

Panel II: Gender and Sexuality in North Africa

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Paper Title: *Sexism in Arabic Music in Relation to Sexual Harassment of Egyptian Activists*

Abstract: Music is an integral part of a country's culture. The aim of this paper is to trace sexism in modern Arabic music and how it perpetuates, in part, an atmosphere for sexual harassment. Sexual harassment cases have become a widely debated issue in Egypt due to incidents of mass violence and rape against female activists in Tahrir Square. In a culture where music provides models and concepts of femininity and women as sexual objects of desire and as weak and submissive, the activists on the streets of Egypt couldn't be more different. Therefore, they became targets for violence and harassment. During a recent campaign, women held posters and flyers of famous female Arab singers, actresses and thinkers who were highly influential during previous turbulent political times in Arab and Egyptian history. This paper will look at the ways activists are redefining the images and concepts of femininity and womanhood in contrast to the popular modern Arabic music.