. With few exceptions, it was clear that this feeling of a connection only occurred when a participant felt clearly represented in the curriculum. For instance, Randa, who had graduated from school in 2015 explained how being from Bani Suef, which is considered an Upper Egyptian governorate, she was so thrilled to see a young Upper Egyptian character in one of her history lessons:

> This young kid from Bani Suef really appealed to me in one of the history lessons. It was a story about how he sacrificed for the country. I believe it was not really in the textbook, but our teacher included four historical figures from Bani Suef. Although this was like in third or fourth grade it made such a big difference for me to see a young person from Bani Suef and I still remember it. I felt I could somehow see myself in this person.

Relatedly, the vast majority of the participants expressed how their history education had lost its credibility for them from as far back as they can remember. They generally saw their school subject matters as content that they needed to learn simply for the purpose of regurgitating to pass the exams, but not a content that they would benefit much from otherwise, for instance. Several explained that their teachers warned them not to be fooled by misleading exam questions such as ones that ask them to freely express their personal opinions or analyses regarding a historical figure or event. Teachers would stress that with these types of questions they still should always follow the textbook script closely and remember that this is what the examiner really means and expects. Several participants from various parts of the country used the exact same words to narrate what their teachers told them:

> When in the exam they ask you to tell 'your personal opinion', this means that you share the 'textbook's opinion' (*ra'yak yaa'ni ra'yy el ketaab*).

Lack of trust in curricular content.

Some participants also commented on how the curriculum offered often-contradictory

historical narratives. Noura, a participant from Cairo, explained:

> It was very confusing for me whether I should view the Ottomans in a positive or a
> negative light because different parts of the history curriculum presented contradictory
> facts and opinions. I am also curious whether Lord Cromer [the British consul-general in
> Egypt] was supportive of women's education, as the history and Arabic language
> textbooks gave two very contradictory accounts. I started to get anxious, as I needed a
> straightforward consistent response that I could use in my final exam in case these
> questions came up.

Clearly, Noura saw this contradiction between the curricula of various subject matters as

a source of confusion. She did not see it as an attempt to expose students to multiple

perspectives. Like other students she was expecting the textbooks to offer her one unified and

authoritative narrative to learn. When this was shaken, it made her start questioning the

credibility of these curricula. Similarly, the lack of credibility and trustworthiness emerges in

Maha's response. Maha, a female participant from Cairo, explained how the Chemistry subject

matter textbook content, which was outdated and inaccurate in some instances, represented a

trigger for her and her colleagues to generally take their textbooks lightly:

> … we never took textbooks or curricula that seriously. I remember especially that our
> teachers and colleagues made fun of the outdated Chemistry textbook, which also made
> me question the accuracy of the other textbooks. But now, after 2011, most of the
> students are losing faith in education because many of them have seen and lived the
> January 2011 events and see their history textbooks trying to tell them something else.
> They are questioning now more than ever the credibility because they know it's full of
> bullshit.

Biased textbook coverage of January 2011 events as a turning point.

Closely connected to the substantive code above, as noted above in the last couple of

sentences in the excerpt from Maha's responses, for some of the participants who graduated from

school post 2011, the curriculum developers' manipulation and misrepresentation of those events

that participants had themselves either experienced or followed closely on TV and social media

represented a clear turning point in their relationship with history education. This was also the case for those who had graduated before then but had continued to help their younger siblings and relatives study the post-2011 history curriculum. Given the frequency of the emergence of this substantive code, I found it important to have it as a standalone code separate from the substantive code above.

For instance, Sandy, a Coptic participant who graduated from secondary school in Minya in 2016, problematized the coverage of 2011 as well the subsequent events of 2013, which prompted her and some of her colleagues in school to question the way the rest of the country's history was presented to them in the curriculum:

> I remember our third preparatory class (grade 9) and the first civics (*tarbeyya wataneyya*) textbook we got after the 2011 events. The textbooks referred to the violence of thugs (*baltageyya*) in Maspero [violence against Copts widely believed to be instigated by the military and the then ruling SCAF] and in Abbaseyya [the attack on the Coptic Cathedral in Cairo]. It was all about how the military successfully protected the people and how it was all good. However, coming from Mallawi [in the Minya governorate] where three churches were burnt down, I noticed that there was no mention of churches that were burnt down. It was actually total chaos in Minya. Also, 30/6 [the popularly-backed military coup of June 30, 2013] the way it was written now there's nothing about any violence and people getting killed or the numbers of those killed are really diminished. This made me think of other history they taught us and how it might've been manipulated. I do not have answers but I started questioning.

Maria, who graduated from secondary school in 2016 in Fayoum, also critiques how the January 25, 2011 events were covered in her textbooks:

> The sequence of events was not presented accurately, and they also took out the mention of Mubarak which made me feel 'you're playing with my mind' (*enta kont betedhak 'alayya*). If this is what you're doing with history that I personally witnessed, then how about what you might have done with history that I know nothing about? I remember there were no mentions of the police killing people and no mention of the camel battle in Tahrir. You need to tell me history [as it happened] and let me decide on my own.

Randa, who graduated from secondary school in Bani Suef in 2015, explained:

> I have always been a bit skeptical about how history was taught to us but a clear turning point that really made me question it was how I personally saw textbooks after the 2011 events trying to change and manipulate the facts in different ways.

Heidi, who graduated in 2015 in Gharbeyya, shared a similar experience:

> I was shocked with how before 2011 the textbooks were so positive about Mubarak and then how all of this changed after 2011 textbooks. Before I graduated in 2015 he was totally removed from the textbooks.

Significant Influences of Official Textbook Narratives

Although this was not a commonly occurring theme or theoretical code, I found it important to capture as it offers important nuances to how some of the participants who might reject the dominant narrative as illustrated above, might still have passively accepted aspects of it whether consciously or unconsciously. This theoretical code has two key substantive codes that inform it: the first captures how some participants are seemingly reproducing some of the dominant narrative elements as 'historical facts', especially the lack of agency of Egyptian people. The second code relates to participants who spoke critically about the vividness – and potential influence - of their textbooks' imagery among them and their colleagues.

    The Egyptian people's lack of agency as a historical 'fact'.

As illustrated above, the majority of the participants - albeit to varying degrees - problematized aspects related to the dominant narrative or elements of the schematic narrative template, including omissions and representations of social movements. However, a few participants seem to have internalized some of those same elements and have passively accepted them, such as the lack of agency among Egyptian people. For example, an understanding of the

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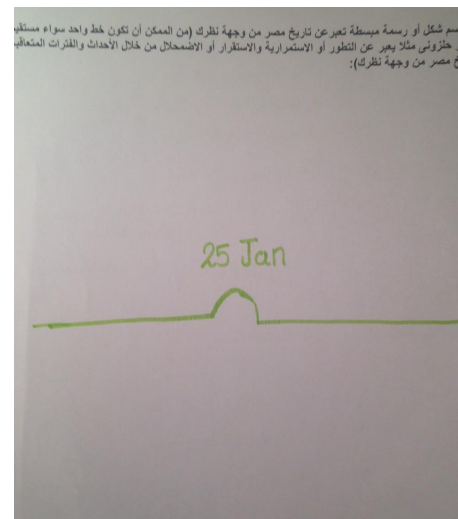
Figure 21

January 2011 revolution as a unique and standalone event seems to manifest in the responses of

Shams, a female participant from Cairo. This is what she drew in response to the pre-interview

prompt (Figure 21), explaining it as follows:

> I wanted to show that Egypt's history is a very stagnant and stable one. Since the Hyksos
> [one of ancient Egypt's key Asiatic enemies and colonizers] until now, we have still been
> sleeping and stagnant. Then came the 25th of January [2011] revolution and it is like a
> bump in that long history of stagnation (*rukuud*). So, after January 25th it is like we are
> back to our normal and stagnant history. For me, as I understand history, January 2011
> was the first time ever in history that we had a revolution led by the people as opposed to
> a small group of people with particular interests as was the case before. And it was led by
> idealist and well-meaning middle class young people who were trying to advocate on
> behalf of others who are less privileged. Then of course after political parties intervened
> and started to compete based on their ideologies again we went back to square one.

In reflecting on her school history curriculum, it seems the curriculum played an

important role in instilling that understanding:

> I remember this recurring sentence "then the Egyptian people started a revolution" (*thum
> qaam al sha'b el musri bi-thawrah)* and you sense that euphoria and victory. But then the
> new chapter [of the textbook] begins with describing a much worse kind of oppression or
> colonization. So, sadly Egyptians do not maintain victory or control [of the country's
> resources or destiny]. Egyptians are not comfortable or interested in change or freedoms.
> The Egyptian individual only cares about securing his basic needs and livelihood
> (*yu'aminn ma'eshtuh*).

Although her response varies slightly from the response of Shams, Dina presents a

similar case of a participant who is unaware of the history of Egyptian people's resistance

movements. Although she seems to be starting to question the possibility of her lack of

knowledge having been shaped by the curriculum, she also seems convinced that there were no

other significant revolts in Egypt's history before the January 2011 events:

> January 25 is the only time when we took to the streets to revolt (*awwel marra nethour*).
> When else in history did we [as Egyptian people] demonstrate? When we tried to expel
> the British and French, may be too? I don't remember reading words such as uprising or
> revolts of the people (*nuhuud sha'b aw thawrat sha'b*) anywhere in the curriculum. May
> be it was mentioned once but in general it is unmentioned (*gheir mazkura*).

Influences of reservoir of textbook images and constructions.

Despite the denial of its credibility or significance as many participants explicitly explained, history education - embodied in textbooks - seem to continue to hold some significance at least on an unconscious level. Reham, a female participant from Cairo, narrated how her presence during some of the most violent moments in Tahrir Square in January 2011 conjured the textbook image of the British occupation and resistance of the Egyptian people.

> On the Kasr El Nil bridge on January 28th [2011] as demonstrators were confronting or fleeing police and military forces, I conjured the textbook image of the British occupation and resistance of Egyptians moving back and forth (*al-karr wal-farr*). This made me feel a connection because this was a continuation of a struggle against an oppressor, whether it was the British occupation or Mubarak's rule. But I found out how that the official narrative (*el-sardeyya el-rasmeyya*) in textbooks was not only affecting me, but also my friend who joined me in the demonstrations. This is when I realized how these images and what we studied still have powerful influences on us.

As is clear from the above, some participants harbored negative emotions vis-à-vis their educational curricula due to the lack of a sense of personal connection; the overemphasis on rote memorization; and lack of credibility because of the personal encounters that some of them had with counter-narratives. Additionally, for a large number of participants, January 2011 emerged as a key turning point that prompted them to question and challenge the authority and credibility of the dominant narrative. Importantly, however, the textbooks still do have an influence, as was clear in how some participants have passively internalized key textbook narrative elements or images.

So, what are some of the key alternative sources that the participants reverted to that helped inform their interactions with the dominant narrative and their critical views regarding history education that were outlined above? In the next section, I present some of the key alternative sources of historical knowledge that emerged in the participants' responses.

Alternative Sources of Historical Knowledge

If many of the participants are clearly rejecting the dominant narrative or key elements within it, where are they getting their alternative versions of history? Participants cited several sources of alternative historical knowledge that taught them about their history curriculum's omissions or misrepresentations. For example, some participants referred to their university-level courses - whether in their university studies in Egypt or through studying abroad (e.g., semester abroad arrangements) - as turning points where their professors clearly shocked them when explaining things, such as how Egypt did not win the 1973 war against Israel or that in July 1952 the Free Officers did not lead a popular revolution but a military coup d'état. Throughout the data analyses I make references to how participants have interacted with various sources.[47] Thus, here, I focus on two sources that emerged not only as significant, but also as especially contentious. I focus on family and the Church's Sunday School curriculum since they provide important insights into participants' interactions with historical narratives as well as their sense of social identity:

Family as an Alternative Source of Historical Knowledge

Whether confirming the dominant narrative or challenging it, family narratives emerged as a powerful and generally unquestioned source of historical knowledge for several of the participants. For instance, four of the participants referred to their grandparents in citing alternative narratives whether to the dominant historical narratives or to current realities. Regarding the British occupation of Egypt, two Coptic participants problematized how the textbooks only painted that occupation as negative. They had both been exposed to their grandparents' narratives, which painted a generally more positive image of the British colonization. In contrast, Fatima, a Muslim female participant who comes from a small village in

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[47] For a comprehensive list of the various sources of alternative historical knowledge cited by participants, please refer to Appendix IX.

Giza, felt that the textbooks downplayed many abuses committed by the British occupation, citing her grandmother's stories about how British soldiers had brutally attacked and raped her village's women.

However, relationship with family – including grandparents – was seen by several participants as potentially contentious and that it needs to be managed delicately in order to maintain the peace and good relations, especially vis-à-vis the polarizing post-2011 political situation. As Maha, a female participant from Cairo, explained:

> When I visit my grandmother, who loves to watch Ahmed Moussa [a pro-regime propaganda TV commentator], I usually come up with any excuse to ask her to turn the TV off or may be turn the channel to watch a nice and light [Egyptian] black and white movie that we can enjoy together. A film of that sort is not controversial. That way we avoid talking politics or ending up arguing, because I still love her and I don't want for politics to stand in the way of our relationship or ruin it as it clearly did with many of my friends.

Historical narratives of grandparents also very clearly shaped Maria's understanding and imagination of Muslim-Christian relations. Her vision to try to counter intolerance and to try to increase cooperation between Muslims and Copts in society came from two key familial influences, her mother's Christian faith as well as her grandparents' stories about the more tolerant and inclusive past:

> I want to bring back the two of us [Muslims and Copts] together as one. It comes from my mother. As a Christian, Christ taught us to love our enemies. And Muslims are not even my enemies. They are the first we need to love. Zeinab, my Muslim roommate, and I pray together, and we really love each other. I don't want us to be like this. I hope that when my children reach my age that Egypt would be a different place. Also, I want to bring back that love that existed and that I heard in my grandfather and grandmother's stories (*qissass teita w geddo*). People never asked what religion you were or discriminate based on that at all. Actually, I have no idea why we need to include [religious affiliation] in our [national] ID cards. They should take it out.

Similarly, Safa, a female Muslim participant in her first year of university, laments the current status, referring to her families' narratives, confidently stating:

> No one in the past used to ask whether you're a Muslim or Christian. It's only now that we have these issues. I feel the media is the one that incites sectarian violence and misunderstanding. Why do we even need slogans such as 'long live the cross and the crescent' ('ash el hilal ma'a el saleeb)?

Similar to Maria's case where her mother's faith influenced her, parents had an important influence on several other participants. Two of the participants referred to their fathers' historical knowledge and the influence that had on their understanding and learning of history. Two others explained how they loved history because of their fathers' positive influences. Shenouda, a Coptic male participant from Cairo, explained the specific role of his mother – who had studied history at university - in encouraging him to explore various sources of history to help him ultimately reach a narrative that makes sense to him personally. Similarly, Maha referred to her mother as the key source of her critical approach to history and society at large. She explained how her mother would share stories from her own volunteering and community service activities with less privileged Egyptians living in dire need, hunger, and poverty. Listening to these stories indirectly helped her become critical of the national media's coverage of grand national projects and achievements, feeling that this was 'not the complete picture':

> Although I mainly developed this critical attitude through university courses I took, there are several reasons that led me to be that critical even before then. Partly encouraged by my mother I started volunteering and through seeing the poverty and hunger I was starting to question what I was hearing on TV and newspapers about those great national achievements (*ingaazaat qawmiyya*), while I could still personally see there are people who are poor, deprived and dying. I also had some critical history teachers in school. Although they were not explicit about their critiques we could sense it and this sowed a seed in me that helped me continue to be critical later on.

Thus, whether confirming or challenging the dominant narrative, families' narratives emerged as trusted sources of alternative historical knowledge among several of the participants.

Elements of Coptic Church's Sunday School as Sources of Historical Knowledge (for Coptic Participants)

Except for one Coptic participant who was less active in the Coptic Church's activities, including Sunday School, all seven Coptic participants were either active until recently or are still actively involved in Church-related activities. The six Coptic participants who were involved in their churches stated that the Sunday School classes they had attended did not explicitly teach them history per se (which explains how only one participant cited it as an alternative source of historical knowledge, as illustrated in Appendix IX). However, some explained that it had helped them indirectly learn some of the Church's and the Coptic community's history through the historical narratives about key Coptic figures such as saints, martyrs, and Coptic Popes. According to the majority of Coptic participants, these discussions did not entail any mentions of historical abuses by Muslim rulers against Copts or the Church. Within the substantive or focused code of the 'influence of Sunday School as an alternative source', a few codes or sub-codes emerged which I present and discuss briefly below as they give a sense of the Sunday School curricular content and its influences on Coptic participants.

Historical injustice and abuses.

Peter, a Coptic male participant from Cairo, was the only Coptic participant to mention that he heard of historical Muslim rulers' abuses of Copts in the context of his active engagement with Sunday Schools. As a regular student of Sunday School for several years, he never got to learn about such abuses. It was not until he joined training courses to help qualify him as a Sunday School facilitator (*dawaraat i'daad el khoddam*) that he started learning more, because, as he explained:

> The Church's curriculum had to touch upon those issues to prepare future facilitators in case their own students bring up such questions during [Sunday School] class discussions.

Peter also referred to the fact that while learning about those abuses briefly through his Sunday School involvement, his first encounter with more in-depth knowledge about those historical abuses was through a Muslim colleague of his at university who had studied through the International Baccalaureate (IB) high school system in a private school in Cairo (instead of the national system of the *Thanaweyya 'Amma*), which had encouraged him to do some independent historical research and learned about these historical abuses.

This lack of engagement with historical injustices on the Church's part was implicitly problematized by Shenouda, a Coptic male participant from Cairo, who explained:

> Sunday school curricula and the Coptic Church in general would be too afraid to enter into discussions of religion or politics (*el keneesa khawwafah awi ennaha tkhosh fi deen aw siyasah*).

Historical contributions.

Important and historic theological contributions to Christianity at large emerged in some of the Coptic participants' responses in terms of what they learned in Sunday School. Heidi was the only participant, however, to refer to her Sunday School in Gharbeyya as a source of learning about modern Coptic contributions:

> There was a list of Coptic figures that they handed out for us to learn. This made me wonder how come those were not included in [official public school] curricula. For instance, Pope Kyrollos who was named 'the father of reform' (*Abu El-Islah)* and his very important contributions. I believe that in our public school curricula, even for the 1919 revolution, if [curriculum developers] could they would have remove mentions of Copts playing a role there.

Questioning the Church's Sunday School narrative and approach.

In some cases, it seems that Sunday School was the sole alternative source of the history of Christianity and the history of the Coptic Orthodox Church among some participants. However, in two cases, Coptic participants stated that their exposure to various other sources prompted them to question their Church's narrative. Thus, it was important to capture this here as a 'code' or a 'sub-code' to offer that important nuance of how the Church's historical

narrative is also being questioned by some participants. This exposure to other narratives allowed them at least to realize that there might be discrepancies and thus gaps they need to fill in their understanding of that history. Sandy, a Coptic female participant from Minya, explained:

> Regarding the Church's history, I have several sources to help me understand that. It [partly] comes from my church's [Sunday School] curriculum. But I would say also the tour guide that took me on a tour to old [Coptic] churches. But this tour showed me I have big gaps in my understanding. So I can say that, along with the [biased] way that the 30/6 [June 2013 popular coup d'état] was covered in our textbooks, the tour guide's narrative during that tour in old churches made me question the Church's history that I had learned.

Shenouda, a Coptic participant from Cairo, seems to have also been questioning his faith based on reading other sources:

> I started reading more about the history of the Christian Councils (*el magame' el maskuneyya*) and history of religion and how Christians fought with each other. This made me start asking myself questions such as: Why am I a believer? Why not become an atheist, for instance? Why are we Christian?

Similar to Shenouda's critique of the generational gap that existed between Sunday School students and teachers (cited earlier), Maria did not necessarily problematize the curricular content but mostly the pedagogical approach of the Sunday School teaching in her church in Fayoum. Her critique was that the teaching largely depended on rote memorization of names and details:

> I didn't like the way these subjects [Coptic history and language] were being taught as it was based on memorization like in my [public] school. They wanted us to learn the very detailed history of [Coptic] martyrs during the Roman era.

Participants' Approaches to History

The above presented theoretical codes, substantive codes, and codes or sub-codes offer some insights into how the participants interact with particular narratives – namely, the dominant historical narrative and the Coptic Church's narrative - and sources of historical knowledge. To

gain additional insights and add more nuances to how participants interact with the dominant narrative, it is instructive to also analyze what shapes participants' understandings of and approaches to 'history' more generally. While basing this on analyzing the various responses to the history-related questions (i.e., Questions 21 to 27 of the written exercise), it became clear as I was conducting the coding that some of the most helpful data to offer insights into participants' understandings and approaches to history, in fact, emerged especially from participants' responses to Questions 26 and 27. Those two questions asked participants to explain why they believed the historical misrepresentations and omissions that they had highlighted needed to be properly included in history curricula. Equally helpful in this analysis was the subsequent reflections on those questions during the interview, especially through Questions 8 and 9, which asked participants to propose key reforms they would introduce to the history curriculum and how it is enacted in the classroom. Based on that analysis I attempted to classify some of the types or tendencies that were emerging from the data.

It is worth noting here that the participants' visions of the past were distilled from various data. Within that, as mentioned, I also analyzed the participants' visions of curricular reforms. It is worth noting here that as I was analyzing the data I could start to sense how pragmatic some of the most critical participants were being while presenting their reform proposals. Given the sense of defeatism that many young people currently feel after their sense of the failure of their January 2011 revolution to achieve the change it envisioned, it is clear that many were practicing their own self-preservation and self-censorship when sharing the ideal changes that they would hope to see implemented in curricula. Tellingly, while the question clearly asked them to articulate any changes they would want to see, it became evident that they mostly shared proposals that would not potentially be seen as radical or threating to the status quo. Additionally, some of the participants explicitly shared how they would be pessimistic about the prospects of any fundamental curricular changes. Some attributed that to the huge bureaucracy and the long time

it might take to change and reform curricula, while some - who were more critical - pointed to how the curricula were designed to serve particular purposes and thus will need to remain the same to continue to serve those interests. For ease of reference, I assign labels here and provide some illustrations of how those categories and sub-categories were obtained:

Traditional/Exemplary Tendencies

Traditional/exemplary-unreflective.

Wafaa, a female participant from Cairo, sees that history education's role is to offer positive examples from the past to inspire Egyptians. In explaining her pre-interview drawing, she had highlighted that to reverse the decline that the country is experiencing, it is the role of the Egyptian people to work harder because if they do, they would get to where the country deserves to be, and bring back its glorious past. Focusing on invoking patterns from the past to help inspire modern-day Egyptians, showing little signs of self-reflection or any problematization of any structural injustices or the inequitable access to resources, she seems to clearly demonstrate what historical consciousness theorists would label as 'traditional' along with possibly 'exemplary' tendencies:

> … Egypt especially during the royal time [rule of King Farouk] was still inhabited by Egyptians not another people. They were the ones who were enjoying and leading a renaissance and were being respected and recognized in all sectors. Then why don't we try to bring back this life another time? I don't mean the royal rule of the King but under any rule or circumstance.. all of Egypt's problems could be remedied through an educational renaissance and …possibly we can reach that by looking at the history of our people especially when we were in a better place than now… Spreading awareness among Egyptian students that Egyptians had a very high status … compared to now and that we were actually more advanced than many other countries. … May be this will help them learn that the problem is not really in the country but in the people themselves… Egypt has been the same during ancient Egyptian times and during the royal time but what changed is that people back then wanted to advance and worked on that.

Absent from Wafaa's analysis is a critical approach to the other competing narratives that she was drawing on to construct the glory and supremacy of these earlier times. Her emphasis on

the glory of the ancient Egyptian history might have been informed by the history curriculum which offers a large space to that history. However, in portraying the pre-Nasser royal rule of Egypt as entirely positive she would be generally countering the dominant narrative which generally paints that pre-Nasser era negatively. Importantly, the negative portrayal of that era has slightly improved and a more balanced narrative has slowly been emerging over the past few years whether in curricular content or through TV series productions, for instance. Thus, such slightly improved curricular content could be responsible for her signaling the pre-Nasser royal era out as a positive era that she would see as a good time for all Egyptians. Generally, her uncritical tendencies seem to shape her interaction with the dominant narrative, as embodied in the history curriculum.

In addition, Wafaa exhibits little inclination towards self-reflection. This clearly emerges in how she has internalized the societal discourse related to the empowerment of women and the importance of improving the images of Egypt and Islam as an important duty upon Egyptian citizens vis-à-vis the rest of the world. Thus, Wafaa's mission when she travelled to study in an East Asian country for a few months was to set a good example to defend the image of Egypt and Islam:

> They have a lot of stereotypes about Egypt. I was asked whether we still live in pyramids and whether we still ride camels and donkeys to school and work. They were also surprised to see a [Muslim] veiled woman travelling on her own and pursuing her graduate studies abroad. I was happy to contribute to giving the right image about Egypt and to show them how smart and empowered our women are as well.

Mahmoud, a male participant from Cairo, sees that the function of history is to reinforce a narrative that helps students foster a unified national identity:

> History education helps in creating a national consciousness that is secular and not contaminated by any other influences or identifications, whether religious or otherwise. Its role is to help raise pride and a belonging to the country.

During the interview Mahmoud further elaborated that he wants history education to help

Egyptians appreciate the progress that the country is experiencing under the current regime, to

encourage them to make short-term sacrifices for long-term gains:

> History needs to instill a positive outlook and also to establish a unifying Egyptian character that overcomes identities that call for differences. This would help people accept change and development even if there are pains and necessary sacrifices. [History] should serve in establishing a basic citizenship so that we avoid exclusivist ideologies such as that of Islamists who don't like Christians or who would want to discriminate against them, for instance. We need to produce citizens who understand ideas and concepts and how they evolved not only focus on historical figures.

Mahmoud seems to exhibit what historical consciousness theorists would refer to a

'traditional' approach to the past, where many givens remain unquestioned and dominant

narratives are approached uncritically. This manifests also in both Wafaa's and Mahmoud's

strong unreflective references about national identity, patriotism, and their uncritical pride in the

country's history.

Traditional/exemplary-reflective.

Like Mahmoud and Wafaa, Dina - a female participant from Cairo - explained the

importance of history as a source of inspiration, pride, and dignity among Egyptians. This is how

she justified the importance of history education and its purposes:

> If there is no history, there is no country. Also, it is important to instill a sense of pride and dignity among Egyptian citizens. Historical figures and their achievements are currently role models to look up to. It is essential for all citizens to be fully aware and conscious of their country's history not only for studying but also for general knowledge. I believe that history education did not take its place and the needed status among us, but we need to give it the needed status since people with no history, have no present and no future. I hope that the student and citizen generally approach history not only as a subject matter but as essential knowledge that they should try to reach at any expense.

> History education should also focus on positive things and achievements. I somehow feel that most of our history education focused on colonization, debts, protests, or massacres. Positive periods were not clearly articulated or didn't take much space. We should have

those to give students an incentive to do as good as those people. For instance, some leaders did good things and brought things and technology, which made Egypt advance in agriculture and industry.

In addition to exhibiting traditional tendencies, Dina's focus on the importance of emphasizing "historical figures and their achievements" as "role models", seems to also point at some 'exemplary' tendencies, discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. However, in Dina's case there seems to be a conundrum here as she also exhibits some elements of a critical self-reflection when talking about herself as a product of the Egyptian society and how she did not start questioning some traditions until she was exposed to foreigners through her involvement in online chatting forums that aimed to help participants improve their English language skills:

> All I knew when talking to foreign students was that we [as Egyptians] were great and we had Pharaohs and pyramids, but beyond that I knew nothing. I am proud but unable to explain or share information. It is like you wake up in the morning feeling that we are proud and that we as Egyptians were great. Because we have pyramids or sphinx we were great but then we dropped (*konna 'uzam w ba'eina wa'een*). I guess I am a product of this system… listen to me now… I embody the sense of confusion… I am a typical Egyptian student and my confusion is now coming out [in what I am saying]… I have a sense that we were great and you wake up every morning thinking and believing that… but why? Is it because we have the pyramids and the sphinx? But what have we added now and what happened since then?... I also seem to have internalized how we were taught about female leaders and their failures such as *Shagaret El Durr* [a Memluk era female leader]. I leave school not remembering anything but inside of me are thoughts such as 'this is not acceptable, you are a girl after all' (*'eib, maysuhish enti bent*). Our understanding of the limited role we have as girls or women, I feel lots of it comes from school, even if indirectly.

Dina clearly exhibits some self-reflection abilities. However, her self-reflection seems to stop at critiquing societal norms and traditions, but is not necessarily articulated further into a critical approach that, for instance, starts to question the potential purposes of the dominant narrative and how it has been constructed. While she might be showing signs of beginning to question society's patriarchal traditions, the dominant historical narrative, its production and manipulation remain beyond the scope of her criticism. Thus, I would place her in a category

where her approach to history generally demonstrates traditional/exemplary tendencies, yet also being reflective, since she is starting to question her social position as a female vis-à-vis some societal norms and traditions.

Critical Tendencies

This category includes the participants who were generally critical of the dominant narrative or specific elements or misrepresentations within it. There are three clear variations that emerged among those with critical tendencies, which I present below:

Critical-unreflective.

Apart from being clearly critical of the Coptic history misrepresentation in school curricula, Teresa seems to have otherwise accepted the dominant national narrative in general and had little to question about it. This manifests in her strong agreement with the dominant narrative, including its positive portrayal of a controversial figure like late President Sadat. She has rejected her parents' reminder that 'most Copts are supposed to dislike Sadat'. In addition, she talks about 'loyalty' to the Church as well as to the Egyptian state. For instance, she has taken it upon herself to prove to her university colleagues that public education is good. Given that she is on a full scholarship at a private university and that she was educated through the public education system, she feels that through her academic performance she can prove to her colleagues that the Egyptian public education is a good one that produces good, smart individuals. As she explained:

> I sometimes even correct [my colleagues'] English and they are like: didn't you go to a public school? I want to improve the image of public education among my colleagues.

She also wants Egyptians to learn to be more attached to their "mother country," adding that history has proven that Egypt needs to be "owned by someone" (*mamluka li hadd*) – clarifying the she believes that what works best for Egypt is a strong centralized rule and not a democratically governed republic. In addition to largely accepting and internalizing key elements

of the dominant narrative, Teresa seems to have clearly accepted the Church's narrative, including some of its miracles - such as the myth of the move of the Muqattam hill by a Coptic holy man - as historical facts. This mythical incident and Teresa's presentation of it as a historical event and her hand-drawn representation of it (Figure 25) will be further discussed in the next chapter. Thus, while critical of some aspects of the dominant narrative – specifically those related to Coptic omission or misrepresentation from the dominant narrative and school curricula - she also exhibits clearly uncritical tendencies towards other narratives, including the Church's faith-based historical narratives.

Similarly, Hassan, a Muslim participant from Minya, who, as highlighted above, has been critical of the dominant national narrative, has reverted unquestioningly to faith-based Muslim historical narratives and perspectives. Given his religious tendencies and convictions, he joined a recently established group that attempts to teach history from an Islamic perspective, focusing on Islamic history since Prophet Muhammad's times. Hassan sees that this is an important history to learn and a missing perspective as he had clearly stated in his written exercise and interview. In discussing history education, one of his main concerns relates to the unnecessarily large focus that teaching of ancient Egypt receives in the history curriculum, offering a clearly negative evaluation of that ancient civilization, which seems to be much in line with a hardline Islamic perspective:

> I feel like we are promoting a civilization that has no connection with the present. At least I personally feel no connection with [the ancient Egyptian civilization] whatsoever. Also, I have personal concerns about its ethical and moral values which I believe were characterized by significant imbalances (*ikhtilaal qiyami wa akhlaaqi*).

Thus, Hassan seems to exhibit critical tendencies towards particular types of historical narratives (i.e., the national dominant narrative), but does not adopt the same critical approaches towards alternative sources, including religious-based ones. This is arguably the case given that

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he is unable to critically reflect on how his religious beliefs and identity might be influencing and limiting his understandings of, and approaches to, history.

Those participants do exhibit some critical tendencies vis-à-vis 'particular' narratives, omissions, and misrepresentations (i.e., the Coptic history omission in the case of Teresa, and the dominant secular narrative in the case of Hassan). However, both seem to demonstrate little self-reflection or critical approaches to the alternative narratives they have embraced.

Similarly, Laila, a female Muslim participant who went to a French Catholic nuns' school in Cairo and studied political science at university, exhibits clear critical but unreflective tendencies. She identifies a specific subaltern narrative "role of the people" that she sees as missing and emphasizes the need to use a critical approach to deconstruct a 'nationalistic' dominant narrative that aims to control the people. An excerpt from her written narrative exercise is demonstrative of her clearly critical approach:

> For me, this is history [emphasis in original]. The history is the story of the people and the struggles. It is not the nationalistic story of the state and its victories. You need to be critical and to understand the other perspectives. We took history to memorize it not to learn from it or to reflect upon it or give our opinions… They do not care about our opinions or about us. We were simply recipients but we were not a part of the story. These eras and events [that I am proposing to include] are the real history not the fabricated history that presents idealized personalities that led stupid people who did not have any opinion or reaction… It's absolutely absurd learning the history of Egypt from the state point of view that highlights the nationalistic characters and the heroic victories without talking neither about the role of the people nor the external events happening in the world. There is no history of thoughts [in the curriculum]. You [as a student] are absorbing the facts of the history. You are neither reflective nor critical of the events.

Laila is clearly critical of the dominant narrative and seems to clearly propose one alternative narrative that she believes is the viable one to teach. However, throughout the discussions she was unable to identify or reflect upon the potential limitations of her approach or proposed 'alternative' narrative. She also did not exhibit any ability to reflect on her own

positionality and the possible limitations those might impose on her worldviews. This 'critical-unreflective' category will become even clearer when put in contrast with participants who are classified as 'critical-reflective'.

Critical-reflective.

Heidi exhibits strong critical tendencies in approaching history, accompanied by a sense of self-reflection. A Copt who is currently an engineering student at a private university and who went to a public school in the governorate of Gharbeyya, she is clearly critical of the current biased narrative and envisions that history education should promote more pluralism and tolerance among students. Additionally, she exhibits aspects of a critical self-reflection in explaining how her personal sense of exclusion from the master narrative as a Christian is what propels her to call for the inclusion of Coptic history. She further reflects on how her stances might be interpreted by others, explaining that others could rightly interpret the fact that she highlighted that specific history and focused on it as another form of bias on her part. But, she also sees how inclusion of Coptic history would help students of different faiths be more respectful, thus believing in an important role of history education in informing better intergroup dynamics. These different elements emerge clearly in how she reflects on why she chose Coptic history as one of the key missing historical narratives that need to be included in Egyptian history curricula:

> I think that [as a student] I need to learn history – all the history – not some of it or the positive part of it or the <u>fabricated</u> part of it [emphasis in original] .. and based on that all events need to be included not some of them… this will help raise a generation that is not discriminatory and not intolerant and accepting others and respecting their rights… for instance, colonization did ruin some things or many things in Egypt… but it also contributed and reformed and was fair.. so why don't we mention both points of view? … and Copts have also contributed to Egyptian history…first, if these events are present you would not find that most of my responses are biased towards my religion.. because I am Christian and I feel that I was not justly treated in [not] learning about the Coptic history [in the official history curriculum] and on the contrary I learned everything about everything about Islamic history.. so may be this [including Coptic history] would have a

positive influence by removing the biased tone or the sense of exclusion and discrimination that you can depict in what I am writing here… second, and in the larger context, it will influence Christian students to accept learning Islamic history with an open heart and would positively influence their dealing with non-Christians… third, in general, I am supposed to learn all of history and not only good and positive parts or those set in a positive light… history needs to be realistic and truthful and not used to improve the image of the present.

Heidi, seems to exhibit strong critical tendencies towards the dominant historical narrative. Additionally, she is clearly able to contextualize and problematize the limitations of her social position - especially as a Copt who has personally experienced that exclusion herself - and how they could influence and bias her vision of the 'ideal' historical content that needs to be included and taught.

Similarly, the critical self-reflective tendencies of some participants emerged in how they problematized that - as products of the Egyptian educational system - they were unable to clearly articulate or represent the narratives or minorities they believed were misrepresented or omitted. This emerged in three participants' attempts to represent the Nubian minority and one participant's attempt to represent Egyptian Jews. For instance, Farida, reflected on how difficult it was for her to draw Nubians or Berbers, whom she chose as one key misrepresented minority group.

Reflecting on her workshop drawing (Figure 22), Farida offered some remarks (which I paraphrase below given that the workshop discussions were not audio-recorded):

> I attempted to draw Nubians and Nubian houses along the Nile. However, I feel that I cannot appropriately represent Nubians. I only learned about Nubians and their culture when I did my university studies in [another Middle Eastern country] because one of my closest friends who studied with me there was a Nubian from Egypt. Before that, all I knew was very little about Nubians including some stereotypes such as that they

Figure 22

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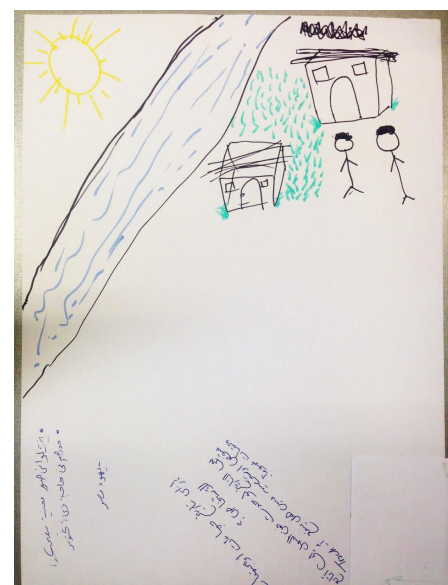
are simple and funny people. My Nubian friend has a lot of anger because of feeling invisible and that society imposes many stereotypes on him. Nubian identity and contribution is always reduced (*tukhtazal*). I couldn't even draw the Nubian village because it is totally absent from my imagination. We didn't study the fact that the Nubian language was key in the October 1973 war. Similarly, I couldn't draw anything related to the Berbers of Egypt who live in the Siwa oasis. I have no visual imagery of them in my mind. I would say Berbers are generally seen as savages and Nubians are simply seen as different.

Critical-reflective (and conscious of power dynamics).

Sharing the critical-reflective tendencies, some participants did not only exhibit critical stances vis-à-vis the dominant narrative, and strong self-reflexivity. Additionally, they exhibited an ability to problematize power and structural injustices that ensure the manipulations of historical narratives to maintain existing power asymmetries and unequal access to resources. For instance, Heidi's responses above start to hint implicitly to a power that might be 'fabricating' historical narratives. However, she clearly stops at that and does not further reflect on what those powers might be doing and for what purpose. In contrast, Maha, a Muslim participant from Cairo, makes sure to highlight that she believes that the omission of Coptic history is not haphazard but intentional, to maintain the Copts subordinate status in society:

> I remember clearly, [the Coptic era] was in the last chapter [of the history textbook] and the teacher covered it very briefly and no significance was given to it really. [The textbook content] mostly focused on suffering. Mainly in one and a half pages (*safha w noss*) only. This led me to ask: do we really respect Christians in Egypt? But the answer was clear. They are a page and a half in a textbook. Until now, I have no understanding of that history, to say the least. This is the first thing that came to mind [in response to Question 21]. What were their [Coptic] contributions? What was their [Coptic] art? I know this is intentional that there is no focus on their role in history.

Maha also exhibited a strong ability to explain the limitations that her own social position imposes on her understandings and approaches. In explaining why she found it challenging to

answer the scenario question about her role as an Egyptian citizen (Question 18 of the written

exercise), in the interview she explained:

> I come from a very very sad country. From the realistic side, it is difficult to say
> 'Egyptian' to refer to a whole people. There are so many variations in income and
> education. Which Egyptian citizen are we talking about? It is far from coherent. Your
> perspective is limited by your income and socio-economic background. May be the only
> person living with a very average lifestyle can tell us what is an Egyptian. My definition
> or whatever I say would be biased by my privilege. Powers of privilege play a very large
> effect on this. Even being asked this question and sitting here [for an interview] is a
> privilege.

Shenouda, is one of the participants who would clearly fit under this category. As

illustrated in several of his excerpts shared above, he refers to how the dominant narrative is

meant to influence and shape the sense of apathy and passivity among Egyptians. He is not only

critical of the dominant narrative as well as parts of the Church's narrative but moves beyond

those critiques to question power dynamics and their possible purposes in maintaining passive

subjectivities. He is also reflective in his approaches to the various sources he sought to read to

be able to compare them with his Sunday School curricula narratives, for instance.

Multi-Perspectival Critical Tendencies

This category pertains to participants who exhibited the ability to be critical as well as

engage with a multiplicity of perspectives. Yara is a female Muslim participant who did all her

schooling at a public school in Aswan. After graduating she was offered a full scholarship to

study at a private university in Cairo, where she took several history courses and was engaged in

several oral history research projects. She currently continues to work as a researcher on some

history-related projects at university. In response to Questions 26 and 27 she wrote:

> It is important to introduce the meaning of history concepts like historiography, primary
> sources, secondary sources, different histories the social/the economic/the history of
> Thought, different narratives, the power relations behind these narratives (power and
> knowledge in general) just to train the student to think of history, to prepare them even on
> a very minor level. To make history not to be the recipient of a certain narrative. This, for
> me, is more important than any event or character in particular, it's the very rationale of

teaching history to produce the modern subjects that go into the machine, do their parts, & never question or understand it.

In presenting her pre-interview drawing, Yara explained the difficulty she faced in developing her drawing, as she felt she was unable to capture multiple perspectives:

> I wanted to show whether it was a line going up [progress] or down [decline] for different eras. For instance, may be for the Ottomans it could be down, as they didn't emphasize science and support it. But what does that line represent exactly? Culture? The economy? For instance, for the British occupation period, which class exactly would the line represent and who benefited from it? For some groups the line would be going up and for some others it would be doing down.

As is clear from her responses, Yara's approach to history does not stop at problematizing how history could be manipulated by the modern state to serve its purposes or at showing an ability to deconstruct the dominant narrative as some of the participants demonstrating the critical-reflective tendencies might have. She transcends that critical-reflective approach by calling for students to be offered the tools necessary for their independent engagement with multiple historical narratives and perspectives to potentially construct their own narratives. She is also clearly cognizant of the limitations or her own and any other one perspective in prescribing a 'decline' or a 'progress' label, recognizing the multiplicity of potential viewpoints and approaches to the same historical event or figure.

Hussein is a Muslim male participant who completed his public education in Damietta. He is currently studying comparative English literature at a private university. Similar to Yara's case, Hussein questioned whether there is one true or correct narrative and thus refrains from advocating one alternative narrative (or counter-narrative). He highlighted the role of power dynamics in shaping historical narratives and went as far as problematizing the shortcoming of advocating one particular narrative, explaining that any one narrative would, by design, be flawed and leave out other narratives or perspectives:

Realizing that history is not simply one story but that there are several narratives and that there is an authority that controls which narrative is being promoted and which needs to be protected as a dominant official narrative which draws the ideal vision of the Egyptian personality… if you excuse the expression … these personalities and events fill important gaps in our imagination and understanding of how we reached what we have reached now.. for instance, understanding the shift in the public administration system and how it reached what it did now helps us realize the negative consequences of the appointment system [government-guaranteed placement jobs system] that started with Nasser's regime… and the infiltration of unqualified military officers to lead key executive institutions and local administrative authorities…

While the first part of his response could be interpreted as clearly critical, the second part of his response points to a tendency that moves beyond being critical to emphasizing the importance of embracing and acknowledging multiple perspectives:

But there remains a question… who owns the real version of the truth?.. who can provide or create an 'effective history narrative' [he makes the inverted comma signs in the air] which tells the truth of historical events and their consequences… revisiting and rebuilding the framework of this narrative to allow it to be more neutral, objective … but what would guarantee that in our efforts to achieve such an end, that we would not oppress or marginalize another segment that does not fit into the narrative?... and what if [having multiple perspectives] is just an idealistic vision that contradicts what is actually needed in real life?

As can be detected from the above two examples of Yara and Hussein, participants exhibiting these tendencies sometimes had a strong self-reflexivity that actually impeded them from articulating alternative historical narratives, often because they explained that the narrative would vary by the group that is narrating it. This is clear in how Fatima explained why in her pre-interview drawing (Figure 13), she drew two parallel lines and several symbols between those lines:

I drew two lines here to show that there is always more than one version of the story. And in between the two lines I included some symbols to show the diversity of the country. History follows two lines always: one of goodness and one of evil. For instance, during the January 2011 revolution events even though people were dying, there was a sense of utopia. Muslims supported Christians as they were praying, and so on. And within those two lines, where grey signifies corruption and the blue color signifies optimism, between

them we see several symbols. In every moment there is everything, lots of good or bad things.

Fatima's strong self-reflexivity is also apparent in her reflection on how her approaches and understandings of history, and thus of Egypt's diversity, have evolved over time. She explained that she has evolved over time from a strictly religious and conservative upbringing, growing up in a small rural village in Giza where she still lives, to now advocating for religious freedoms and respect for diversity, including starting to research and write about highly controversial topics, such as Islamic understandings of homosexuality.

Similarly, in her pre-interview drawing, Nesrine, who has been active in founding a voluntary initiative that adopts critical approaches in teaching the humanities and social sciences, also wanted to draw several lines:

> Drawing one line is too simplistic. If I could I wanted to draw a line that shows these different perspectives since one line can't work or capture the richness and complexity of history.

Thus, another variation that emerged included participants who have been able to articulate a more evolved understanding of 'history' and its constructions. Those participants were not only capable of being critical of how the dominant narrative is constructed and exhibiting strong abilities of self-reflection upon their own limitations; importantly, they also emphasize the complexity, and multiplicity of narratives and perspectives embedded in any 'history'. Thus, for instance, they saw that history education needs to help students understand the nature of history and equip them with the tools necessary for conducting their own historical research and develop their own historical narratives and approaches to history. This last category is very closely connected to – if not identical to - Rüsen's genetic type, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I presented the key theoretical codes and themes that emerged pertaining to the question of how participants interact with the dominant historical narrative that they are exposed to in multiple social sites, especially in their official school curriculum. It becomes clear from the analysis that most of the participants are critical of the dominant narrative for various reasons, including the 2011 revolution, which played a major role in most of these participants' interactions with the dominant historical narrative. Within these critical tendencies, it was also clear that participants were directly or indirectly unsettling and problematizing the misrepresentation of fundamental elements that reinforce and consolidate dominant Egyptian narrative or its schematic narrative template.

However, the analyses also point to the power of some of the textbook narratives and also how some participants uncritically revert to alternative sources of history, such as family or the Coptic Church's Sunday School curricula. Based on those analyses, I offered a typology to capture how participants interacted with and approached history and various historical narratives. Importantly, this typology captures nuances that have emerged, such as participants who exhibited 'critical-unreflective' tendencies, or those who exhibited 'critical-reflective' tendencies with a strong awareness of societal power dynamics shaping historical narratives. I discuss this typology in more detail in Chapter 8. For now, in the next chapter (Chapter 7), I present the key theoretical codes and themes that emerged in relation to the second part of the research question, which is concerned with how participants' interactions with the dominant historical narrative help shape their social identities and civic attitudes.

Chapter 7: Data Analysis (2/2): Participants' Interactions with Historical Misrepresentations, and Influences on Their Civic Attitudes

In this chapter I present the results and findings of the data analysis conducted pertaining to the second part of the research question which is concerned with how participants' interactions with the dominant historical narrative – including its misrepresentations and omissions - influence their subjectivities and civic attitudes. Similar to the structure I followed in the previous chapter, under each of the 'theoretical codes' presented below, I explain the substantive codes that inform it and what they tell us in response to that key question. While it might have sufficed to present the 'theoretical codes' or 'substantive codes,' in several cases, to offer additional insights and nuances, I found it instructive to include some of the 'codes' or 'sub-codes'. I did that as well for some 'codes' that did not emerge as commonly as others as I believe they offered important nuances.

I start by presenting the themes that emerged regarding the participants' interactions with omissions and misrepresentations of Coptic history. I then present how these omissions or misrepresentations influence participants' approaches to history education more generally. Finally, I engage with the theoretical code regarding how interactions with the dominant narrative and its omissions shape participants' civic attitudes. Within this theme, I present the various manifestations of these civic attitudes, which relate to the participants' understandings of the Egyptian identity; civic engagement and their role in society; and their intergroup dynamics.

Interactions with Historical Omissions or Misrepresentations of Coptic History
Some of the discussions in Chapter 6 - as well as the information presented in Appendix VIII - give a general sense of the various curricular omissions and misrepresentations that participants problematized and from which several codes emerged, some of which were elevated to being substantive codes because of their frequent emergence. However, within these misrepresentations and omissions, which I already gave a sense of throughout Chapter 6, given

the focus of the study, I dedicate this chapter to how participants interacted with the omission and misrepresentation of Coptic history in history curricula, or society more generally. I then present some of the key themes that emerged regarding participants' social identities and civic attitudes, as represented by their current and envisioned societal roles and civic engagement.

Gaining a Better Understanding of the Awareness of the Coptic Narrative Misrepresentation

Before presenting the substantive codes that emerged from participants' responses regarding the place of Coptic history in history curricula, it would be pertinent to put the awareness of the issue in perspective. Thus, I start by a brief discussion that gives a better sense of the level of awareness, especially among Muslim participants. I then provide a brief analysis of the language that participants used to represent this generally omitted and misrepresented narrative.

Analyzing Muslim participants' awareness of Coptic misrepresentations.

Out of the 32 Muslim participants, only 14 included a mention of Coptic history when narrating Egypt's history in their written exercise or through their pre-interview drawings. Also, only 10 Muslim participants listed Coptic history in their responses to the specific question about histories or perspectives they believed were omitted or misrepresented. During the interview when offered an additional opportunity to list other omissions and misrepresentations that they might have forgotten to include in their written exercises, only a couple of Muslim participants listed the Coptic era among the key narratives that they believed were missing from their curricula. The participatory visual workshops offered a third chance for some participants to share the narratives that they felt were omitted from their history textbooks. In the workshop, out of the 16 participants, two female Muslim participants and one Coptic female participant chose to focus on the Coptic era for their individual drawing exercises. In the group storyboard drawing exercise, none of the six groups chose to focus on the Coptic era or any aspect of it.

Alternatively, the storyboards revolved around more modern history events, such as Egyptian university student movements and protests; popular and subaltern resistance against Mehmed Ali's rule and the British occupation; and, the role of the Nubian language in the 1973 war (as illustrated in some drawings presented in the previous chapter).

It is worth noting here that the Muslim participants who highlighted the Coptic omission, had highlighted Coptic history as one among other misrepresented and omitted histories. Most of the participants listed two or three responses to this question and often when probed during the interview, additional responses would emerge. Perhaps one participant stands out in the numerous exclusions she highlighted. Alia, a female participant from Sharqiyya, who is a lecturer of Sociology at a private university, problematized several issues related to the dominant and exclusionary Arab Muslim cultural identity of the Egyptians. She not only pointed to the marginalization of the "Nubian, Coptic and Jewish histories" like some others have, but also uniquely pointed to how the textbooks "omit Egypt's strong connections to Africa and feed into a largely racist and orientalist dominant discourse vis-à-vis sub-Saharan Africans".

In sharp contrast to Alia and most of the other participants who problematized at least one type of omission and misrepresentation, the case of Mahmoud stands out. Mahmoud explicitly disagreed with the need to include the Nubian minority's historical narratives and in terms of women, feels that there are plenty of female leaders and role models presented in textbooks, which he readily named such as "Hoda Sha'arawi and Safiyya Zaghloul". He advocates the erasure of issues related to conflict from textbooks including anything related to religion that might exclude anyone, with the aim "to instill a unifying secular Egyptian identity".

Participants' references painting Copts as passive and victimized subjects of history.
For the few participants who presented the Coptic era and what they might know about it, the language they used to describe that era, the Romans, and the Copts is indicative of the

meaning they make of that era. Expectedly, some of the participants referred to the Coptic era by using titles such as "the era of the martyrs" (*'asr al shohadaa'*) using the term that the Coptic Church uses for its calendar to mark the church's sacrifices and large number of martyrs – a term which also appears in textbooks. One Muslim participant simply gave the era the title "Romans and their torture of Christians in Egypt" (*al Roman wa ta'zibhum lil maseeheyyeen fi Misr*). The references made by other participants revolved around coercion and persecution, using terms such as the "tyrant Romans" (*al Roman al tughaah*), and explaining that "Roman kings used to torture anyone who embraced Christianity" (*kan al molouk yu'azzebun kull mann yadkhul fil deen al maseehi*). Another Muslim participant refers to the "Roman repression" (*idtihaad al Roman*), and another to their heavy-handed violence (*butsh al Roman*) including their violent acts, such as the "destruction of churches" (*tadmeer al kanaa'ess*).

The Copts or Egyptian Christians - in the very few instances they were even mentioned - were presented as passive or victimized subjects: for instance, in one the few mentions in the written exercise by a Muslim participant, she refers to the whole period as one generally marked by "the suffering of the Christians" (*mo'anaat al maseeheyeen*). The only participant who used an adjective to describe Copts or used Christian as an adjective, used it to refer to "the Christian martyrs" (*al shohadaa al maseeheyyeen*).

With this brief background, which attempts to give a general sense of the significance attributed to the Coptic era by the participants and how they might make sense of that history, in the next section I present some of the substantive codes that emerged from those participants' responses who problematized the misrepresentations of the Coptic era.

Representations of Coptic History in School Curricula and Classrooms Problematized

A theoretical code emerged pertaining to problematizing how Coptic history was represented whether in curricular content or in classroom practices. As discussed below, the substantive codes that emerged to inform this theoretical code included: the general omission of

Coptic history in history education; problematization of specific aspects of the misrepresentation of Coptic history; and, the overly religious and exclusionary curricular content and classrooms practices.

Coptic era generally sidelined or completely ignored in the curriculum.

Some participants – both Muslim and Coptic - pointed out how the Coptic era was confined to a smaller space compared to other historical eras. But more specifically, they pointed out the fact that it was usually squeezed at the end of textbooks in few pages which meant that period would just be covered briefly or not studied at all due to the common end of academic year time constraints. Reham, a Muslim female participant who went to one of the private and exclusively Islamic school in Cairo, which are all mandated to cover the Egyptian history curriculum, clarified that what she found most problematic is the way her teachers dealt with Coptic history; for her, it always felt like an 'add-on' to one of the subject matters. She even had a difficult time remembering which subject matter that history was included in, whether it was civics or history.

Heidi, a female Coptic participant from Gharbeyya, echoed a general sentiment that anything connected to Christianity or Christians "does not receive any mention" (*la ya'ti thikruh 'ala al-itlaaq*). Similarly, Menna, a Muslim participant from Menoufia, told of what she had remembered of the 'Coptic era' in her school history curricula:

> I remember we studied the Coptic era in preparatory school, but never in a way that gives you a sense of its significance. I remember it came in the exam very briefly and no one really cared about it. There was not much focus on it by teachers or by the curriculum. I don't remember the number of pages [dedicated to the Coptic era], but remember clearly that it wasn't given any attention or significance.

Sandy, a Coptic participant from Minya, argued that it was unfair to not offer students a full account of history:

> I remember we studied the history of Christianity in 2 to 3 pages at the end of the textbook. It was probably either second or third preparatory [grades 8 and 9]. Even in the external book (*el kutub el kharigiyya*), it's just one page on the Christian era. And also it is usually not presented in exams and if it is, it gets very little weight, like a grade or two may be. Anyway, I felt that this omission from the textbooks is discrimination, not on religious basis, but because, as I said before, this is history and needs to be presented in a balanced way. We can't provide all those details about one era [referring to the Islamic era] and another just squeeze into 2 or 3 pages. What's the point? So, I only really knew about the Church's history from the Church's history curricula as I went regularly to Sunday School (*madaress el Ahad*) in Minya. But again, this is from a religious perspective. So not sure how balanced it was and so on.

But Sandy also reflected that for her, compared to her parents, she believed that having any mention of Coptic history was an improvement in and of itself:

> When my parents were helping me with studying for my history exams, they told me that there was not even any mention of the Christian era when they went to school in the late 1970s. My mother was actually shocked that this material was present because during their time it was not even covered in their textbooks. So I guess having these couple of pages at least is an improvement.

However, it is important to note that not all Coptic participants were aware of the Coptic era's sidelining or omission. Nada is a female Coptic participant from Cairo, who has never been active in Sunday Schools. In probing on the reason why she did not include Coptic history as a misrepresented or omitted history in her written responses, in the interview she elaborated:

> I did not really notice that Coptic history was missing from the curriculum, but as I mentioned I feel that women and some of the other neglected groups are also important to include as I highlighted in my questionnaire. But I believe that any of those histories should not be included in special or separate sections.

Indicative of the lack of attention given to Coptic history in the curriculum and classroom teaching, several of the Muslim participants clearly stated that they knew nearly nothing about the Coptic era. Perhaps one of the most striking responses came from Nadine, a Muslim female

participant who went to a private French language school run by Catholic nuns in Cairo. In her written exercise, she wrote that:

> If Egypt's history had something called a 'Coptic era,' then it is clear that it was not represented at all (*lao musr leeha tarikh qibti fa wadih ennu mesh momathal 'ala-l-itlaaq*).

In the interview, she curiously asked: "so, is there a part of the Egyptian history that is called the Coptic era or history?" Throughout her schooling and studying the Egyptian curriculum she seemingly was not exposed to that term, and if she were, she probably forgot it because of its brief mentions. Seemingly emboldened by my confirmation to her during the interview that such an era with this appellation certainly does exist, in the workshop, in response to the prompt of drawing a misrepresented or omitted history, she drew the following (Figure 23). In presenting her drawing to the group, Nadine explained:

> I chose the Coptic era (*al huqbah al qibtiyah*), because I believe we did not learn anything about it. So, on top, I drew a Coptic saint, as I think that saints and their icons are important in Coptic art and churches. Below, I drew an Egyptian peasant cultivating the land signifying that during the Mehmed Ali era, Egyptians were forced to work the land.

Figure 23

Similarly, Maha, the other Muslim participant who chose to draw a representation of the Coptic era during the workshop (Figure 24), explained:

> All I remember learning about Copts is that they were tortured people and victimized and suppressed. I have no further information about the faith

Figure 24

[Christianity] or the [Coptic] history really.

Specific curricular content of misrepresented Coptic history problematized.

Some of the Muslim participants who had problematized the misrepresentation of Coptic

history offered very impassioned responses about Egypt being originally Coptic in essence and

how this makes it even more problematic that such history is misrepresented. This was clear in

Ibrahim's – a Muslim participant - response where he negates any Muslim contribution to the

country's history. He explained:

> Egypt is Coptic not Islamic and the biggest testimony is that although Copts are a small
> minority, they have been able to maintain their heritage and culture. And our Islam has
> never been an important part of our culture. That is why, for example, a religious rule
> [referring to the Muslim Brotherhood's] would never succeed here.

Also, in his interview, Ismail, a participant from Cairo, questioned:

> How we do not learn much about the Coptic era especially if, as we had heard (*zayy ma
> seme'na*), the country is originally Coptic?

Embedded within this general problematization of the history's omission articulated by a

few of the participants, this second substantive code emerged from several codes which focused

on more specific dimensions of Coptic history that Muslim and Christian participants thought

were specifically omitted or misrepresented:

Arab Muslim Conquest.

Several participants – both Muslim and Coptic – problematized how the narrative largely

represented the Arab Muslim conquest (641 CE) as one that was largely peaceful and that all

Copts (Egyptians) at the time fully embraced the conquest unconditionally. Among the Muslim

participants who problematized the omission of Coptic history and the biased narration of the

conquest, Nada, a Muslim female participant from Cairo, focused on how the curricula lacked

discussion of tension or popular anger against 'Amr Ibn Al 'As - the Arab Muslim leader of the

conquest army - which she said she had "simply inferred as obvious and logical as would be the case with any military conquest".

Several of the Coptic participants mentioned how the agreement signed between Muslim leaders at the time of the conquest whether in Jerusalem or Egypt (which they referred to either as: *al 'ohda al 'omareyya* or *al watheeqa al 'omareyya*), was biased against Christians; thus, it would naturally not be presented in full in the textbooks. Teresa, a Coptic female participant from Cairo, reckoned that:

> If the Muslim conquest was all that positive as was painted in the textbooks, then why would so many people flee the country at the time, as we heard.

Heidi, a female Coptic participant from Gharbeyya, problematized how the Arab Muslim battles and conquests are painted positively in the curriculum, while all these wars were actually characterized by bloodshed (*kanet huruub dameyya*). She is not concerned with including Coptic contributions as much as the need to include the historical sufferings of Copts at the hands of Arab Muslim rulers in history curricula. Thus, in her written response, she explained:

> We do not learn about the succession of different Muslim rulers on Egypt and what pain they inflicted on Christians, crimes they committed against churches and historic monasteries, nuns and monks, and how they had demolished churches or forbidden people to pray in them.

Maria believes she does not know much either but seems to have a strong sense that this was a violent takeover of the country by Muslim armies:

> We were told but am not sure if it's accurate that during the time of 'Amr Ibn Al 'As, they used to torture and kill Copts who weren't able to pay the *gizia* and who didn't want to convert to Islam. I don't remember the source but I heard outside of school and not from church either probably, that 'don't believe what is told to you in school and that emphasis about the tolerance of Islam's early days'. It was like any other occupation (*ihtilaal*) and they were killing people. But I didn't verify that.

In her interview, Randa, a Muslim participant from Bani Suef, explained how learning the real history and the various perspectives is important:

> Generally, I find textbooks to be very delicate and sensitive in their approach to religion. Regarding the advent of Islam (*dukhul al islam*), we need to be prepared to learn that history. So, is it true that [the Arab armies] threw books into the water or burnt them when they first came into Egypt as we hear sometimes? Also, we learn that the Omarian pact (*al-mithaaq al-'omary*) was one of tolerance. But we should be told the truth and the different perspectives. For instance, I also heard that no crosses were allowed to be placed on top of churches. These topics are extremely sensitive and this is very clear when teachers are presenting them. Also, regarding the advent of Christianity to Egypt, I don't remember anything [from the curriculum] really. It might have been mentioned in earlier grades, but compared to Islam we hear very little about that period. I think what mostly upsets Copts is that things are told from an Islamic religious perspective actually, not necessarily that there is not much about the Coptic era. That they have to learn the Quran and that the Muslim conquest is told from a purely religious perspective highlighting only the positives and so on.

Coptic Contributions.

Several of the Coptic participants pointed to the fact that the curricula need to highlight contributions of Copts throughout history textbooks. For instance, two Coptic female participants pointed out that the role of Pope Kyrollos (Cyril) – referred to as *Abu El-Islah* (the father of reform) as they explained - who played a pioneering role in advocating for girls' education. "But we always only hear about Qasim Amin's [an Egyptian Muslim women rights' activist] role in promoting women's rights and not Pope Kyrollos" as Teresa noted. Two other Coptic participants questioned why there are no mentions of the key role of the Coptic engineer, which one of the two referred to by name "Baqi Zaki Amin". They had learned about him from an Egyptian TV program. As Heidi explained, she had learned that he was instrumental in providing technical support for the Egyptian army to cross the Suez Canal to reclaim the Sinai Peninsula during the 1973 (Yom Kippur) war against Israel.

Teresa proposed that Coptic contributions be highlighted regardless of religion and also interwoven throughout the curriculum:

Confining contributions to the few pages [of Coptic history] gives an impression that it was the end of the story [for Copts] when the Arab Muslim conquest came.

Shenouda believes that the textbook sections on Coptic history are included just as a token, so that curriculum developers can claim to have fulfilled the mandate to include that history. Thus, he problematized the content for several reasons:

I remember in first secondary year (grade 10), our history curriculum had 2 units about Christianity and monasticism in about 40 pages. But it was empty space with very little content. Just lots of pages to show that Islamic and Christian history are covered equally. All I remember was that it was all about what Jesus did, his miracles, disciples, and so on. Then it jumps immediately to monasticism, which in reality actually only appeared 700 years after the advent of Christianity to Egypt. The content on Coptic history, even if it's covered in several pages, focuses on very marginal issues and provides mundane and unnecessary details. I feel the Christians are sidelined, but you never know, may be that era had no contributions and nothing really worth mentioning!

Rana, a Muslim participant from Cairo, pointed to another misunderstanding regarding Christian history that needs to be rectified, related to the role and positive contributions of Eastern Christianity in the fight against the crusades:

There are still also misunderstandings of the role of Eastern Christians during the Crusades and that they were not supporting those [European] armies. This misunderstanding is in the curriculum as well as the media… We also need to see Copts and their contributions throughout the curriculum not only during 1919 [the 1919 revolts against the British occupation] but throughout, including during the Crusades wars to show their role in supporting the Muslims.

Finally, within this code, some participants specifically proposed that including Coptic contributions is important as it offers a more balanced narrative of that era of Egyptian history, as opposed to one that focuses on the suffering. For instance, Randa, a female participant from Bani Suef, offers a reflective response into the textbooks' overemphasis on Coptic suffering, which Maha, another female Muslim participant highlighted and problematized (as can be seen

in her workshop drawing presented above). Randa reflected on the curricular tone that she

believes overemphasized the suffering and torture endured by Copts under Roman rulers:

> May be if we had learned more about the [Coptic] contributions, we would have developed a more balanced mental image (*surah zehneyya*) of that era. There must have been some contributions. To learn about those, may be it will give us a sense that the era was not all that dark (*dulmah*) and full of suffering only.

Curriculum and classroom practices overly Islamic and exclusionary.

This substantive code emerged from two closely related codes: one focused on the

exclusionary religious tone in the curricular content, and the other related to the sense of

exclusion experienced through classroom practices.

Exclusionary curricular content.

Some of the Muslim participants stated they felt it was unfair for Muslim or Coptic

students to be required to learn the Quranic verses, which are included in their Arabic language

textbooks. In explaining how she sympathized with how most of her Coptic colleagues were

reclusive or only socialized with other Copts in her school, Yara, a female Muslim participant

from Aswan, explained that if she were in their position she would feel frustrated and resentful

for many reasons. She expressed those sentiments in vivid and strong language:

> Coptic history received very little coverage compared to Islamic history which was not only taught in history, but also in Arabic language, literature (*adab)*, civics (*tarbiyya wataniyya)*, as well as classes of other subject matters. So, a Coptic student is expected to learn that history and religion of those he probably believes buried his religion (*aw'adu el deen betaa'uh*). And [the Copts] are living with [Muslims] who often refer to them as foreigners (*khawagaat)*. And yet, [the Coptic student] has to learn and to write it [Islamic referents and Quranic content] in the exam. Although I am sure that at home, his parents are saying negative things about Muslims and their history.

Heidi, a Coptic female participant from Gharbeyya, explicitly stated how she felt

uncomfortable learning Muslim history and Quranic verses adding that she felt this was unfair

that she had to learn all that content, while there were no details about Jesus or Christian history,

for instance. She further elaborated in her interview:

> I believe that I would not have felt that way or felt the need to mention the importance of including Coptic history or to have a sectarian tone (*nabra ta'ifiyya*) if I did not feel injustice because of omissions and lack of representation in curricula.

Ibrahim, a Muslim participant from Cairo, recalled how his history curricula, even in

narrating ancient Egyptian history did so from an Islamic perspective, explaining:

> I feel there are red lines that do not even get mentioned about the Pharaonic [ancient Egyptian] period due to the country's Islamic leanings and identity.

Exclusionary curricular enactment and classroom practices.

In her interview, Randa, a Muslim participant from Bani Suef, problematized not only the

overly religious tone and content in curriculum, but how that reflected on the classroom

experience. She explained how a Coptic colleague of hers was mistreated:

> 'Egypt is an Islamic nation' (*Musr dawla Islameyya)* was a phrase that kept recurring throughout different curricula. It was inserted and imposed on Arabic textbooks and imposed on both Muslim and Coptic students. And Quranic verses that were expected to be learned by all. It is as if because we don't study that content in our religious studies textbooks which we generally ignore, they [curriculum developers] bring it [Islamic religious content] to our Arabic language curricula to impose it not only on Muslims but also on Christians. I remember a Coptic student in my 6th grade class who got scolded and beaten up by the teacher because he, like all of us, was making fun of a *hadith* [Prophet Muhammad saying] that we had to memorize in our Arabic language class. The *hadith* said '*al sedq mangaah*' (honesty saves). So, my Coptic classmate was playing on words because 'mangah' sounded like *manga* [the Egyptian Arabic word for the mango fruit]. I remember the teacher yelling at that student "you need to respect *us* and *our* religion". So I would say, either include religious references from all religions, or simply remove them all. But having the current curricula like this creates a lot of sensitivity.

Maria, a female Coptic student from Fayoum, expressed how hurtful it was and how

rejected she felt when, in a couple of instances, she was told by some Muslim colleagues or

teachers how strange it was for a Christian like her to love and excel in the Arabic language. She

remembers specifically one of her teachers saying:

> 'It does not make sense that a Christian excels academically in the Arabic language'
> (*mayenfaa'sh maseehi yekun shaater fil 'Arabi*). But I contest that. I read my Holy Bible
> in Arabic. This was very upsetting. Arabic is my language that I love.

Some Coptic participants spoke of how they felt unacknowledged and invisible in the

classroom. Teresa told of a situation when her classmates in school asked her several very basic

questions about Egyptian Christians, pointing to how little they knew. After the Coptic era and

the various Christian denominations were discussed briefly in class, her classmates asked

whether she was a Protestant, Catholic, or Orthodox Christian and what the differences are

between those. She found it annoying that they did not know such basic information. In

reflecting on that situation during her interview, Teresa got animated and explained how her

classmates' questions made her feel:

> To that extent you do not know ANYTHING [she raised her voice to emphasize this
> word] about me? To that extent I am that unknown to you except for my name and my
> final grades at the end of the year? I am actually much more than that.

Coptic Omission and Misrepresentation Shape Approaches to Historical Narratives

This theoretical code is informed by the substantive codes emerging that related to how

the participants explained that the Coptic history's omission or misrepresentation translated into

their lived experiences, outlooks, and civic attitudes.

Trigger to Question Authenticity of Textbooks (for Coptic Participants)

The textbooks' biased positive coverage of the Arab Muslim conquest of Egypt, which is

in contradiction to other narratives they would 'hear' in the Coptic community, seems to have

been an additional reason – in combination with manipulations of the January 2011 narratives in

textbooks – that led several Coptic participants to more readily question the authenticity of their

textbooks.

For instance, in her interview, Heidi, a Coptic female participant from Gharbeyya, narrated that she remembers clearly that the way that the biased and highly positive praise of Islamic history was taught to her in school made her question the authenticity of all the history she was studying at school. In her interview, she explained:

> Although I do not have a clear image and I haven't really read much about it, I have this gut feeling that [the Arab Muslim conquest] could not have all been that positive as the textbooks make it sound.

Reverting to Alternative Sources of Historical Knowledge to Fill Gaps (Coptic Participants)

In Teresa's case it was clear how she reverted to religious Church sources as well as 'transcendental' narratives to fill gaps in her historical knowledge about Coptic history and contributions. In the written exercise and in her subsequent interview, she discussed a miracle and elaborated further on how important it is to include this in history curricula.[48] In the participatory visual

Figure 25

methods workshop, Teresa chose to draw two key events that she believed were missing from the history curriculum: the omission of President Muhammad Naguib and his contribution, and the Muqattam hill miracle (Figure 25), which she chose to expand on to the rest of the workshop participants:

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[48] This is a widely circulated legend especially among Copts, that during the Fatimid ruler Al-Mo'ez's rule, he challenged a Coptic holy man to prove him how strong his faith was by moving the Muqattam hill in Cairo. The Coptic holy man is said to have successfully been able to move the hill permanently from its place. As Van Doorn-Harder (2005) explains, "According to the tradition, the Muqattam hill moved four kilometers after several days of fervent prayer by the holy patriarch and a tanner called Samaan" (p. 46).

I attempted to draw the miracle of moving the Muqattam [a hill on the outskirts of Cairo] during the reign of the Fatimid ruler Al Mo'ez. So, there was a conflict between Christians and Jews during that time and they gathered around Muqattam. Then there was a big miracle that a Coptic holy man [Samaan] managed to move the Muqattam hill from its original place. So, Al Mo'ez gave us [the Copts] money (*'atana felous*) because of this miracle. And, by the way, this event is documented in the Maqrizi's [Muslim Egyptian historian] documents known as 'makhtutaat al-Maqrizi' which I managed to read a copy of in my church.

Similarly, Shenouda, who is clearly well read on various topics, including those critical of Christianity and its history, makes an important statement, which points to how he sees the religious scriptures as an equivalent that offers a counter-narrative to the school curricula's or dominant narrative's omission of Christian (or Coptic) history to help him and other Copts assert their history and identity:

School curricula were irrelevant to me. I grew up knowing that they had a lot of lies. And I knew that when it comes to my religious history I need to refer to the Bible in which our Christian history is well documented and acknowledged (*yuqarr bi-tarikhna el deeni fil ingeel)* even if it's excluded from history textbooks.

Conscious Negotiation and Selection of 'Convenient' Historical Narratives (Muslim Participants)

In terms of the violence and injustice that has been committed by Arab Muslim rulers against some religious minorities in Egypt - especially the Copts - some Muslim participants seem to have consciously chosen to ignore those historical facts that they had learned about, to avoid shaking their religious faith. For instance, both Rasha from Cairo and Randa from Bani Suef stated that they were worried about learning more about possible historical abuses and injustices. Rasha, who is pursuing a doctoral degree in the UK, explained:

As a Muslim, the Islamic history and the issue of imposing the '*gizia'* on non-Muslims is more problematic for me now when I look back. But as a practicing Muslim, I have actually chosen not to go there, as it would most probably shake my religious beliefs.

Similarly, Randa from Bani Suef stated the following:

I only recently started learning about the fact that the Arab Muslim conquest is actually another type of occupation. I only was exposed to that perspective through listening to Yasmine El Khateeb's program [an Egyptian internet-based radio program] and the episode [of her program] entitled *Kemet qabl al-Islam* (Kemet before Islam) through which I learned about the advent of Islam to Egypt and violence against the people of the country at the time (*el i'tida'aat dud ahl el balad*). This made me think that may be Egypt was not as dark a place when Islam came and liberated it, and so on, as they portray to us (*yemken musr makanetsh el dulmah elli kanu bey'oluha w enn el islam gah w harrar w keda*). This doesn't only touch history but my religious beliefs and approach to religion. So, I am not sure whether I want to pursue my questioning any further. [49]

Both of these two participants interacted with the historical injustices and made conscious decisions about them: Rasha decided to stop further investigation, and Randa to potentially continue with it. But not all Muslim participants have taken such acknowledgment of historical injustices and violence against the Copts that personally. For instance, Mahmoud, a Muslim participant from Cairo, seems to have settled that potentially uncomfortable investigation into historical injustices against the Copts by generalizing that violence is committed in the name of many religions. As he explained:

I want to learn about violence committed by religions in general. This would include both that committed in the name of Islam but also that committed in the name of Christianity against ancient Egyptians, such as the burning down of Library of Alexandria and the lynching of [the Greco-Roman pagan philosopher] Hypatia.

Influences of Interactions with Dominant Narrative and Omissions on Shaping Civic Attitudes

So, how do these interactions with omitted and misrepresented histories inform participants' subjectivities and civic attitudes? In the next section, I present the key themes or

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[49] I did some additional research and found that the title of this episode is actually 'Kemet under Arab occupation' (*Kemet taht al-ihtilal al-'arabi*).

theoretical codes that emerged from the participants' responses, especially related to their understandings of the Egyptian identity, and their current and future roles in society and civic engagement. A few substantive codes emerged regarding the participants' understanding of Egyptian identity and their civic attitudes - as represented by their understandings of civic engagement and their role in society - as will be presented below:

Understandings of Egyptian Identity Shaped by Interactions with Dominant Narrative and Recent Political Events

Several participants spoke about the 2011 events being formative of their understandings of their belonging to Egypt. Some stated that it helped them understand and unearth a sense of belonging to the country that they might not have known existed within them before. However, for several, these positive sentiments were later replaced by a sense of defeatism and alienation, as is captured in the shifts of their civic engagement. Similarly, a clear class-consciousness emerged, where several of the participants used their middle class status to assert how they possessed a stronger sense of responsibility and 'Egyptianness', especially as compared to upper and more privileged classes. The codes that informed this substantive code and some of their supporting excerpts are presented below:

The 2011 uprisings: a brief glimpse of an inclusive Egyptian identity.

Several participants spoke clearly about how the 2011 events and their aftermath were among the few, if not only, times in their lives when they felt the sense of belonging to Egypt as a country. For instance, Abdel Rahman, who grew up in Daqahleyya and who recently co-established an initiative that works with *Thanaweyya 'Amma* students to expose them to critical perspectives about humanities and social sciences, explained how January 2011 had marked a clear shift for him:

> The January 25th revolution is the real event which, at the time, made me feel I was Egyptian and that I belong to this country and that I want to offer something to it. It is the only event and since its beginning I started feeling that I care about public affairs (*al*

shaan al 'aam) in Egypt. Before it, I did not participate in any voluntary or public action and I did not care much about public affairs and I was not aware of what was happening in the country.

Rana, who was also active during the 18 days in Tahrir Square and subsequently active with an opposition political party and campaigning for a presidential candidate in the 2013 elections, explained what January 2011 represented for her and why she chose to highlight it as one of the key events that made her feel she was an Egyptian citizen:

> The [January 25] revolution: because I felt that this was our opportunity as a generation to create a different reality and to express ourselves. It offered a space for protesting and building and reimagining our reality. With the revolution my life has become *before* and *after* the revolution. The revolution was a turning point. I felt at the time that I was part of my country's history and that anything was possible. The revolution raised the ceiling of the possible even during the most difficult of moments.

Similarly, Ghada explained:

> Back then I felt like being part of this event that will be the most important thing in my life. Being there [in Tahrir Square] from the first day made me feel empowered.

Middle class people care more and are 'more Egyptian'.

Several of the participants pointed to how, as middle class people, they felt they understood the Egyptian identity better and that they care more about the country's present and future. For instance, Shenouda, who states that he comes from a middle class background, elaborated how his mostly privileged university colleagues are not as attached to the country as he is:

> I was shocked by how my privileged colleagues here are not patriotic at all (*mesh wataneyeen khaless*). In my case, for instance, I realized how I am still very attached to this country. I received a good offer to study in a university in Australia and I was about to immigrate. But after listening to the song *Ahaager Wa-Asseebek Li-Meen* (*how can I leave and abandon you?)* I convinced myself that maybe I can just go study abroad then come back.

Through reflecting on her own experience with civic engagement, Shams also problematized how detached upper class Egyptians are from reality and Egyptian people's needs. Based on volunteering with one of the largest youth-led NGOs in Egypt, she observes:

> 80% of the upper class of Egyptians feel this [volunteering and community service] is not their role and they have options to leave the country. They are also not very generous in donating or supporting, but middle class people like us try to play a positive role by improving themselves and others around them. I saw this through my own volunteering in [a youth-led NGO]. The volunteers are mostly middle class (*taba'ah motawasitah*)... Look at how Mostafa Kamel [nationalist anti-colonial leader] and others organized night schools for workers. So one can continue to have a positive role no matter what the circumstances are.

Maha also critiqued the upper classes:

> The higher classes have many options to leave, and the poor classes are too overwhelmed by making ends meet. So, it is our role and has always been the role of the middle class to work and help improve society, even if it is through improving themselves.

Similarly, Maria criticizes here colleagues in her elite private university, who are privileged and thus detached from reality and the country's culture and history. She exclaimed:

> They are very Westernized and they even look very artificial. This is not how to be modern. There is apathy also. My colleagues were laughing about Egypt's low ranking in education and high prevalence of diseases. Many of those youth are not connected or feel this is part of their responsibility. Some of them fake an [English or American] accent and are proud not to be able to speak fluent [Egyptian] Arabic. I [as a Christian] even know more Quranic verses than those [privileged Muslim] colleagues. Many of them are rich and are able to find other nationalities or continue their education elsewhere [outside of Egypt]. They even make fun of me when I play *Um Kulthum's* [famous Egyptian diva] songs or when I suggest to go for a walk in *El Moez* Street [a quarter with some of Cairo's key historical mosques].

Recent Political Events Contributing to Shifts in Understandings of Civic Engagement

As illustrated in Appendix X, some participants are currently inactive in their communities for various reasons mainly due to personal reasons, such as lack of time or taking time to assess what best to do in the coming period. Among the several who are active, there are clear shifts in what they have started to be engaged with in the community or what they plan to

engage with in the future. Among those who are active or plan to be active, the vast majority spoke about hoping to be able to do their community work with as little interaction and intervention from the state's authorities as possible, to avoid unnecessary red tape or harassment, as well as to ensure that the state does not take credit for their efforts. To gain a sense of the sectors and types of activities, Appendix X offers a tally of the organizations participants have been engaged in and the types of activities these organizations are involved with. Two key codes informed this substantive code, offering more nuances regarding the shifts and what they might mean for participants' view of their roles in society and thus their civic attitudes:

Shifts from charity to economic development and awareness building.

Several of the participants pointed to how, based on their experience in 2011, they decided or intended to shift to economic development, educational and awareness-building activities. Among those were several who are currently re-evaluating how they might choose to be involved in the community. Those also expressed an intention to be involved with awareness raising and educational activities. Several cited the reason being that they saw several political parties and movements abuse peoples' poverty by donating money or food or offering favors in return for securing their votes or political allegiance.

Randa, who is currently inactive in the community, explained that if she were to be active, she would choose educational and awareness-building activities to try to overcome some of the ideological polarization she has been observing in society:

> Distributing blankets and food is not fulfilling for me. I would like to go to talk to people about their ideas. I would like to talk to girls in areas like poor neighborhoods. We miss awareness and it has nothing to do with illiteracy. There needs to be a dialogue. We need to create a common ground. We need to reach out to people regarding women rights for instance. They need to go to those marginalized people. There needs to be a different approach, not a top-bottom approach. The rhetoric on women's rights especially is very naïve. It is simply not convincing and is very cliché. Just like all the talk about national unity [between Muslims and Christians] (*el-wehda el-wataneyya*), which is very cliché.

Similarly, Ghada explained:

> It was Jan 2011 that got me to major in political science. Now [after graduating with a university degree in political science] I plan to shift to economic development. Part of that shift was motivated by taking an economic development class and [our professor] helping me reflect upon the fact that we cannot talk to [marginalized and poor] people about politics before we fulfill their basic needs. So we will fulfill their basic needs of food, shelter, blankets… and then I can start working on other things such as political awareness and that these are your rights and not us [privileged Egyptians] being generous and kind towards you.

Nadine, who was involved in mostly charity and short-term relief activities during her school years, is now focusing on awareness-building activities as one of the few spaces she feels she can affect some change:

> I volunteer or even select my type of work as a researcher specifically in development projects, because this is the only space that we are allowed to have an impact in our society. Even if we are unable to achieve that impact but at least we are trying to make society better in one way or another…. I volunteered in an initiative that aims to spread the values of pacifism, nonviolence, and peace education… and the thing I am still volunteering with until today although I am giving much less time than before is [an initiative that aims to promote sustainable development] where we are helping inform and expose participants to various developmental approaches to raise their awareness about the country's realities to encourage them to seek to create projects to change it.

Shifts away from patriotic or nationalistic motives.

Some participants explained that although some of their previous engagements in the community were motived by nationalistic or patriotic tendencies, based on recent political events and developments they have developed more humanistic motives. This shift was largely in rejection of how the nationalistic discourse has been co-opted by the current regime. As Maha explained, for instance:

> I also don't want to condemn others. I actually respect those who are doing things out of a nationalistic sentiment (*sho'our watani*) because they've seen the real face of Egypt and many of them are not serving the state or the regime, but the Egyptian people. I'm serving people who are more proximate to me [geographically], and those happen to be Egyptians. It's where I've lived most of my life. Thus, people who use patriotism or

nationalism (*wataneyya*) in this context, I still respect them. But I have issues with the use of that word because, unfortunately it has been abused [by the regime].

Similarly, Nadine wrote the following in response to how she envisioned her future societal role:

Between 2011-2012, I was very keen on being part or at least following the Egyptian political scene. However, with the disappointing management of the successive governments, I started to lose my sense of belonging. Especially when Egyptians began to be divided. I kept on doing charity and research and probably will keep on doing both for a long time. Not because I feel nationalistic, but mainly because I have seen people who need help and without the educational and medical services we provide, they won't have any change for a decent human life. So I now mainly am interested in staying in Egypt out of humane reasons not nationalistic ones.

In her written response, Rasha also noted her frustration with the status quo, which led to a dampened enthusiasm and a shift in her motives and envisioned role:

I cannot really tell how I feel about my role as an Egyptian at the moment… I know it could be a temporary feeling bec. [because] of my frustration with the political and economic system, but I try to go back in time and trace my feelings… I think in 2012 I was still enthusiastic. I had hope that I can contribute to the system if I study more, be more qualified & get more people involved. .. I wanted to create a better Egypt that can improve its education & social system along with the new political system that we are aspiring for. The political landscape was more open back then & my achievement in this activity [organizing a national conference on education while an undergraduate university student] made me think I can add value… I was still undergrad., passionate & enthusiastic and didn't think much about my future career or other responsibilities I have on the personal level.. All what I thought of was to follow my passion and do what I could do to improve the system. I think my aspirations are different now as I became more and more frustrated in the system.

This shift seems to be marked by a clear frustration with, and rejection of, the ruling elite - as embodied in the government - which clearly emerged in Maria's response. She articulated how she would choose to do her civic work away from the government, which she believes is detached from its citizens:

Because actually for a while I sensed my marginalization and also the sense that the government does not care for those people who I share humanity with. So I will serve

them despite [the government] and away from it. The government does not really understand peoples' suffering (*el hokuma mesh hassa bel sha'b*).

Interactions with Coptic History Omissions and Misrepresentations Contributing to Civic Attitudes and Intergroup Dynamics

This theme or theoretical code is informed by two key substantive codes relating to how Coptic history's omissions feed into stereotypes and suspicion; and, how they prompt Copts to engage in community activities that help foster better interfaith relations.

Omission and Misrepresentations Feed into Stereotype and Suspicion

This substantive code specifically captured participants' responses related to how misinformation or incomplete information about Copts and Coptic history fed into stereotypes and gross generalizations. For instance, Peter laughed as he spoke of having to refute allegations and face mockery and jokes by some of his Muslim classmates that Copts "turn off the lights and kiss each other in church on New Year's Eve".

Similarly, Sandy, a Coptic female participant who did all her schooling in Minya, explained in her interview how the omission of Coptic history from curricula is problematic as it increases intergroup stereotypes and suspicion:

> The person writing history [textbooks] is biased and so you are not representing history fully. This makes it [Coptic history] curious and questionable. Everyone needs to learn about that history. It's the right of Christians to feel included and the right of Muslims to know. Who are [the Copts]? Where did they come from? I remember being asked many questions in school like: Are you really sure you don't drink alcohol in church? What do you actually do in church? [she changes her facial expression to imitate how she was asked this last question in an accusatory and suspicious tone].

Maria, a Coptic participant from Fayoum, reflects on misrepresentation of Coptic history and contributions in history curricula, remembering conversations with her current Muslim university dorms roommate who has become one of her closest friends. She offers a very dense - almost 'stream of consciousness' - narrative that offers important insights and connections

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between how omissions and misrepresentations in curricula feed into misconceptions and

misunderstandings between Muslims and Christians:

> I wasn't upset to learn Quranic verses as long as they didn't conflict with my values. But my [university dorms] roommate has no idea about what we [as Christians] believe in. In terms of education and how curriculum could help I don't remember anything mentioned about the Coptic civilization (*al-hadarah al-qibtiyah*)… and even that information is not accurate. For instance, I should show respect… when I speak about Antonious [a historic Coptic figure largely credited for having founded Christian monasticism], I should show respect. And my roommate was curious whether they [the Copts] did something or had contributions. She was ignorant about monasticism and its contributions and I had to clarify that it was not only about renunciation of the world. They [earlier Copts] had contributions. That it is one form of Sufism, like in Islam.. The [textbook's] spelling of Antonious was wrong and it was disrespectful to mention his name without prefixing it with something like 'Anba' [meaning father - used as a title of Coptic clergymen or saints]. My roommate even asked me.. 'Am I allowed to go into a church?' and my response was, 'what would happen if you do?' We don't bite!... There is every wrong assumption about us… Christians are very bad… My roommate says that I was a good Christian which is exceptional…So I asked her if she knew other Christians and she said no, but she was told that they are generally bad and she shouldn't try to deal with them… but there are also generalizations about Muslims among Christians, when churches are burnt down, they would say they do that because they [Muslims] hate us, but I'm like "no, these are just extremist groups"… I saw that in Fayoum, where there was an attack on our church… It was the Muslim owner of a close by café who came and he was the one who tried to extinguish the fires .. the problem is that we didn't learn in our education to accept diversity… we are the same… each of us worships God, but in a different way.

Rana, a Muslim participant, highlighted the importance of the inclusion of Coptic history

not only to better understand Copts, but also to help Egyptians better understand themselves and

their history:

> This is a group [the Copts] that was a majority at some point and now we need to learn about them as they are still living with us. It helps us have a clearer picture of who we really are. We are told of being ancient Egyptian and that we have a connection with [ancient Egyptians], but we don't feel a connection with the Coptic era and their values that we might be able to relate to. Learning more about this would change how we look at ourselves.

Awareness of misrepresentation increases understanding of Coptic minority's reclusiveness.

Another code that offers an important nuance to this substantive code relates to how the mere awareness of these misrepresentations seems to have translated into better understanding and acceptance of the Copts by some. Some of the Muslim participants clearly expressed strong empathy towards Copts and their lived realities, whether based on how they imagine they would feel or based on family histories they remember. This was clear in Yara's explanation of the understanding that she gained in retrospect after going to university of how and why her Coptic colleagues in her school in Aswan would be closed unto themselves. Similarly, Randa - a Muslim participant from Bani Suef - problematized the misrepresentation of Coptic history in curricula, and in society. She mainly gained that deeper understanding from her aunt's oral history:

> My aunt told me that during Sadat's era there were some attacks on *Hayy Mo'bel* which is the name of the mainly Coptic neighborhood in Bani Suef. Since then the Copts have generally closed down on themselves as a community. I strongly believe that it is their right…it is their right. This should help us understand their reality like we give excuses for people who are mentally challenged, for example. It is their right to close down on themselves and just serve one another. The least they can do actually is to close down on themselves.

Sense of Exclusion among Copts Prompting Interfaith Community Outreach

The second substantive code within this theme relates to how several Coptic participants explained that they are either involved in or plan to be involved in community activities that help improve the image of Copts among Muslims, and thus improve understanding and respect between the two groups. For instance, Heidi explained that her current and future work with marginalized street children is guided by her own sense of marginalization, hoping to promote more peace and tolerance in society:

> I want to help contribute to solving this problem of marginalization. I had heard about an initiative from some Christian friends who go through church to visit a public hospital

and bring presents without knowing what religion the patients are. Those bring excellent results as they told me.

Peter, a Coptic participant, made the most direct statement about the importance of his and other Copts' active service to society, which would help Copts be better understood and accepted by Muslims. During his interview, he explained:

It is important that Copts serve Muslims as well as other Copts because that would make Muslims accept them more as they would feel they are serving them, and so on. … I feel that serving the poor, whether Christians or Muslims, of course breaks the stereotype that Christians are closed on themselves or only help each other… This will make a difference that may be some day *Insha'Allah* (God willing) [he says this as he rolls his eyes expressing a mix of doubt and sadness] one day especially in Upper Egypt that they would feel that we [the Copts] are humans (*bani admeen*) and we are fine (*kowayessen*)… Then [Muslims] might resist some of the discrimination and forced displacements that are taking place there.

Similarly, Maria explained how her sense of marginalization has prompted her to engage in activities that help promote interfaith dialogue and tolerance through serving underprivileged families regardless of their religious background:

I felt for a while that because I am a girl and a Christian they hate me in my own country (*koani maseeheyya w bent fa ana beykrahuni fi baladi*) and that I have no rights in this country (*maleesh hoquq aslan*)… I felt invisible or have no place in a country that has no place on the world stage any way.

In reflecting on her sense of marginalization, she shared how she clearly chose a more constructive way that does not blame contemporary Muslims for possible historical injustices, which clearly translates in her choice of community engagement:

Then you're not sure what should be your attitude [when you learn about historical abuses of the Copts by Muslim rulers]. Should I feel angry that this happened to my ancestors who were tortured and mistreated by early Muslims? Or shall we just focus on the present. Even if this is true, it is lack of humanity for me to hate people because of judging them. Those were people of a particular era who had a particular way of seeing the world. We are in another time. I don't see hatred as a message, whether of Christianity or Islam.

Socio-economic class shaping young Copts' interfaith engagement.

A code that captures an important nuance within this substantive code relates to the role of socio-economic class in shaping Copts' civic attitudes, especially as relates to interfaith engagement. In reflecting on her experience of working with Muslim and Coptic youths for several years, Rana offers important insights regarding how class status informs Coptic youths' civic engagement. Rana is a Muslim participant from Cairo who works on a private university-based program that aims to encourage civic engagement and volunteerism through supporting young Egyptians and placing them in various development organizations. She pointed to how Coptic choices for volunteering varied by class, but was still mostly done through Coptic organizations:

> Copts from a middle or upper class would work in any [Muslim or Christian] group. But, those who went more to public universities or are from lower classes may be were mainly Copts serving Copts. So, it varies by class as well. I remember that this was mentioned in a meeting I attended with *Masr El Qaweya* [Egypt the Strong - a center-right political party]. In my own experience, I was leading a program where we had the three Coptic participants all of whom chose to volunteer with Coptic organizations in different parts of Egypt. To my surprise, this included Morcos who has a very strong pride in his Egyptian identity and strongly believes in the value of diversity. But still he chose a Coptic organization that serves Coptic communities. Similarly, Martina works a lot on interfaith dialogue, but still chose to do that from within a Catholic organization.

Rana's observations are important since they point to the fact that this interfaith outreach effort on behalf of Coptic participants could be clearly informed by their middle or upper class backgrounds, which has also been confirmed by earlier studies that have pointed to how Copts of middle and upper classes have less of a sense of persecution and marginalization (e.g., Ha, 2016), and thus would expectedly to be more prone to engaging in such interfaith and wider societal activities, as opposed to ones that only focus on serving the Coptic community.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I presented the data analysis pertaining to how participants interact especially with the omission or misrepresentations of Coptic history. While these misrepresentations are clearly felt by Coptic participants, it took additional probing for most Muslim participants to be forthcoming with problematizing that omission or misrepresentation. Within that interaction with the omission, how the participants discuss it confirms how very little is known about Coptic history among Muslim participants, and also how this misrepresentation pushes some Coptic participants to revert to the Church's religious narratives or to family histories.

The analyses also point to how the interaction with these misrepresentations influences participants' civic attitudes. Regarding most participants, including Muslim participants, the 2011 events and their aftermath, including how the revolution has been co-opted by counter-revolutionary forces, seem to have a strong influence on determining their understanding of their current and envisioned future societal role and civic engagement as well. Such shifts have emerged in reaction to how the dominant historical narrative – especially vis-à-vis the 2011 revolution - might have been manipulated to serve dominant interests. This is clearest in the shift among participants in prioritizing economic empowerment, education, and awareness-building among poorer and marginalized segments of society to help them avoid future political manipulation.

There also seems to be a rejection of the concept of 'patriotism' or 'nationalism' among several participants - including rejecting it as a motive for their civic engagement - since many of them feel it has been hijacked along with its symbols and representations by the regime. Additionally, in defining the Egyptian identity, a clear class-consciousness emerges where the - mostly middle class - participants seem to position themselves as caring more, and knowing

more, about Egypt's history and culture. The analyses also reveal that Coptic students – largely

in reaction to being misrepresented in curricula and the dominant narrative - are engaged in

reaching out and engaging in activities, many of which aim to promote better interfaith

understanding and mutual respect. In the following chapter I engage with the findings emerging

from the data presented in this chapter as well as the previous chapter.

In this chapter I engage with the key themes presented in Chapters 6 and 7, drawing upon and engaging with some of the relevant theories and studies. I start by discussing participants' approaches to the dominant narrative and to history in general. This entails presenting a proposed typology based on what had emerged in Chapter 6 and discussing how it relates to those emerging from other contexts. At the end of that section I discuss the understandings of the nature of history that emerge from the analysis, which could provide some insights into the participants' general motives and attitudes vis-à-vis their civic engagement. I then discuss participants' civic engagement and civic attitudes in more detail in the following section.

In the second part of this chapter, I engage with the findings regarding Muslim and Christian participants' understandings of and interactions with misrepresentations and omissions, especially of Coptic history. Within that discussion, I focus on how understandings and approaches to history and to misrepresentations and omissions influence individuals' civic attitudes and intergroup dynamics. As discussed earlier, I base that specific discussion on the findings emerging from analyzing participants' choices of current or envisioned future roles in society. I also base it on participants' sentiments and approaches to the ethnic or religious 'other', which have emerged in some participants' responses.

Approaches Towards History and the Dominant Narrative

In this section I start by discussing the general skepticism towards history education and the dominant narrative that has clearly emerged from the data. Then, before discussing some of the potential factors influencing those tendencies, I discuss some of the nuances that emerged from the data and that might inform existing efforts to build a more comprehensive and nuanced framework of historical consciousness. We observe that the 'intended' curriculum has generally failed to achieve its goals of instilling an interest in the study of the country's history or the study of history more generally. In contrast to these intentions, for many participants the history

curriculum clearly produced a strong sense of aversion to that history because of the way it was taught. This sentiment was clearest towards specific eras, such as ancient Egypt, which several participants commented on how uninteresting it was because of the way the curriculum required them to learn an overwhelming number of names of ancient Egyptian kings and queens. However, the analysis also shows that the curriculum helped possibly reinforce other aspects indirectly, such as the primordial nature of the Egyptian nation-state and the conception of the nature of history as cyclical, as will be elaborated further in the second section of this chapter.

As some participants have noted, in enacting the curriculum, teachers played an important role in their classrooms as curricular "gatekeepers" (Thornton, 2008, p. 16). Sometimes they would give their students the queues to strategies to deal with their standardized exams - reminding them that 'your opinion means the textbook's opinion' - and in some other cases implicitly conveying how the curricular content was biased or inaccurate. In reviewing the data analyses that I conducted when I shared the draft dissertation with the participants who had shown interest to do so, Maha noted that she heard this statement repeatedly during her schooling and that it was specifically referring to the 'textbook' itself as a standalone entity, not to the textbook authors, which she noted further bestowed an aura of sanctity and unquestionable authority on textbooks. As noted by several male and female participants, teachers also played a significant role in shedding a generally negative light when narrating the role of female rulers throughout Egyptian history.

Expressed Skepticism Towards the Master Narrative and Formal Curriculum

The fact that historical events that many of the participants had experienced as students - or that they had multiple alternative sources to learn about - were so boldly manipulated by the ruling regime, led several of them to question the authenticity and the legitimacy of the rest of the ancient and modern history they had been taught in school. Clearly, as illustrated, the

manipulation of textbook content in narrating the January 2011 events and their aftermath was a key trigger for that skepticism.

Although the manipulation of the 2011 events narrations triggered some participants to more critically and boldly question the dominant narrative, however, as illustrated, some participants had already started perceiving their school curriculum negatively long before the 2011 events. Several other factors that preceded the 2011 events fed that sense of cynicism vis-à-vis history education. For instance, some participants who came from politically active and engaged families cited their families' oral narratives as an alternative that helped them contest how some of the key historical events are narrated; some cited their teachers who indirectly in some cases alluded to the fact that the curriculum was not necessarily accurate about how a particular event was narrated or a leader portrayed; and some cited other curricula and textbooks that were obsolete or included scientific mistakes, such as Chemistry, triggering their teachers' and fellow students' skepticism vis-à-vis curricula and their accuracy and authenticity.

For most of the Coptic participants, however, it seems the case was slightly different. While the biased coverage of the 2011 events encouraged them to continue to question the credibility of their textbooks' content, several Coptic participants had already been generally skeptical because of how their textbooks disproportionately covered the Coptic era and its contributions in comparison to other historical eras. However, despite that skepticism, all these participants learned this narrative and reproduced it well. Similar to what Wertsch (1998) found in the case of Estonian students, these participants utilized a "tactic of resistance" by using this dominant narrative or cultural tool to achieve their goals, to pass their exams and graduate from school (p. 152). They did that even if they had strong negative sentiments against having to regurgitate facts they did not believe, which one participant went as far as describing as a 'humiliating' experience.

Importantly, as will be discussed further below, those with critical tendencies - generally rejecting and deconstructing the dominant narrative - were not necessarily able to construct a full alternative narrative. However, they were clearly able to critique fragments of it, based either on lived experiences (as is the case of most participants, Muslim and Christian) in narrating alternative narratives to the 2011 events or based on their community's narrative that they learned from their Sunday Schools or family discussions (as in the case of Copts vis-à-vis Coptic history and contributions). This is similar to the case of Quebec, where Zanazanian (2015a) found that minority English-speaking students - even those with clear critical tendencies - were unable to construct "a coherently alternative (be it even a fragmented) perspective on the past, or a narrative that replaces their main understanding of the nation with one they fully identify with" (p. 130).

Proposing a Typology of Approaches to History and the Dominant Narrative

As noted earlier, there have been some important efforts to operationalize Rüsen's typology of historical consciousness, whether by developing repertories that capture nuances within Rüsen's typology (e.g., Zanazanian, 2009, 2012, 2015a, 2015b), or offering alternative typologies (e.g., Duquette, 2015). Inspired by those efforts and based on the patterns emerging among my participants - as outlined in Chapter 6 - I propose a typology.

Emerging Nuances within the Framework of Historical Consciousness

As illustrated in Chapter 6, the participants more or less fit into some of the approaches to history defined by several historical consciousness scholars (e.g., Rüsen, 2004; Zanazanian, 2012, 2015a). Several participants exhibited critical stances vis-à-vis the dominant narrative. The participants seem to be explicitly and implicitly engaging in a critical questioning of the dominant narrative and in some cases engaging in a radical deconstruction of some of the

defining elements of the country's schematic narrative template. Below, I highlight the variations that necessitated the introduction of some additional sub-categories in the framework - especially among individuals with critical tendencies - which enabled me to capture some nuances and tendencies that would have otherwise remained unnoticed.

Critical-unreflective.

This combination or appellation might sound like an oxymoron. However, as illustrated in Chapter 6, in the case of participants showing critical tendencies towards the dominant historical narrative, some simultaneously demonstrated unreflective approaches towards the alternative historical narrative they reverted to, especially when those alternative sources were embedded in or emanated from a faith-based or a religious-based discourse, whether Muslim or Christian. This was clearest in the cases of Hassan and Teresa. Arguably, it is not all that surprising - especially for those with strong religious identities or tendencies, especially those who want to see a stronger and more visible involvement of religion in governance and in public life (such as in the case of political Islam) - that individuals might exhibit different approaches and tendencies vis-à-vis different historical narratives. However, the literature seems to be generally silent about exploring how individuals might negotiate various historical narratives, which might be embedded in different - oftentimes competing - discourses.

A critical approach to history after all is guided by a strong ideological stance that could be assumed to have clear-cut moral judgments that define 'right' and 'wrong'. So, it could be expected that some of the participants with strong critical tendencies towards history would be critical of the dominant narrative and the ruling regime. However, it seems that when such a critical approach emanates specifically from a religious discourse it arguably is unable to view - let alone question - religion and religious institutions as social and historical constructs. Further, they are often unable to critique these institutions' roles in sanctioning particular power

asymmetries and inequalities (e.g., Starrett, 1998). Thus, exhibiting critical tendencies, that manifest in an ability to deconstruct a dominant narrative or parts of it, does not automatically transfer to an individual's ability to deconstruct other forms of dominant discourses, including religious-based ones.

Developing this sub-category and engaging with it is important because of how the 'unreflective' element, could have implications for intergroup dynamics especially relating to interactions with the religious 'others'. To illustrate, in the cases of Teresa and Hassan more specifically where this tendency was clearly the case, as Wertsch (1998) would suggest, they were unable to exhibit a "conscious resistance or other forms of reflective intent" towards that faith-based alternative discourse; they were clearly subordinated to "a cultural tool", used "in accordance with socioculturally prescribed norms" (p. 146). This tendency has clear ramifications on civic attitudes: for instance, compared to the majority of other Coptic participants, Teresa showed no interest in community engagement that would promote interfaith understanding. Similarly, none of Hassan's responses in his written exercise, interview or workshop showed any concern for missing or misrepresented religious minority narratives.

This distinction might resonate with Zanazanian's (2015a) description of a sub-tendency in which he included critical individuals who attempt to "overcome important narrative gaps" (p. 131). However, to distinguish the two, here I would like to highlight how this study has shown how some critical individuals might attempt to overcome those 'narrative gaps' in an unreflective manner. This was clearly the case with those participants in their unreflective approaches towards transcendental or faith-based narratives.

Critical-reflective and conscious of power dynamics.

Beyond reverting uncritically to faith-based narratives, inspired by scholars who have called our attention to how analysis of approaches to the past often offer inadequate attention to the place of power and structural injustices in individuals' understandings of history (e.g., Kölbl

& Konrad, 2015), I proposed that it would be equally important to draw distinctions among individuals who exhibited more evolved understandings regarding power dynamics.

To capture these nuances, there is a need to build upon how a critical-reflective tendency is currently being defined by various historical consciousness scholars. Critical tendencies are mainly defined by their rejection and denial of the validity of historical patterns, while proposing a "counter-narrative" (Rüsen, 2004, p. 32). In terms of intergroup dynamics, this implies that critical tendencies mainly challenge "We-They dichotomies" and "pre-defined Self and Other" constructions (Zanazanian, 2015a, p. 118). To build on these definitions, based on the findings emerging from the Egyptian context, I propose that it would be additionally important to also attempt to capture the nuance of individuals who are not only stopping at exhibiting generally critical-reflective abilities, but who are additionally perceptive and aware of power dynamics and inequalities in society more broadly.

From a critical pedagogy perspective, such awareness of power dynamics and their manifestations in historical narratives is crucial as it potentially helps individuals problematize historical and existing societal asymmetries, including their own social positions, thus finding ways to resist "languages, ideologies, social processes and myths that position them within existing relations of power and dependency" (Giroux, 2005, pp. 135-136).

Multi-perspectival critical.

This category refers to the particular case of participants who were critical, yet also able to acknowledge and engage with multiple perspectives. Thus, they were not necessarily wedded to one specific counter-narrative as other critical individuals might be. I would like to start by noting that none of the participants seemed to fall exactly in what we might call a purely 'genetic' tendency that would be characterized by being open to various perspectives without showing commitments to a particular ideological inclination, for instance. The participants in this study who showed elements of the 'genetic' tendencies similar to what Rüsen (2004) introduced

- and which other scholars have further theorized and elaborated on in terms of an ability to embrace multiple perspectives (e.g., Duquette, 2015; Seixas, 2004; Zanazanian, 2012, 2015) - did that from a clearly critical standpoint.

Those participants were fundamentally 'critical' of the dominant narrative but exhibited an ability to appreciate and weigh the various perspectives that might offer alternatives to that dominant narrative. As illustrated in their responses - and as captured in the typology (see table 8.1 below) - they also clearly saw that history education needs to avoid indoctrination and, instead, to impart the necessary critical outlook and historical research skills to prepare students to engage with various perspectives and narratives. To capture that nuance, there was the need to introduce this 'multi-perspectival critical' sub-category.

Given this background, in the Table 8.1. (below), I attempt to explicate the tendencies characterizing the various types that have emerged. In attempting to do so and for ease of reference and comparison, I employ the labels used by historical consciousness theorists (i.e., Traditional, Exemplary, etc.). Based on the findings, I illustrate those tendencies through how individuals in each category would approach the dominant historical narrative (especially related to omissions and misrepresentations) as well as their understandings of the function of history/history education. In some cases, where it would be important to differentiate, I distinguish between the characteristics of individuals who self-identify as belonging to a minority group (i.e., Coptic), and those who belong to a majority group (i.e., Muslim):

Table 8.1. Proposed typology based on participants' approaches to historical narratives.

Type of Approach to Master Narrative	Approaches vis-à-vis omission of minority narratives or perspectives	Understanding of dominant narrative and function of history
Traditional/ Exemplary	**Minority participant:** • Might be unaware of own group's omission (or sees it as the way it	• Emphasis on the aim for the dominant narrative and history education to be inclusive of

(*Unreflective*)	has always been, and reflective of societal omission). Thus, generally unable to problematize that omission. • Unable to articulate or problematize omission or possible misrepresentation of other minority groups or perspectives. • Might emphasize need to include historical figures and role models representing his/her minority group. **Majority participant:** • Omissions or misrepresentations not recognized or acknowledged. • Misrepresentations or omissions possibly seen as needed not to disrupt or weaken a collective national identity. **All participants (Minority & Majority):** • Power asymmetries and intentional omissions or misrepresentation not acknowledged.	various narratives and perspectives so as to strengthen a 'unified national identity' and pride in it. • Emphasis on the need to include particular historical events and role models from the past with the intention to inspire students. • Possible emphasis on the need to focus on a smaller number of key historical events, but offer more context and present lessons learned.
Traditional/ Exemplary (*Reflective*)	Similar to Traditional/Exemplary (*Unreflective*), but with some key differences: • Embedded in dominant narrative but shows signs of reflecting on and potentially questioning some dominant societal discourses, such as patriarchal traditions in society. • Omissions or misrepresentations might be problematized and seen as important to rectify for different students to feel	Similar to Traditional/Exemplary (*Unreflective*): • Emphasis on the aim for the dominant narrative and history education to be inclusive so as to strengthen a unified national identity and pride. • Emphasis on the need to include events and role models from the past with the intention to inspire students. • Possible emphasis on the need for

	represented and present in the curriculum.	focus on a smaller number of events, but offer more context and present lessons learned, etc.
Critical (*Unreflective*)	**All participants (Minority & Majority):** • Generally critical of the dominant narrative but possibly only critical of particular elements/aspects of it. • Unable to articulate and problematize power dynamics that shape dominant narrative constructions. • Uncritically reverts to other narrative (e.g., religious-based). • Inability to reflect on nor problematize how one's identity (e.g., religious) dictates understanding of history and sense of exclusion. **Minority:** • Own cultural group's narrative omission clearly problematized. • Possibly no acknowledgment of other minorities or perspectives excluded or misrepresented. • Inability to reflect on or problematize how identity (e.g., religious) dictates understanding of history and sense of exclusion. • Might exhibit some critical approaches vis-à-vis aspects of community narrative or the dominant narrative (e.g., particular political figures or religious leaders) but not the overall narrative or its	• Might want for history to promote a specific type of cultural identity (e.g., religious-based identity).

	constructions.	
Critical (*Reflective*)	**All participants (Minority & Majority):** • Ability to reflect on or problematize how self-identity (e.g., religious or class) dictates understanding of history and sense of exclusion. • Possibly discusses issues related to a dominant narrative and its deliberate, intentional attempt to exclude particular narratives or perspectives to consolidate control and serve its interests. • Generally unable to articulate or problematize power dynamics behind construction of dominant narrative. **Minority:** • Own cultural group's narrative omission clearly problematized. • Acknowledgment of other minorities or perspectives excluded or misrepresented. • Ability to reflect on or problematize how self-identity (e.g., religious) dictates understanding of history and sense of exclusion.	• Purpose of history should be to promote critical thinking, a sense of agency, and an ability to resist and affect positive change. • Critiques how dominant historical narrative is constructed to serve the dominant interests of ruling elites. • Might stop at critiquing and deconstructing the dominant narrative only. • If able to articulate an alternative narrative, would be inclined to articulate a specific counter-narrative (as opposed to multiple possible alternative narratives) to replace current dominant narrative.
Critical (*Reflective and Conscious of Power Dynamics*)	**All participants (Minority & Majority):** • Ability to acknowledge, critique and question ruling regime or elite interests, power dynamics, power asymmetries, and attempts to secure and consolidate hegemony. • Clearly engages with the	• Sees the ways history is constructed as serving dominant interests. • Might stop at critiquing and deconstructing the dominant narrative only. • If able to articulate an alternative, would be inclined to articulate a

	dominant narrative and its deliberate, intentional attempt to consolidate power to control resources, for instance. • Ability to reflect on or problematize how identity (e.g., religious or class) limits and dictates understanding of history and sense of exclusion. • Acknowledgment of other minorities or perspectives excluded or misrepresented.	specific counter-narrative to replace current dominant narrative. • Purpose of history should be to promote critical thinking, a sense of agency, and an ability to resist and affect positive change.
Multi-perspectival critical *(Genetical)*	• Problematizes particular omissions and misrepresentations, but acknowledges that any narrative will inherently have omissions and misrepresentations. • Acknowledges power dynamics shaping dominant narrative. • Exhibits an ability to question purposes of constructions and manipulation of historical narratives. • Beyond one's group marginalization based on any self-identifications, is often able to acknowledge and problematize omissions and misrepresentations of various narratives and perspectives. • A clear ability to appreciate and weigh merits and shortcomings of various perspectives and narratives, as opposed to articulating or adopting one particular narrative.	• Elements of the Critical (*Reflective*) type, including being critical of current status quo of history education curricula, but with an emphasis that there is not one particular viable alternative narrative to replace current dominant narrative. • Believes that any narrative is prone to have its shortcomings, blind spots, and biases. • Believes in importance of imparting historical research skills and tools among students to encourage students' critical ability to engage with multiple historical narratives. • Possible mention of the ideal purpose of history education being to promote critical skills which would ultimately help students develop tolerance towards various groups and their different perspectives.

Based on that proposed typology, I revisited the data of each of the participants vertically to identify which tendency most closely captures their case. In Table 8.2 below, I offer a summary of the tally of the results. For purposes of clarity, I have shaded out the quadrants that represented nonexistent combinations – e.g., Critical/Multi-perspectival and unreflective:

Table 8.2. Tally of participants by approach to historical narratives.

	Traditional/Exemplary	Critical	Critical/Multi-perspectival	Total
Unreflective	10	2		12
Reflective	6	2	17	25
Reflective & Conscious of Power Dynamics		2		2
Total	**16**	**6**	**17**	**39**

The Fluidity of the Model

The vast majority of the participants fit comfortably within one of the categories presented above. However, it is important to note that there are one or two participants who did not easily fit into only one of the above tendencies. This is mainly related to how, in some cases, participants who showed strong critical-reflective tendencies towards the dominant historical narrative, simultaneously proposed very traditional ways of approaching history education.

To illustrate, Khadiga, a female participant from Cairo, showed strong critical-reflective tendencies. For instance, she was the only participant to ask critical and reflective questions related to her Muslim family being potentially Coptic and how that would have changed her perception of her identity and intergroup relationships. She also critiqued her former university professor being indoctrinated in Nasser's socialist ideology and questioned the place of female role models in curricula. Simultaneously, she was still strongly committed to the state's dominant narrative presented in formal history curricula. For instance, in proposing her

envisioned curricular reforms, her key concern was to instill values and morals in the historical

narratives and figures being presented, so as to teach and inspire students. In her interview she

explained her pragmatic approach:

> I would encourage narrating events. Within the context of a state narrative I would
> insert values and morals of movements, such as feminism. Some people might think this
> is also manipulating history. But if it's educational then it needs to focus on those
> values, such as citizenship … origin of Egyptians, different religions… also history of
> Egyptian literature … if we choose to be biased we need to be biased towards an
> educational objective that aims to instill certain values and we need to do that … we're
> doing it with good intentions

Perhaps, again, this is a result of Khadiga's – and other participants' - pragmatism that

led them to realistically reflect on the limited possibilities for drastic curricular changes. It also is

indicative of their critical view of the state and its lack of will to introduce fundamental reforms,

which might entail including competing narratives.

These findings confirm our need to approach the historical consciousness types offered

by Rüsen more as 'tendencies' that are fluid (Zanazanian, 2012). Employing that more flexible

approach, as discussed in Chapter 4, what emerged in the case of Quebec were data that

necessitated the introduction of new categories or sub-categories, especially in the 'genetical'

level (Quasi-Genetic and Genetic-Resistant). In the case of the Quebec study, those two had to

be differentiated, especially based on how participants made sense of "the Other" (Zanazanian,

2012, p. 225). Importantly, the 'Genetic-Resistant' category was introduced to capture how some

individuals who exhibit genetic tendencies might otherwise consciously "refuse either to

recognize the complexity of a certain aspect of the past or to seek to better understand it" (p.

224). As discussed above, in the case of this current study, however, what seem to emerge are

less variations within those exhibiting 'genetic' tendencies, and more among those exhibiting

'traditional' tendencies and 'critical' tendencies, where there seems to be a need to introduce

sub-categories to especially capture the level of reflexivity of the individuals within each of those categories.

Factors Influencing Shifts in Approaches to History and Dominant Narrative

As discussed earlier, in the late 19th century, inspired by efforts of missionary schools both the Coptic Church and the Egyptian state attempted to use written and printed text to have a direct connection with their subjects, helping them maintain control over the messages including religious interpretations (Sedra, 2011). Unifying the curriculum and consolidating a more centralized administration of education during Nasser's time especially also ushered in a new era of such attempts of constructing the modern cultural and civic identity of Egyptian citizens. As illustrated, this strong and centralized state's control continues until the modern day. However, as this study reveals, while these attempts might be successful in propagating dominant discourses and key resilient elements of the schematic narrative template, it is clear that their success to indoctrinate young Egyptians is generally being challenged. This could be expected to mark a shift especially compared to earlier periods when alternative sources of information and historical knowledge might have been fewer, less accessible, and more controlled.

As illustrated in the data analyses chapters, several factors have contributed to shaping participants' approaches to the dominant narrative and history more generally. However, there seem to be two key factors that are worth focusing on, given how they emerged prominently from the data analysis: the 2011 events and their aftermath, and being involved in historical research-related training:

Momentous political events a key turning point in challenging dominant narrative.

The January 2011 events and the diverse opinions and camps with and against it have somehow become a measuring rod for some of those youths that helped them navigate and orient themselves in society, and shape their outlooks. In addition to a newfound sense of empowerment, the events have helped many recognize and attempt to break with the state's –

and potentially other patriarchal institutions' - dominant narrative and hegemonic projects and visions. Additionally, such engagement with these events has raised the level of self-reflection, which is clear in how several participants explained that the events helped them become more critical of, and more distant from, older generations.

In relatively stable contexts, such as the case of Quebec currently, scholars had argued that for students to be able to challenge the dominant narrative and template, teachers have to confront it and challenge it upfront in the classroom (e.g., Létourneau, 2007; Létourneau & Moisan, 2004). However, in the case of Quebec, earlier massive political changes had clear ramifications on individuals' relations with the dominant narrative and the place of families' oral histories and narratives. In the case of the Francophone population of Quebec, Conrad et al. (2009) found that the role of family narrative compared to other minority groups across Canada was less significant - a fact that the authors attribute in part to the Quiet Revolution and modernization, which entailed rejection of the authority not only of the Roman Catholic church but also of family. In the view of younger generations, both institutions – family and Church - were associated with rigidity and backwardness.

Similarly, in this study, it was the participants' lived experiences of the January 2011 revolution that seems to have played that transformational role in preparing them to question key elements of the dominant narrative, and possibly the more resilient schematic narrative template. Thus, what the study shows is that exposure to - and sometimes the active participation in - momentous political events and movements helps reinforce and possibly accelerate a break away from the master narrative propagated by curriculum, teachers, and the media, and, in many cases, is reinforced by other social sites, such as families and religious institutions. As Rüsen (2002) had noted, such momentous events or "extraordinarily disturbing experiences of change", whether on the personal or societal levels, could trigger clear shifts in individuals' approaches to the past, and indeed their historical consciousness (p. 1). However, it is important to note that

while the 2011 events might have accelerated that process and contributed to a heightened

critical awareness, such shifts have been gradually building up over at least a decade.

A gradual erosion of the dominant narrative's legitimacy.

While the misrepresentation of the 2011 events in history textbooks might have been a

trigger, it is very telling how those omissions or misrepresentations prompted participants to be

generally skeptical vis-à-vis history education as a whole, as opposed to taking this

misrepresentation as one among a few possible errors, for instance. It is indicative of the fragility

of the bond of trust between the state and these young citizens. While this might have been

further triggered or confirmed by particular recent events or omissions, such erosion seems to

have started much earlier.

Such shifting understandings of the dominant narrative and possibly the widespread

debates around the notion of the nation-state, national belonging, and citizenship have clearly

been further encouraged by the 2011 events and their aftermaths (e.g., Dorio, 2016; Khorshid,

2014; Megahed, 2017; Moheyeldine, 2016; Zuhur, 2014). However, these shifting

understandings did have their roots – albeit within smaller circles – starting at least in the late

1990s and early 2000s, when oppositional political movements, such as the *Kefaya* (Enough)

movement and subsequently the youth-led 6th of April movement, started to challenge the

Mubarak regime and the status quo (El Mahdi & Marfleet, 2009; Shehata 2008). These

movements were largely "nonideological and inclusive of diverse outlooks", and clearly made

effective uses of information technology, which helped them secure "broadened communication

and allowed efficient organization" (Youniss, Barber, & Billen, 2013, p. 8).

Additionally, the exposure of these participants to multiple sources of historical

knowledge would have played an important role in helping them critique the dominant narrative.

Compared to earlier generations, they have access to multiple sources of information, including

social media. This is a very different reality from the nation-state's historical ability to propagate

its dominant narrative and silence competing narratives, through use of state-controlled media channels and other social sites. As Hobsbawm (1990) had argued, one of the key traditional tools in the hands of modern nation-states is mass media through which "popular ideologies could be both standardized, homogenized and transformed, as well as, obviously exploited for the purposes of deliberate propaganda by private interests and states" (p. 141). Currently, however, with the ubiquity of alternatives, the state has lost much of that grip on the central message being propagated. Thus, in addition to that widespread access to the internet and social media, increasingly vocal popular TV talk shows that were highly critical of the Mubarak regime and authorities, contributed to building a critical awareness among various segments of society about many of the regime's shortcomings and abuses, slowly building towards, and culminating in, the massive January 2011 uprisings (Herrera, 2012).

Such growing discontent among Egyptian students was also detected by some studies. For instance, in her pre-2011 study of public secondary school students, Sobhy (2012) had pointed out that the sense of national belonging and loyalty to the Egyptian state among young Egyptians had already been eroding in reaction to Mubarak's neo-liberal policies and the breach of the social contract, where these young citizens were neither guaranteed jobs upon graduation nor offered a quality free public education for all, as their grandparents or parents would have been entitled to especially during Nasser's era. Sobhy's (2015) pre-2011 study revealed that "students did not appropriate neoliberal (or nationalist) textbook narratives", instead they critiqued the Egyptian state for not providing "real services (even when one is forced to pay for them), physical security, legal protection, job opportunities or dignified treatment" (p. 819).

These shifts, informed by the rupture and distancing from identification with the territorial nationalist discourse, could also be seen as part of a global phenomenon, which some historians and scholars have predicted. As Hobsbawm (1990) notes, the weakening relationship with concepts such as the 'nation-state' and even towards "ethnic/linguistic groups" could also

be seen as part of a global trend where these concepts will gradually retreat in the face of the new supranational restructuring of the globe" where "[n]ations and nationalism will be present in this history, but in subordinate, and often rather minor roles" (p. 182). These sentiments and identifications would stand in contrast with the stronger national identifications and loyalties internalized by many among the older generations.

Challenging key elements of the 'schematic narrative template' through action.

In response to this gradual erosion, 2011 events offered an opportunity for these participants to further question, but to also find the space – albeit very briefly – to contemplate and present a counter-narrative or an alternative, utopian vision of society. During 2011 and subsequent events, many participants were actively involved in actually challenging and potentially redefining some of the 'cultural models' they were expected to embody and enact as passive and docile subjects, breaking down long-held stereotypes and perceptions that painted Egyptian youths as apathetic and politically unaware or disinterested (e.g., Dorio, 2016; Moheyeldine, 2016). They were engaged in unsettling and redefining these cultural models, which, as Howarth (2006) reminds us are not "static templates" pulled out of "our cognitive schemas", but represent dynamic templates that allow for "re-acting, rejecting or re-forming a presentation of the world that conflicts with one's stake, position, and self-identity" (p. 68).

Many of the participants were somehow directly and practically challenging that schematic narrative template and key elements of it. By taking to the streets, they were challenging a 'schematic narrative template' that mainly constructs the 'Egyptian people' as generally either absent, marginal, or at best obedient citizens. Those elements that were being challenged included the marginal role of the Egyptian people; the need for a leader or savior; and the central nationalistic role of the Egyptian military. These public events that participants have personally experienced seem to have empowered and helped many of them to see themselves as 'part of making Egypt's history', as articulated by Randa from Bani Suef.

However, as will be discussed in more detail regarding the internalized understanding of the nature of history as cyclical, it seems that with the ultimate negative results and defeat of 'their revolution', several participants understandably witnessed what some would argue was the 'logical' or 'common sense' scripted ending based on the schematic narrative template. In other words, by the country finding a 'savior' and returning to 'stability' – even if that is brought about by an authoritarian regime - the dominant narrative and the schematic template have arguably somehow been restored and reinforced.

Exposure to historical research methods helps move beyond critical deconstruction of dominant narrative.

As illustrated in the data analysis, it is clear that several participants depended heavily on hearsay in critiquing the dominant narrative, literally using words such as 'as we heard' (*zayy ma seme'na*) or 'as we were told' (*zayy ma alollna*), when referring to counter-narratives. For instance, as demonstrated earlier, in some of the participants' responses, some explained that they had 'heard' or 'have been told' about Egypt having originally been Coptic, or that they had 'heard' there might have been violence committed during the Arab Muslim conquest.

However, not all participants have gone beyond that stage to conduct further historical research or investigate those counter-narratives. In many cases this was due to a lack of knowledge of what such investigation would entail. Thus, while some seem to be 'settled' at the 'critical-unreflective' or 'critical-reflective' categories and might have lost faith in the dominant narrative, including its various manifestations, only those who have been able to develop the historical research tools through taking university-level or joining non-faith-based extracurricular courses seem to have been able to move beyond those categories. Those participants were able to appreciate various perspectives and assess their plausibility as has emerged in some of their responses and reflections.

Similar to what studies have shown in other contexts, such as Quebec (e.g., Zanazanian, 2015a), British Columbia (e.g., Seixas & Clark, 2004), and Finland (e.g., Löfström, 2013), most of the participants exhibited reflective tendencies. While several participants exhibited critical tendencies like in other contexts, several of the participants in this study uniquely showed even more evolved 'multi-perspectival critical' tendencies, acknowledging the multiplicity of perspectives, while historicizing and contextualizing historical events and actors. These features are characteristic of the 'genetic' type (Rüsen, 2004), and which as discussed above, I labeled 'multi-perspectival *critical'* to emphasize the critical element common among those participants' tendencies.

Given that these past studies all focused on school students while this study's participants were all either enrolled in or already graduated from higher education institutions, arguably university-level courses played a significant role in helping many of this current study's participants develop their understandings of history, which involved an ability to conduct historical research and to acknowledge and weigh multiple perspectives, for instance. In fact, this was clear in the responses of some participants in which they explained that taking some university-level courses in history, economics, or political science helped to expose them to the workings of history and constructions of historical narratives. This explanation would follow the logic of what Carretero and Van Alphen (2014) found in their study where older Argentinian students of Grade 11 exhibited relatively more sophisticated approaches to the master narrative than younger students in Grade 8. However, importantly, that would be a function of the quality of, and approaches to, historical research they are being exposed.

Additionally, in some cases, even if the role of university-level opportunities was less explicitly articulated by participants, further analysis showed that those who listed university-level courses or non-formal history-related extracurricular courses and activities among their alternative sources of historical knowledge, exhibited more evolved and nuanced understandings

of historical narratives and their constructions. The only exception was Hassan, whose history-related extracurricular source of knowledge was religiously-based and thus, seemingly influenced his outlook, giving prominence to a religious-based historical narrative, precluding other perspectives. Thus, as elaborated earlier, he fit within a 'critical-unreflective' category.

Extracurricular activities cited by several participants as having changed their understandings of history and provided them with the tools necessary to deconstruct the dominant narrative and conduct their own historical research included youth-led independent institutes, such as the Cairo Institute for Liberal Arts (CILAS) and the *Ehki Ya Tarikh* oral history workshops.[50] Thus, participants who have had a chance to enroll in history-related higher education courses or extracurricular activities, exposing them to the workings of history and historical research tools, were able to transcend that deconstruction characteristic of a 'critical' historical consciousness. They were able to move towards a 'genetical' historical consciousness where a multiplicity of perspectives and voices are acknowledged and assessed.

Resilience of the Schematic Narrative Template and Dominant Narrative

In terms of their approaches to history and the dominant narrative, as illustrated, it is clear that most participants exhibited reflective tendencies, albeit with some variations and nuances. Expectedly, some of those exhibiting traditional/exemplary unreflective tendencies revealed the resilience of the dominant narrative. However, the resilience and power of the dominant narrative or elements of the schematic narrative template was also detectable among those exhibiting other tendencies, including critical and reflective tendencies. As evidence of this resilience, I hereby discuss the general perception of the Egyptian state as primordial, and the lack of any alternative chronology or periodization being proposed. I then highlight how the

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[50] Those initiatives were discussed briefly in Chapter 1. For a listing of key alternative sources of historical knowledge cited by the participants, please refer to Appendix IX.

dominant narrative might have been internalized as manifests in a widely observed underlying conception of the nature of history being cyclical. I then end this section by discussing a manifestation of the internalization of the ancient and resilient nature of the Egyptian state.

The primordial Egyptian state.

As illustrated in the data analysis, in their narratives and their critiques also, participants exhibiting multi-perspectival critical approaches engaged with the key elements of the schematic narrative template more meaningfully, but not fully. This could be put in sharper focus if we look through the lenses of the three elements proposed by Carretero and Van Alphen (2014): "the historical subject (homogenous or heterogeneous); historical events (simple or complex); and understanding of nation building being essentialist or constructivist" (p. 298). In most cases, participants demonstrated an ability to differentiate between historical subjects by period, as well as by the social positions dictated by their socio-economic and cultural status, thus refraining from referring to Egyptians as a 'homogenous' group. Thus, as illustrated in the data analysis, most of the multi-perspectival critical participants exemplified what Carretero (2017) referred to as a critical ability to separate "the present storyteller and the past historical subject" (p. 518). Additionally, several demonstrated an ability to deal with the multi-faceted and compounded nature of historical events.

The point of departure with Carretero's model, is that while these participants seem to have exhibited sophisticated and critical approaches to questions of 'historical subject' and 'historical events,' very few - if any - questioned "nation building" or in Carretero's terms, took a "constructivist" approach to understanding the nation (Carretero & Van Alphen, 2014, p. 298), whereby "(national) origins would be considered ontological instead of constructed through precisely a historical process" (Carretero, 2017, p. 518). For instance, none of the participants questioned Egypt's national borders, or introduced ideas of how the nation's borders or

understandings of an Egyptian 'nation' might have essentially shifted or changed in any fundamental way over time.

To offer an example, Karim exhibited critical and multi-perspectival tendencies and challenged the dominant narrative, offering a radically different narrative. For instance, this was clear in how he was one of the only participants to highlight the omitted history of the semi-autonomous republic of al-Hawarah (*gumhuriyyet el-Hawarah*) in Southern Egypt. However, when he came to represent that understanding in his drawing (Figure 12) and narrative, he still did that 'within' the borders of what he seems to see as the primordial borders of Egypt. This lack of explicit questioning seems to reflect many participants' internalization of particular aspects of the dominant narrative, especially as relates to the country's ancient history, as well as the resilience and essentialization of the Egyptian state and its highly centralized mode of governing.

Given that Egypt is the oldest documented centralized nation-state as several historians have agreed, it becomes more difficult to challenge constructions of the resilience of the Egyptian nation, as propagated by the dominant historical narrative. To elaborate, this historical 'fact' has been widely accepted and propagated by prominent Egyptian and non-Egyptian scholars, accompanied by the narrative of the founding story of King Menes who unified the Northern and Southern regions of the country. This makes it even more difficult to start to unsettle this key element of the dominant historical narrative. Hobsbawm's (1997) contends that "nations are historically novel entities pretending to have existed for a very long time. Inevitably the nationalist version of their history consists of anachronism, omission, decontextualization and, in extreme cases, lies" (p. 270). This reality becomes specifically more challenging in the Egyptian context, given the ubiquity of the belief that the Egyptian nation-state was among the oldest, if not the oldest ever and longest standing unified nation-state, and thus possibly giving it an essentialized and powerful aura of legitimacy and sacredness.

Lack of coherent alternative narratives, chronologies, or periodization.

As noted in Chapter 6, where participants' oppositional and critical perspectives more clearly emerged was in how they chose to represent the trajectory of some of the events and eras – or the overall storyline of the nation's history - as one of decline, stability, or progress. However, notably this was still done from within that dominant narrative and its chronology of events. For instance, while some mentioned particular omitted or misrepresented facts or perspectives, none of the participants, including those exhibiting clearly critical and multi-perspectival tendencies, attempted to provide alternative chronologies. They were basically critiquing the dominant narrative on its own terms, which is similar to what Carretero (2017) found in his several studies in contexts such as Mexico, Argentina and Spain, where even those critical of the dominant narrative did so, "within the framework of the general structures provided by master narratives" (p. 520).

Being confined by the master narrative and its parameters in expressing dissent or challenging it clearly limits possibilities of offering new understandings and visions beyond those offered by dominant powers (Ball, 1993; Wertsch, 1998). As critical historians have argued, introducing an alternative understanding of history would require a fundamentally different perspective, such as offering the often marginalized 'subaltern' perspective (e.g., Abul-Magd, 2013; Apple & Buras, 2006). Similarly, it might require a radical alternative chronology, such as what some studies have proposed in offering a less Eurocentric understanding of ancient world civilizations, especially in some Western curricula, especially in US curricula (e.g., Marino, 2011; Marino & Bolgatz, 2010), and in Canadian curricula (e.g., Abdou, 2017d).

Permeation of dominant linguistic references and representations.

Only very few participants seem to have been aware of, and able to problematize, the permeation of linguistic references that subtly and implicitly reinforce various elements of the dominant ideologies and worldviews. To illustrate, only one participant at the participatory

visual methods workshop problematized how some other participants were using the Arabic word *'isti'maar'* when referring to the British 'occupation' of Egypt. He challenged the group on the common use of that word, which carries within it a subtle positive meaning. *Isti'maar,* he explained, comes from the Arabic root word *'amar,* which implies civilizing or developing a place or a people. Thus, he warned participants against unknowingly using language that endorses and propagates meanings and versions of history they might not intend to.

Similarly, as presented in Chapter 6, at the same workshop, Somaya was the only participant to problematize the militaristic tone and language that dominated the workshop discussions and narrations of historical events, which she saw as a reflection of the penetration of the highly militarized master narrative amongst Egyptians. This lack of critique by others could also be understood in terms of how individuals become confined by a schematic narrative template, its provisions and tools; thus, even when critiquing it as the participants of the workshop were doing, they were limited to using its tools and its ways of knowing, describing, and understanding the world. In that sense, as outlined in Chapter 4, these unofficial counter-narratives were basically in a "hidden dialogicality" with the master narrative - even when they were not referring to it directly – revealing how "the official account" continues to "occupy a dominant position, even as it was being resisted and rejected" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 162).

The nature of history as cyclical.
Another possible manifestation of the internalization and influence of the Egyptian dominant narrative and schematic narrative template is the common emergence of an understanding of history's nature as cyclical. This internalization and explanation of the cyclical nature of history seems to mirror that of the Egyptian schematic narrative template, which was outlined earlier based on textual analyses of curricula. Thus, such understanding of history as cyclical could also point to a more deeply rooted understanding reinforced by the dominant narrative and its various manifestations that defined these participants' 'cultural models' or

"everyday theories (i.e., storylines, images, schemas, metaphors, and models) about the world that tell people what is typical or normal" from the viewpoint of the dominant discourse (Gee, 2004, p. 40).

Additionally, while such a conception of the nature of history might have been deeply entrenched as the schemata through which many Egyptians came to understand the world, and forecast and predict how historical narratives progress and end, these participants' lived experience of the 2011 events only confirmed how history has always been governed by a pattern that "keeps repeating itself", as Hussein put it. Basically, these participants' lived experiences and collective memories of how their 2011 revolution ultimately failed - whereby "Egyptians have always wanted change but are either taken advantage of or fooled by rulers", as Maha explained it - confirmed and reinforced the understanding of the nature of history that the schematic narrative template of the country has constructed through its multiple narrations. Their collective memories and experiences coincided with that dominant template, sanctioning that this understanding of the nature of history is the most legitimate and convenient to continue to serve as the "interpretive schema" to be deployed to understand current evens and realities (Wagner & Hayes, 2005, p. 153). Thus, in the vast majority of cases, while the participants were able to critique the dominant narrative or specific elements of it, they have clearly appropriated that cyclical understanding of the nature of history.

While the outcomes of the 2011 events and their aftermath could have served as a trigger to reinforce that cyclical conception of history, other factors including how ancient Egyptian history is narrated in the curriculum and through the academic institution globally, reinforce that.[51] The way history is narrated in textbooks is clearly cyclical as has been noticed by

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[51] Another dimension that seems to have arguably established that understanding of the nature of history is how ancient Egyptian history is consistently presented as highly cyclical in nature. In the established academic field of Egyptology, periods of decline between various ancient Egyptian dynasties have been given the academic term

participants, some of who challenged that, or unquestioningly simply presented it as a reality. As discussed, Safa had explained how even when Egyptian people's historical revolts are included, a student would only hear briefly about them at the end of a textbook chapter, then the following chapter often starts by telling of the advent of an equally oppressive regime than the one that Egyptians had just revolted against. Sandy had made a similar comment, mocking ancient Egyptians and how each period of prosperity was followed by a new period of demise, which the textbooks explained would be caused by the same exact reasons that caused earlier periods of demise. This had prompted her to question whether ancient Egyptians learned any lessons or accumulated any wisdom from periods of demise. Thus, the way the curriculum is designed and the way it is received generally seems to reinforce that notion of history's cyclicality.

Cultural influences on understanding of the nature of history.

There have been ongoing debates regarding whether the linear or cyclical understandings of the nature of history are characteristic of particular cultures and whether the linear understanding is an achievement of Western thought, for instance (Burke, 2002). However, first, it is important to note that I agree that linear and cyclical are not mutually exclusive categories. As Khalidi (2002) reminds us, "many working historians are impressed by both recurrent patterns as well as linear evolution or progress," thus, perhaps a more appropriate differentiation would be made between "teleological" and "nonteleological conceptions of history" (p. 54), instead of posing it as either linear or cyclical (Al-Azmeh, 2002; Khalidi, 2002). Al-Azmeh (2002) further reminds us that this idea of linearity predates the Judeo-Christian tradition, as it started with the ancient religion of Zoroastrianism in the ancient Near East.

'Intermediate Periods' ('*usur al-idmihlaal*), of which there is a total of three and which often lasted for several decades, preceded and followed by periods of stability and prosperity (e.g., Kantor, 1992; Kitchen, 2009; Ryholt & Bülow-Jacobsen, 1997).

The linear nature has clearly also been informed by the Abrahamic religious tradition where "Messianic and millenarian expectations form part of Muslim as well as Jewish and Christian traditions" (Burke, 2002, p. 19). However, Burke (2002) makes a point that in "non-Western historical cultures", the "the idea of cycles" might be more normal while the concept of linear "progress" remains the exception, illustrating that by referring to Ibn Khaldun's famous Muqaddimah and his discussion of the "alternate dominance of nomads and settlers" (p. 19). Thus, beyond the 2011 defeat or an internalization of the schematic narrative template, the prevalence of the cyclical understanding of history among participants could further be understood as influenced by deep-seated cultural dimensions and factors

The burden of ancient glories and an ancient resilient state.

Related to the conception of the primordial nature of the Egyptian nation-state, and the cyclical nature of history, there is arguably an internalization among several of the participants of the sense of aggrandizement, and exaggeration of the ancient achievements propagated by the dominant narrative. This could in turn contribute to and explain the prevalent sense of defeatism and apathy among several of them. An exaggeration of ancient achievements can potentially paralyze modern day people and demotivate them – especially when compared to a nation's dismal modern achievements - from envisioning the possibility of ever reaching similar glories. Although it could be argued that the Egyptian regime does not intentionally use ancient Egyptian glories to infuse Egyptians with a sense of apathy, colonial powers have often used that strategy in various contexts. For instance, Anderson (1983/2006) explained that in the East Indies, in an effort to demoralize them, the Dutch colonial powers sought to distance the locals from their ancient monuments by propagating that it was non-natives who had constructed them (p. 155).

Additionally, such a reinforcement of the continuity and resilience of constructions of Egypt, as the most ancient nation-state and centralized government, seem to also have, at least indirectly, influenced participants' lack of hope about prospects of real change. Hence, the sense

of alienation and defeatism among many Egyptians, including youths, seems to be further exacerbated by the construction of the Egyptian state and its institutions as primordial, ancient, and resilient. As illustrated, some of the participants' responses explicitly invoked the image of an ancient and deep state that would be difficult to change or would be resistant to embracing new ways and approaches.

Copts as 'absent' or passive victims of history.

One manifestation of the resilience of the dominant narrative is how most participants, as illustrated in some of their responses and the linguistic referents used to describe Coptic history, painted Copts as a historically persecuted, victimized, and passive minority, that has few or no meaningful contributions. A review of the words and phrases used to refer to the Coptic era by both Muslim and Coptic participants, reveals that representations of that 'null' group's history revolve mainly around themes of Roman persecution and torture, passivating and victimizing Copts. To borrow Fairclough's (2003) critical discourse analyses terminology, in the participants' descriptions of Coptic history, the Copts continued to be "passivated" as historical victims "affected by processes" as opposed to being actors who might have any sense of agency (p. 145). This victimized representation that focuses on the suffering of Copts and undermines the Coptic era's significance and contributions in a way justifies and legitimizes the savior role attributed to the Arab Muslim conquest (e.g., Abdou, 2018).

While the vast majority of participants did not reflect on how they might have internalized this 'passivated' portrayal of Copts, such representation was explicitly problematized by two of the more critical and self-reflective Muslim participants, who - as illustrated in the previous chapter - found this victimization narrative problematic. During their individual interviews, Maha and Randa spoke of how the curricular representations of that history paint it as a generally 'dark' (*dulmah*) era.

Thus, it was clear that the participants were limited by the dominant narrative's 'passivated' constructions of the Coptic minority. With the lack of alternative social representations or an alternative "repertoire of interpretations and explanations" (Moscovici, 2001, p. 151) to replace that, this remains the dominant lens through which participants view and approach that history and that social group. This lack of alternative repertoires was evident in how most Muslim participants, who initially explained or later realized that Coptic history was omitted or misrepresented, were unable to articulate any alternative narrative, potentially either due to the lack of interest or lack of tools to do the needed research.

However, it is important to note that with their ability to draw on the Church's narrative and other sources, many of the Coptic participants seem to be aware of, and are actually critically resisting, this portrayal. Many of them seem to be resisting the 'cultural model' that paints them as the reclusive or passive minority. They challenge that by attempting to reach out and seeking to be better understood, as emerges from the earlier analyses and as will be further discussed below. As discussed in Chapter 3, this social representation has also been challenged by some young Copts and political activists who managed to break out of the Church's hegemonic authority during and after the 2011 uprisings (e.g., Tadros, 2013). Thus, these interactions with, and in many cases the challenging of, key elements of the dominant narrative have contributed to shaping participants' civic attitudes, as will be discussed further in the next section.

Interactions with Historical Misrepresentations and Influences on Civic Attitudes

The influences of understandings of history on some civic attitudes and outlooks has clearly emerged from some of the above analysis, such as the possibility of the internalization of the cyclical nature of history and the resilient and the ancient nature of the Egyptian state, both of which potentially reinforce a sense of defeatism and apathy. To delve deeper into this connection, I dedicate this section to unpacking the potential relationship between participants' approaches to history, historical misrepresentations, and civic attitudes. Given that I have already

discussed participants' interactions with the dominant narrative's misrepresentations in general terms, I hereby specifically focus on their interactions with Coptic history misrepresentation and omission.

Interactions with the *Absent* and *Unenacted* Coptic History

Coptic history is generally omitted by being confined to a disproportionally small space within the curriculum, and thus rendering Copts a 'null group' (Peskhin, 1992) - part of the general 'null curriculum' (Eisner, 1994). However, a more accurate description here, since Coptic history is not totally omitted from curricular content, and to also highlight the significant role of teachers as curriculum gatekeepers, would be what Wilkinson (2014) proposes as an "absent *unenacted curriculum*", referring to curricular content that teachers might choose not to teach or give due attention to in the classroom for various reasons (p. 3). This could be attributed to the fact that the Coptic era is often covered towards the end of the academic year, thus not allowing enough time to examine this period in detail. Additionally, the era is perceived as less important academically given that it rarely appears in final standardized exams and examiners do not place much weight on, as some of the participants highlighted.

Another way the curriculum further nullifies Coptic history and realities is via the dominance of an exclusionary Islamic religious content and tone that permeates the textbooks of various subject matters. This exclusionary tone was enacted by some Muslim teachers who, as both Muslim and Christian participants noted, played a generally negative role in reinforcing a sense of separation and division of 'us' vs. 'them' between Muslim and Coptic students.

Carretero (2017; Carretero et al., 2012) has proposed that schematic narrative templates often paint the 'other' in a critical and negative light in an effort to help define the national group. This seems to play out here as well although in more subtle ways. In the Egyptian case, the Copts are not explicitly painted as the 'other'; however, they are rendered largely invisible in the curriculum. As is clear in the lived experiences of several of the Coptic participants, this

invisibility led to ignorance about them as a cultural group and opened the door for suspicion and tensions with their Muslim colleagues. Additionally, with the imposed Islamic curricular content and overly religious tone, which essentializes Egypt's cultural identity as Arab and Muslim, the Copts are clearly 'othered', albeit in less direct and subtler ways. This is clearly fed by, and continues to reproduce, the generally exclusionary religious societal discourse.

The multiple factors that reinforce that marginalization and invisibility reflect Luke's (1995) theorization that subordination to a minority status is a product of various manifestations of and practices that enact the dominant discourse. As he elaborates, a "colonized "other" – the person who has been assigned colored, gendered different and "minority" status – is produced through complex and interleaved textual and institutional practice" (p. 38). In this case, it is not only the curricular content, but also how it is enacted by teachers and education administrators that continues to reinforce the societal discourse that generally sidelines the Copts, among other non-Muslim religious minorities.

Muslim participants' interaction with Coptic history omission or misrepresentation.

Lack of awareness or acknowledgment of Coptic history omission or misrepresentation.
As a reflection of being part of the null curriculum, as the data show, most Muslims do not mention or problematize the Coptic era's misrepresentation or omission. Importantly, however, as illustrated, among the Muslim participants who problematize the misrepresentation or omission of Coptic history, the vast majority expressed compassion and sympathy towards that minority. Thus, the acknowledgement of the misrepresentation seems to represent an important step towards better intergroup dynamics with the misrepresented or omitted minority narrative. This seems to reflect Zanazanian's (2015a) proposal that those with more reflective tendencies are in a better position to have less rigidly defined 'We-Them' boundaries and thus would be more open to more understanding and engagement with that 'other'. As discussed

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earlier, however, this recognition mostly positions Copts as victims, with very little mentions of the significance of Coptic history and contributions. For instance, only Coptic participants were aware of and mentioned some specific modern Coptic contributions and the importance of including those in the curriculum.

It is important to reflect especially on the fact that only less than half of the Muslim participants readily identified Coptic history among their lists of misrepresented historical eras, events, or figures. This could also be indicative of the general lack of knowledge and invisibility of this issue in the public sphere, despite how this might be changing slowly. It might also be an intentional resistance or negation by some participants against recognizing Coptic history omission or misrepresentation, especially by those who might have internalized negative perceptions of the Copts. Those perceptions include that Copts are disproportionately rich and powerful thus, are not a marginalized or a persecuted minority (Van Doorn-Harder, 2005). Alternatively, those perceptions could be harbored by participants whose Islamist ideological convictions stipulate that Copts are second-class citizens who are already being protected in a Muslim-majority society, thus are undeserving of additional rights.

Another explanation could be that under an authoritarian regime, given that numerous groups - including large segments of Egyptian Muslims - feel alienated and oppressed, it becomes more difficult to empathize with a particular minority's plight, such as that of the Copts. In other words, it ceases to be seen as a priority when there are many groups, including the majority, which themselves might be feeling marginalized. Closely connected to this is that participants might not necessarily see the possibility that the experience of Copts might be different, or that in fact they might be carrying two types of burdens. Consequently, they fail to realize that in addition to Copts experiencing the same suffering as all other Egyptians – such as economic hardships and lack space for political participation or freedom of association and expression - they are also persecuted and face daily micro aggressions in an intolerant public

space (e.g., Tadros, 2013). This might explain the lack of appreciation among the majority group

that Copts carry a "double consciousness" as Epstein (2000) argued in the case of African

Americans is a strategy that helps them negotiate different narratives and realities, and which

Copts similarly use to help them negotiate this general "invisibility … in everyday life"

(Ibrahim, 2015, pp. 2585-2586). This ambivalence by Muslim participants could also be a

product of the effective permeation of the successive Egyptian ruling regimes' general denial

strategy vis-à-vis Coptic marginalization (Khorshid, 2014; Tadros, 2013; Zuhur, 2014).

Unfamiliarity and invisibility of Copts constructed through their omission and social representations.

It was clear among the Muslim participants who had acknowledged the misrepresentation

of Coptic history that they found it challenging to represent it, whether in verbally explaining the

misrepresented narrative or in hand-drawing it. This applied to trying to represent other

misrepresented minority groups as well, such as Nubians or Berbers (see Farida's drawing –

Figure 22). As Randa put it, she had no clear 'mental image' of those generally marginalized

groups and what an appropriate way to represent them would be. Moscovici (2001) explains how

the lack of social representations renders objects, concepts and peoples unfamiliar and thus

feared, or at the very least misunderstood and perceived as 'not quite right' (p. 38).

In the case of Coptic history, the omission renders the Copts as a group generally

unfamiliar and thus results in stereotypes and fear from it. Simultaneously, such sidelining of the

Coptic narrative and the contributions of Copts serves to reinforce the supremacy of Islam and

augment the significance of its contributions, as a dominant cultural identity. Moscovici (2001)

eloquently explains the negative civic attitudes, fears, and tensions that such marginalization,

invisibility, and the 'unfamiliarity' result in:

> The unfamiliar attracts and intrigues individuals and communities, while, at the same
> time, it alarms them, compels them to make explicit the implicit assumptions that are
> basic to consensus. This 'not quite rightness' worries and threatens …Phenomena of

mass panic frequently stem from the same cause and are expressed in the same dramatic movements of flight and stress. (p. 38)

Rendering Coptic history as part of the 'null curriculum' renders Copts as a group 'unfamiliar', which ushers in lack of understanding and suspicion, as clearly emerged in the participants' responses, laying a fertile ground for 'mass panic' and violence. This happens, for instance, when rumours spread about issues such as an abduction of a Muslim girl by Copts or her forced conversion in a church or rumors about a church storing weapons, leading to sectarian attacks, killings, and destructions of churches and other properties, which has occurred several times over the past two decades.

Scholars of Critical Pedagogy, Social Representation, and Critical Discourse Analysis would clearly see the general curricular omission or (mis)representations of the Coptic narrative as reflective of a dominant societal discourse that aims to serve the interests of the ruling elite, its allies, and stakeholders. Through rendering the familiar 'unfamiliar' and maintaining this unfamiliarity through misrepresentation or omission, a totalitarian regime could continue to manipulate that societal division and polarization for its own interests and ends. For instance, it helps it maintain a 'divide and rule' strategy that helps it diffuse potential movements that might unite and coalesce against it.

Coptic participants' interaction with the omission or misrepresentation of Coptic history.

General sense of invisibility.

As illustrated, some of the Coptic participants, such as Teresa, voiced their concern and frustration about how invisible they felt in the classroom, which was mostly triggered and felt during the brief discussion of the Coptic era in class. This discussion exposed Coptic participants to the extent of ignorance that existed vis-à-vis Copts among their Muslim colleagues. Such a sense of invisibility has long-lasting negative influences on students; for instance, based on her

own experience as an African-American student as well as an educator who had to deal with issues of exclusion faced by her students, hooks (2010) likens making a student feel invisible to a "full-frontal attack", with damaging effects on their sense of self (p. 123).

Nearly all of the Coptic participants felt that Coptic history, contributions, and realities were inadequately represented in their curricula and classroom experiences. They mainly problematized the omission of Coptic contributions and the misrepresentation of some Muslim rulers' historical injustices against Copts. First, they seemed to seek a recognition and legitimation of their community's historical suffering, which – as would be acknowledged by many – continues until the present, albeit in different forms. Second, stressing the importance of including contributions seems to stem from a need for their community's ancient and modern contributions to be valued, especially modern contributions, which several believe are more clearly sidelined and omitted.

These calls to include modern contributions reflect the issues related to the representation of Indigenous populations in North American curricula - including Native Americans in US textbooks (Journell, 2009) and Aboriginals in Canada (Clark, 2007) - where textual analyses revealed that curricula focused on earlier and ancient contributions, neglecting modern contributions. Consequently, such representations paint those groups and their significance as largely bygone. This misrepresentation of Coptic history has led most Coptic participants to develop a general sense of cynicism vis-à-vis the dominant narrative as embodied in school curricula. Due to the lack of a coherent alternative narrative, it seems some of the Coptic participants have been seeking various sources to fill in the gaps in their historical knowledge.

Initial cynicism vis-à-vis the dominant narrative and curricula.

Since many of the Coptic participants have learned to be skeptical of the master narrative as embodied in their school textbooks - especially in generalizing the peaceful nature of the Arab Muslim conquest or its welcome embrace by all Copts – arguably, they were more prepared to

challenge the master narrative. Such sentiments by Coptic participants towards history education reflect some of what has emerged in studies in the UK where different minority groups lost confidence and interest in history education because of how it largely excluded their communities' histories and contributions (Harris & Reynolds, 2014; Hawkey & Prior, 2011; Wilkinson, 2014). That said, however, it is important to note that the Coptic participants did not necessarily show clear diversions – such as more evolved critical or multi-perspectival critical tendencies - in their approaches to history from Muslim participants. They, like most Muslim participants, despite this general cynicism vis-à-vis the curriculum seem to be appropriating and reproducing some of the resilient elements of the schematic narrative template like other participants, as outlined earlier.

Lack of a coherent historical narrative offered by the Church's Sunday School curriculum.

Although Sunday School curricula did not seem to offer a coherent alternative history for Coptic participants per se, they mostly seemed to possess a general understanding of Coptic history, mostly based on what these curricula offer regarding the Church's history, its popes, and saints. According to some of the participants, these curricula entailed some contextualization of the time period under discussion. However, as noted, these curricula avoid discussing interactions between the Church and the ruling elite during those period, especially injustices committed by some of the Arab Muslim rulers against Egyptians in general, or Copts more specifically. Some of these abuses and injustices against Copts seem to only be included in more advanced Sunday School teacher preparation curricula and discussions so as to prepare those future teachers to handle such difficult questions in case they arise in their future classrooms, as noted by Peter.

However, it is worth noting that in presenting the omitted and misrepresented Coptic historical narratives, most of the Coptic participants referred to similar events they believed were

omitted such as '*Al Watheeqa Al 'Umareyya'* and violence during the Arab Muslim conquest. Thus, although they do not seem to learn this content in a systematic way through the Sunday School's curriculum, these issues seem to be vivid and commonly referred to among parts of the Coptic community. Given their own lived experience with demolishing and burning of churches or forced internal displacement over the past few years, these more historical examples, references, and comparisons are understandably discussed even more frequently and are becoming even more relevant in the Copts' quest to make sense of their current realities, even if this is not done in a formal or structured manner through written curricula or lesson plans in Sunday Schools or elsewhere.

Given this lack of a coherent alternative historical narrative offered by the Coptic Orthodox Church's official channels, as embodied in its Sunday School curriculum, Coptic participants were largely left to their own devices to seek to construct a coherent and meaningful historical narrative. Thus, it is only logical that, with such a lack of a coherent alternative narrative – along with the Church's omissions of Arab Muslim conquest and subsequent injustices as confirmed by analyses of the Church's dominant narrative (e.g., Botros, 2006) - Coptic participants would revert to other sources, such as family or transcendental narratives, to fill in those gaps. Reverting to oral family histories has been found to be a common practice among minority groups in several contexts, including Aboriginal students who reverted to their families and communities, becoming their most trustworthy sources of historical knowledge (Conrad et al., 2009; Hamilton & Ashton, 2003; Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998). Similarly, uncritically reverting to 'transcendental' or spiritual-realm narratives (e.g., Lukacs, 1985; VanSledright, 2008) - as was the case with Teresa - seems to be characteristic of marginalized and excluded religious minority groups, as was found to be the case with Muslim students in the UK (Hawkey & Prior, 2011).

Interacting with Coptic Era Misrepresentation and Intergroup Dynamics

As outlined in Chapter 4, past studies have found variations in how participants' approaches to and understandings of history influenced their civic attitudes, and thus the need to introduce sub-categories to capture those nuances, such as the 'Quasi-Genetic' and 'Genetic-Resistant' sub-categories within the historical consciousness typology (Zanazanian, 2012). In the case of this current study – with the introduction of the 'critical-unreflective' subcategory - there is arguably a consistent pattern among participants' approaches to the past and their intergroup dynamics or civic attitudes.

To illustrate, in terms of their civic attitudes, those with either 'critical-reflective' or 'multi-perspectival critical' approaches showed positive tendencies towards intergroup dynamics. The reactions towards the Coptic era's omission or misrepresentation in curricula are a good case to illustrate that. Many of the Muslim participants exhibiting 'critical-reflective' or 'multi-perspectival critical' approaches towards history and the dominant narrative, also acknowledged misrepresentations and expressed clear signs of sympathy and compassion towards Copts, their suffering, and sense of exclusion, whether in school or elsewhere.

Similarly, Coptic participants exhibiting 'critical-reflective' or 'multi-perspectival critical' tendencies, given their ability to historicize the historical injustices for instance, generally exhibited positive attitudes and outlooks towards the Muslim majority. More specifically, the Coptic participants with 'critical-reflective' tendencies were able to see contemporary Muslims as different from their ancestors who might have committed atrocities against Copts historically. Some Coptic participants with those tendencies went as far as presenting both Muslims and Copts as victims facing common challenges and enemies, including ignorance and poverty, and thus merit services and outreach that serves both. As a result, many of those participants decided to be civically engaged in community activities that serve both communities to promote better interfaith relations.

In contrast, participants exhibiting 'critical-unreflective' tendencies, especially reverting to faith-based narratives, seem to exhibit less understanding of, and interest in, dialogue with the religious 'other'. This, for instance, is apparent in how Teresa's main focus remains on her Sunday School and church activities, with no mentions of future involvement in activities that might aim to improve interfaith relations and dynamics. In the case of Hassan, some of his responses actually revealed his negative views of 'non-Islamic' value systems and beliefs, which could negatively shape his interactions with the religious 'other'.

These findings point to convergences and divergences with past efforts such as Zanazanian's (2015a) repertory, outlined in Chapter 4. The findings clearly reflect the repertory's categories in terms of those exhibiting 'critical-reflective' and 'multi-perspectival critical' (or genetical) tendencies. For instance, in some cases, Coptic participants exhibiting those tendencies towards the past made civic engagement choices that aimed to promote interfaith understanding, thereby transcending historical injustices committed against their community. In doing that, they were clearly realizing that "their ethical stance when interacting with the past could and should vary in time for historical contexts and impending present-day realities evolve" and thus, continuing to seek a "fuller understanding … to act in an informed and educated manner" (Zanazanian, 2015a, p. 118). In terms of divergences from the repertory, as discussed, those participants exhibiting 'critical-unreflective' tendencies in this study were unable to be critical towards their communities' narratives, which is unlike what the repertory suggested in terms of how individuals in Quebec with critical tendencies were also critical towards "dominant historical narratives as handed down through collective memory" (Zanazanian, 2015a, p. 118).

General Sense of Exclusion Defining Civic Attitudes

Most participants seem to be redefining their civic engagement based on a general rejection of a nationalistic patriotic discourse that they feel was hijacked by the ruling regime to

serve its own purposes. Thus, a sense of alienation and exclusion seems to be at work in defining many of the Muslim and Christian participants' attitudes towards their understandings of their role in society and their civic engagement. This is clearest in many of the participants' reactions to how the 2011 events and their aftermath, including their media and curricular representations, were manipulated to serve the interests of the ruling regime. Additionally, in the case of Copts, the sense of exclusion and misrepresentation or omission of their historical suffering and contributions, also helped shape their civic attitudes and choices of civic engagement.

As Howarth (2006) argues, resistance shapes identity in many ways, which manifests here with the participants' general feeling that 'their revolution' was hijacked and further misrepresented, and more specifically in the case of Copts that their history is omitted or misrepresented. Thus, such resistance to these omissions or misrepresentations clearly shaped participants' sense of identity and their civic attitudes. I hereby further discuss the potential connection between participants' reaction to the misrepresentations of the 2011 events and their aftermath, and then engage with the Coptic participants' civic attitudes and how those are potentially shaped by their sense of exclusion and misrepresentation.

Participants' reactions towards misrepresentations of 2011 events and aftermath.

For some participants, the 2011 revolution, and its failure to achieve the change it aspired to, represented a major turning point for the rejection of the dominant narrative and anything that has an overly 'nationalistic' tone. Thus, as the data clearly illustrate, in their rejection of the ruling regime's dominant nationalistic narrative, they have moved away from labeling their actions as patriotic or nationalistic. Furthermore, several of them have intentionally shifted towards activities that would eventually empower marginalized segments of society with the hopes that they can become more economically independent and critically aware of the dominant political elite's corruption and manipulations.

The participants' disappointment with the outcomes of their engagement in the 2011 revolution and its aftermaths has led them to revert to civil society work with a new awareness of their role and the need to adopt a more gradual process towards the desired change. This was clear in how several of them observed that the less educated masses were either easily manipulated by the Muslim Brotherhood or other political opponents, whether in the name of religion or through manipulating their poverty, offering them food or other short-term relief items in return for their votes. They also saw that successful manipulation in how the masses and the older generations especially were easily turned against the youth and their positive role in the 2011 uprisings, which was largely vilified by the media which played a powerful role in shaping that public opinion. These findings resonate with the results of an earlier study which interviewed young Egyptian activists, demonstrating how - after brief political engagements and activism during 2011 events – many of them have pragmatically reverted to less confrontational and less risky activities until the opportunity for meaningful political participation would arise again (Abdou & Skalli, 2017).

Another determinant of civic attitudes and motives was a strong awareness of socio-economic class. The emergence of a socio-economic class-consciousness as a crosscutting theme among Copts and Muslims points to an important identity marker that might be overlooked when examining religious divides. As illustrated, several participants referred to their motive for civic engagement as emanating from what they see as their role as individuals belonging to the Egyptian middle class. Seeing themselves as continuing a traditional historical role of that class, several participants were sure to also point out that during to the 2011 events it was middle class people who took to the streets to call for change. Thus, class seems to be approached not only as an identity marker that reinforces and affirms the sense of 'Egyptianness', but also the responsibility this puts on those who belong to it to continue to play an active and positive role in their communities, and in society at large.

Coptic sense of exclusion prompting outreach and community engagement.

In terms of their civic attitudes, as manifested in their current and envisioned future societal roles, Coptic participants mostly exhibited an interest to reach out to be better understood by the Muslim majority. They mostly saw serving communities regardless of their religious affiliations as the route to achieving that. Some of them have already started doing that, such as the personal initiative in Fayoum that supports poor Muslim and Coptic families regardless of their religious background, as well as the work with street children in Cairo, again serving children regardless of their religious backgrounds. As Peter put it, even if these inclusive community service initiatives are not directly educating about Copts and their history, they would, in the very least, result in Muslim beneficiaries appreciating that Copts do not represent a community closed on itself, thus leading to an appreciation of their contributions to society.

Similar to the case of Quebec where the English-speaking minority has clearly exhibited a stronger sense of empathy towards the French-speaking majority (Zanazanian, 2015a), several of the Coptic participants' approaches to history and their choices of civic engagement focusing on interfaith dialogue, seem to exhibit similar tendencies of empathy. In the case of Quebec, this could be emanating from a sense of empathy towards the French-speaking majority, which has been historically mistreated by Quebec's English-speaking minority. However, in this study, this empathy seems to be stemming from the values of service, compassion, and forgiveness being embraced and advanced by the Coptic participants' Christian faith. Additionally, it could be a result of an internalization of the Church's narrative, which proposes oppression and sacrifice as opportunities to test and demonstrate the strength and resilience of one's true faith, emulating the examples of ancient martyrs (e.g., Van Doorn-Harder, 2005). Such outreach could also be informed by a pragmatic choice that these Coptic participants are making in an attempt to create a better, more tolerant, and more egalitarian society for them and for their future families, as Maria indicated, for instance.

Asserting the Copts' 'Egyptianness'.

These positive civic attitudes and outreach by Copts are also a strategy to assert their Egyptianness. Closely connected to their community service outreach, discussed above, is a strong sense of belonging and attachment to Egypt that emerged among most Coptic participants. Several of the Coptic participants seem to be asserting their 'Egyptianness' through various strategies that emerged in their responses. This was clearest in expressing their commitment to serve the country and not to immigrate to the West, for instance. A few of the Coptic participants did so more subtly by critiquing their privileged colleagues in university who are not as attached to the country as they are. According to them, their privileged colleagues are not as attached to the country and to serving it. In critiquing those colleagues, they highlighted how they have other 'nationalities' or have plans to immigrate to other countries. They also emphasized how those colleagues are neither aware of nor proud enough of the country's language, rich culture, and history as they are. In asserting their 'Egyptianness', some Coptic participants, such as Maria, used the class distinction to point to how she knows more Quranic verses than her more privileged and Westernized Muslim colleagues in university. It also emerges in Maria's assertion that Arabic is her beloved language, in response to how her teachers exclaimed how a Christian student, like her, did well in the Arabic language.

These assertions of 'Egyptianness' (Galal, 2012; Tadros, 2013), and the strong sense of rootedness are clearly reinforced by the Church's narrative, which underscores the indigeneity of the Church and the Coptic community (Galal, 2012; Ramzy, 2015; Shafik, 2007). This theme that runs across various elements of the Church's narrative offers an alternative understanding for these Coptic participants that reinforces their belonging, which helps affirm their existence and historical role, even if not clearly or coherently articulated by the Church's Sunday School curriculum. As a result, while the misrepresentation or omission did instigate Coptic participants to question the balance and credibility of their curricula and textbook, none of the Coptic

participants explicitly stated that this misrepresentation or omission influenced their sense of belonging to the nation, for instance. Thus, compared to other minorities that have expressed a sense of alienation from their history curriculum and, by extension, the dominant narratives which omit their histories, such as in the contexts of the UK (Harris & Reynolds, 2014; Wilkinson, 2014) or the US (Epstein, 2000), the Coptic participants – despite their negative sentiments vis-à-vis the curriculum - exhibited a strong sense of history and place that helps them navigate and challenge that alienation or exclusion from the school and wider societal curriculum.

Concluding Remarks

This discussion and the earlier discussion of how some participants exhibited critical yet unreflective tendencies towards faith-based historical narratives bring us to an important issue that merits further discussion. It pertains to discourses (or knowledge systems and epistemologies) that those participants' approaches to, and understandings of, history and their civic attitudes, seem to be embedded within and thus confined and limited by. Thus, in the next chapter, I offer a summary of the key findings presented in this chapter. Then, before offering concluding remarks, I briefly engage with a discussion of these competing knowledge systems and epistemologies that the participants' understandings of history and civic attitudes seem to be shaped by.

Charmaz (2006) reminds us that it is important for all researchers, not only those using a Grounded Theory approach, to try to answer the "So what?" question regarding the contribution of their research (p. 156). To attempt to answer that important question, in this chapter I start by presenting a brief summary of the key findings outlined and discussed over the previous three chapters. Based on these, I present the key dominant discourses that participants' understandings of, and approaches to, history seem to be embedded within and shaped by. I then discuss some of the key implications of this study; finally, based on some of the limitations and findings of this study, I outline some suggestions for future research.

Summary of Key Findings

In this section I offer a summary of the key findings organized by the two key parts of the research question. I start by summarizing findings that emerged regarding how participants interact with the dominant historical narrative. I then summarize key findings regarding how participants' interactions with historical omissions and misrepresentations shape their subjectivities and civic attitudes.

Interactions with the Dominant Narrative

Regarding the participants' interaction with the dominant narrative, it is clear that the majority of participants are critical of it. However, within that critical approach there are variations, which I attempted to capture to add nuances to existing frameworks of historical consciousness. Given my critical approach, guided by critical pedagogy and critical discourse analysis especially, the most significant of these would be the nuances needed within the 'critical' tendencies. The sub-categories I proposed and outlined in Chapter 8 point to the need to distinguish between those individuals who are critical but unreflective in their approaches to the past and to their social positions. Among the critical-reflective, I propose two sub-categories: the

critical-reflective, which is clearly reflective as well as exhibits an ability to deconstruct and critique the dominant narrative, and, the 'critical-reflective and conscious of power dynamics,' which moves beyond deconstructing and critiquing and exhibits an understanding of potential power dynamics and interests motivating such manipulations of the dominant narrative. As the analyses demonstrate, the 2011 events and their aftermath were formative in shaping such critical approaches among most participants.

Thus, participants seem to be experiencing a heightened awareness and a critical and reflective approach to history that might not have been the case for their parents' or grandparents' generations, as some have clearly expressed in pointing to the growing gap between their parents' and older generations' and their own views of the nation and understandings of their roles in society as citizens. This is clear in the large number of participants exhibiting reflective types of approaches, which might be unexpected from participants who are mostly products of a public education system that emphasizes a dominant narrative and the rote memorization of that.

However, these findings need to be approached with caution since the majority of these participants – despite most of them being products of the Egyptian public education system - had the privilege to study in universities or be exposed to extracurricular institutions that often adopt and encourage critical approaches to history. Additionally, some of the participants might have come to their higher education already equipped with strong critical tendencies, based on their experience with tensions between their lived experience and their school history curriculum's attempts to manipulate those and force fit them within the dominant schematic narrative template, as was the case with the state's revisionist narration of the events that took place between 2011 and 2013. However, university coursework and exposure clearly offered participants the tools necessary to further develop that critical outlook and the skills necessary to

allow them to appreciate multiple perspectives, embodying a more evolved and reflective approach to understanding and engaging with the past.

Another important point of caution relates to how some of those individuals who might exhibit what could be initially interpreted as 'critical' approaches, have reverted to alternative sources of knowledge that are equally exclusionary. Thus, we cannot confidently argue that all of these alternative spaces are forces for good or that they promote values of inclusivity and pluralism. Some of them – as we saw clearly in the two cases of the two participants who reverted to religious-based discourses, including one propagated by an independent youth-led history-teaching group - sometimes propagate exclusionary ideas and understandings of history.

Influences of Interactions with Dominant Historical Narrative on Subjectivities and Civic Attitudes

Regarding participants' interactions with misrepresentations and omissions, and the influences on their civic attitudes, participants were generally aware of various types of omissions and misrepresentations. Such awareness seems to be largely shaped by their access to alternative sources of historical knowledge, among the most influential of which seem to be nonfiction historical books and articles, documentaries, university-level courses, followed by the internet and social media (as is presented in Appendix IX).

However, the awareness and reactions of Muslim and Coptic participants regarding the omission or misrepresentation Coptic era varied widely. Except for one, for all Coptic participants this misrepresentation was problematized, whether in their written exercises or when they felt comfortable enough to do so during their one-on-one interviews. With Muslim participants, there seems to be a generally growing sense of compassion and empathy towards the cause of the Copts and their general societal marginalization, seeing the curricular omission as only one manifestation of that. However, in terms of priorities and the prominence of Coptic history misrepresentation among Muslim participants, as discussed, only 10 Muslim participants

(out of the 32 Muslim participants) had initially listed the omission of Coptic history as a misrepresented history in their written exercise or subsequent interviews, which indicates that the Coptic question is not perceived as an immediate concern by most Muslim participants.

Relatedly, a large number of participants who exhibited critical and reflective approaches to understanding and engaging with the past, proposed curricular changes that would aim to foster more tolerance among students. For example, those participants called for school students to be given the needed tools and skills to engage with multiple perspectives and historical narratives to enable them to accept differences. These proposals could point towards a growing awareness of these exclusions and misrepresentations among many of the participants. Thus, arguably, even if most Muslim participants did not necessarily specify Coptic history among the omitted or misrepresented narratives, their call for promoting these methods and approaches could be interpreted as a call for ultimately allowing students to engage with various perspectives and currently misrepresented histories, including the Coptic history.

In terms of civic attitudes, there seems to be a commonly expressed shift in civic engagement, especially in terms of motives, intents and purposes. Again, 2011 events and their aftermath featured significantly among the major reasons for such shifts. For Coptic participants, more specifically, it was more evident that their sense of exclusion dictated their communal outreach and voluntary efforts, seeking to improve interfaith relations with their Muslim compatriots.

Such analyses necessitated an engagement with the discourses that these participants' approaches to history, and their understandings of their roles in society, are embedded within and limited by. Based on that analysis, I briefly present the key elements informing those dominant discourses that emerge: a territorial nationalistic discourse, and a religious-based discourse.

Competing Dominant Societal Discourses Emerging in Participants' Responses

From the earlier discussions it becomes apparent that while most participants seem to be aware of and are able to resist some elements of the schematic narrative template and the dominant narrative, there are more resilient elements and conceptions that are taken for granted as 'common sense' and that are mostly left unchallenged. Dominant ideologies succeed, as Fairclough (2003) reminds us, through maintaining "relations of power" by making sure they are "widely taken as given"; in other words, consolidating a "hegemony" is fundamentally achieved through an ability to "universalize particular meanings" to maintain their dominance (p. 58).

Dominant ideologies are rarely explicitly reinforced in curriculum. As discussed earlier, they are subtly propagated as 'common sense' or the natural order of matters. Although this study did not entail a full critical discourse analysis, given that this study is strongly inspired by those critical approaches, it would be pertinent to point to some dominant discourses that emerged in participants' responses. Critical pedagogy scholars call on us to engage with and problematize how dominant discourses permeate curriculum, thus disrupting ways that "hegemonic cultural and educational practices … reproduce the logics of neoliberal conservatism" and other hegemonic ideologies (Denzin, 2007, p. 462), including how those discourses inform curriculum and its enactment in ways that reinforce "the construction of neoliberal conceptions of identity, citizenship, and agency" (p. 463). The permeation of these ideologies in curriculum globally is what prompted critical scholars to call on researchers and teachers to "combat against a social epistemology that discursively limits the chances of conceiving this world outside of a neoliberal and neoconservative context" (Lopes & Macedo, 2014, p. 92).

As outlined earlier, such critical engagement should hopefully help teachers and students see the shortcomings of current frameworks, and thus work towards defining new emancipatory ways of knowing and being in the world. In other words, as Gee (2011) argues, we need to

continue to question how various texts – including curriculum - "privilege or disprivilege …
different ways of knowing and believing or claims to knowledge and belief" (p. 20).

The relevance of this discussion stems from the fact that historical narratives are clearly
embedded in particular discourses and ways of viewing the world. Further, such a discussion
would hopefully elucidate the need of having future research dedicated to studying this important
question.

Limited by understanding history's nature as cyclical?

As discussed in the previous chapter, it seems that the vast majority of participants – as a
result of the schematic narrative template and its manifestations in curriculum, as well as the
defeat of the 2011 revolution – see the nature of history as cyclical. The issue is not with the
cyclical understanding of history, but with the tone that accompanied such depiction, which
revealed a sense of defeatism and apathy, as is clearly illustrated in the excerpts shared from
several participants. In contrast, none of the participants used that cyclical nature to paint a
hopeful image of the future or to forecast the eventual triumph of the will of the masses. This
sense of apathy and defeatism was also expressed in the lack of enthusiasm or, in some cases, the
expression of reluctance and cynicism vis-à-vis the exercise prompting participants to propose
curricular changes if they were in a leadership position (Questions 8 and 9 of the interview).

This cyclical understanding of the nature history seems to negate human agency, which
would be clearly problematized by critical pedagogy scholars. Critical pedagogy scholars would
view a propagation of the nature of history as cyclical as a tool to bestow a sense of legitimacy
and inevitability on the status quo. Thus, critical curriculum theorists and scholars would
necessitate that a curriculum acknowledge and emphasize people's struggles and their role in
making history (Buras, 2006; Dimitriadis & McCarthy, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2003). Such an
emphasis on the role of people's agency and movements in shaping the course of history
necessitates a focus on historical discontinuities (e.g., Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003;

Giroux, 1992). This would be in sharp contrast to the disempowering understanding which has emerged from most of the participants of history being a series of failed people's struggles that create a vacuum, which is then used by a more organized and opportunistic ruling elite to continue to consolidate its hold on power and resources.

Confined within competing dominant discourses and epistemologies?

As illustrated, a few of the participants seem to be breaking out of a nationalist discourse as most clearly exhibited in their choices and references to their civic engagement, where some have explained that they are driven by a desire to serve humanity and address human needs regardless of the target group's nationality and wherever they might be located, for instance. These few participants are engaging in fundamental questions, such as the raison d'être of notions such as the 'nation-state', its relevance and legitimacy. Apart from those few participants, however, most participants are generally confined within the limitations of dominant discourses that might be limiting their worldviews and thus defining their inability to construct productive alternatives. While many of the critical participants seem to have stopped at deconstructing a dominant historical narrative or dominant societal discourse, they do not seem to see an alternative approach or to be able to articulate or construct one. Another clear manifestation of this phenomenon is how some participants, in seeking an alternative approach to history, decided to uncritically revert to a religious-based narrative embedded in a religious discourse and epistemology.

Participants' negotiation and grappling with these discourses seems to generally reflect the conundrum that Cochran (1986) has argued has been characteristic of modern Egyptian society. As she argues, the Egyptian educational system, "with its history of elite and populace divergence has created a country whose people are in conflict with themselves" (pp. 156-157). She contrasts those who have been seeking to continue to impose training which ensures "obedience and conformity to the religious and cultural heritage of the past", to those "trained

toward an expression of change and … technology" (pp. 156-157). These competing camps also resemble what Anderson (1983/2006) has characterized as the traditional competition for allegiance and loyalty between national and religious affiliation, especially as he argues that affiliation to "religious community" was the "taken-for-granted" frame of reference to later on find competition from notions of "nationality" and national belonging (p. 12), promoted by the territorial nationalist discourse.

Thus, I propose that, as reflected in their responses, most participants seem to be operating within two discourses or limited by focusing on deconstructing them. Although these discourses are characterized by overlaps and points of intersection, for the sake of argument, we might define the two as a 'nationalistic territorial discourse' and a 'religious' or 'faith-based discourse'. These closely reflect the competing ideologies over the country's cultural identity and resources: the nationalist territorial, and the supranationalist Islamist orientations.

The nationalistic territorialist discourse emerged in the uncritical internalization and appropriation of key elements of the dominant narrative and schematic narrative template, discussed in Chapter 8. Regarding the exclusionary religious-based discourse, as was clear, some participants were immersed in and products of this discourse. Moreover, this discourse has also shaped some participants' lived experiences. As illustrated in the data analyses, it was clear that teachers, many of whom are products of this exclusionary religious-based discourse, played an important role in propagating it. This was especially clear in how those teachers drew rigid religious boundaries between various groups, especially excluding the Copts. This emerged in the experiences narrated by Maria from Fayoum whose teacher argued that a Christian student could not excel in Arabic because this is not the language of non-Muslims, but the language of Islam. Similarly, as narrated by Randa from Bani Suef, when a young Coptic student joined his Muslim classmates to joke and mock an Islamic saying, their Muslim teacher reminded him that he was not allowed to make fun of 'our religion'.

This exclusionary religious discourse clearly sees religious minorities and their histories as less significant or possibly of some bygone importance that was displaced with the advent of Islam, and thus would not merit being studied. Thus, empowered by standardized assessments that do not give much weight to the Coptic historical era and its contributions, it is this discourse that also empowers Muslim teachers to gloss over or totally ignore covering the few pages dedicated to the Coptic history, as some participants had pointed out.

How the competing dominant discourses converge and diverge from each other.

These generally dominant and competing discourse camps that manifest in the participants' responses in various ways, obviously share some commonalities, such as their commitment to neoliberal economic ideologies, including the central role of the market, and to social conservatism. As highlighted in Chapter 1, the two discourses also share common elements in their approaches to history, including, for instance, that they both confound historical evidence with transcendental or spiritual narratives, such as when they are dealing with ancient Egyptian history. Importantly, the territorial nationalistic discourse might deliberately draw on those transcendental or spiritual narratives and highlight them in order to appease the religious public or religious-based political opposition movements.

Relatedly, one of the key features common between the two discourses – the nationalistic and the Islamic religious-based one – is their relationship with the ancient Egyptian history and ancient indigenous knowledge and belief systems, which is either superficial or dialectical. In both cases 'ancient Egypt' is purposefully constructed to serve their particular ends. The nationalistic discourse uses that history to give itself legitimacy for its narrative of a primordial distinct nature of the Egyptian nation with modern day borders (e.g., Botros, 2012).

The Islamic discourse seems to follow either of two strategies vis-à-vis that ancient Egyptian past: it follows the Judeo-Christian tradition in negating ancient Egyptian knowledge systems and their significant contributions in an effort to give itself supremacy and legitimacy

(e.g., Assmann, 1998). Alternatively, the other strategy - which we see clearly manifest in curriculum - is one that uses ancient Egyptian history to offer legitimacy to monotheism and Islam specifically, by focusing on the inclination of ancient Egyptians towards monotheism, especially through King Akhenaten's efforts. Through that emphasis, the curriculum confirms not only the spiritual inclination of Egyptians but also the 'natural' instinctive human inclination towards monotheism as opposed to polytheism, thus clearly presenting monotheism "as superior to paganism or polytheism" (Abdou, 2016, p. 13).

Where these two discourses diverge is potentially how they define Egypt's cultural identity and the place and rights afforded to religious minorities and women in society. To illustrate how that difference would be articulated through critical discourse analysis tools, I draw on Fairclough's (2003) distinctions in how various discourses view or represent social actors differently. So, arguably, on one hand, in the case of the nationalistic Egyptian discourse, religious minorities might be included as social actors, however, through a strategy of "backgrounding" they would basically be positioned in the background and largely 'passivated'. On the other hand, in a religious-based discourse, through a strategy of "suppression", religious minorities' roles and contributions as social actors would be largely omitted (pp. 145-146).

Given their resilience and the various manifestations they might include, these dominant societal discourses could be considered more of 'meta discourses' or "discourses of truth", that as Foster and Crawford (2006) explain – in drawing on Foucault's work - construct a "regime of truth" within which several mutually reinforcing discourses could co-exist (p. 3). Thus, within these dominants 'meta discourses' there are several variations. The key point, however, is that given the dominance of those camps or orientations, other alternative visions and epistemologies have been sidelined, if not totally devalued or ignored. Missing in most of the participants' approaches and articulations is what Bartolomé (2007) calls being exposed to and developing

"effective counterhegemonic discourses to resist and transform" these dominant societal discourses (p. 280).

Through this brief discussion I mainly attempted to underscore the need for alternative visions and epistemologies to be developed and eventually to co-exist, combine with, or possibly offer a comprehensive alternative to replace the existing discourses or knowledge systems that seem to be dominating curriculum currently and thus limiting students' abilities of alternative ways of seeing and understanding history and current realities. Also, inspired by critical scholars' call to not stop at deconstructing dominant narratives and challenging the very conditions "in which power/knowledge systems reproduce themselves", but to provide some alternatives (Pashby, 2011, p. 431), in discussing curricular reforms, I briefly outline an alternative approach based on Egyptian indigenous knowledge systems. The permeation and maintenance of these conflicting discourses and ideologies into the Egyptian educational system and its curricula is arguably not haphazard, since they continue to serve dominant interests and visions of the country.

The dominance of these discourses has been further advanced due to the lack of a clear educational philosophy. In her analysis of the evolution of discourses related to public education in Egypt, Sayed (2006) highlights the continued "absence of a clear educational philosophy" as a "common thread running through the various and often opposing trends of thought engaging Egyptian intellectual, political and public discourse" (p. 61). The lack of an educational philosophy – which some scholars have pointed to – in Egypt and several other countries in the region, is perhaps a tangible outcome of that tension. At the same time, it serves to reinforce the status quo, which impedes enacting a progressive philosophy and vision for Egyptian education. Such tension also clearly impedes the emergence of and support for an alternative curricular approach that might be embedded in ancient indigenous knowledge systems and worldviews.

<center>**Implications and Scholarly Contributions of the Study**</center>

Theoretical Implications

Acknowledging nuances within individuals' approaches to history and the dominant narrative.

The study confirms the significant influences that national schematic narrative templates (Wertsch, 1998) have, as well as the general success of the efforts of the ruling elites in propagating imaginings that define and delimit individuals' understandings of the nature of the nation, the national group, thus shaping individual subjectivities and civic identities (Anderson, 1983/2006; Carretero, 2017; Hobsbawm, 1990, 1997). Even if these visions are not fully internalized by individuals, the study demonstrated that - in the very least – they contribute to shaping individuals' understanding and outlooks vis-à-vis the nation and its history.

Additionally, the study captures important nuances and manifestations of individuals' sense of agency and their ongoing negotiations with the master narrative that might otherwise go unnoticed. One of the key contributions of this study is what emerged in terms of the nuances of participants' approaches to history, which were captured in the model I proposed, and which build on existing frameworks. In terms of implications for the history education classroom and critical curriculum development, these nuances that have emerged within the traditional and critical tendencies should offer insights for dealing with various types of students in the quest to develop more evolved 'critical' historical consciousness. For instance, participants who might be seen as 'traditional' in their approaches to history, but who are starting to exhibit critical or reflective approaches towards some dimensions, such as societal norms, could be offered curricular and extracurricular opportunities to continue to develop these reflective tendencies in engaging with the dominant narrative and various histories. Similarly, students who exhibit critical tendencies, but who are also unreflective - or selectively critical only vis-à-vis particular narratives - need to be supported in developing historical research tools to more critically engage with the various historical narratives they are exposed to, in a systematic and methodical manner.

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Being guided by critical pedagogy and critical discourse analysis has further helped me elucidate and reveal key elements of the dominant discourses confining participants' understandings and approaches to history and the nation. Those observations could have gone unnoticed if I were not in tune with and conscious of the power of various competing discourses in shaping individuals' lived experiences and outlooks, as critical discourse theorists emphasize. This deliberate attempt to map out the various discourses was also further facilitated by the use of a Grounded Theory approach, which I discuss further in the next section that is dedicated to discussing the methodological implications.

Methodological Implications

      Benefits of employing multiple data collection methods.

Using multiple data collection methods offered several advantages. The sequenced use of these methods over a period of a few weeks also allowed me to build a rapport and a relationship with the participants. This allowed some initially shy and reclusive participants to gradually open up and be more forthcoming with sharing their experiences. This was more apparent in the case of participants who seemed to be exercising some sort of self-censorship. For instance, a few of the Coptic participants did not mention anything about how they took issue with the omission or misrepresentation of the Coptic era in their curricula in their written responses. In the case of Sandy, she only problematized that omission during the interview. The same could possibly be said about Maria's case where she only casually wrote an indirect critique in her written response, exclaiming "I would've wanted to learn more about *Al Watheeqa Al Omareyya*", but during the interview the question of Coptic marginalization emerged more centrally in her responses. This was different in the cases of Teresa, Heidi, and Shenouda who brought up this omission and critiqued it more boldly both in their written and oral responses. Had I depended solely on the written exercises, I would have only been able to capture a much less nuanced image of the participants and the various strategies and tactics they use to present themselves and

their experiences.

In addition to my own observations, some of the participants also expressed that the engaging in various data collection activities offered them a unique opportunity for self-reflections and for making some mental connections that they had not contemplated before, especially that these data collection opportunities were spaced out over a few weeks. For instance, some participants commented on how that time offered them the opportunity to make connections between their approaches and understandings of history with their past or current civic engagement which they had rarely considered before.

Capturing unique nuances through participatory visual methods.

Stemming from my positionality and commitment to participatory research, the workshop aimed to create an additional opportunity and space to give participants voice. While throughout this study I aimed to create an empowering and emancipatory space for participants, I believe that the use of these visual participatory methods particularly encouraged the students to assume their roles as 'co-investigators' (Freire, 2000), and allowed their voices to be creatively and organically expressed and captured. Through the dynamics and the energy created by the participatory visual methods workshop, it became clear how those participatory techniques can be used to get at, account for, and represent elusive meanings which other methods might not capture as readily.

Additionally, using participatory visual methods proved especially productive in exploring questions of social representation. For instance, the inability of most participants to represent several of the omitted or misrepresented minority groups, which they had pointed out are omitted from the curriculum, helped them realize that these narratives are also omitted from their own personal and the collective visual imaginations. This was clearest when several of the participants struggled to find appropriate images to visually represent Copts, Nubians, Berbers, or Egyptian Jews. Thus, asking participants to visualize and represent an omitted narrative in

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drawing propelled them to more readily confront some of their ignorance about and inability to represent what is missing in curricula, pointing them towards problematizing the wider societal omission and marginalization that reflects, produces, and reproduces curricular omissions.

Space for a fuller participatory methodological approach.

I believe that adopting a participatory approach presented several benefits. For instance, in addition to capturing their visions and recommendations for how they would reconceptualize history education in Egypt, which I will attempt to share with the Egyptian MOE, some participants mentioned that the mere fact that they were encouraged to reflect on some of their experiences and explore connections, that they might not have thought existed between their understanding of history and their civic engagement, was inspiring. Thus, arguably, together with the participants, I experienced part of the potential of constructivism, where "[p]ropositional, transactional knowing is instrumentally valuable as a means to social emancipation" (Lincoln & Guba, 2005, p. 198). Additionally, some participants commented on how they found connecting with some like-minded individuals through the participatory visual methods workshop both inspiring and reassuring. However, I believe that there was still some room for the study to be more participatory and inclusive. For instance, due to time constraints during my field visit I did not have the opportunity to involve my participants in the data analysis process, which I was initially hoping to do. However, as mentioned above, I had offered all 39 participants to review the full draft of this dissertation, including the data analyses chapters. And I made sure to incorporate all comments received from those who shared their feedback with me.

Benefits of adopting an inductive Grounded Theory approach.

Adopting a Grounded Theory approach was beneficial especially that this study explored a question that is highly understudied, particularly in the Egyptian context. Going to the field equipped with a general understanding of what other studies had found in other contexts was extremely helpful. However, being guided by that inductive approach, I continued to be

reminded of the importance of not allowing those existing frameworks to influence my findings and analyses. Such an approach, for instance, is arguably what liberated me from attempting to force fit past frameworks of historical consciousness unto the Egyptian context. Instead, the Grounded Theory approach allowed me to capture nuances – as illustrated in the new proposed types that emerged from the study – that would have otherwise potentially gone unnoticed and that could be beneficial for the future study of the Egyptian context, as well as other contexts.

Proposed Curricular Reforms

As outlined in Chapter 1, reviewing the body of literature developed by critical pedagogy scholars points to elements of desired curriculum reforms. Based on this study and the sense of exclusion and alienation experienced by several of the participants, I would recommend that curricular reforms, especially of social studies curricula, include instilling missing narratives and perspectives; emphasizing human agency; and, promoting the development of historical research methods.[52] Importantly, such reform would also include an awareness of the discourses governing the curricula and that are clearly being internalized by, and thus limit, Egyptian students' subjectivities and outlooks.

Inspired by critical pedagogy's vision of a social studies curriculum, along with the insights shared by participants regarding their visions of an ideal curriculum, I present the key curricular revisions proposed. Although the two are closely connected and intertwined, I divide the proposed curricular reforms into curricular content and the curricular approaches. As for the curricular approaches proposed, in response to the dominance of generally exclusionary discourses, briefly outlined above, the curricular approaches proposed center around introducing such content in more inclusive ways that embrace a more indigenous framework of knowing and

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[52] Some inspiring efforts include alternative historical narratives developed in contexts such as the US. For instance, some attempts include Loewen's influential book *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (1992), which aimed to not only highlight key shortcomings in history textbooks, but also to provide an alternative narrative "retelling of American history as it should- and could- be taught to American students" (Ladson-Billings, 2003, p. 1).

acting in the world. However, before doing that I briefly present some of the positive aspects of the formal curriculum that were highlighted by some participants.

Positive aspects of the formal Egyptian curriculum.

Albeit their paucity, there were some positive aspects highlighted by some participants. For instance, Yara expressed her admiration of how the curriculum of Arabic literature (*al-adab al-'arabi*) was presented in a chronological manner in the formal secondary school curriculum, which helped her learn about and appreciate the evolution of that literature from the pre-Islamic *'Gahiliyya'* period up until modern Arabic literature. Also, Shams showed a great admiration for the Political Geography curriculum (*al-gughrafiya al-siyasiyah*). Shams explained that it was not only her own personal admiration of that curriculum, but that numerous students in her school shared the same sentiments. Based on an informal survey that she initiated during her final year of school in 2015, she concluded that the vast majority of around 1,000 students who took the survey found this subject matter extremely useful and helpful for them in understanding "the world, politics, international relations, technology, empires and their relations", as she explained. She particularly commented on how it was helpful for this curriculum to connect geography to history in a way that was unusual for most other geography curricula, which were typically taught devoid of explicit connection to history or politics.

Proposed reform of curricular content.

Including religious and ethnic minority narratives and contributions.

There needs to be an inclusion of ancient and modern contributions and struggles of various minority groups. However, these contributions should not be confined to discussing a particular group or an era only. As recommended by some participants, mentions of Copts and their contributions should not be confined to the brief 'Coptic era' section of the curriculum. Some of the specific omitted contributions that were mentioned, especially by Coptic participants, included the omitted fact that the Egyptian engineer who created the idea of

overcoming Israeli constructed barriers over the Suez Canal during the 1973 war was a Copt.

Additionally, the role of Pope Kyrollos to encourage female education across the country, needs

to be acknowledged, given that his role preceded that of other more famed pioneers who

advocated women rights, such as the Muslim intellectual and activist Qasim Amin. Including

Coptic contributions throughout the history curriculum might also avoid the fact that many of

those contributions often get sidelined given that the Coptic era is often taught at the end of the

academic year, and thus is either glossed over or altogether ignored, as pointed out by some

participants. [how about the struggles as well?].

It is equally important to point to the various forms of exclusion, beyond the Coptic

omission or misrepresentation. As has emerged from the data analysis, it is clear that there are

various forms of exclusion in Egyptian society based on class, gender, and ethnicity, not only on

the basis of religious backgrounds. Thus, while an important case, the exclusion of the Coptic

minority in school and curricula should not overshadow other forms of exclusions and racisms

that need to be confronted in Egyptian society. As was clear, for instance, there is a sense of

gender exclusion, a bias towards urban centers over rural areas and the peripheries, as well as a

bias to upper classes at the expense of working and middle class in formal curricula. Some

participants also noted the exclusion and general omission of the Nubian and Berber minority

narratives particularly. Thus, the scope of curricular reforms regarding omitted narratives needs

to be wider, looking at various forms of exclusions and racisms.

Including multiple narratives and perspectives, especially vis-à-vis the 2011 events and their aftermaths.

History curricula need to include missing narratives of minorities as well as different

perspectives especially of recent events, such as the momentous 2011 and 2013 events. As

illustrated in this study, those are vivid collective memories that have either been experienced or

narrated to these students; thus, if they are not represented in more inclusive ways that embrace

various perspectives, students will continue to be alienated and lose any trust in their history education and possibly formal education more generally.

This needs to be part of a general direction towards the inclusion of people's historical struggles to give students a sense of agency. Part of the disconnect that participants felt towards the history curriculum seems to be due to the fact that it is intentionally presented devoid of people's agency. If it were to be presented with a strong focus on people's struggles and historical injustices – as some participants recommended and as critical pedagogy scholars would advocate – then students would potentially create a stronger connection with history and a potentially more critical reflection on their own place and role within it.

This would ideally include inviting students to narrate their own personal accounts as well as interview family and community members. Inviting individual and community oral histories into the classroom is an important part of the effort of democratizing the history subject matter and formal education more generally (Llewellyn & Ng-A-Fook, 2017; Ng-A-Fook, 2007). Ushering in these "countermemories" which are often "repressed memories" (Strong-Wilson, 2008, p. 79) into the classroom, although a challenging exercise for teachers, offers several advantages, including helping students develop empathy towards the sense of exclusion and historical injustices that some of their colleagues and their communities have experienced. Such changes that would infuse curricula with a stronger understanding and appreciation of diversity, multiplicity of perspectives, and pluralism, would potentially safeguard the social cohesion and fabric of Egyptian society, as opposed to what some might fear as a process that would lead to further fragmentation and polarization.

Including role models and historical figures that students can identify with.
To illustrate the impact that such inclusion would have on students, it is worth noting how participants spoke about events or figures they identified with or found inspirational. Several participants spoke about how they identified with and found inspiration in particular

historical figures, especially those with demographics, traits, or attributes similar to their own. For instance, some of the female participants clearly indicated how some ancient Egyptian female rulers, especially Hatshepsut, offered good role models that they identified with.

Similarly, participants from outside large urban centers like Cairo seem to have particularly identified with historical figures from their own governorates or towns. Randa had cited how she still remembered names and details of some characters from her native Bani Suef that her social studies teacher had shared through offering some extracurricular materials. She explained that she found those historical figures inspiring and felt it made her aspire to be like some of them. In the visual methods workshop, in problematizing the Cairo-centered narrative, Sherif from Gharbeyya, made sure to share with the other participants that El Nahhas Pasha, a former prime minister and a prominent anti-colonial politician, is also from his native town of Samannoud and that this needed to be included in the curriculum since it currently is not. He had only learned about this through his own individual research after graduating secondary school. Including these diverse historical figures seems to allow students to build some connection to the curricular content, something which seems to be direly needed, given the strong sense of aversion or ambivalence many have exhibited towards the curriculum.

Implications for enacting the curriculum.

If these curricular content reforms outlined above are to be effective in instilling a new sense of active and responsible citizenship and belonging among all students regardless of their backgrounds, they need to be accompanied by other considerations, including how curricula are enacted in the classroom. This would include how teacher education programs prepare teachers in how they view women and various worldviews and belief systems. As illustrated earlier for instance, in enacting the curriculum, several teachers were said to have mocked and ridiculed

female rulers of Egypt, such as Cleopatra and Shagaret El-Durr, as well as ancient Egyptian belief systems in their classrooms.

Additionally, several participants explained how history education as a subject matter was not given the due attention or weight in their schooling. This might need to be reconsidered by Egyptian curriculum developers and policy makers as part of a larger pertinent discussion that needs to take place about the marginalized place and perceived lower status of the Humanities in the Egyptian schooling system, higher education, and Egyptian society at large (Fahmy, 2017).

Less content and less emphasis on rote memorization.

As presented through the data analysis and discussion, several participants clearly expressed how they strongly disliked school history because of how it valued rote memorization at the expense of critical analysis and thinking. They specifically mentioned how ancient Egyptian history was taught in ways that were 'boring' and 'uninteresting', depending solely on the memorization of events, names of kings and queens, and their achievements. Additionally, some participants pointed to the irony of how, although the system seems to aim for students to be proud of the country's ancient history, there were no real efforts made in the curricular content or classroom discussions to help students appreciate the connection between that ancient past and their present.

This general rejection of, or distancing from, the ancient Egyptian history might have been further strengthened by several participants' critical approach towards the nationalistic narrative, which overemphasizes these connections to serve its purposes as discussed earlier. Alternatively, it could be a result of how contemporary Egyptian history textbooks have been found to present cultural continuity and change in ways that would potentially weaken the sense of connection and affinity between students and the country's ancient history (Abdou, 2016).

It is worth noting that past and current curricular reform efforts in Egypt seem to be clearly cognizant of that need of removing unnecessary content and addressing the issue of these

overloaded curricula. As Sayed (2006) notes, based on her interviews with education and curriculum development experts involved in the reforms of the 1990s and early 2000s, "the experts aimed at shortening the overloaded and long school curriculum which encouraged rote learning without stimulating critical and scientific thinking" (p. 113). In reality, however, as is confirmed by this study, despite ongoing calls by thousands of parents and students alike to remove unnecessary and irrelevant details, especially from history curricula (Diaa, 2016; Sobhy, 2016), there still is an overload of content and a high value placed on passive rote memorization.

Striking a balance between desired historical skills and content.

In enacting the curriculum, a difficult balance to strike is the one between trying to cover a particular content while also attempting to help students develop historical research skills. It is understandable that some policy makers and curriculum developers would worry about instilling those skills, fearing that there be multiple understandings of the national history and various competing narratives, which could weaken the credibility of the dominant narrative and thus weaken a sense of a collective national identity. However, as is clear from the data, this erosion of a collective sense of national identity and belonging is already taking place - and rapidly - among young Egyptian. With the lack of historical research tools, young Egyptians are left prey to any other sources. What emerge from the earlier analyses are three types of sources or issues: First, there is the transcendental narrative, as is the case in the Coptic Church's beliefs in miracles such as those of the Muqattam Hill movement myth. Second, and closely connected to the first, there is the Islamist narration of history which some of the participants seemed to have sought by joining some organized groups that claim to be representing a balanced approach to history, but are doing so from a faith-based perspective. Third, with the lack of historical tools, several of the participants cited their family stories as sources of inspiration or sources of narratives that allowed them to question the master narrative.

Thus, pragmatically speaking, curriculum developers might want to include historical research skills to equip students so that they would not fall prey to clearly biased and exclusionary discourses, including extremist religious-based historical narratives. As illustrated, in reaction to the absence of their narratives and perspectives and having lost trust in the official curriculum some Muslim and Coptic participants – unequipped with historical research approaches and tools - are uncritically reverting to religious-based historical narratives. When we are not giving our students the tools to do historical research and also when the dominant narrative offers an incomplete and clearly biased version of the pat, students lose trust not only in how it covers events that they have seen misrepresented, but potentially the national historical narrative as a whole.

Thus, while there is a need for inclusion of missing minority narratives, it is important to avoid overloading curricula with content. In addition to making sure that students feel included and that their communities' histories and contributions are represented, it is of utmost importance for curriculum to be enacted in ways that help students develop the historical research skills that enable them to carry out their own independent historical research and to evaluate the various competing historical narratives they are exposed to in society.

Proposed reform of curricular approaches and perspectives.
Curriculum theorist William Pinar, a leading figure in the reconceptualization movement, calls for a radical approach to reforming curriculum (2004, 2014). For instance, he has argued for the need to avoid piecemeal changes and, instead, to articulate bolder alternatives. Along with other reconceptualist curriculum theorists, Pinar (2004) has called for avoiding short-term or temporary remedies, such as "plugging into" or "co-opting" parts of the curriculum; alternatively, we need to work towards a "fundamental reconceptualization of what curriculum is, how it functions, and how it might function in emancipatory ways" (p. 154). Through their historical analysis of the evolution of Brazilian education, Brazilian curriculum theorists Lopes

and Macedo (2014) illustrate the importance of questioning power dynamics being promoted through curriculum, which entail asking the most fundamental questions related to:

> … the connection between legitimate knowledge, hegemony, and processes of economic exclusion; reasons and effects of the unequal distribution of knowledge, the naturalization of academic knowledge as being more valid and more accurate; and questioning the selection of school knowledge. (p. 90)

Thus, ideally what would be needed, as Bickmore (2008) suggests, is to equip students to not only "build procedural and substantive knowledge", but also "facilitate constructive questioning (deconstruction) of the sources, shape, and drivers of that knowledge" (p. 157). Building on these arguments by leading scholars, I would argue that there need to be spaces afforded for other discourses and worldviews to be constructed and allowed to co-exist with the dominant ones. Given the dominance of some discourses and ideologies to the exclusion of other perspectives as has emerged and was outlined above, ideally the Egyptian curriculum would at least make room for other perspectives, including an indigenous perspective that could be inspired by the well-documented ancient Egyptian knowledge and belief system. Creating space for alternative visions informed by other knowledge systems might help move society beyond these ideological binaries or dichotomies outlined above. It might also contribute to addressing the strong sense of alienation and polarization that several of the participants have expressed vis-à-vis the older generations or Egyptian society at large.

As I outline below, the proposed approach would not stop at merely including content that acknowledges contributions or struggles of traditionally marginalized groups, and highlights fundamental elements of cultural continuities and changes across the various historical eras starting with ancient Egyptian history as would be proposed by some 'Egyptianist' scholars (Abdou, 2015; Gershoni & Jankowski, 1986). It addition to presenting such curricular content and narrative, this approach would fully acknowledge and be guided by indigenous approaches

and understandings of Egyptian society and its history. Currently, as emerges from the data analyses and discussion above, these indigenous approaches are largely sidelined as part of the 'null curriculum,' or as Eisner (1994) explains, "the options students are not afforded, the perspectives they may never know about" (p. 107).

Creating space for indigenous ancient Egyptian approaches and perspectives.

In proposing ways to operationalize the seminal work presented in the book *Southern Theory* by Connell (2007), Takayama et al. (2016) highlight the centrality of "Indigenous knowledge" in the framework proposed to explore alternative theories that might emerge from the global South to challenge the dominance and hegemony of Western perspectives (p. 7). One key component of that effort would be to identify and contest "the processes and mechanisms of academic knowledge production that sustain the uneven knowledge producing relationship both within and across nation-states" (p. 11). There have been some excellent efforts by several scholars who have explored how African curricula could better integrate and embrace indigenous knowledge systems and perspectives (e.g., Nashon, Anderson, & Wright, 2007; Sigauke, 2016; Wane, 2013), and how the Western academy can better include those discourses and perspectives (e.g., Dei, 2000; Emeagwali & Dei, 2014). Those scholarly efforts can certainly be built upon for the Egyptian case.

If Egyptian history curricula adopt a cultural continuity perspective, this could help promote values of tolerance and respect for diversity including various minorities, perspectives, and narratives that might otherwise be excluded or diminished, as is currently the case. Ideally this approach would go hand-in-hand with promoting critical thinking and developing historical research tools. The current curricular distancing from ancient pre-Abrahamic indigenous knowledge and belief systems could be a result of the initial distancing from those knowledge and belief systems which was introduced by the advent of the Abrahamic tradition to Egypt (Assmann, 1998), which has led to a general ignorance and sometimes an unfair demonization of

ancient Egyptian belief systems. Further, it could be a result of a possible internalization by modern day Western-educated Egyptian intellectuals - contributing to various discourses including the nationalistic discourse - of a sense of superiority of Western knowledge systems. This internalization is often inherently accompanied and reinforced by an adoption of an uncritical Orientalist perspective that generally diminishes the significance of local and indigenous knowledge systems – whether those that pre-date the advent of the Abrahamic tradition or not - rendering them inferior (e.g., Piterberg, 1997).

This orientation manifests, for instance, in how these narratives clearly vilify the Ottoman Empire, constructing it as the backward enemy of the Egyptian nation and people (Fahmy, 1997; Piterberg, 1997). The permeation of this Western influence has also been reproduced by the strong Western forces shaping modern Egyptian schooling and curricula from the outset. As highlighted in Chapters 2 and 3, the way modern Egyptian education has been conceived - whether by various rulers starting with Mehmed Ali or the multiple waves of Western Christian missionary schools - has clearly been influenced by Western visions of education and thus potentially some of its defining discourses and philosophies.

Ideally, the curriculum would at least embrace elements of indigenous knowledge and belief systems that pre-date the advent of Abrahamic religions to Egypt. Such an orientation would build upon the line of thinking of the pioneering Egyptianist intellectuals of the early 20th century, who in terms of curriculum, called for more emphasis on cultural continuity and details of the social history of ancient Egyptians that would create a better sense of affinity among students with their ancient ancestors (Gershoni & Jankowski, 1986; Tadros, 2013). Beyond building on these 'Egyptianist' efforts, the proposed curricular approach would attempt to restructure the general approaches to curriculum more fundamentally, including for instance, building on some of these ancient indigenous epistemologies and knowledge systems' visions regarding how individuals would co-exist and interact with other humans and with foreigners, as

well as other creatures and their natural habitat and environment. Despite their traditional marginalization, at least in contexts such as in Canada and Australia, indigenous knowledge systems are beginning to offer alternative ways of understanding the world as well as approaches to history and the past, which are clearly different from dominant 'Western' or 'modern' ways (e.g., Seixas, 2012). However, such calls for a revival of indigenous knowledge systems and perspectives in curriculum, which have emerged strongly over the past few years in several Western contexts, including Canada (e.g., Scott & Gani, 2018), are not reflective of the case of Egypt, where these calls have been marginal.

Thus, discussions of curriculum reform in Egypt, including problematizing its 'null curriculum,' need to move beyond discussing the inclusion of omitted or misrepresented minority groups, such as the Copts for instance, towards pointing to omitted and misrepresented discourses, epistemologies, and systems of knowledge. Such a process also entails analyzing and problematizing the currently dominant discourses, the influence of which could be easily sensed in how participants come to know and be in the world. The fact that no participant went as far as questioning or even articulating the dominant discourses or epistemologies is indicative of these dominant discourses and ideologies' success in permeation and normalization. As critical scholars Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) point out, ideologies succeed to dominate through offering "a highly articulated worldview, master narrative, discursive regime, or organizing scheme for collective symbolic production," that becomes "taken-for-granted as the natural and received shape of the world" (p. 330).

The proposed inclusion of indigenous perspective and approach to curriculum is in line with the global revival of movements inspired by an "anticolonialist discourse", which, as Denzin (2007) rightly notes, are embodied in "the emergence and proliferation of critically grounded indigenous epistemologies and methodologies" (p. 461). Such methodologies and approaches give precedence to the traditionally marginalized "commitment to an indigenism"

and to "an indigenist outlook" (p. 461). Drawing on indigenous approaches to the environment and to the relationship of humans with nature offer important and productive entry points towards better prospects of ecological sustainability (e.g., Kulnieks, Longboat, & Young, 2013; Ng-A-Fook, 2013; Ryan, Van Every, Steele, & McDonald, 2013). Consequently, such an indigenous approach promises to lead students towards asking critical and much needed questions related to their relationship with their ecosystems and the environment. As Ng-A-Fook (2010) reminds us, such "ecocritical rereadings", could help "deconstruct the various narrative em-plot-ments and respective cultural representations" that maintain unequal power structures, including those related to environmental exploitation (p. 57).

There are also some inspiring models that might be worth considering in the case of Egypt, such as the model of Citizen Schools in Brazil, briefly outlined in Chapter 1. Pertinent to this discussion, in addition to integrating historically marginalized narratives and perspectives, importantly, the Citizen School project constructed a new epistemological understanding of what counts as knowledge, allowing students to question the "core of humankind's wisdom," and "the process of construction of knowledge" (Gandin, 2009, p. 345). Although introducing new approaches to curriculum might need to be more gradual in the case of Egypt, this radical Brazilian model offers some inspiration.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that an indigenous perspective is not immune to potential pitfalls. Territorial nationalist movements, which often attempt to construct a "strong ethnic consciousness", could easily slip into a "form of racism" (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 65). For instance, the Egyptianist orientation, with its emphasis on the indigenous population and culture could give rise to a sense of supremacy among some groups, such as the Copts. As Tadros (2013) has warned, the emphasis on national unity and a common ancient history can easily – as has been demonstrated by some intellectuals – "be transformed into a supremacist, exclusionary discourse that refers to Copts as the original inhabitants of the land and others as having lesser

claims to it" (p. 39). Thus, this perspective is proposed to be included along with other perspectives and approaches, not to fully replace them. Otherwise, by having this as a dominant narrative we would be continuing to reproduce a patriarchal top-down approach to imposing those discourses and ideologies to the exclusion of others, as opposed to offering students various perspectives to engage with, and possibly adopt and adapt to their contexts.

Avenues for Future Research

This study points to the need for several areas of further investigation, which I outline below:

Discourses and Knowledge Systems Informing Curriculum

The initial attempt above to briefly highlight the key dominant ideologies emerging in the participants' responses clearly point to how more work and analyses are needed on this important question. There needs to be more research on curriculum and how it is being shaped by these dominant discourses, as well as how Egyptian students are interacting with those dominant discourses and ideologies. Ideally, such efforts could articulate alternatives, including an indigenous approach, which I attempted to present some illustrative elements of in the discussion above.[53] This research would start by proposing some frameworks that define what such indigenous knowledge would entail, thus offering a better understanding of its points of convergence and divergence with the dominant religious-based and nationalistic territorial discourses.

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[53] In Egypt, there have been some recent inspiring efforts by some individual scholars (e.g., Ezzat, 2017) and organizations, such as the New Hermopolis Center (https://www.newhermopolis.org) near Minya (in middle Egypt), to revive the interest and connection to ancient Egyptian wisdom and knowledge systems among modern day Egyptians. These efforts also include the several writings of Dr. Mervat Abdel Nasser targeted to children and adults. However, to date, none have attempted to bring these perspectives to the formal curriculum. Nonetheless, they offer important frameworks that could be built upon when envisioning what indigenous perspectives and approaches need to be included in formal curriculum. Also, in some western contexts, such as in the US, there has been some important contributions - especially produced by African-American scholars - drawing on ancient Egyptian wisdom and spirituality, such as the ancient concept of Maat of balance and harmony demonstrating how its values could be applied to modern societies and to empower various marginalized groups (e.g., Martin, 2008; Pratt-Clark, 2013).

Similar Research Design with Different Participant Profiles

      Pre-university students.

      All participants in this study had either graduated from university or were still enrolled in university. Many of them spoke about the influence that their university courses had on encouraging them to critique the dominant narrative and equipping them with tools to do that. So, how about those young Egyptians who did not go to university? Further, how about the large numbers of Egyptians who did not study at higher education institutions, or those who dropped out of school, let alone those who were never able to enter school in the first place and might remain illiterate? Future studies would need to examine some of these questions.

      However, it is also worth noting here that being confined to university-educated participants was not as limiting as I had initially expected and discussed in Chapter 5. My worry was that this demographic would offer skewed results about Egyptian students at large, since university experiences would potentially have an important impact in shaping students' approaches to history and the dominant narrative. I was especially concerned that my participants' university education might have influenced their critical stances vis-à-vis the dominant historical narrative. Based on the findings, being involved in history-related courses or research projects during their university education did help participants develop critical and multi-perspectival approaches, as discussed in Chapter 8. However, regarding developing a critical outlook, it is important to note that several participants, who were not exposed to these university courses or research projects, still exhibited critical approaches. I reached that conclusion based on the fact that some of my participants with strong critical approaches had just graduated from their secondary schools a few months before the study and had just been enrolled in their first semester at university, which did not include any history, economics, or political science courses where they would have potentially been exposed to critical approaches to history.

Various socio-economic and ideological backgrounds.

The understandable institutional limitations imposed by AUC GSE due to the security situation in Egypt for researchers restricted my ability to recruit widely beyond the AUC community. Being situated in AUC and being mostly confined by the snowballing recruitment technique meant that I recruited participants who mostly belonged to the upper or middle Egyptian socio-economic classes. Given this reality, there are various ways that future research could expand on the current study, especially in terms of the demographics of participants to ensure better representation of various socio-economic backgrounds. As noted earlier, for instance, apart from Sedra's efforts, little scholarly work has been conducted on the role that class plays in defining how Copts of various socio-economic backgrounds might interact differently with the dominant narrative.

Within this expansion of the pool of participants, it would be important to also attempt to include those with strong Islamist inclinations, since they would offer important insights into an influential discourse that informs general understandings of non-Muslims and their rightful place in Egyptian society. It was clear that among my participants I did not have a strong, if any, representation of these powerful political movements. For instance, these inclinations would have translated in expressing more extreme negative views regarding Copts. In reflecting an extremist Islamist political discourse, such participants might have used more derogatory terms to refer to Copts or might have recommended that curricula be revised to reinforce an inferior status of Christians, which is what more explicit Islamist media, including websites and YouTube channels, advocate.

Longitudinal approach.

More longitudinal research is also needed on the participants of the current study as this could offer helpful insights, both to their approaches to history as well as their civic attitudes.

Regarding civic attitudes and civic engagement, studies from other contexts do point to the fact that political activism becomes a predictor for a continued active role and political engagement. For instance, as Youniss et al. (2002) explain this causal relationship: "service and participation in youth organizations during adolescence is found to predict adult political behavior, including voting and membership in voluntary associations, even 25 years later" and that political engagement "with its threats and risks" usually leads to "lifelong political activism" (p. 125).

Gender-focused Analyses

As noted earlier, the fact that the majority of the participants were females (among both Muslim and Coptic participants) would have clearly influenced the data collected and findings that emerged. In this study, whenever relevant form my perspective I made sure to specify the gender of the participants, such as when noting which participants problematized the omission of women in history, or how female rulers were portrayed in the curriculum and how that history was enacted in the classroom.

As the analysis here began to reveal, the gender element was key in defining some participants' intersectionalities and how those might shape their subjectivities and civic attitudes differently. For instance, in the case of Maria who clearly stated that she felt at a huge disadvantage given that she not only is a woman, but also that she is a Copt who comes from the relatively small and impoverished governorate of Fayoum. Such a sense of exclusion that is further compounded by various aspects of her social identity has prompted her to be one of the most passionate and active participants in being actively involved in her independent interfaith community service initiative that serves poor rural Egyptians regardless of their religious background. However, this was not generally the case, since for another participant - Randa from Bani Suef - her reflections on being a woman coming from a poor and marginal governorate gave her more of a sense of cynicism vis-à-vis her 'Westernized' university colleagues, choosing not to be actively involved – at least for the moment - in the community.

Future research or additional gender-focused analyses of the data collected for this study could offer helpful insights by focusing on the question of gender and how a participant's gender might influence her/his understandings of, and approaches to, history. Beyond the question of gender, further analyses exploring participants' intersectionalities promise to offer important additional nuances and insights. Such exploration should also attempt to capture the nuances of how the lived experiences of individuals from larger cities and towns within marginalized governorates might differ from the experiences of those who come from smaller towns or villages within those same marginal governorates. As pointed out earlier, such analyses would make important contributions to the understudied question of how such intersectionalities inform individuals' interactions with the past (Kölbl & Konrad, 2015).

Textual Analyses of Sunday School Curricula

Finally, there are several social sites that are in need of further analyses and investigation regarding their roles in shaping young people's approaches to the dominant narrative and their civic attitudes, including social media and other more traditional sites, such as museums. Among those sites, I would argue that one key research priority related to understanding Coptic subjectivity would be conducting critical and systematic textual analyses of the Coptic Orthodox Church's Sunday School curricula. Despite the strong influence of the Sunday School institution on shaping young Coptic subjectivities, as argued by several scholars, to date there has been no scholarly analyses of the content of these curricula per se.

<div align="center">

Closing Remarks

</div>

Despite the cynicism and growing sense of alienation and defeatism among many young people that emerges from this study, it simultaneously points to the hopefulness and a renewed sense of possibility and empowerment among young Egyptians. They are not alone in their passion and drive; they seem to be part of a growing global awakening and consciousness. In

parallel to the alarming rise to power of right-wing figures to politics across various contexts in the global North and global South propagating exclusionary discourses, we are witnessing a global consciousness that manifests itself in various forms, including individual or collective actions. We saw this, over the past few years, in the massive youth-led peaceful uprisings that took place in various parts of the world. We have also seen it in various youth-led movements calling of a more just, inclusive, equitable, and sustainable world. Such a vision is also embodied in the growing Indigenous people's rights movements across various contexts.

In the Egyptian case, this growing critical awareness seems to be informed by a new sense of history and a critical approach towards the dominant historical narrative, including some of the key elements that shape the Egyptian schematic narrative template. Drawing on the Freirian conception of the potential role of history in offering inspiration and hope, Fischman and Gandin (2007) refer to this intentional outlook as a "critical discourse of hope" (p. 218). Studying and shedding light on that growing critical awareness offers much needed hope in a world otherwise plagued by a sense of hopelessness and apathy. However, for the frontiers of possibility to continue to be redefined and pushed forward in constructive ways, we need to continue to try to offer young people the space, the preparation, and the tools to critically and productively engage with their nations' various competing historical narratives and their places within them as citizens.

APPENDICIES

Appendix I: McGill University's Research Ethics Board Approval

McGill

Research Ethics Board Office
James Administration Bldg.
845 Sherbrooke Street West. Rm 325
Montreal, QC H3A 0G4

Tel: (514) 398-6831
Fax: (514) 398-4644
Website: www.mcgill.ca/research/researchers/compliance/human/

Research Ethics Board II
Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

REB File #: 84-0716

Project Title: History Education and Its Influences on Egyptian Students' Historical Consciousness and Sense of Citizenship

Principal Investigator: Ehaab Dyaa Abdou

Status: Ph.D. Student

Department: Integrated Studies in Education

Supervisors: Prof. Claudia Mitchell and Paul Zanazanian

Approval Period: <u>August 3, 2016 to August 2, 2017</u>

The REB-II reviewed and approved this project by delegated review in accordance with the requirements of the McGill University Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Participants and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.

Deanna Collin
Ethics Review Administrator, REB I & II

* All research involving human participants requires review on at least an annual basis. A Request for Renewal form should be submitted 2-3 weeks before the above expiry date. Research cannot be conducted without a current ethics approval.
* When a project has been completed or terminated, a Study Closure form must be submitted.
* Unanticipated issues that may increase the risk level to participants or that may have other ethical implications must be promptly reported to the REB. Serious adverse events experienced by a participant in conjunction with the research must be reported to the REB without delay.
* Modifications must be reviewed and approved by the REB before they can be implemented.
* The REB must be promptly notified of any new information that may affect the welfare or consent of participants.
* The REB must be notified of any suspension or cancellation imposed by a funding agency or regulatory body that is related to this project.
* The REB must be notified of any findings that may have ethical implications or may affect the decision of the REB.

Appendix II: AUC Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

TO: **Ehaab Dyaa Abdou**

CC: Nagwa Megahed

FROM: George Marquis

DATE: 12 Oct 2016

RE: Approval of study #2016-2017-0015

This is to inform you that I have reviewed your research proposal entitled **"History Education and its Influences on Egyptian Student Historical Consciousness and Sense of Citizenship"** and determined that it required additional information to ensure that participants were being provided with all necessary information to make informed consent. I confirm that you have made the requested clarifications or modifications, and I believe you will also take adequate measures to obtain informed consent of the participants. As a result, the study may now proceed.

This approval letter was issued under the assumption that you have not started data collection for your research project. Any data collected before receiving this letter may not be used since this would constitute a violation of the IRB policy.

Please note that IRB approval does not automatically ensure approval by CAPMAS, an Egyptian government agency responsible for approving some types of off-campus research. CAPMAS issues are handled at AUC by the office of the University Counselor, Dr. Amr Salama via an official letter from your School Dean. The IRB is not in a position to offer any opinion on CAPMAS issues, and takes no responsibility for obtaining CAPMAS approval.

This approval is valid for only one year. In case you have not finished data collection within a year, you will need to apply for an extension.

Thank you and good luck.

George Marquis
Acting IRB Chair
T: 02-261-1598
Email: geomarq@aucegypt.edu

Institutional Review Board
The American University in Cairo
AUC Avenue, P.O. Box 74
New Cairo 11835, Egypt.
IRB Email: **geomarq@aucegypt.edu**

Appendix III. Participant Demographics (n=39)

		Number of participants	**Percentage of overall number of participants**
1) Gender	Female	28	72%
	Male	11	28%
2) Academic level	Graduates	20	
	Undergraduate	19	
3) Religious affiliation:	Muslim	32	82%
	Christian (Coptic Orthodox)	7	18%
4) Governorate where participant underwent her/his schooling:	Aswan	1	
	Bani Suef	2	
	Cairo	15	
	Damietta	1	
	Daqahleyya	2	
	Fayoum	1	
	Gharbeyya	2	
	Giza	7	
	Ismailia	2	
	Menoufia	2	
	Minya	2	
	Sharqiyya	1	
	Home schooled for Egyptian curriculum in Saudi Arabia	1	
5) Type of School	Private	12	

	Public/ Government-run	19
	Public/Azharite System	2
	Public/Experimental	5
	Graduated in Saudi Arabia	1
6) Specialization in Thanaweyya ʿAmma	Adabi (Literature)	15
	Adabi (Azharite system)	2
	Sciences	22
7) Universities where participant underwent/is undergoing undergraduate studies education	Ain Shams University, Cairo	2
	American University in Cairo	8
	Azhar University, Cairo	2
	British University in Egypt (BUE), Cairo	1
	Cairo University, Cairo	8
	Lebanese American University, Beirut	1
	Mansoura University, Mansoura	1
	Minya University, Minya	1
	Misr International University, Cairo	1
	Suez Canal University, Ismailia	2
8) Undergraduate Degree	Business Administration	4

	English/Comparative Literature	1
	Computer Sciences	1
	Dentistry	1
	Economics	8
	Engineering	4
	Graphic Design	1
	History & Political Science	1
	History	1
	Islamic Law/Shari'a	2
	Law	1
	Mass Communication	3
	Pharmacology	1
	Political Science	6
	Political Science & Integrated Marketing Communication	1
	Undeclared major (AUC)	3
9) Academic Level	PhD Student	1
	Master's degree	5
	Bachelor's degree	14
	Undergraduate student	19
10) Current occupation (for participants who are not full-time students)	Banking	1

	Civil Society	5
	Corporate Sector	1
	Research	3
	Translator	2
	University lecturer	2
11) Graduate Studies Institutions/Country	AUC	2
	France	1
	South Korea	1
	United Kingdom	2
12) Year of Graduation from High School:	2006	2
	2007	3
	2008	2
	2009	1
	2010	1
	2011	10
	2012	7
	2013	3
	2014	0
	2015	9
	2016	1

Appendix IV. Written Narrative Exercise Guiding Questions (Arabic)

	تاريخ اليوم:	الرقم المسلسل للاستمارة:

<u>استمارة بحثية</u>

- برجاء الاجابة على كل الأسئلة بأكبر قدر من الدقة والتفصيل.
- ليس من الضرورى التقيد بقواعد اللغة العربية. من الممكن جدا استخدام اللغة المصرية العامية أوالانجليزية للتعبير بشكل أفضل، اذا لزم الأمر.
- برجاء عدم التردد فى طلب أى توضيحات أو شرح اضافى لأى من الأسئلة.
- اذا لم تكن المساحة المطروحة لاجابة أى من الأسئلة كافية، برجاء استخدام خلفية الصفحات أو طلب أوراق اضافية.
- **برجاء ملء استمارة الموافقة المسبقة للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية والتوقيع عليها.**
- **فى حالة عدم التمكن من الاجابة على أى من الأسئلة، برجاء كتابة السبب فى ذلك.**
- برجاء قراءة كل الأسئلة الموجودة بالاستمارة قبل البدء فى الاجابة.
- المدة المتوقعة لملء الاستمارة حوالى ساعتان.

شكرا جزيلا على اشتراككم فى الدراسة وعلى حسن تعاونكم!

<u>أولا، البيانات الشخصية:</u>

1. **تاريخ الميلاد:**

2. **النوع الاجتماعى:** □ أنثى □ ذكر

3. **الجنسية:**

4. **الديانة:**

5. **مجال الدراسة الحالى (أو الوظيفة):**

6. **المنح الدراسية الجامعية الحاصل عليها (ان وجدت):**

7. **نوع الشهادة التى حصلت عليها ما قبل الجامعة:**

   □ الثانوية العامة، برجاء تحديد التخصص (أدبى، علمى، ألخ):

   □ أخرى(برجاء التحديد):

8. **نوع المدرسة الثانوية (حكومية، خاصة، تجريبية، ألخ):**

9. **المحافظة التى توجد بها المدرسة:**

10. سنة التخرج من المرحلة المدرسية (الحصول على شهادة ما قبل الالتحاق بالجامعة):

11. متى توقفت عن دراسة التاريخ المدرسي؟ (مثلا للقسم الأدبى هى السنة الأخيرة فى الثانوية العامة):

12. هل كان لديك نشاط تطوعى فى فترة الدراسة المدرسية (سواء داخل أو خارج نطاق المدرسة)؟

نعم ☐   لا ☐

13. لماذا؟ (برجاء تحديد الدافع أو الحافز للتطوع أو عدمه):

14. فى حالة الاجابة بنعم، برجاء تحديد النشاط التطوعى (سواء داخل أو خارج نطاق المدرسة):

15. هل لديك نشاط تطوعى فى المجتمع حاليا (سواء داخل أو خارج نطاق الجامعة)؟

نعم ☐   لا ☐

16. لماذا؟ (برجاء تحديد الدافع أو الحافز للتطوع أو عدمه):

17. فى حالة الاجابة بنعم، برجاء تحديد النشاط (سواء داخل أو خارج نطاق الجامعة):

ثانيا، أسئلة البحث:

برجاء الاجابة على الأسئلة الآتية بأكبر قدر من التفصيل واستخدام خلفية الصفحات أو طلب أوراق اضافية، اذا لزم الأمر.

18. برجاء وصف موقف معين حدث لك أو نشاط قمت به جعلك تشعر بأنك تقوم بدورك كمواطن مصرى أو مواطنة مصرية.

19. لماذا اخترت هذا الموقف أو النشاط بالذات لتعرضه فى الاجابة السابقة؟

20. كيف تشعر ان هذا الموقف أو النشاط قد حدد أو من الممكن أن يحدد رؤيتك لدورك كمواطن مصرى أو مواطنة مصرية فى المستقبل (سواء فى التطوع أو فى العمل العام والسياسى مثلا)؟

21. ماذا تتذكر من مناهج التاريخ المصرية التى درستها فى المدرسة؟ بالتحديد، ما النقاط الهامة والفارقة فى تاريخ مصر منذ التاريخ المصرى القديم؟ (النقاط الهامة والفارقة من الممكن أن تكون فترات أو شخصيات أو أحداث). برجاء استخدام المساحة المطروحة (حوالى صفحتان ونصف) أو أكثر اذا لزم الأمر.

22. ما وجهات النظر أو الرؤى التى من خلالها تم عرض الفترات أو الأحداث أو الشخصيات التاريخية فى مناهج التاريخ المصرية التى درستها؟ (من المؤشرات مثلا الأحداث التى تشعر أنها أخذت مساحة كبيرة على حساب أحداث أخرى، ألخ).

23. ما الفترات أو الأحداث أو الشخصيات التى تشعر انها ممثلة بشكل ضعيف أوغير ممثلة بالمرة فى مناهج التاريخ المصرية التى درستها؟ برجاء ذكر كل تلك الفترات والأحداث والشخصيات.

24. برجاء سرد وشرح بعض التفاصيل التى تعرفها عن تلك الفترات أو الأحداث أو الشخصيات التى ذكرتها فى الاجابة السابقة.

25. ما مصادر معرفتك بتلك التفاصيل والمعلومات التاريخية غير الموجودة فى مناهج التاريخ التى درستها؟

26. ما أهمية تلك الفترات أو الأحداث أو الشخصيات للتاريخ المصرى بشكل عام، من وجهة نظرك؟

27. ما أهمية أن تكون تلك الفترات أو الأحداث أو الشخصيات متواجدة فى مناهج التاريخ المصرية، من وجهة نظرك؟

English translation of written narrative exercise.

Guidelines:

- Please complete all questions with as much accuracy and detail as possible.
- Although the questions are in classic standard Arabic, please feel free to write your response in Egyptian Arabic or in English, if that would help you express yourself better.
- Please do not hesitate to ask for any clarifications.
- If you need more space for any of the questions, please do not hesitate to ask for more paper.
- Please make sure to read the consent form closely and sign it.
- If there are any questions you do not feel comfortable completing, please make sure to write the reason for that.
- Please make sure to have read through all the questions before embarking on writing your responses.
- You are given 2 full hours to complete this form.

First, Personal Information:

1. Name:
2. Gender:
3. Nationality:
4. Religious Affiliation:
5. Area of Study (or Work):
6. Scholarships earned during university:
7. High school diploma earned:

   ___ Thanaweyya 'Amma. Please specify track (literature, science, etc.):

   ___ Other. Please specify: _____

8. Type of School: Public ___ Private ___ Experimental ___
9. Governorate/City (where you received most of your school education):
10. Year of completion of high school diploma:
11. What was the last year of receiving history education in high school: _____
12. Did you have any voluntary activities during your school years? (whether within school or outside school): ___ Yes ___ No
13. Why? (Please specify the reason for whether you volunteered or did not):
14. If you answered Yes, please specify the type of activities you were engaged in:
15. Do you have any current voluntary activities in society (whether within university or outside)? ___ Yes ___ No
16. Why? (Please specify the reason for whether you do or do not):
17. If you answered Yes, please specify the type of activities you were engaged in:

Second, Research Questions:

Please complete the following questions as accurately and as fully as possible. Do not hesitate to ask for extra paper, if needed.

18. Please describe a situation where you felt you enacted your role and sense of being an Egyptian citizen?
19. Why did you choose this situation?
20. How do you see this - or similar situations - informing your future role in public activity (whether voluntary or more political)?
21. What do you remember of your history lessons at school? Specifically, what do you remember of the key milestones/turning points that might have defined Egyptian history? (those could include key eras, events and actors). Please use the next 2 pages and a half or more, if needed.
22. What dominant viewpoints and perspectives do you feel were used to narrate that history? (an indication could be events that took a disproportionately large space at the expense of other events, for instance).
23. What key historical periods, events or figures do you believe are missing from history education in Egyptian schools that you studied? Please include all eras, particular groups, events, and actors, you feel were missing.
24. Please narrate and explain all that you know about those currently missing narratives.
25. What are the sources of your knowledge of these narratives that you found were missing from Egyptian history curricula?
26. Why do you think it might be important to include those missing narratives in Egyptian historiography at large?
27. Why do you think it might be important to include those missing narratives in Egyptian history curricula?

Appendix V. Pre-Interview Drawing Exercise and Interview Prompts.

a) Pre-interview drawing exercise prompt.

برجاء رسم شكل أو رسمة مبسطة تعبر عن تاريخ مصر من وجهة نظرك (من الممكن أن تكون خط واحد سواء مستقيم أو دائري أو حلزوني مثلا يعبر عن التطور أو الاستمرارية والاستقرار أو الاضمحلال من خلال الأحداث والفترات المتعاقبة فى تاريخ مصر من وجهة نظرك):

English translation of drawing exercise prompt:

In a simple diagram or illustration, please present the history of Egypt from your perspective. Feel free to present this as a diagram or a simple straight line or circular or spiral that might depict progress, stability/continuity, or decline.

b) Interview Prompts

The guiding prompts for the semi-structured interview discussions included the following:

REFLECTIONS ON PRE-INTERVIEW DRAWING:

1) Reflecting on drawing:
    a. Just to make sure, does this drawing express how you were taught it in school or how you personally view it? Any differences?
    b. Why did you choose this particular way to present your diagram (for instance a symbol vs. a timeline)?
    c. Do the color choices have any particular significance for you?

CLARITIFICATIONS FROM WRITTEN NARRATIVE EXERCISE:

2) Please elaborate on what you wrote in the written exercise or anything you feel you want to add or modify? *[I also prompted specific questions that emerged from the written narrative exercise or points that were unclear to me or contradictory or confusing, for instance]*

SOURCES OF HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE:

3) What would you say is your main source of historical knowledge is? *[I further probed by asking whether the sources include textbooks, faith-based curricula, movies, novels, media, family, or others]*.
    a. Relatedly, what are the sources of the missing narrative you presented in your written exercise? How did you learn about it and where?

INCLUSION/EXCLUSION:

4) In terms of what you felt is missing, do you think others (of other identities and realities) share that sentiment?
5) Who would and who would not?

CONNECTING HISTORY EDUCATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:

6) How do you think your understanding and engagement with history informs your engagement with your community or Egyptian society at large, whether in volunteering or your political outlook, etc.?

7) More specifically, do you feel the inclusion/exclusion of your history as a Citizen/ Youth/Gender/Religion/Class/Governorate) might've affected your decision to be civically engaged? And how might it have affected it?

IDEAL TEXTBOOK/CURRICULUM:

8) If you were a senior curriculum developer or an advisor to the minister of education, how would you design a history textbook or curriculum that might have a good influence on your ideal vision of a citizen?
9) What would it look like in terms of content as well as style?

Appendix VI. Prompts for Participatory Visual Methods Workshop.

1) Prompt for Individual Drawing Exercise:

You are asked to choose one key era, event or historical figure that you believe is omitted from history textbooks. Please draw how you would present that missing era, event or historical figure.

Guidelines:

- Choose **one** key historical figure, event, or even a full era that you believe is unjustly omitted from Egyptian history curricula

- Draw a snapshot representation of that

- You will then present that to the group

Present your drawing to the rest of the participants focusing on:

- Why you chose to draw this…
- Why do you think you chose to represent it that way?

2) Prompt for Storyboarding Group Exercise

- Imagine that you have an opportunity to meet with key policy makers or curriculum developers in an attempt to convince them of the significance of that event, person, or era and how it is a key priority to include it in Egyptian history curricula.
- You have chosen to present your case through a short film that convinces that policy maker/curriculum developer, while also appealing to a wider audience, as you certainly need their support and buy-in.
- Based on listening to the other participants' presentations, form a group of two or three other participants to work together.
- You are asked to develop a storyboard.

Guidelines:

- o Please focus on one particular historical event, personality, or era.
- o You could choose to: work on what you started in your individual exercise; or work individually on *another* event/era; or work *with someone else* on something you got convinced is a more important priority from other participants.

- Even if you see narrative and perspective omissions as a general problem, please choose the one you believe might be the most important as a priority.
- Many participants spoke about the need for new approaches to help encourage critical thinking and historical research among students, but here we focus on omissions of particular and specific historical narratives, events, personalities or eras.
- Draw a Story Board.
- Put as much detail as you can, including few words under each frame.
- Please think of the logic of:
    - Why you chose this particular event, era or personality and its significance
    - Why you chose to present it the way you chose to
    - What would you be aiming to teach students *through this particular* way of narrating this? For instance, the sequence of events or placing an emphasis on particular aspects of the narrative

- In presenting your Story Board, you want to convince the other participants (policy makers and curriculum developers) of:

    – the importance including your narrative in curricula; and,

– the significance of how you propose it should be narrated

Appendix VII. Historical Narrative Arc and Turning Points Shared by Participants

This table offers a summary of how participants' drawings imagined Egypt's historical narrative arc and its key turning points.

Trajectory of Egypt's history	Tally	Key milestone marked or explained in subsequent interview
Clear decline	17	• With the End of the Coptic Era/Since Advent of Islam (2) • Ottoman Rule of Egypt (1) • End of Mehmed Ali's rule (1) • End of Mehmed Ali's rule, but then with El-Sisi a very sharp decline (1) • 1952 Revolution/Coup d'état and subsequent events (3) • Gradual decline starting 1952 revolution, but worst decline starting with the time of El-Sisi (3) • Mubarak's era but reached worst decline since El-Sisi's rule (1). • Mubarak's era, especially last 15 years of his rule (1) • General decline but no specific starting point (4)
Stagnation	1	• 25th January 2011 revolution only positive 'bump' in a very long stagnant political history.
Clear stability/continuity	0	
Clear Progress	1	• Various ups and downs but a general trajectory of progress
Cyclical	3	• No specific decline or progress but repeats itself (1) • Ups and downs but unclear about current situation (2)
Whose Perspective?	3	• Participants unable to draw a line as they explained it would depend on whose perspective we want to present (3)

Appendix VIII. Omissions and Misrepresentations Highlighted by Participants

Participants' responses regarding historical figures, events or eras that they believe are omitted from their curricula.

Omitted Narrative	Number of Participants	Notes
1) Historical Figures		
Mohamed Naguib (his rule and subsequent tensions with Nasser)	15	
Saad Eddin El Shazly	2	
Naguib Mahfouz	2	
Rifa'a Tahtawi	1	
Pope Cyril/Kyrollos (Abu El-Islah)	1	
Ahmed Zoweil	1	
Magdy Yaqoub	1	
Pope Shenouda III	1	
Representatives of 'fanatic political Islamist movements' (Hassan El Banna, Sayyed Qutb, assassins of Sadat)	1	
Feminists/Female activists (Huda Shaarawi, Nawal Saadawi, Malak Hefni Nassef, Wedaad Metry, etc.)	1	
Ahmed Lufti El Sayyed	1	
2) History of Minorities in Egypt		
Coptic History	14	Muslim participants: 10/32 Coptic participants: 4/7
Role of Women/Feminist movement incl. Qasim Amin and women's liberation movement	5	Male participants: 1 Female participants: 4
History of Nubians/ Negative influence of High Dam on Nubians 1	3	
Arab Muslim conquest and how Egyptians	2	Muslim participants: 1

received it (how Amr Ibn Al 'As dealt with popular anger/revolts)		Coptic participants: 1
Berbers of Egypt (inhabitants of Siwa Oasis)	2	
Ancient Israelites in Egypt	1	
Shiites (connected to more details of the Fatimid dynasty)	1	
Peasants	1	
Laborers	1	
Bedouins	1	
Persecution of Copts under Muslim rulers	1	Muslim participants: 0 Coptic participants: 1
Jews of Egypt	1	
3) Historical Era/Events		
Positive aspects of King Farouk's rule/Achievements during that era including his peaceful renunciation of power	8	
Circumstances/Suffering of Egyptians under Mehmed Ali's rule/Forced army conscription	5	
Revolts and protests against rulers	5	
January 2011 Uprisings	4	
Ottoman Empire/Rule in Egypt/Influences on Egyptian society, its culture and composition, etc.	4	
Islamic History starting with advent of Islam until Ayyubids/Memluk	4	
Reasons behind 1967 debacle/defeat against Israel	3	
The gap/al thaghra in 1973/victory/defeat	3	
Student Revolts and Protests/Movements	3	
Labor Movements	3	
Imprisonment of opposition during Nasser's and other eras/closing down of syndicates and political parties	3	

Periods of demise of ancient Egypt	2	
Advent of Christianity	2	
Persecution of ancient Egyptians at hands of early Christians	2	Muslim participants: 2 Coptic participants: 0
Mehmed Ali's dynasty after Tawfik until King Farouk	2	
Circumstances/Suffering of Egyptians under Nasser	2	
1952-1954	2	
Muslim Brotherhood	2	
Socialism and motives for its application during Nasser's era	2	
Free market policy under Sadat and motives for it	2	
1956-1967	1	
Fatimid era	1	
Contributions of ancient Egypt and influences on modern Egypt	1	
The Egyptian enlightenment and liberal era: 1900-1950	1	
Violent parts of Islamic history	1	
Violent parts of Christian history	1	
Pre-2011 protests (2006, 2008)	1	
30 June Event	1	
Nubian Rule of Ancient Egypt	1	
Resistance/Opposition movements since 1952	1	
Times of prosperity to give pride	1	
Emergence of Islamist groups during Sadat's time due to oppression under Nasser	1	
Advent of Islam in Egypt	1	
Situation in Palestine	1	

Details of Mubarak's rule and changes in relations with Arab countries	1	
Egypt's debts	1	
Circumstances/Suffering of Egyptians under Sadat	1	
Circumstances/Suffering of Egyptians under Mubarak	1	
More details about Mubarak rule (both positives and negatives)	1	
Disadvantages of Camp David accord	1	
Al-Jama'a Al-Islamiyya	1	
Communists	1	
Economic reforms under Mubarak	1	
Egypt's involvement in different external wars such as 1948, Gulf wars and motives	1	
4) Perspectives		
Socio-cultural history of the Egyptian people/Reactions of Egyptian People	3	
Daily lives of ancient Egyptians, traditions, food, religious beliefs and practices, etc.	2	
Positive aspects of some foreign occupations	1	
History of other countries (including Palestine, Arabian Peninsula, Europe, International Relations)	1	
Egypt's historical and cultural connections with Africa	1	

Appendix IX. Sources of Alternative Historical Knowledge.

Sources of alternative historical knowledge in response to Question 25 of the written exercise (arranged in descending order).

Source	Number of	Notes

	participants	*(In cases where participants were able to provide more details)*
Historical books/articles (nonfiction)	15	Khaled Fahmy: 4 Galal Amin: 2 Ahmed Roza: 1 Hazem Qandil: 1 Nelly Hanna: 1
Documentaries	14	
Internet/Websites/Wikipedia/Online Programs and articles/Google searches/Facebook posts	13	
Studying history/political science courses at university	12	
Historical books/articles about Egypt (by foreign historians)	8	Malek Bennabi: 1
Family (includes personal stories from parents, grandparents, family gatherings/historical competitions, family members well-read in history)	7	
Oral history workshops (Ehki Ya Tarikh)/public lectures/workshops/Ahl El Lamma discussion group/CILAS/Discussion groups	5	
Historical Films (feature films)	5	
Peer discussions (includes friends from particular minorities such as Nubian and Shiite, discussions with colleagues or friends, listening to other colleagues' debates)	5	
Historical fiction/novels	4	
University courses (at foreign universities outside Egypt, includes history, political science and economics)	4	
Egyptian TV series (e.g., *Haret El Yahud* (The Alley of the Jews))	3	
As personal eye witness (referring to Jan 2011 events)	2	

Biographies and autobiographies of historical figures such as Muhammad Naguib, Ali Mubarak, Taha Husayn, Saad Eddin Shazly.	2	
Working with activists who are critical of the system and its dominant narratives	1	
Field visits (to historical monuments and sites)	1	
Old manuscripts in church	1	
Religious background/religious home education	1	Muslim female participant from Aswan.
Books on Philosophy	1	
Books on Psychology	1	
Family book collection	1	
Meeting people from other nationalities who studied alternative narratives to what we learned	1	
Songs	1	
Sessions and lessons about the history of the church (Sunday School)	1	

Appendix X. Types of Current Civic Engagement of Participants.

Name of Organization	Type of activities listed by participants	Number of participants
Civil Society Organizations/Initiatives		
Resala NGO (and the related Anwar Resala groups)	Teaching in underprivileged areas, house repairs, visits to elderly and orphans, clothes and food distribution, visits to hospitals.	8
Life Makers (Sona'a Al Hayah) in Cairo, Gharbeyya, Giza, Minya	Charity and educational activities	4
Dialogue and peace education	Initiatives/networks promoting dialogue and nonviolence mainly: Selmeyya. Other include Hewar Kids, etc.	4
Mobtadaa Initiative	Social sciences and humanities for	3

	Thanaweyya 'Amma students	
Heya	Educational support for underprivileged girls	2
Ahl El Lamma	Youth group for intellectual discussions and peer-learning (Ismailia)	2
Fayoum interfaith group	Independent group in Fayoum that helps poor Muslim and Christian families	1
Misr El Kheir Foundation	Women and children rights and education	1
Bedaya NGO	Reaching, charity activities like distributing clothes and food.	1
Nazra for feminist studies		1
Mok3b	Co-working space for youth and enterprises (Ismaliya)	1
St. Andrew's Program	Educational support with refugees	1
Saffarni	Intercultural exposure for underprivileged children	1
Elderly Home	Volunteering to spend time with elderly people	1
Student Clubs & Associations		
3al Raseef (AUC)	Education and support for street children.	3
Glow (AUC)	Community service and development	3
Developers Inc. (AUC)	Support for other student clubs	2
Times magazine (AUC)	Part of editorial team or making regular contributions	2
Enactus (AUC and Suez Canal University)	Youth and community development	2
University manual workers' rights/teaching (AUC)		2
Educational support for refugees		1
Astronomy Club (AUC)		1
Educate Me	Education reform and teacher training	1
Help Club (AUC)	Charity activities	1
Nafham website	Educational website attempting to offer educational materials in accessible ways.	1

Fun Science	Aims to present education in engaging and fun ways to school students.	1
University choir (AUC)		1
AIESEC	Student organization focused on personal development and international exposure.	1
Career Center (AUC)	Support for students' career planning.	1
Mashrou3 Kheir organization		1
Eco-tourism Social Enterprise		1
Volunteering with children NGO		1
Active Citizens Program/British Council		1
Ministry of Youth and Sports: education development program		1
Good Morning AUC	Student media production	1
Cairo International Model Arab League (CIMAL)		1
Andalusia Book club		1
Y-peer	Youth peer education network	1
Political Parties		
Al Misreyeen Al Ahrar political party (until present)		1
Egyptian Democratic Party (only for a short period in 2014)		1
Unnamed political party and university student movement		1
Misr El Qawiyya party (until end of 2013)		1
Coptic Orthodox Church-related Activities		

Church activities (in Cairo, Fayoum, Gharbeyya, Minya)	Includes offering educational services, girls' and boys' scouts, church choir and volunteering in general and being involved in a course that prepares some church youths to travel to poor communities in Africa and Asia to offer medical, psychological and financial support.	5
Individual/Personal efforts mentioned		
Education	Volunteering to teach high/middle school students/teaching English for less privileged individuals/ Individual Peer Mentoring/Tutoring	6
Girls' Empowerment	Providing educational, psychological and awareness building support among village girls and women	1
Health	Health awareness and free dental care	1
Helping foreign students with Arabic (individual activity)		1
None		
	Participants who explained they currently have no time or interest to be engaged in any activities.	5

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