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A Critical Analysis:

"Gender-Based State Violence" against Women in Egypt following the 2011 uprising

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Egypt, on 25 January 2011, an anti-government uprising against then-president Hosni Mubarak's autocratic rule began. Hundreds of thousands of Egyptians occupied public spaces, including the Tahrir Square in Cairo, marching and demonstrating with the three words 'freedom, peace and justice' echoing across the country. Demonstrators protested against poverty, unemployment, injustice, increasing police brutality and corruption, and demanded the immediate ouster of the Mubarak regime. Protesters were met with violence at the hands of government security forces, causing the deaths of hundreds of protesters and the injury of thousands more. Regardless, it barely deterred Egyptians from taking to the streets and instead, amplified their resistance. Inspired by the Tunisian revolution (18.12.2010 – 14.1.2011), the uprising took just 18 days to topple Mubarak's government after nearly three decades in power.[1]

Despite the immediate euphoria felt across the country, Egyptians have lived in a near-constant state of political turmoil and instability since.[2] The subsequent rule of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) under Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi did not live up to expectations. When the SCAF came to power, the constitution was suspended and parliament was dissolved, with the army expected to remain in place only until presidential and parliamentary elections could be held. Major protests erupted against military rule and protesters increasingly faced incidents of extreme state violence. The discontent did not cease with the election of Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohamed Morsi in 2012 either. Dissatisfaction with his rule increased due to empty promises and the continuation of state violence against protests in public places, combined with increasing grabs for power. Further mass protests followed and Morsi was removed from office by a military coup d'état in 2013.[3] The removal of Morsi paved the way for now-

[1] "Egyptian Revolution: 18 days of people power," *Al Jazeera*, January 25, 2016, https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2016/1/25/egypt-revolution-18-days-of-people-power.
[2] Amnesty International, *"Circles of Hell" Domestic, Public and State Violence against Women in Egypt* (London: Amnesty International, 2015), 5, https://www.amnestyusa.org/files/mde_1200 42015.pdf.
[3] Gamal M. Selim, "Egypt Under SCAF and the Muslim Brotherhood: The Triangle of Counter-Revolution," *Pluto Journals* 37, no. 2 (Spring 2015): 177-178.

president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to seize power in 2014, after interim president Adly Mansour's short rule, and ever since, political plurality has been in freefall.[4]

This brief summary of the events in Egypt from 2011 to 2014 highlights that regardless of the ruling regime, protesters have faced extreme brutality when publicly expressing political and social demands. It is striking that a large volume of literature – from scholars, journalists, activists, and human rights and civil society organizations – discussing state violence against protestors in Egypt, focuses on the events from 2011 and, particularly, on state violence faced by female protesters after the 18 days of Tahrir (2011) until 2014. A particularly symbolic account, in December 2011, a female protester was brutally beaten by security forces, causing her *abaya* (traditional full-length garment) to rip and expose her body. She came to be known as 'the Girl in the Blue Bra'. Not only did her story cause public outrage, but it was also discussed widely in national media and various scholarly studies.[5]

Two dominant themes in the literature can be identified pertaining to the nature of state violence against women in Egypt. First, scholars, journalists, activists, human rights and civil society organizations (hereinafter referred to as 'the Cohort') argue that following the 2011 uprising, state violence against women changed: the target of violence changed,[6] it became politicized,[7] systematic,[8] or methodical.[9] Secondly, the Cohort claims that state violence faced by female protesters was gender-based: that sexual state violence against women was gender-based,

[4] Amy Hawthorne and Andrew Miller, "Worse Than Mubarak," *Foreign Policy*, February 27, 2019, https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/02/27/worse-than-mubarak/.
[5] I.e.: Sherine Hafez, "Bodies That Protest: The Girl in the Blue Bra, Sexuality, and State Violence in Revolutionary Egypt," *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 40, no. 1 (Autumn 2014).
[6] Jihan Zakarriya, "Public Feminism, Female Shame, and Sexual Violence in Modern Egypt," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 20, no. 7 (August 2019): 120.
[7] Heather McRobies, "Sexual violence and state violence against women in Egypt, 2011-2014," *CMI Insight*, no. 7 (September 2014): 2; Heather McRobies, "The common factor: sexual violence and the Egyptian state, 2011-2014," *Open Democracy*, October 6, 2014, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/common-factor-sexual-violence-and-egyptian-state-20112014/.
[8] Albaraa Abdullah, "Why women in Egypt continue to face violence," *Al-Monitor*, October 22, 2020, https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2020/10/egypt-killing-woman-rights-violence-harassment.html; Rasha El-Ibiary, "Media Portrayal of Street Violence Against Egyptian Women: Women, Socio-Political Violence, Ineffective Laws and Limited Role of NGOs," *IAFOR Journal of Media, Communication & Film* 4, no. 1 (Summer 2017): 57.
[9] Habiba Abdelaal, *Women on the Frontline: The Anti-Sexual Violence Movement in Egypt Ten Years After The Revolution* (Washington: The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, 2021), https://timep.org/commentary/analysis/women-on-the-frontline-the-anti-sexual-violence-movement-in-egypt-ten-years-after-the-revolution/.

that there were other forms of gender-based violence against women,[10] or that physical and verbal attacks against women in the public sphere were gender-based state violence.[11]

This thesis seeks to enhance our understanding of the real-world phenomenon of state violence against protesters in Egypt – its scope, nature and trajectory, to be able to adequately challenge it. Therefore, this thesis seeks to answer the following question: How did Egyptian state violence against women change following the 2011 uprising and does it constitute "gender-based violence"? To do so, this thesis critically engages with the above-mentioned claims and assumptions made by the Cohort (scholars, journalists, activists, human rights and civil society organizations) about the extent and nature of Egyptian state violence against protesters following the 2011 uprising.

Many of the claims and assumptions of change in the nature of state violence against women is based on minimal empirical evidence, therefore highlighting a knowledge gap. This thesis aims to plug this gap with information by using empirical evidence tracing the scope of change. The subsequent characterization of this state violence as essentially gender-based suggests an understanding gap, which this thesis aims to address through a more nuanced interpretation that explains whether and to what extent it makes sense to consider this a case of gender-based state violence. The purpose of this analysis is not to discredit the significant contributions of the Cohort. Rather, it is to establish our understanding of the phenomenon of Egyptian state violence against protesters on a more solid foundation of empirical evidence and bring blind spots and silence in the dominant narratives to the foreground, exposing and challenging underlying power structures, in order to provide a more complete understanding of the subject of analysis and facilitate alternative conceptions and social change.

This research posits, firstly, that the institutional set-up in terms of inflicting violence in Egypt has not changed – coercion rather than consent has been the primary approach to ruling the country for decades now. The main change in state violence against women post-February 2011 was the

[10] International Federation for Human Rights, *Exposing State Hypocrisy: Sexual Violence by Security Forces in Egypt* (Paris: International Federation for Human Rights, 2015), 29, https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/egypt_report.pdf; Katie Booth and Salma El Husseiny, *Egypt: Keeping Women Out – Sexual Violence against Women in the Public Sphere* (Paris: International Federation for Human Rights, 2014), 11-56, https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/egypt_women_final_english.pdf.
[11] Lucia Sorbera, "Challenges of thinking feminism and revolution in Egypt between 2011 and 2014," *Postcolonial Studies* 17, no. 1 (June 2014): 68.

intensity and extent of it. As Egypt witnessed a sudden and massive wave of large-scale mass mobilization, public spaces became more militarized and securitized, which led to more state violence against women, relative to the magnitude of the uprisings. Secondly, this research posits that while elements of gender-based state violence against women existed, it is more relevant to focus on the *intent* behind such violence, as such violence was primarily motivated by politics, rather than gender. The implications of the existing dominant narratives in terms of power structures will be examined thoroughly in the discussion section.

This thesis starts with a research design chapter, offering a transparent and coherent account of how the investigation was carried out, by accounting for what sources were used and how they were assembled and identified ('Source'), the lens used for the analyses – critical theoretical analysis and political (critical) concept analysis ('Methodology'), the procedure by which the sources were analyzed ('Methods') and the limitations of this research ('Limitations'). This is followed by a chapter on the conceptual and theoretical framework, comprising a system of concepts that are used not only to support and inform, but are also critiqued in this thesis. Relevant concepts are defined and discussed and then placed in the context of the topic at hand ('Conceptual Framework'). The primary theoretical lens to understand the abstract intersection between states, violence and their citizens – Max Weber's conception of the State – is presented before its various manifestations in Egypt are discussed in the analysis ('Theoretical Framework'). A literature review follows this chapter. A classic literature review serves the purpose of identifying key secondary sources that contribute to closing the identified knowledge and understanding gaps. It aims to demonstrate that the topic at hand has not yet been addressed satisfactorily, pointing out what is still missing by critically evaluating these sources in terms of quality of argument and reliability of evidence. The empirical chapters of this thesis engage with key secondary sources that address the knowledge and understanding gaps identified, namely, how state violence changed following the 2011 uprising and whether it constitutes "gender-based violence" and are concerned with what is missing, critically evaluating these sources in terms of quality of argument and reliability of evidence. Therefore, this literature review does not focus on this classic element, and instead presents a range of literature engaging with state violence against citizens and gender and state violence, first broadly, and then in the context of the Middle East. This serves the purpose of providing a foundation of background knowledge and illuminating how the field informs this thesis for the reader to develop a deeper understanding of the field and contextualizing the issue at hand.

This is followed by the first empirical chapter: a historical analysis of coercive institutions guilty of committing violence against citizens in Egypt. This aids a deeper understanding of Egypt's historical institutional set-up of state violence, as a means to indicate the current state of affairs. The second empirical chapter engages with key secondary sources that make claims and assumptions that state violence against women changed following the 2011 uprising. Using critical theoretical analysis, it evaluates these sources in terms of quality of argument and reliability of evidence as a means to assess the scope of change of state violence against women. The third empirical chapter engages with key secondary sources claiming that state violence against women post-February 2011 constitutes "gender-based violence". It evaluates these sources in terms of quality of argument and reliability of evidence, to provide a more nuanced interpretation explaining whether and to what extent this should be considered gender-based state violence. It uses critical theoretical analysis and political (critical) concept analysis. A discussion and a conclusion chapter complete this these, presenting the findings and discussing the implications of the dominant narratives.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1.Sources

For the analysis, secondary sources gathered included journal articles, scholarly studies, and national and international online news articles, as well as policy studies and think-tank analyses. These were considered and analyzed for claims, assumptions, and the concept of "gender-based violence" pertaining to state violence against women in Egypt. Primary sources were used to evaluate to what extent such claims, assumptions and concepts are accurate. Primary sources included reports by human rights and civil society organizations – national and international – such as the Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture, Nazra for Feminist Studies, Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment, New Women Foundation, the Uprising of Women in the Arab World, Amnesty International, the International Federation for Human Rights and Human Rights Watch. Primary sources were identified by running keywords through organization's websites and perusing their reports, with a defined time period between 1 January 2011 and 1 January 2015. A further primary source was an interview between the author and Dr. Magda Adly, co-founder of the Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture. She was selected due to her long years of experience working with victims of state violence and the availability of her contact details. The interview was held in English and Arabic. Secondary sources were identified by running keywords through search engines and online libraries, including Google, Google Scholar, and the Leiden University Catalogue, using the same timeframe. Further sources were found in their respective bibliographies. Keywords searched included: 'Egypt revolution women', 'violence and torture in Egypt post-2011', 'sexual violence Egypt post-2011', 'state violence Egypt 2011-2014', 'gender-based violence Egypt 2011', 'SCAF and Muslim Brotherhood violence against women', 'gang rape and sexual assault Egypt', 'Egyptian state complicity violence' and 'victim-blaming in Egypt'. Primary and secondary sources were primarily in English, with some exceptions, which were translated by the author from Arabic.

2.2.Methodology

In order to answer the question of how Egyptian state violence against women changed following the 2011 uprising and whether it constitutes "gender-based violence", the claims, assumptions and use of the concept "gender-based violence" by the Cohort were investigated using

critical theoretical analysis and political (critical) concept analysis as the main research methodologies. Critical theoretical analysis provided a lens to examine the claims and assumptions, while political (critical) concept analysis provided a lens to inspect the use of the concept "gender-based violence". The primary target of both methodologies is to expose power structures and enable a better understanding of reality, thus allowing it to be challenged.

Critical theoretical analysis is based on Critical Theory, a social theory. This critiques and challenges, instead of only understanding or explaining society. Born out of the Marxist tradition, this theory was expanded upon by a group of sociologists at the University of Frankfurt in Germany.[12] 'Critical' here refers to the "capacity to inquire 'against the grain'",[13] by critiquing and assessing conventional theoretical and conceptual knowledge bases, or, the dominant narrative, which reproduces inequality and oppression. It asks questions that go beyond prevailing assumptions and understandings to uncover and contest existing power structures hence, contributing to a deeper and more accurate understanding of the subject of analysis.[14] In identifying power structures, critical theory aims to identify "potentialities for emancipation",[15] meaning it aims to bring about real social change by unmasking causes of alienation and domination. Furthermore, critical theory assumes that social reality is historically created and is produced and reproduced by people.[16] While it is possible to consciously attempt to change social and economic structures, this theory posits that this is constrained by different forms of social, cultural, and political domination.[17] Critical theoretical analysis was chosen for this thesis as it enabled critical analysis of the claims and assumptions made – the dominant narrative – to reveal and challenge existing power structures that contribute to alienation, inequality, and oppression.

Political (critical) concept analysis begins with the basic premise that knowledge is power and that concepts are pivotal to knowledge production. According to Felix Berenskoetter, "this approach highlights that the order created by concepts is artificial, blocking out the complexity of

[12] Ashley Crossman, "Understanding Critical Theory," *Thought Co.*, October 15, 2019, https://www.thoughtco.com/critical-theory-3026623.
[13] "Research Paradigms: Critical Theory," *iNtgrty,* August 8, 2016, https://www.intgrty.co.za/2016/08/08/research-paradigms-critical-theory/.
[14] Ibid.
[15] John M. Budd, "Critical Theory," in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, ed. Lisa M. Given (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2008), 4.
[16] Ibid, 3.
[17] "Research," *iNtgrty.*

the world and upholding certain power structures that benefit some and disadvantage others."[18] This approach is meant to critique the use of certain concepts that uphold existing power structures and contribute to alienation, inequality and oppression. According to the political (critical) approach of concept analysis, it is integral that concepts are reviewed, as not only do they contribute to a better understanding of an issue, but they "actually *make* things, that is, in the words of Michel Foucault, they 'systematically form the objects of which they speak.'"[19] Hence, concepts frame thinking, action, identities and subjectivities. The aim of political (critical) concept analysis is "to disrupt and challenge reified meanings and underlying power structures to open the door for alternative conceptions and, ultimately, social change,"[20] similar to critical theoretical analysis. Such an approach is not only critical, but also political and a mode of resistance. This is because it unmasks power structures and in doing so weakens them, fighting against finding "a singular meaning and accept[ing] a 'common sense'."[21] Political (critical) concept analysis was chosen for this thesis, because it enabled analysis of how the concept of "gender-based violence" is used, exposing and challenging how it possibly blocks out the complexity of state violence against citizens and upholds power structures that contribute to alienation, inequality and oppression.

2.3.Methods

When applying critical theoretical analysis and political (critical) concept analysis in this thesis, several tools associated with these methodologies were deployed. Firstly, considering that critical theory assumes social reality is historically created, the first empirical chapter of this thesis offers a historical analysis of coercive state institutions in Egypt. Not only does this provide an overview of the institutional set-up of state violence in Egypt historically, it is also intended to be indicative of current norms. By accounting for relevant actors and their historical development, "historical situatedness"[22] provides necessary background to understand coercive state institutions in Egypt and their trajectory, relevant for the subsequent analysis. Therefore, historical examination is an important analytical method of critical theoretical analysis.[23]

[18] Felix Berenskoetter, "Approaches to Concept Analysis," *Journal of International Studies* 45, no. 2 (2017): 168.
[19] Ibid, 169.
[20] Ibid, 168.
[21] Ibid, 169.
[22] Budd, "Critical," 3.
[23] Budd, "Critical," 2-3.

Furthermore, the method of deconstruction was deployed in order to critique prevailing assumptions and understandings and the use of certain concepts through critical theoretical analysis and political (critical) concept analysis in the second and third empirical chapter. In this thesis, deconstructing key claims and assumptions means evaluating the empirical foundation of claims and assumptions in terms of quality and reliability. Further empirical evidence then established the extent to which claims and assumptions hold true, identifying possible weaknesses. For the third empirical chapter, deconstruction additionally means evaluating how the concept of "gender-based violence" has been used and to what effect.[24] The third method deployed subsequently was reconstruction. Reconstruction, according to Berenskoetter, means exposing blind spots and silence in the dominant narrative and understanding/use of a concept by bringing marginalized and forgotten aspects to the foreground.[25] In this thesis, particularly for the second and third empirical chapters, deconstruction enabled an assessment of the accurateness of claims, assumptions and use of the concept of "gender-based violence" in the context of state violence against women in Egypt. Then, reconstruction – particularly deployed in the discussion section – brought marginalized and forgotten aspects to the foreground, exposing blind spots and silence in the dominant narrative, exposing possible power structures. The objective of this analysis and the methodologies and methods applied was to identify areas of improvement. The emphasis was not on judging the quality of the works of the Cohort, but highlighting the scope for improvement, as they may inadvertently be reinforcing the power structures they attempt to challenge.

2.4.Limitation

The first limiting factor of this research was language. Having intermediate Arabic skills enabled the author to review several key sources in Arabic, as well as hold the interview with Dr. Adly largely in Arabic, however, they are insufficient to conduct a deep analysis of available sources in Arabic. Consequently, official government statements, local news articles and databases in Arabic were not analyzed and consulted in detail, which could have enriched the analysis. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, the second limitation was that physical fieldwork was impossible. Further interviews with activists, civil society and human rights organizations or victims of state violence would have been beneficial to the analysis, as their insights are valuable primary sources.

[24] Berenskoetter, "Approaches," 170.
[25] Ibid.

Due to restrictions, it was not possible to travel to Egypt and track them down. The final limitation worth noting is that the critique expressed in this thesis includes personal interpretation and analysis of the various works and therefore constitutes subjective writing.

3. RESEARCH FRAMEWORKS

3.1.Conceptual Framework

State Violence

M. Gabriela Torres discusses the various ways state violence is understood. She writes that popular notions which stress physicality as an essential element of state violence, are not shared in scholarly literature, as there are also various psychological forms of state violence.[26] According to Torres, state violence can be understood as politically-motivated physical and psychological harm and torture inflicted upon citizens by the state.[27] In times of internal conflict and instability, state violence is covertly or openly inflicted upon certain political groups that the state perceives as threats, in order to eliminate the perceived threat to its authority.[28] While this definition is relevant for this thesis, it fails to draw a broad spectrum of the actors who commit such violence. Sheena Chestnut Greitens' definition of state violence in the context of authoritarianism is of value here. Greitens explains that coercive state apparatuses employ coercive agents (non-state actors), offering social and material incentives to escalate violence against citizens in times of internal instability and conflict.[29] Furthermore, she notes that coercive institutions are of utmost importance, and that their creation and management are among any dictator's priorities, as they pivotally shape patterns of repression and state violence in authoritarian regimes.[30] Torres and Greitens' definitions of state violence combined, form the working definition of state violence for this thesis, namely, politically-motivated physical and psychological harm and torture inflicted upon citizens by the state, through coercive agents and institutions working to eliminate perceived threats to its authority in times of internal instability and conflict.

In the context of Egypt, state violence in form of physical or psychological harm is evidenced by brutal beatings and whippings in public places and documented methods of torture used in state custody, such as but not limited to waterboarding, electric shocks, deprivation of basic necessities

[26] M. Gabriela Torres, "State Violence," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Social Problems,* ed. A. Javier Trevino (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 382-384.
[27] Ibid, 381-382.
[28] Ibid, 384.
[29] Sheena Chestnut Greitens, *Dictators and their secret police: coercive institutions and state violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 5.
[30] Ibid, 11.

(food, sleep) and medical neglect.[31] Greitens' definition allows us to identify several state and non-state actors who inflicted such violence in Egypt. Non-state actors include *baltagiyya*, a name given to an organized group of thugs hired by the Egyptian Ministry of Interior to perpetrate acts of violence and repression. State actors, or in Greitens words, "coercive institutions" guilty of committing violence are the military and the Ministry of Interior, by hiring *baltagiyya* and directing the National Police, General Security and Central Security Forces (Quwwat el-Amn el-Aam wa Quwwat el-Amn el-Markazi) and the National Security Agency (Keta' el-Amn el-Watani), formerly the State Security Investigation Service, to commit violent acts.[32] The judiciary is also regarded as a coercive institution in this thesis, due to its widespread failure and unwillingness to prosecute those responsible for gross violations.[33] Hence, in Egypt, state violence is perpetrated directly and indirectly – through the use of physical and psychological tactics by state actors, and complicity in hiring *baltagiyya* and failing to prosecute perpetrators of violence. In this thesis, the term 'state violence' includes the above-mentioned state and non-state actors guilty of committing violence against protesters in Egypt.

Sexual State Violence

While the definition of state violence usually includes sexual violence as a form of physical violence, for the purpose of this thesis it constitutes a separate concept. This is because a large amount of literature focuses particularly on sexual violence against women perpetrated by the state after the 2011 uprising, necessitating a differentiation between non-sexual and sexual violence. Therefore, state violence and torture of sexual nature against citizens is termed 'sexual state violence' in this thesis. Sexual violence as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), "encompasses acts that range from verbal harassment to forced penetration, and an array of types of coercion, from social pressure and intimidation to physical force."[34] Sexual torture, as defined by Christopher J. Einolf, "includes rape and other forms of physical sexual assault, including physical violence to the sexual organs or breasts, and mental sexual assault such as lewd comments

[31] Alastair Leithead, "Egyptians demand secret police give up torture secrets," *BBC*, March 8, 2011, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-12674714.
[32] International Federation for Human Rights, *Exposing*, 5.
[33] McRobies, "Sexual violence," 4.
[34] World Health Organization, "Understanding and addressing violence against women," accessed April 27, 2021, https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77434/WHO_RHR_12.37_eng.pdf?sequence=1.

and threats."[35] Sexual state violence against citizens is hence understood as politically-motivated sexual violence and torture perpetrated by the state, through direct and indirect means, to eliminate the perceived threat to its authority.

Sexual violence in Egypt includes (gang) rape and sexual assault, threats of sexual violence, verbal harassment, electrocution of genitals, virginity tests and the so-called "circles of hell".[36] Virginity tests are an examination of the female genitalia and are meant to resolve whether a female has had vaginal intercourse. This examination has no scientific value, as the state of the hymen does not accurately indicate whether there has been vaginal intercourse. Instead, this practice is social, cultural, and political, deployed as means to assess women and girls' virtue, honor or social value. Female political activists, detainees and prisoners face such examinations more frequently, as they are used to instill fear and intimidation. The WHO categorizes this practice as sexual violence, as it is often conducted through force, threat, or coercion. It is practiced in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and has been imported to Europe and North America by some immigrant groups.[37] In Egypt, virginity tests were first performed on female protesters when they were detained during demonstrations on 9 March 2011.[38] The "circles of hell", refer to a strategy deployed by the state during demonstrations, where men circled in on women as a means to isolate and assault them.[39]

Gender-Based State Violence

"Gender-based violence" constitutes the main concept under investigation in this thesis, as the Cohort have claimed that state violence against women after the 2011 uprising was gender-based violence. In order to provide a more nuanced interpretation explaining whether and to what extent it makes sense to consider this a case of gender-based state violence and what the implications of its use are, it is necessary to define what this term means. It is striking that none of the primary or secondary sources utilizing this concept provide contextual definitions of its use nor contest what violence it comprises. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) includes

[35] Christopher J. Einolf, "Why Do States Use Sexual Torture against Political Prisoners? Evidence from Saddam Hussein's Prisons," *Journal of Global Security Studies* 3, no. 4 (October 2018): 417.
[36] International Federation for Human Rights, *Exposing*, 4-6.
[37] World Health Organization, *Eliminating Virginity Testing – An Interagency Statement* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2018), 4-5, http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/275451/ WHO-RHR-18.15-eng.pdf?ua=1.
[38] Booth and El Husseiny, *Egypt*, 3.
[39] Ibid, 11.

the following types of violence in their definition: "sexual, physical, mental, and economic harm inflicted in public or in private (…) threats of violence, coercion and manipulation,."[40] This understanding is shared by several organizations and institutions, including the World Bank (WB), the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), and the European Commission (EC). There are, however, differences when it comes to who is included in this definition. When arguing that state violence is gender-based, the authors of the primary and secondary sources exclusively engage with the fate of women. Men's experiences of state violence, as well as those of people of different sexual orientations and gender identities are not discussed in the framework of "gender-based violence". It therefore seems that gender-based violence, in their understanding, exclusively describes violence inflicted upon women, based on their gender. This understanding of gender-based violence is broadly accepted. The World Bank for example uses the terms gender-based violence and violence against women and girls synonymously, implying that such violence only affects women and girls.[41] The European Institute for Gender Equality also uses both terms interchangeably, noting, however, that men and women can both experience violence based on their gender. They argue that because the majority of victims of such violence are women and girls, gender-based violence is a term used to describe violence against women and girls.[42] The European Commission describes gender-based violence as violence against a person inflicted due to their gender or violence that affects a particular gender disproportionately. It also treats violence against women and girls as a subcategory of gender-based violence and notes mainly women and girls are affected by it.[43]

This thesis understands gender-based state violence as violence inflicted by the state, directly or indirectly, that only or disproportionately affects a particular gender, *because* of their perceived gender. It does not treat violence against women as synonymous or interchangeable with gender-based violence, as this thesis follows the understanding that it can affect men, as well as women

[40] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Gender-Based Violence," accessed April 27, 2021, https://www.unhcr.org/gender-based- violence.html#:~:text=Gender%2DBased%20violence%20refers%20to,threatening%20health%20and%20protection%20issue.
[41] World Bank, "Gender-Based Violence (Violence Against Women and Girls)," accessed April 30, 2021, https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialsustainability/brief/violence-against-women-and-girls.
[42] European Institute for Gender Equality, "What is gender-based violence?" accessed April 28, 2021, https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/what-is-gender-based-violence.
[43] European Commission, "What is gender-based violence?" accessed April 28, 2021, https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/what-gender-based-violence_en.

and people of other gender identities. Consequently, 'violence against women' in the scope of this analysis is a descriptive term, just like 'violence against men'. State violence against men and women describes politically-motivated physical or mental violence, while sexual state violence against men and women describes politically-motivated sexual violence, perpetrated by the state through direct and indirect means, occurring in the public sphere or in state custody.

Patriarchal Social Structures

Thus far, the concepts of state violence and sexual state violence, gender-based state violence and violence against men and women have been defined and contextualized. Finally, it becomes relevant to provide a deeper explanation of the power structures underlying gender-based violence. Explanations of gender-based violence propose that it is rooted in gender inequality, power imbalances and harmful norms (UNHCR, EIGE, EC). The gender order is commonly described by the term 'patriarchy' and its understanding has extended beyond 'rule of the father' to rule by men in the public and private sphere.[44] Nancy Felipe Russo and Angela Pirlott provide a deeper understanding of this in their publication "Gender-Based Violence: Concepts, Methods, and Findings". In their work, drawing on feminist insights, they propose that gender-based violence comes in the context of patriarchal social structures. According to them, it usually results from an imbalance in power, privilege, and resources, in other words, gender inequality, causing subordination of women. They argue that gender-based violence against women stems from patriarchal social structures and unequal gender norms that contribute to an imbalance of power, which, in turn, causes the subordination of women. This makes them more vulnerable to violence in the private and public sphere.[45] David Ghanim, in his book *Gender and Violence in the Middle East*, stresses that men are also affected by patriarchal social structures and cultural gender-related roles, values and norms, as they dictate a range of behaviors and attitudes that are considered acceptable, appropriate, and desirable by society. When individuals are perceived as incompatible with the symbolic and cultural roots that regulate conceptions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity', the result is often alienation, inequality and oppression.[46] This thesis relies on the combined

[44] Cynthia Cockburn, "Militarism," in *Gender Matters in Global Politics: A Feminist Introduction to International Relations*, ed. Laura J. Shepard (London: Routledge, 2014), 113.
[45] Nancy Felipe Russo and Angela Pirlott, "Gender-Based Violence," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1087, no. 1 (December 2006): 180-186.
[46] David Ghanim, *Gender and Violence in the Middle East* (Westport: Praeger, 2009), 10, Google Books.

understanding of Russo, Pirlott and Ghanim pertaining to the dynamics between patriarchal social structures, gender norms and violence.

3.2.Theoretical Framework

The main theory guiding this thesis is Karl Dusza's understanding of Max Weber's conception of the State. Max Weber was a German historian, jurist, sociologist, and political economist who profoundly influenced social theory and research.[47] According to Weber, as understood by Dusza, the defining attribute of a state is its "claim to the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory."[48] This monopoly has not always existed, but is a product of history. Under feudalism in Medieval Europe from the 9th to 15th century, no lords, princes or kings could claim monopoly over the use of violence. While their subjects served them, they were free to exercise power in their own territories. The modern state hence emerged through the expropriation of the means of political organization and domination, including violence, and the appropriation of the material instruments of power.[49] This is why modern states differ from all previously organized political communities, as they wield ultimate control through violence and its implied threat. It is the only organized political community that successfully claims the right to use force to maintain its order.[50] Weber's theory, as understood by Dusza, does not imply that non-state actors cannot be violent – rather that only the state can legitimately authorize the use of violence. It can, for instance, assign the right to use violence to another actor while not losing its monopoly, because it is the only source that retains the capacity to enforce this monopoly. Because the state holds the right to legitimate use of violence within a given territory, it is the supreme authority and can enforce its norms unconditionally.[51] According to Dusza's understanding of Weber's theory, the state therefore "does not have to invoke the power of other associations, but is able to generate by itself the necessary powers and set them in motion by its own autonomous will" and thus, has

[47] Arthur Mitzman, 1998, "Max Weber," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., last modified April 17, 2021, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Max-Weber-German-sociologist.
[48] Karl Dusza, "Max Weber's Conception of the State," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 3, no.1 (Autumn 1989): 75.
[49] Ibid, 80.
[50] Ibid, 87.
[51] Ibid, 88-89.

the "systematic potential to create the ever necessary means and competence to the enforcement of its rules."[52]

In the context of state violence against citizens in Egypt, this theory provides the basic premise for this thesis that violence and the implied threat of violence is a central attribute of the state and that the structure of legitimacy for state violence also defines its power. In order to maintain power and enforce and uphold its norms, the state claims monopoly of the legitimate use of violence and grants non-state actors the right to it – meaning they can commit violence with impunity against those who pose a threat to it. While Weber's theory was not developed in the context of authoritarian states in the Middle East and has been criticized as "Eurocentric",[53] it provides an adequate lens to understand the abstract intersection and dynamics between the state, violence and its citizens.

[52] Ibid, 89.
[53] Herbert Wulf, "Challenging the Weberian Conception of the State: The Future of the Monopoly of Violence," *The Australian Center for Peace and Conflict Studies* (December 2007): 8.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

State Violence Against Citizens

In their book, *Violence and the State*, Matt Killingsworth, Matthew Sussex and Jan Pakulski, are concerned with the dynamics between violence and the state's willingness to employ it. Similar to this thesis, their analysis is premised upon Weber's understanding that violence is a pivotal element of state conduct and that the state continuously seeks to monopolize the legitimate use of violence.[54] They examine state violence from the French Revolution to Stalinist and Nazi genocides. While this span does not include state violence in Egypt, it provides valuable insights. According to Killingsworth et al., the state inflicts violence whenever and wherever it deems it necessary, usually for political reasons in the name of protecting state interests.[55] While the book considers both external and internal state violence, the latter is relevant for this research. Internal violence, they argue, can be an instrument deployed at times of weakness and fragility, or to combat "threats to their interests, to project their power, and impose their dominance over others".[56] Killingsworth et al. also argue that the relationship between elites and violence is a strong one. In times of weakness and fragility, ruling elites struggle to hold onto power and therefore impose their dominance through the instrumentalization of violence.[57]

Killingsworth et al.'s framing is significant to the context in Egypt, as they provide a useful conception not only of the dynamics between the state and violence but also of when and why violence is deployed. From 2011 to 2014, violence was inflicted when deemed necessary for political ends, justifying its use as a legitimate means to protect state interests, when in fact the demonstrations from 2011 onwards threatened the existence of the authoritarian state and the interests of the ruling elites. To hold onto their power and impose their dominance, violence was instrumentalized in response.

Erica Chenoweth and Adria Lawrence, in their book, *Rethinking Violence: States and Non-State Actors in Conflict*, analyze state violence against citizens and non-state actors' violence

[54] Matt Killingsworth, Matthew Sussex, and Jan Pakulski, *Violence and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 1, EBSCO Host.
[55] Ibid, 205.
[56] Ibid, 206-211.
[57] Ibid, 211.

against the state. They are puzzled by the fact that the state's "raison d'etre" [58] is to govern and provide security to their citizens, making it unclear why they subject them to violence. Chenoweth and Lawrence's book is based around the question of how, why, and when states inflict violence on their citizens.[59] Similar to Killingsworth et al., they discuss how state weakness might be linked to a rise in violence, however, in contrast, they are more critical of the direct link between the two.[60] They argue that weak states do not necessarily slip into state failure and violence and that strong states also occasionally experience violence. According to them, state weakness is often enduring and violence only erupts sporadically and under certain conditions, meaning that state weakness is insufficient to explain state violence.[61] While Chenoweth and Lawrence make a valid point, literature such as Killingsworth et al.'s points to the fact that weak, poor, underdeveloped states are more likely to experience violence than wealthier states, a fact relevant to this thesis. Egypt was an already weak state when confronted by unprecedented mass mobilization – a shock that caused it to descend further into weakness. Therefore, as Killingsworth et al. argue, in order for the three separate regimes that ruled Egypt from 2011 to 2014 to remain in power, extreme violence was necessary. Chenoweth and Lawrence also argue that authoritarianism affects the probability of violence, because in authoritarian regimes political dissent is repressed, while in democracies, collective action is possible and encouraged.[62] They also write that violence is "a function of uncertainty and threat, either from outside the state or within it."[63] Political turmoil can disrupt or shift the balance of power, leading to uncertainty and threat to the state, such as the removal of leaders and the emergence of new ones.[64]

In the context of Egypt, those two arguments are of particular importance. Authoritarianism in Egypt and with it, the lack of freedom to express political dissent was one of the grievances that led to the uprising and in turn, to the violence protesters were subjected to by the state.[65] The second argument is also significant, because as the demonstrations led to political turmoil and

[58] Erica Chenoweth and Adria Lawrence, *Rethinking Violence: States and Non-State Actors in Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 2-3, EBSCO Host.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid, 7.
[61] Ibid, 8.
[62] Ibid, 10-11.
[63] Ibid, 14.
[64] Ibid, 15.
[65] "Egyptian Revolution", *Al Jazeera*.

shifted the balance of power several times between 2011 to 2014, uncertainty and threat to the state was suppressed through violence.

State Violence against Citizens in the Middle East

In the chapter, "Mapping the Neoliberal Experience" in his book *Lineages of Revolt – Issues of Contemporary Capitalism in the Middle East*, Adam Hanieh discusses core policies connected to the neoliberal transformation that began in the Middle East in the 1990s. His section on Centralization and Authoritarianism is of particular importance. Similar to Chenoweth and Lawrence, he writes that authoritarian state structures contribute to increased probability of state violence. He goes further to analyze how neoliberal institutions (i.e. the International Monetary Fund) and Western governments embraced authoritarian regimes, understanding that the success of their neoliberal policies – the Structural Adjustment Programs – depended on dictators and kings violently repressing any resistance to them.[66] Hanieh's analysis is relevant to this thesis, as it shows that not only does authoritarianism contribute to the probability of state violence, but also that it has been strengthened by external powers and neoliberal policies that contributed to repression and ultimately caused the uprisings in the Middle East. This analysis is important to consider in the context of post-February 2011 Egypt, as it offers a broader context of authoritarianism and the external mechanisms at play in the Middle East.

Joshua Stacher, in his journal article, "Fragmenting states, new regimes: militarized state violence and transition in the Middle East", is concerned with political transitions in the Middle East. He describes how scholars have argued that the breakdown of authoritarianism leads to periods of uncertainty which eventually results in movement towards democracy. If this does not occur, there is a return to "authoritarian normalcy". According to Stacher, this is inaccurate, as Egypt, Libya, Syria and Bahrain did not witness either. Shacher argues that instead, mass mobilization caused the weakening and fragmenting of regimes that "stimulated elites' militarization of the state apparatus and unprecedented levels of state violence against ordinary citizens in a process of regime re-making."[67] To Stacher, one cannot link state violence solely to a

[66] Adam Hanieh, *Lineages of Revolt – Issues of Contemporary Capitalism in the Middle East* (Chicago: Haymarket Book, 2013), 64.
[67] Joshua Stacher, "Fragmenting states, new regimes: militarized state violence and transition in the Middle East," *Democratization* 22, no. 2 (March 2015): 259.

"transitional moment of uncertainty",[68] but instead, as the result of increased militarization of the governing apparatus in reaction to the popular uprisings. "It is deliberate political engineering by elites who are directing violence against their citizens in order to maintain some part of the existing regime or create a new regime on the ashes of the older order", he writes.[69] While Chenoweth and Lawrence argue that a period of uncertainty due to internal instability causes increased state violence, Stacher's argument is stronger in the context of Egypt, as he explains that internal instability led to ruling elites' increasingly militarizing politics and society, which in turn led to high levels of state violence.

Gender and State Violence

In the book, *Gender Violence in Peace and War – States of Complicity*, several scholars analyze, "the role of the state, its mechanisms, and its structures in perpetuating, legitimizing, and facilitating gender violence worldwide."[70] The focus lies particularly on states' participation in gender violence. In her chapter, "Subaltern Bodies: Gender Violence, Sexual Torture, and Political Repression during the Greek Military Dictatorship (1967 – 1974)", Katerina Stefatos discusses sexual violence during the Greek military dictatorship. She argues that sexual violence and torture in state custody was a tool to repress women and a "state-sponsored project of control, regulation, and rehabilitation of 'incorrigible,' politically active women."[71] In their chapter, "Sexual Violence as Weapon during the Guatemalan Genocide", Victoria Sanford and Sofía Duyos Álvarez-Arenas argue that during the Guatemalan Genocide, the state, particularly the army, used sexual violence as a counterinsurgency strategy. According to their analysis, the state ordered sexual violence primarily against women, "enshrouded with impunity by official denial."[72] They report that many women were gang raped by army soldiers, and that security personnel were responsible for over 90 percent of sexual violence against women. Furthermore, they explain, that the claim by many scholars that sexual violence is an unfortunate outcome of the extraordinary circumstances of war, where men are provoked to deviant behavior, is inaccurate. Instead, they cite the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women who reported that "sexual violence is not an

[68] Ibid, 269.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Victoria Stanford, Katerina Stefatos, and Cecilia M. Salvi, *Gender Violence in Peace and War – States of Complicity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016), 1, EBSCO Host.
[71] Ibid, 19.
[72] Ibid, 35.

outcome of war but that rather women's bodies are an important site of war, which makes sexual violence an integral part of wartime strategy."[73]

In her chapter, "War", in the book *Gender Matters in Global Politics – A Feminist Introduction to International Relations*, Swati Parashar writes similarly, that most wars in history demonstrate a kind of "'militarized masculinity'"[74], nurtured socially and politically. Militarized masculinity projects notions of honor and nationalism which are preserved in a constant conflict between the 'self' and a perceived 'other'. It also projects notions of what it is to be a man – including dominance and control over women – who are perceived as subordinate to men.[75] According to Parashar, producing and upholding a "militarized patriarchal social order"[76] are central motives of war and are achieved by using gendered strategies. Women, who are the perceived 'other', are subjected to violence as a part of war strategies because they are perceived as "upholders of social and cultural values."[77] Thus, their bodies hold symbolic value and are turned into terrains on which battles are fought.[78]

Contrary to the above-mentioned scholars, Natalia Linos, in her journal article, "Rethinking gender-based violence during war: Is violence against civilian men a problem worth addressing?", argues that the focus on women as victims and men as aggressors in the discourse on gender-based violence during conflict and war leads to difficulties in identifying gender-based violence against men. According to Linos, focusing on the "intent"[79] behind state violence (i.e. as a tool for ethnic cleansing or humiliation) can enable a deeper understanding of why men and women are subjected to violence similarly or differently. She argues that this approach would not dismiss men's experience of violence during conflict and war.[80]

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[73] Ibid.
[74] Swati Parashar, "War," in *Gender Matters in Global Politics: A Feminist Introduction to International Relations*, ed. Laura J. Shepard (London: Routledge, 2014), 100.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid, 101.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid, 102.
[79] Natalia Linos, "Rethinking gender-based violence during war: Is violence against civilian men a problem worth addressing?" *Social Science & Medicine* 68, no.8 (April 2009): 1550.
[80] Ibid.

Gender and State Violence in the Middle East

David Ghanim, in his book, *Gender and Violence in the Middle East*, argues that the intersection between authoritarianism and the patriarchal gender structure is the leading cause of violence, including state violence, in the Middle East. According to him, violence is not incidental, it is embedded in these systems that dominate everyday life.[81] Ghanim focusses on the internal structures that feed, sustain and intensify violence, claiming that these are overlooked due to the overemphasis of external factors contributing to violence.[82] He argues that the patriarchal gender structure is an intrinsically violent social system, because it includes patriarchal cultural practices, perception and social values which create a cycle of violence difficult to break away from.[83] He argues that civilian men and women are partially responsible for this cycle of violence, as they feed into and sustain patriarchal gender structures – direct or indirectly, consciously, or unconsciously – through the internalization of these patriarchal social systems and constructs.[84] More importantly, however, he argues that authoritarian states reinforce and reproduce patriarchal gender structures, enabling and increasing unchecked state violence to extreme levels.[85]

This chapter provided various perspectives of how state violence against citizens can be understood. Most relevant for this thesis are, firstly, perspectives highlighting state violence as a result of increased militarization and as an instrument deployed at times of internal weakness, fragility, uncertainty, and threat, and also as a means by which ruling elites or the governing apparatus combat internal threats to retain power, maintain parts of the existing regime, or create a new regime similar to the old one and impose their dominance. Secondly, in the context of the Middle East, perspectives that point towards the role of authoritarianism and the manner external powers contribute to the strengthening of those systems and affect the probability of violence too are relevant. The literature presented on gender and state violence against women during conflict and war reveals contrasting perspectives. It shows that sexual violence is a tool to control and regulate politically active women and that sexual violence can be considered a counterinsurgency strategy. Further arguments include that because women are perceived as upholders of cultural and social values and structures, their bodies are seen as an important site of war and make sexual

[81] Ghanim, *Gender and Violence*, 2.
[82] Ibid, 3.
[83] Ibid, 4-9.
[84] Ibid, 9-10.
[85] Ibid, 5.

violence a pivotal strategy of war. A contrasting perspective contended that the focus on men as perpetrators of violence and women as victims can, in turn, lead to a dismissal of men's experiences of violence. In the context of the Middle East, it was argued that the intersection between authoritarianism and patriarchal gender structures are the leading cause of state violence because the state and society sustain and reinforce patriarchal cultural practices, perception, and social values, creating a cycle of violence. The presented literature on gender and state violence is relevant, because it provides an overview of contrasting perspectives of gender and state violence and therefore enhances a deeper understanding of the broader field and contextualizes the following analysis.

5. CHAPTER ONE: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

This chapter offers a brief historical analysis of coercive institutions guilty of committing violence against citizens in Egypt – namely, the military and the Ministry of Interior, which commands the National Police, General Security and Central Security Forces, and the National Security Agency (formerly, the State Security Investigation Service). This analysis facilitates a deeper understanding of the historical institutional set-up of state violence in Egypt, as means to indicate the current state of affairs.

Today the Egyptian military ranks 13th on the list of the most powerful armies in the world and is amongst the most powerful in the Middle East. It comes in 8th in terms of armed vehicles and 14th in terms of manpower.[86] Historically, the Egyptian army played a large role in the process of post-colonial state development. After centuries of British occupation, the Egyptian army was reborn in the revolution of the so-called Free Officer's Movement. Led by Gamal Abdel Nasser, the movement overthrew the British-backed monarchy on 23 July 1952. The Free Officers restricted political space and monopolized power, thus preserving the military's dominant position and ensuring its interests were protected and advanced.[87] After Nasser's Free Officers achieved victory over the occupier and the unpopular monarch it backed, the military came to be seen as the core of Egyptian nationalist identity. The public and the military apparatus itself perceived it as the ultimate protector and unifier of Egypt against external threats and internal political instability. Its popularity and prestige granted the military nearly absolute authority and power. Hence, it met barely any resistance when political parties were banned and the Muslim Brotherhood faced a massive crackdown, leaving political activity confined to the boundaries of its rule. With no considerable opposition, the military accumulated and exercised power.[88]

This continued when Nasser became president in 1956, and relied on the military to crush any civilian opposition groups and established the State Security Investigation Service under the Ministry of Interior.[89] Its focus was the elimination of political threats to the state's security,

[86] "Egypt vs Turkey in 2021: who has the stronger military?" *Egypt Independent*, February 26, 2021, https://egyptindependent.com/egypt-vs-turkey-in-2021-who-has-the-stronger-military/.
[87] Daniel Kurtzer and Mary Svenstrup, "Egypt's Entrenched Military," *The National Interest*, no. 121 (September 2012): 40.
[88] Ibid, 42.
[89] Ibid, 43.

particularly those deriving from Islamists, liberal or far-left opposition groups. It was able to legally arrest, detain, and prosecute internal threats to the state.[90] Under Nasser's leadership, the military became increasingly present in the economic sphere, as state resources were directed to the military, who played a lead role in land reclamation, public infrastructure, basic commodity provision and domestic industry.[91] Nasser also purged the military leadership following defeat in the 1967 war with Israel, which shifted the focus onto his executive office, meaning that the military went from being heavily engaged in politics to being subordinate to the president.[92]

Under Nasser's successor Anwar el-Sadat, the military was further disengaged from daily governance and Nasser loyalists in the military leadership were discharged to reinforce the military's subordination to the presidential office. However, Sadat granted the military financial and institutional independence, giving it space to increase its privileged status in Egyptian society. Later, under Hosni Mubarak's rule, the military expanded its economic strength and independence, under the condition that it was completely subordinate to the president and did not engage directly in daily governance.[93] This loyalty to the president earned it his protection and increased its position of privilege.[94] Until the uprising in 2011, the role of the military in politics had gradually decreased, compared to 1952, but expanded into the Egyptian economy. This is not to imply that it was not powerful – it remained one the prominent institutions in Egypt with the presidential office, crushing any threats to their interests to this day.[95]

Under Mubarak's rule political participation was repressed. Political free speech was not tolerated, elections were rigged and "political parties and the parliament were a joke, and civil society became an arm of the state, rather than an outlet for expression and volunteerism."[96] The state became increasingly authoritarian in its nature and heavy-handed police crackdowns increased. This can be attributed to the neoliberal Structural Adjustment Programmes enacted by

[90] "Egypt dissolves notorious internal security agency," *BBC,* March 15, 2011, https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html#cg-news.
[91] Shana Marshall, *The Egyptian Armed Forces and the Remaking of an Economic Empire* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2015), 4, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/egyptian_armed_forces.pdf.
[92] Kurtzer and Svenstrup, "Egypt's," 43.
[93] Ibid, 44.
[94] Ibid, 45.
[95] Ibid, 42.
[96] Ibid, 41.

International Financial Institutions (IFIs), such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which Mubarak began implementing in the 1990s, as mentioned before. It meant that in exchange for loans, Egypt was required to adopt and reform macroeconomic and fiscal policies that cohered around privatization, deregulation, reduced social spending, trade and financial liberalization.[97] While these conditionalities were promised to lead to economic growth and support the servicing of debt, the self-perpetuating reforms and consequential restructuring of the Egyptian economy had devastating social repercussions.[98] As the Egyptian economy increasingly became integrated into the global market economy, unemployment, poverty and income and gender inequality grew, which Mubarak failed to address.[99] Well-connected political, business and military individuals became massively wealthy through the reforms which gave rise to a new political elite in positions of dominance in government and state institutions. As social grievances grew, protection of the new ruling elite and its interests from an increasingly dissatisfied population required the inflation of the security apparatus – the Egyptian Ministry of Interior, responsible for law enforcement.[100] The national police, directed by the Ministry of Interior, used increasingly brutal tactics against citizens. The General Security and Central Security Forces, a paramilitary wing under the command of the Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with the State Security Investigations Service also used increasingly coercive interrogation and torture tactics against opposition forces in detention and state custody and increased public surveillance, infiltration and intimidation.[101]

The Egyptian Ministry of Interior has long been associated with the ruling elites and its evolution from Nasser until Mubarak reveals that since 1952, it has shown a tendency towards policing through coercion and force rather than consent. Indeed, "Mubarak's regime failed to mobilize support to its policies and the Ministry of Interior's coercive apparatus became integral

[97] Maha Abdelrahman, "Policing neoliberalism in Egypt: the continuing rise of the 'securocratic' state," *Third World Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (February 2016): 186.
[98] Karen Pfeifer, "How Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan and even Egypt became IMF "Success Stories" in the 1990s," *Middle East Report,* no. 210 (Spring 1999): 23.
[99] Jason Oringer and Carol Welch, *Structural Adjustment Programmes* (Washington: Institute for Policy Studies, 1998), https://ips-dc.org/structural_adjustment_programs/.
[100] Abdelrahman, "Policing," 186.
[101] Refworld, "Human Rights Watch World Report 1993 – Egypt," January 1, 1993, https://www.refworld.org/docid/467fca73c.html; Gregg Carlstrom, "A first step towards prosecution?"*Al Jazeera,* March 6, 2011, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2011/03/06/a-first-step-towards-prosecutions/.

to its survival."[102] State coercion in Egypt and the power of the Ministry of Interior are not coincidental outcomes of authoritarianism, rather a pivotal part of the capitalist state, which started developing at a fast pace from the 1990s onwards.[103] It becomes clear that neoliberal capitalism steered by the IMF, World Bank, Western governments and local elites led to elevation of the state's security apparatus, strengthened authoritarianism and increased economic inequalities, which ultimately triggered mass demonstrations by 2011.[104]

This chapter has shown that state coercion and violence against citizens – whether by the military or the Ministry of Interior, through coercive institutions, organizations, and agencies – has long been part of Egypt's history and was amplified by social divisions caused by the implementation of the neoliberal agenda. It offers valuable context of how the state is, and has, historically been mediated to its citizens, and illustrates the state of affairs in Egypt today. It is necessary to define what is meant by 'the state' when investigating state violence in Egypt from 2011 to 2014. As noted previously, Egypt saw three regimes come to power in quick succession – the SCAF under Mohammed Hussein Tantawi (2011-2012), the Muslim Brotherhood under Mohammed Morsi (2012-2013) and interim president Adly Mansour (2013-2014). Of note is that when the SCAF declared itself interim ruler in 2011, it was the first time the *military* ruled Egypt directly since the 1952 revolution, and it did so with the main objective to safeguard its economic interests and privileged position above the law and politics.[105] The regime of the Muslim Brotherhood which followed, was the first *elected* government to come to power in Egypt, with the main objective of all-encompassing rule and legitimation of its Islamist agenda.[106] While the interests of the SCAF and Muslim Brotherhood diverged, their core objectives remained similar to previous regimes, namely, to maintain power and impose their dominance. While the SCAF for instance dissolved the State Security Investigation Service in respond to popular demands that it was a lingering aspect of the old regime, it was only renamed as the National Security Agency, but

[102] Dina Rashed, "Violence from Above, Violence from Below: The State and Policing Citizens in Mubarak's Egypt," in *State Terror, State Violence: Global Perspectives*, ed. Bettina Koch (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden GmbH, 2015), 109.
[103] Abdelrahman, "Policing," 187-188.
[104] Ibid, 197.
[105] Kurtzer and Svenstrup, "Egypt's," 45-46.
[106] Ibid, 46.

was never dismantled or reformed.[107] All three regimes had a similar institutional set-up in terms of inflicting violence. Irrespective of the ruling regime, Egyptians who made political and social demands in public, threatening their interests, were met with physical, sexual, and mental violence inflicted by the military and Ministry of Interior. This chapter has shown that regardless of the ruling regime, the core objectives and institutional set-up in terms of inflicting violence were consistent. It is for this reason this thesis does not differentiate between the three regimes that came to power from 2011 to 2014 and instead treats them as one state apparatus, using the term 'successive regimes' or 'the state' to describe them. The timeframe chosen for this investigating of state violence against citizens in Egypt – 2011 to 2014 – yields significant results regarding the high levels of state violence witnessed and experienced by Egyptians during this period.

[107] Sarah El Deeb, "Hotline marks return of Egypt's security Agency," *U.S. News,* January 6, 2014, https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2014/01/06/hotlines-mark-return-of-egypts-security-agencies.

6. CHAPTER TWO: WHAT CHANGED FOLLOWING THE 2011 UPRISING?

There is a trend in the claims and assumptions in the literature that the nature of state violence against women in Egypt changed following the 2011 uprising relative to before the uprising. Chapter one established that the institutional set-up in terms of inflicting violence did not change in Egypt and that coercion, rather than consent, on behalf of the military and Ministry of Interior has been the primary approach to ruling the country since 1952. This chapter deconstructs the claims and assumptions of the Cohort (as previously indicated, this refers to scholars, journalist and activists) that post-February 2011 the mechanisms of state violence against women changed and became "politicized", "systematic", methodical or that the target of state violence against women changed. The empirical foundations of these assumptions and claims will be tested for quality and reliability, while further empirical evidence will be introduced to establish to what extent those claims and assumptions hold, through a process of critiquing to identify possible weaknesses.

State Violence against Women: "Politicized" post-February 2011?

In her works, "Sexual violence and state violence against women in Egypt, 2011-2014" and "The common factor: sexual violence and the Egyptian state, 2011-2014", Heather McRobies discusses sexual state violence against women in chronological order, first reviewing the situation before 2011, then during the 2011 uprising, followed by the rule of the SCAF, the Muslim Brotherhood under Mohamed Morsi and finally that of now-president Abdel-Fatah el-Sisi. McRobies claims in her work that sexual state violence against women reached "epidemic levels" following the 2011 uprising, with the police, military and the judiciary being complicit.[108] McRobies posits that sexual state violence against women became politicized from 2011 onwards, and was "used as a weapon" and was a "tool utilized both by state actors, non-state political organizations, and others – terrorizing women for exercising their right to protest, for their political allegiance, and also simply as women who entered public space."[109] While McRobies recognizes that sexual state violence – including harassment and assault – post-February 2011 progressed from the alarming levels it was at during the regime of Mubarak, she argues that it became

[108] Ibid.
[109] McRobies, "The common factor."

politicized from 2011 due to the successive regimes' complicity in pre-planning and coordinating the use of violence. To support her argument she draws testimony from civil society activists reporting that "women [were] surrounded by men moving together as if in a practiced tactic to isolate and assault the woman", previously referred to as "circles of hell".[110] She also mentions Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment – a citizen-led organization founded in 2012 to combat and document sexual violence in public spaces – and their statement that some of the gang rapes and "circles of hell" were pre-planned and politicized attacks, frequently carried out by *baltagiyya*. Another example McRobies uses to support her argument is that of forced virginity tests, which 18 female protesters were subjected to when detained during demonstrations on 9 March 2011.[111]

Ultimately, McRobies argues that there was a change in the nature of state violence against women in Egypt after 2011 – that it became politicized with the successive regimes complicit in pre-planning and coordinating attacks and that violence was used as a tool and a weapon to silence women. However, McRobies does not provide a large amount of empirical evidence to support this argument, except for the few cases mentioned above. In order to justifiably claim that state violence became politicized post-February 2011, a definition of 'politicized violence' and a comparison to the situation before 2011 is required. McRobies does not provide either. Instead, she claims, "the military, politically-identified groups, and organized mobs (both armed and unarmed) 'representing' or 'acting on behalf of' first the Mubarak and then the successive regimes – and the police – have *all* committed sexual assaults on women. (…) In 2005, for instance, Egyptian human rights organizations documented the use of pro-regime vigilantes by the Mubarak regime to sexually assault female journalists and activists, a tactic (…)."[112] To some extent her own words weaken her argument, as she writes herself that the state activity committed violence against women before the 2011 uprising and was complicit when *baltagiyya* hired by the Mubarak regime committed such violence. By her own logic, sexual state violence against women was politicized before, as well as after the 2011 uprising, as it was pre-planned and pre-coordinated in both cases. The evidence provided by McRobies to justify the claim that state violence against women became politicized after the 2011 uprising is insufficient and contradictory. It is worth however investigating whether despite the lack of evidence, McRobies' claim is true. To do so,

[110] Ibid; Booth and El Husseiny, *Egypt*, 11.
[111] McRobies, "Sexual violence," 2-4.
[112] McRobies, "The common factor."

first, 'politicized violence' will be defined and then followed by a comparison to the situation before the 2011 uprising, through the use of primary sources.

According to Paul Dumouchel, political or politicized violence "is committed in the context of a political conflict, or can be related, either through its cause or its motive, to political issues."[113] Considering this definition, the question arises whether state violence was political either through its cause or its motive, before and after the 2011 uprising. The evidence brought forth by McRobies to justify the claim that state violence became "politicized" after the uprising in 2011 include the so-called "circles of hell", gang rape and sexual assault, the use of *baltagiyya* to carry out such attacks and virginity tests.

Reports from human rights and civil society organizations which support victims of state violence and torture are useful here. They document incidents of violence and attempt to actively combat violence against women in the public sphere. In many cases, their work dates back to the 1990s and 2000s. According to testimonies gathered by the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) – an international human rights NGO federating 192 organizations from 117 countries – after the 2011 uprising, sexual violence was not only used with the knowledge of the Ministry of Interior and armed forces, but was tactically coordinated with police departments and organizations and agencies commanded by the Ministry.[114] The New Woman Foundation – an Egyptian feminist non-governmental organization – also write in their report "Sexual violence and sexual torture against women will not thwart their struggle to fulfill the goals of the Revolution", that many attacks on women were perpetrated by highly organized groups, namely, the *baltagiyya*, hired, deployed and trained for their missions by the Ministry of Interior. They further note that gang rapes and sexual assault by the police or *baltagiyya* already occurred during Mubarak's rule, writing that "the spate of mass sexual assaults against women has not stopped since the Mubarak regime started using sexual violence against women demonstrators in May 2000."[115] The FIDH expands upon this statement in the reports "Egypt: Keeping Women Out – Sexual Violence against

[113] Paul Dumouchel, "Political Violence and Democracy," *立命館言語文化研究 = 立命館言語文化研究* 23, no. 4 (March 2012): 117.
[114] International Federation for Human Rights, *Exposing*, 8.
[115] New Woman Foundation, *Sexual violence and sexual torture against women will not thwart their struggle to fulfill the goals of the Revolution* (Cairo: New Woman Foundation), accessed May 15, 2021, https://nwrcegypt.org/sexual-violence-and-sexual-torture-against-women-will-not-thwart-their-struggle-to-fulfill-the-goals-of-the-revolution/.

Women in the Public Sphere", written in collaboration with Nazra for Feminist Studies, New Woman Foundation and the Uprising of Women in the Arab World, and "Exposing state hypocrisy: sexual violence by security forces in Egypt". They write that during the 1990s, *baltagiyya* were appropriated as a tool of the Ministry of Interior to infiltrate groups of protestors as seemingly corrupt and deprived poor people, in an effort to smear the demonstrations.

When protest movements and opposition grew in numbers by the 2000s, and women and wealthier citizens were more present, the same strategy could no longer be deployed. That is when *baltagiyya* were ordered to spread fear and attack protestors, which included sexually assaulting women, while security forces stood by.[116] The regime's aim was once again to undermine the demonstrations and delegitimize them. According to Dr. Magda Adly, co-founder of El-Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture, who was interviewed for this research paper, on 25 May 2005, 'Black Wednesday' occurred. Also mentioned by McRobies, on 'Black Wednesday', several female protestors and journalists were sexually assaulted by *baltagiyya* and the police during demonstrations calling for a boycott of a referendum on constitutional reform, while high ranking officers of the Ministry of Interior and riot police stood by. When several civil society organizations filed a law suit with the Attorney General, which included photos, videos and testimonies, the file was closed and dismissed, on the grounds that it was impossible to identify the perpetrators.[117] Furthermore, Dr. Adly confirmed that "circles of hell", happened frequently at demonstrations as far back as the year 2000, during demonstrations in solidarity with the Palestinian cause and during the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, both of which El-Nadeem had participated in.[118] Additionally, according to reports from Human Rights Watch and SOS Torture Network, women were subjected to sexual violence and threatened with rape by police officers when arrested during anti-Iraq war demonstrations in 2003.[119]

[116] International Federation for Human Rights, *Exposing*, 8.
[117] Dr. Magda Adly, interview by the author, digital, April 29, 2021; Booth and El Husseiny, *Egypt*, 12.
[118] Dr. Magda Adly, interview by the author, digital, April 29, 2021.
[119] Human Rights Watch, "Egypt: Crackdown on Antiwar Protests – Use of Torture, Excessive Force by Cairo Police," March 23, 2003, https://www.hrw.org/news/2003/03/23/egypt-crackdown-antiwar-protests; OMCT SOS Torture Network, "Egypt: arrests, torture and threats of rape against anti-war demonstrators," March 27, 2003, https://www.omct.org/en/resources/urgent-interventions/egypt-arrests-torture-and-threats-of-rape-against-anti-war-demonstrators.

These primary sources, including Dr. Adly's insights, illustrate that sexual state violence, including threats of violence and gang rape and sexual assault by the police and *baltagiyya* clearly occurred before the uprising in 2011, as did the "circles of hell", during demonstrations in 2000, 2003 and 2005. When asked about virginity tests prior to the 2011 uprisings, Dr. Adly stated that she had never heard of such cases prior to 9 March 2011. Further research could not provide evidence that women detained during demonstrations prior to the 2011 uprising were subjected to virginity tests.

Based on this evidence it is clear the claim brought forth by McRobies that state violence against women became "politicized" post-February 2011 is based on insufficient evidence, as the same practices are confirmed to have existed pre-February 2011, with the exception of virginity tests. However, considering aforementioned evidence of the successive regimes' hiring *baltagiyya* to perpetrate acts of violence and repression with the purpose of cracking down on demonstrations and strategies such as forcibly subjecting women to virginity tests to humiliate and discredit them and hence, the demonstrations, it can indeed be argued that this state violence was political through its cause and its motive. Therefore, state violence against women was clearly politicized, before, as well as after the 2011 uprising.

State Violence against Women: "Systematic" or "Methodical" post-February 2011?

The Cohort has claimed that following the 2011 uprising, state violence against women became methodical or "systematic" when compared to before the 2011 uprising. Habiba Abdelaal, for example, in her article, "Women on the Frontline: The Anti-Sexual Violence Movement in Egypt Ten Years After The Revolution," published by the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, writes that the uprisings in 2011 highlighted the issue of sexual harassment in Egypt and "exposed the government's methods to threaten women and discourage them from participating in public protests."[120] Her claim that the uprising exposed the state's methodical approach to threaten and subject women to violence is not justified with primary source evidence or further analysis. Her claim is based on the assumption that before 2011, the state did not methodically subject women to violence or at least that it was not known at the time. Hala Mostafa, a political activist working with the *Shoft Taharosh* Initiative ("I Saw Harassment" Initiative), has been cited frequently, as,

[120] Abdelaal, *Women*.

for example, in an article published by Al-Monitor titled: "Why women in Egypt continue to face violence". She claims that state violence against women is a "systematic process". To prove this point, similar to McRobies, she mentions cases of state violence against women post-February 2011, such as virginity tests and gang rapes and sexual assault frequently at the hand of *baltagiyya*.[121] However, there is no mention of cases before 2011. While she does not clearly state that state violence became "systematic" after the 2011 uprising, it is implied, considering the article was published in 2020 and the cases she mentions all occurred between 2011 to 2014. Mostafa was interviewed by Rasha El-Ibiary for her article, "Media Portrayal of Street Violence Against Egyptian Women: Women, Socio-Political Violence, Ineffective Laws and Limited Role of NGOs", and explains that since 2005 sexual harassment has been used as a "tool" for political repression, and that following the uprising in 2011, it has become "systematic" and very frequent.[122] Once again, the evidence she cites to underscore this point are virginity tests, gang rape and sexual assault by *baltagiyya*.[123]

Habiba Abdelaal and Hala Mostafa, and in fact the journalist, Albaraa Abdullah, and the scholar, Rasha El-Ibiary, who both cited Mostafa, all argue that state violence against women changed after the 2011 uprising relative to before and that it became methodical or "systematic". In order to argue this, firstly, a definition of 'systematic/methodical violence' is necessary, to establish how and by what measure state violence has become methodical or "systematic". Secondly, a comparison to the situation before the 2011 uprising is necessary, in order to identify how violence only changed in such a way post-February 2011. It is worth investigating whether despite the lack of a parameter of definition and comparison, their claims and assumptions hold.

When asking Dr. Adly how she would define 'systematic/methodical state violence', she responded:

> It means that violence happens with the state's complicity and that the state has a political strategy as to how violence is carried out all over the country. It happens in all places, whether it is on the streets, in police stations, national security offices, etc. and certain methods and tools are used for violence and torture. For example, whips, electrical machines, certain tactics of closing in on protestors and violating, humiliating and intimidating them. This is not an individual police officer or soldier abusing his power. It

[121] Abdullah, "Why women."
[122] El-Ibiary, "Media Portrayal," 57.
[123] Ibid, 58.

> is systematic and methodical, because those methods are known to all police officers, soldiers and security personnel and are deployed when seen necessary. State violence is systematic now and it was systematic under Mubarak.[124]

Considering this statement and aforementioned reports of coordinated and pre-planned attacks, evidence of the Ministry of Interior hiring *baltagiyya*, and strategic methods and tools used pre- and post-February 2011 to inflict violence upon women, it can be argued that state violence against women was systematic and methodical, before, as well as after the 2011 uprising.

State Violence against Women: Changed target post-February 2011?

Scholar Jihan Zakarriya, discusses the connection between public sexual violence, female shame, and public feminism in modern Egypt, first in the 20th century and then the 21st century, in her article "Public Feminism, Female Shame, and Sexual Violence in Modern Egypt". She makes many arguments concerning state violence in Egypt, one of which is of particular relevance to this study. Zakarriya writes that after the 2011 uprising, the successive regimes' "target[ed] not only feminists and female activists but also thousands, if not millions, of common Egyptian women who [were] described as 'foreign agents,' 'brainwashed,' and 'destroyers of the culture and the system of the Egyptian state'."[125] Zakarriya describes how the SCAF and Muslim Brotherhood isolated and defamed women, especially minorities like Christians and democrats, and subjected them to organized and planned sexual violence. She mentions the specific case of Coptic protesters, who gathered for a peaceful demonstration to object the demolition of a church in upper Egypt, where women were subjected to extreme state violence, including sexual violence. She also mentions that many Arab and Western journalists faced state violence post-February 2011.[126] However, as mentioned before, there is evidence that suggests that prior to 2011, i.e. during the demonstrations in 2005, female journalists were in fact targeted by the *baltagiyya* and subjected to state violence, including sexual violence.[127]

More evidence for her claim is not provided and the mentioned evidence does not provide sufficient explanation as to how, post-February 2011, common Egyptian women were targeted, as opposed to pre-February 2011, when supposedly only female activists or feminists were targeted.

[124] Dr. Magda Adly, interview by the author, digital, April 29, 2021.
[125] Zakarriya, "Public Feminism," 120.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Dr. Magda Adly, interview by the author, digital, April 29, 2021; McRobies, "The common factor."

When trying to find primary source evidence supporting this claim, none was found. This is aggravated by the question of who Zakarriya believes the successive regimes would consider an "activist" or a "feminist" as opposed to "a common Egyptian woman" protesting in the public sphere and how they were identified as the former or latter. It can be argued that any common Egyptian woman protesting the state, its policies and socio-economic grievances pre- and post-February 2011 was identified as an "activist" in the eyes of the state, and therefore posed a threat, whether they identified as a "feminist" or "activist" or not. Incidents of state violence, including sexual violence perpetrated by the army were continually enacted against female protesters challenging the rule of the SCAF.[128] This shows that the targets of state violence were protesting women. The claim Zakarriya makes is difficult to prove and requires inside information to confirm whether there was a particular way of identifying whether protesting women were "activists" or "feminists" and whether, prior to the 2011 uprising, they were targeted specifically, while after "common Egyptian women" became targets. Until such evidence is brought forth, the claim Zakarriya makes is dubious and cannot be supported with existing evidence.

State Violence against Women: What changed post-February 2011?

Up until now, it has been established that state violence against women was politicized, systematic, methodical, and affected all women, whether they were activists, feminists, journalists, or regular Egyptian women protesting in the public sphere either before or after February 2011. Assumptions and claims that the nature of state violence changed after the 2011 uprising are not persuasive enough when challenging their empirical evidence. Therefore, the question still remains, whether and what changed in the nature of state violence after the 2011 uprising. This section argues that it was not the *quality* of violence that changed post-February 2011, but rather the *quantity*.

McRobies mentions as a side note that mass mobilization in the public sphere contributed to the surge of harassment and assaults against women reaching "epidemic" levels.[129] However, this thesis argues that not only did mass mobilization contribute to the surge of state violence against women, it was the main factor causing it. As established in Chapter One, the institutional set-up to

[128] Mariz Tadros, "Challenging Reified Masculinities: Men as Survivors of Politically Motivated Sexual Assault in Egypt," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 12, no. 3 (November 2016): 331.
[129] McRobies, "The common factor."

inflict violence did not change, and this chapter showed that neither did the nature or mechanisms of state violence for violating and intimidating women in the public sphere. However, as Egyptians flooded the public sphere and the country witnessed mass mobilization, the ruling elites and governing apparatus increasingly securitized and militarized public space, evidenced by the increased presence of the police, army, and security forces in the public sphere. With that, state violence increased in a desperate attempt to combat the internal threat, regain control of the public sphere and maintain dominance.

Sexual state violence was a strategy to reconstitute authoritarian politics for decades and post-February 2011 this strategy was deployed heavily as the successive regimes witnessed a large-scale crisis and needed to reassert domination.[130] The FIDH states that there was a relative decline in documented incidents of mob rape and sexual assault by fellow protesters, security forces and *baltagiyya* after el-Sisi imposed a ban on demonstrations early on in his rule in 2014.[131] Declining numbers of women demonstrating in the public sphere led to a decline of state violence against women. Nazra for Feminist Studies, an Egyptian women's rights organization, write in their report "Sweeping Assaults Against Women Started Long Ago in Egypt", that while sexual violence and gang rapes in the public sphere have been happening for decades now, they peaked from 2013 to 2014.[132] The FIDH confirms this statement, writing that between February 2011 and January 2014, more than 500 women came forward as victims of mob rape and sexual assault. In just nine days, between 28 June to 7 July 2013, 186 sexual attacks were documented. Those numbers were higher than ever documented in such a period of time.[133] Furthermore, they report that the increase of physical presence of the police, army and security forces in the public sphere led to an increase of state violence in the public sphere, police stations and detention centers in 2013. They suggest that the number of cases of sexual violence by the successive regimes documented are linked to the security clampdown in 2013.[134] When asking Dr. Adly how she thinks state violence against women changed after the 2011 uprising as compared to before, she answered, "the main difference

[130] Zakarriya, "Public Feminism," 120.
[131] International Federation for Human Rights, *Exposing*, 7.
[132] Nazra for Feminist Studies, *Sweeping Assaults Against Women Started Long Ago in Egypt – "Black Wednesday" of 2005 was Just the Beginning while Epidemic of Sexual Violence Against Women Continued Growing* (Cairo: Nazra for Feminist Studies, 2020), 1, https://nazra.org/sites/nazra/files/attachments/backgroundpaper.pdf.
[133] International Federation for Human Rights, *Exposing*, 6.
[134] Ibid, 9.

is in the intensity and the extent of it, that is, the number of women exposed to violence."[135] The primary source evidence reveals that the main difference lies indeed within the number of women subjected to state violence, as the sudden and massive wave of large-scale mass mobilization meant that there was a sudden surge in the number of women in the public sphere, driving increased securitized and militarized public spaces and an increase in strategies, tools, and methods used to violate, humiliate and intimidate women, to regain control and assert dominance. The fact that virginity tests were firstly deployed post-February 2011 illustrates how the SCAF added new methods of violating, humiliating and intimidating women to its toolbox.

This chapter has critically deconstructed the claims and assumptions of scholars, journalists, and activists pertaining to how state violence against women changed after the 2011 uprising compared to before. At the hand of primary sources, it has been established that state violence against women in Egypt has been politicized, systematic, methodical and has targeted women regardless of their backgrounds for decades now. The main change identified in state violence against women post-February 2011 was the extent of it. As Egypt witnessed a sudden and massive wave of large-scale mass mobilization, more women were present in the public sphere, which became more militarized and securitized. The successive regimes therefore deployed all strategies, tools and methods used in the past, along with new ones, to systematically subject women to violence, humiliation, and intimidation more intensely, relative to the magnitude of the uprising, as a means to regain control and assert dominance.

[135] Dr. Magda Adly, interview by the author, digital, April 29, 2021.

7. CHAPTER THREE: DOES IT CONSTITUTE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?

There is a trend in the claims in the literature that that state violence against women in Egypt after the 2011 uprising was gender-based violence. Scholars and human rights and civil society organizations have claimed that sexual state violence against women was gender-based, that there were other forms of gender-based violence against women or that physical and verbal attacks against women in the public sphere were gender-based state violence. In this chapter, these claims will be deconstructed, meaning that the empirical foundation used to justify those assumptions and claims will be challenged for quality and reliability. The concept of "gender-based violence" will also be deconstructed by evaluating how the concept has been used. Evidence pertaining to how men experienced state violence will also be examined, as a means to identify whether claims hold when considered through a gender-based violence lens, to identify possible weaknesses. The aim of this chapter is to identify to what extent state violence against women constituted gender-based violence and to what extent it is makes sense to consider this a case of gender-based violence, following the 2011 uprising.

In its report, "Exposing State Hypocrisy", the FIDH condemn "all forms of sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by the state", as it does in its report written in collaboration with Nazra for Feminist Studies, the New Woman Foundation and the Uprising of Women in the Arab World, "Egypt: Keeping Women Out".[136] They state that women were subjected to gender-based sexual state violence, referencing forced virginity tests, gang rape and sexual assault perpetrated by the *baltagiyya* and threats of rape by security personnel.[137] They also cite the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights statement reacting to complaints against the SCAF ordering and participating in gang sexual violence: "'It is clear that the sexual assaults […] were acts of gender-based violence, perpetrated by state actors, and non-state actors under the control of state actors'."[138] The authors clearly state that women were subjected to gender-based sexual state violence. However, the report does not define or further elaborate on forms other than *sexual* gender-based violence.

[136] International Federation for Human Rights, *Exposing*, 29; Booth and El Husseiny, *Egypt*, 61.
[137] Booth and El Husseiny, *Egypt*, 11.
[138] International Federation for Human Rights, *Exposing*, 5.

Amnesty International, in its report "'Circles of Hell' – Domestic, Public and state violence against women in Egypt", also focuses on the fact that between 2011 to 2014 violence against women and girls was constant, as was the authorities' failure to combat it.[139] Similar to the aforementioned reports, Amnesty states that "sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls in the public sphere, including sexual harassment, has produced deeply alarming results".[140] In defining "sexual and gender-based violence", Amnesty provides examples all sexual in nature, namely "sexual harassment, including cat-calling, verbal abuse of a sexual nature, groping, sexually suggestive gestures and exposure of male sexual organs."[141] They go on to cite other examples including the "circles of hell", gang rape and sexual assault.[142] The report also touches upon violence against women in state custody, echoing the testimonies of women who had been verbally harassed, groped, touched inappropriately, and subjected to threats of rape, invasive search procedures, and sexual violence and torture.[143] These examples illustrate gender-based *sexual* violence against women perpetrated by the successive regimes, however, there are no specific examples of other forms of gender-based violence against women, making it unclear what is meant by it. This is striking, considering that the term "sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls" is mentioned 22 times in Amnesty's report and at no point is there a clear distinction made between gender-based violence, and sexual gender-based violence. All the gender-specific violations Amnesty mentions are sexual in nature, as are all the examples mentioned for "sexual and gender-based violence", similar to the previously-mentioned reports.

The concept of "sexual and gender-based violence" seems to be a wide-spread concept used by human rights and civil society organizations. It is conspicuous that following claims of "sexual and gender-based violence", evidence provided is always sexual in nature, leading to further questions. Firstly, considering that none of the reports discuss sexual state violence against men, how can it be stated with certainty that sexual state violence was in fact gender-based violence against women? Secondly, what 'other' forms of gender-based state violence against women existed?

[139] Amnesty International, *"Circles of Hell"*, 5.
[140] Ibid, 9.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid, 10-12.

Sexual State Violence against Women: Gender-based Violence?

To investigate to what extent the claim holds that sexual state violence against women was gender-based violence, an inquiry into the relative experience of men is required. Further, remembering that violence qualifies as gender-based violence when it only or disproportionately affects a particular gender *because* of their perceived gender, an investigation of whether this violence was inflicted upon women *because* of their perceived gender is necessary.

It is worth mentioning that there is a significant lack of primary and secondary sources that discuss sexual state violence against men in protest spaces in Egypt either before or after 2011, making a direct comparison difficult. Scholar Mariz Tadros also recognizes this gap and attempts to close it in her journal article "Challenging Reified Masculinities – Men as Survivors of Politically Motivated Sexual Assault in Egypt". Tadros interviews twelve men who belonged to different initiatives, all of which identified and responded to incidents of sexual violence against women in the public sphere. According to Tadros, all twelve interviewees opened up about their exposure to sexual violence during operations to support women who were being sexually assaulted.[144] In her analysis, she differentiates between men being subjected to sexual violence as protesters or as supporters of women being assaulted. One interviewee stated that he was attacked by security forces during a protest and was beaten with batons, while "one had his finger in [his] behind" and "they were also hitting [his] testicles".[145] Another interviewee recalled that while marching to the Ministry of Interior, army and security forces tried to hold them back and "'the women protesters and men were sexually harassed; we were fingered in our behinds and touched in sensitive parts of our bodies'."[146] While attempting to support women being assaulted, more interviewees reported that security forces put their hands under their clothes.[147] Dr. Adly, also interviewed by Tadros, stated that El- Nadeem Center came across men who were subjected to sexual state violence in protest spaces.[148] Testimonies gathered by El-Nadeem Center confirm this. One man stated that men supporting women being harassed faced great danger, including physical

[144] Tadros, "Challenging," 325.
[145] Ibid, 331.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid, 332.
[148] Ibid, 326.

violence and sexual assault.[149] Tadros clarifies that sexual violence against men perpetrated by the successive regimes also occurred before the 2011 uprising, like, for example, in 2006, when a video clip of Emad al-Kibeer, a minibus driver from a poorer neighborhood in Cairo, circulated. He was tortured in a police station and sexually assaulted by police officers with a wooden stick.[150]

Through Tadros' primary source evidence and the limited testimonies found, one can establish that men indeed faced sexual state violence during protests and when protecting women from sexual violence. However, it is necessary to explore whether such violence affected women or men disproportionately *because* of their perceived gender, as a means to establish whether it constitutes gender-based violence against women or men. According to testimony by a male protester, given to El-Nadeem Center, he would hand women his clothes to make them appear more masculine, in an attempt to help them escape mob attacks.[151] The fact that this worked frequently indicates that men were not the routine target of sexual violence committed by the successive regimes. When Dr. Adly was asked by the author what the difference in sexual state violence in public spaces against men was compared to women, she stated that while men were subjected to sexual violence, relatively speaking there was a significantly larger volume of cases experienced by women and a larger variety of methods deployed to inflict such violence (i.e. "circles of hell" and (gang) rape and sexual assault by *baltagiyya*) against them.[152] Therefore, it seems that women were disproportionately affected by sexual state violence in public spaces *because* of their perceived gender.

Matriz frames this differently, writing that what was witnessed was "(…) the political instrumentalization of sexual assault by military personnel to demean, denigrate, and humiliate its political opponents", as incidents of sexual state violence against men were intended to humiliate and demoralize.[153] Considering this, this thesis posits that while it can be said there was gender-based sexual state violence against women, given that women were disproportionately affected *because* of their gender, the primary intent behind sexual state violence was of a political nature

[149] El-Nadeem Against Violence and Torture, *Live testimonies on sexual torture in Tahrir Square and surrounding neighborhoods* (Cairo: El-Nadeem Against Violence and Torture, 2013), https://elnadeem.org/2013/02/01/70/?lang=en.
[150] Tadros, "Challenging," 328.
[151] El-Nadeem Against Violence and Torture, *Live testimonies*.
[152] Dr. Magda Adly, interview by the author, digital, April 29, 2021.
[153] Tadros, "Challenging," 326.

and constituted a political strategy to punish and deter protesters, because of the threat they posed to the governing apparatus.

State Violence against Women in State Custody: Gender-based Violence?

Now that this has been established, it is relevant to investigate, whether, as claimed by the above-mentioned human rights and civil society organizations, there were other forms of gender-based state violence against women. A large volume of sources exists on state violence against men and women in state custody, including news reports and reports by human rights and civil society organizations. Therefore, this next section focusses on comparing state violence experienced in state custody by men and women. The large amount of empirical evidence enables an accurate comparison, in turn enabling an accurate assessment of whether or not women experienced other forms of gender-based state violence.

According to Amnesty's "'Circles of Hell'" report, women and men were detained during protests and faced torture and ill-treatment at the hands of security forces. Methods used for torture included "beatings, kicking, punching, suspension and other stress positions, and the administration of electric shocks" and "prolonged solitary confinement in small and dark cells."[154] Dr. Adly added to this that men and women were electrocuted with electric batons in sensitive areas, such as their chests and genitalia. Furthermore, detainees faced medical neglect, leading to death in some cases.[155] According to El-Nadeem's report "Back for Vengeance", detainees in military prisons were waterboarded and tied up by their wrists for hours, until either specific information was given or confessions were memorized.[156] According to El-Nadeem's report, "The Use of Forensic Medical Evidence in Cases of Torture: The Khaled Said Case", torture and violence in detention illustrated the systematic dimensions of state violence against citizens.[157] Gamal Eid of the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, interviewed by the BBC, states that while torture in prisons was frequent in the Mubarak era, torture increased post-February 2011

[154] Amnesty International, *"Circles of Hell"*, 11.
[155] Dr. Magda Adly, interview by the author, digital, April 29, 2021.
[156] El-Nadeem Against Violence and Torture, *Back for Vengeance!* (Cairo: El-Nadeem Against Violence and Torture, 2012), https://elnadeem.org/2012/04/11/67/?lang=en.
[157] El-Nadeem Against Violence and Torture, *The Use of Forensic Medical Evidence in Cases of Torture: The Khaled Said Case* (Cairo: El-Nadeem Against Violence and Torture, 2012), https://elnadeem.org/2012/02/17/63/?lang=en.

due to more people being arrested and thus, "the proportion of barbaric torture [was] higher".[158] Dr. Adly confirmed this statement, stating that torture and violence against men and women was systematic under Mubarak, but with the increase of political turmoil and consequently the rising numbers of detainees, this violence became routine.[159]

While the range of horrific methods to inflict various forms of violence and torture on both men and women in state custody were presented, the question arises as to whether *only* women were subjected to specific forms of violence or whether they were affected disproportionately in state custody *because* of their gender, therefore constituting gender-based violence. According to Amnesty International and Dr. Adly, in many cases, prison authorities failed to address the needs of pregnant women or nursing mothers, who were frequently forced to give birth in detention in unsanitary conditions, often handcuffed and without the necessary medical care.[160] Considering that cisgender men do not get pregnant or share the same needs as nursing mothers, this type of violence is specific to women, meaning that it only affects them *because* of their perceived gender. However, it is necessary once again to question the primary intent behind this violence, which was also political. While it can be said that this type of violence constitutes gender-based violence against women, it was ultimately part of a political strategy used to punish and humiliate protesters, because of the threat they posed to the successive regimes. The same goes for sexual state violence in state custody. Dr. Adly explained that rape and sexual assault in detention centers primarily affected women, girls and homosexual men, other methods of torture such as the electrocution of genitalia affected everyone, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation.[161] This shows the complex nature of state violence against citizens, as it can affect individuals differently, based not only on their gender, but sexual orientation, of which there is no mention of in the dominant understanding of the concept of "gender-based violence". Sexual state violence and torture in state custody affected women and men in different ways because of their perceived gender and sexuality. Therefore, while there might have been elements of gender-based state violence against

[158] Orla Guerin, "Egypt Crisis: Young detainees allege torture," *BBC*, March 28, 2014, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26790381.
[159] Dr. Magda Adly, interview by the author, digital, April 29, 2021.
[160] Ibid; Amnesty International, *"Circles of Hell"*, 11.
[161] Dr. Magda Adly, interview by the author, digital, April 29, 2021; International Federation for Human Rights, *Exposing*, 4.

women *because* of their gender, or state violence against men because of their perceived sexuality, the intent of violence was based on political motives.

Verbal State Violence against Women: Gender-based Violence?

According to Lucia Sorbera, in her article, "Challenges of thinking feminism and revolution in Egypt between 2011 and 2014", gender became an issue after the uprising in 2011. She posits that recurrent verbal and physical attacks against women post-February 2011 highlight a gendered dimension of state violence.[162] It is striking that Sorbera does not provide evidence illustrating how such violence against women was different to that experienced by men, similar to human rights and civil society organizations who claim that there were 'other forms' of gender-based state violence against women. When researching further primary source evidence on physical violence in the public sphere perpetrated by the successive regimes, there were no indications of it affecting men or women disproportionately. Instead, a large volume of articles and reports describe how all protesters were targeted with extreme violence by the successive regimes.[163] Examples of such violence are the brutal beating of Khaled Said by police officers in 2010, which was a catalyst of the 2011 uprising, and the brutal beating of 'the Girl in the Blue Bra.' The lack of evidence supporting the claim that physical violence against women perpetrated by the state affected women disproportionately suggests that the claim that it was gender-based violence is inaccurate. Instead, it is evident that protesters were subjected to politicized, systematic physical state violence in the public sphere.

It is also worth exploring the claim that verbal state violence could be considered gender-based violence against women more deeply. Many sources (including, "Egypt: Keeping Women Out" by the FIDH) report that much of the political discourse reacting to the experiences of female victims of violence was focused on blaming survivors, rather than actively combatting such violence.[164] While this type of violence is not physical, victim blaming increases, "the sense of shame and self-stigma that invariably comes from internalizing some of the emotional and mental injury perpetuated. Being blamed for traumatic experiences can lead to increases in mental health

[162] Sorbera, "Challenges," 68.
[163] I.e.: "Egyptian Revolution," *Al Jazeera*.
[164] Booth and El Husseiny, *Egypt*, 24.

challenges, such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD."[165] Therefore, verbal violence, in this case in the form of victim-blaming, is a form of psychological violence. As Sorbera does not further specify what kinds of verbal attacks only women were subjected to or were subjected to disproportionately, this thesis investigates whether verbal attacks in the form of victim blaming can be called psychological gender-based state violence against women. In order to do so, the following section will present and discuss empirical evidence of the Egyptian state blaming female victims of violence and investigate whether men were subjected to a comparable form of psychological state violence.

According to the FIDH report mentioned above, in February 2013, many members of Egypt's Upper House of Parliament, the Shura Council, place the blame on women for being attacked due to their presence in crowded places with men. They claimed women should not mingle with men, were out of place in these "male spaces" and were dressed indecently. Member of the Freedom and Justice Party, Reda Saleh El Hefnawy, is quoted saying, "'I call on women not to stand next to men in protests... they must have special places. I wonder, how can we ask the Ministry of Interior to protect a woman who stands amongst men?'" Salafi Al-Nour party member, Salah Abdel Salam, also stated that women are responsible for their harassment, considering it is their choice to be present in spaces among thugs. General Adel El Afifi, member of the Shura Council Human Rights Committee, is quoted saying: "'The girl knows that she is going down amongst thugs ...in some cases, the girl is a 100% responsible for her rape because she put herself in that position'."[166] The statements and claims gathered by the FIDH illustrate how women were blamed by members of parliament, an important branch of the state, for the sexual violence inflicted upon them. In her journal article, "Bodies That Protest: The Girl in the Blue Bra, Sexuality, and State Violence in Revolutionary Egypt", Sherine Hafez provides further primary source evidence of how women were blamed for violence inflicted upon them by the successive regimes. Her case study is the brutal beating of the 'Girl in the Blue Bra'. According to her, female victims of violence were blamed on television programs run by state media, such as Channel 1, Nilesat and Al Faraeen TV. After the brutal beating of the 'Girl in the Blue Bra' in December 2011, commentators made

[165] Wisconsin Initiative for Stigma Elimination, "Challenging Victim-Blaming," February 15, 2018, https://wisewisconsin.org/blog/challenging-victim-blaming/#:~:text=Victim%2Dblaming%20severely%20hampers%20our,emotional%20and%20mental%20injury%20perpetuated.
[166] Booth and El Husseiny, *Egypt*, 25.

statements such as, "'She was wearing a bikini and not a bra'" and "'Why, my dear, were you wearing your bikini to Tahrir? Did you think you were going for a swim?'" and "'Truthfully, what were you thinking wearing that *abaya* with nothing underneath it? And an *abaya* with snaps? Come on. Couldn't you find one with buttons?'."[167] In this case, not only is the woman blamed, but the incident of extreme violence is linked to her body and sexuality. Similar statements are also presented in Ibiary's work, "Media Portrayal of Street Violence Against Egyptian Women: Women, Socio-Political Violence, Ineffective Laws and Limited Role of NGOs". She writes that Egyptian commentators on talk shows by state-owned media and in newspaper editorials often posed the question, "why did she go there?".[168] Additionally, Hafez presents primary source evidence of TV cameras from state-run media channels taking to the streets to collect opinions on the incident. The overwhelming majority of commentary broadcasted was dedicated to blaming the victim.[169]

The empirical evidence found in reports of human rights organizations and in secondary accounts depict how the Egyptian state blamed female victims of violence for the violence inflicted upon them, whether of sexual or non-sexual nature. Evidence, whether in the form of statements made by members of parliament, other branches of the state or news reports by state-owned media, which focus on blaming male victims of sexual or non-sexual violence, were not found. News reports warning protesters with a threatening undertone that demonstrating further in the public sphere will lead to violence and that it will be their responsibility to bear it, exist.[170] However, unlike the evidence on the successive regimes blaming female victims of violence, there are no reports, statements or new articles focusing on men. It could be concluded that because there is no evidence of men being subjected to verbal violence in the form of victim blaming, this type of verbal violence constitutes psychological gender-based state warfare against women, as it is violence inflicted upon women *because* of their gender. However, when once again questioning the intent behind this violence, it is revealed that is it primarily political.

According to Hafez, the brutal beating of the 'Girl in the Blue Bra' caused nation-wide public outrage. Consequently, the SCAF worked relentlessly to influence the public debate in favor of its

[167] Hafez, "Bodies," 24-25.
[168] El-Ibiary, "Media Portrayal," 54.
[169] Hafez, "Bodies," 25.
[170] I.e.: 25 January 2011, "وثيق الثورة المصرية 25 يناير 2011 - كذب وجود عناصر بكرات نار لحرق المتظاهرين", August 23, 2014, YouTube video, 1:36, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytu00UdOa2I.

regime, by blaming the victim and "creating as much suspicion and as many conspiracy theories around her as possible, in order to deflect attention from the beatings and killings that took place that day."[171] Jihan Zakarriya writes further that blaming and shaming women for incidents of violence in the public sphere, by targeting their sexually and bodies (such as the 'Girl in the Blue Bra') is a counter-revolution strategy.[172] She quotes Campbell, who argues that, "'shame triggers a withdrawal to protect physical and mental attributes. Hiding prevents further exposure of weakness and/or lack of control and restores the self to a safe, private, hidden place where it can be reconstituted.'"[173] The message conveyed by the successive regimes and communicated en masse is that "to avoid shameful violations, Egyptian women need to hide. Otherwise, they endanger their honour and expose their sexuality being in public spaces and hence they deserve repudiation and violence."[174] One side effect of this is that male family members become complicity when they seek to protect their womenfolk by keeping them out of the public sphere. This is a step backwards in the women's empowerment and emancipation movement. According to Zakarriya, this narrative, relayed by government officials and in state media, causes perpetrators of violence to be immune against punishment or responsibility and endorses further violence, as women are to be blamed for their shame and violence.[175] Considering that the majority of Egyptian media is either owned or controlled – directly or indirectly – by the Egyptian state, the media reflects the states' interests. This is important to consider because the state used media to deliver this narrative, making Egyptian media a further apparatus used by the state to inflict violence.

The Egyptian state, by blaming and shaming women, reproduced patriarchal conceptions, attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes pertaining to gender roles, norms and values, which dictate that the responsibilities of women lie within the confined boundaries of the private sphere, as an organized counter-revolution strategy to deflect the attention from the perpetrators of violence, to prevent women from participating in demonstrations, to validate acts of violence and to silence women, enabling further unchecked state violence with the ultimate aim of sustaining itself in power. Therefore, while it can be said that verbal violence in the form of victim-blaming

[171] Hafez, "Bodies," 25.
[172] Zakarriya, "Public Feminism," 113.
[173] Ibid, 114.
[174] Ibid, 115.
[175] Ibid.

constituted psychological gender-based violence against women, as it was violence affecting them *because* of their perceived gender, the primary intent behind it was steered by political motives.

While no evidence was found that men were subjected to the same kind of verbal violence in form of victim blaming, the fact that documented sexual violence against men is almost completely absent, not only in secondary sources, but also in the political and social discourse in Egypt, prior to as well as post-February 2011, requires closer analysis. Men might not be affected by the same patriarchal conceptions, attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes pertaining to gender roles, norms, and values as women, but this does not mean they are not affected at all. According to Annica Kronsell's article, "Gendered practices in institutions of hegemonic masculinity", state institutions which are largely governed by men – constituting the majority of state institutions in Egypt, but particularly the military and defense organizations – produce and recreate norms and practices associated with masculinity and heterosexuality. These norms have dominated their practices, making them "institutions of hegemonic masculinity", meaning that they have become cultural norms because they are supported by institutional power.[176] They ultimately represent and produce notions of masculinity in a way that make it the norm.[177] This results in attitudes that are hyper-masculine.[178] Joel W. Abdelmoez, in his article, "Muscles, Moustaches and Machismo: Narratives of Masculinity by Egyptian English-Language Media Professionals and Media Audiences", demonstrates how Kronsell's understanding of hegemonic masculinity presents itself in Egypt. His analysis of how masculinity is understood in Egypt, is based on interviews with media professionals working with news production in any way. Abdelmoez' findings demonstrate that the dominant understanding of masculinity is related to heterosexuality and expectations to provide and protect.[179] Ghanim, cited earlier adds to this, noting masculinity is associated with aggressiveness and violence.[180]

When men are perceived as incompatible with guiding conceptions and stereotypes surrounding 'masculinity', the result is alienation and oppression because those conceptions leave

[176] Annica Kronsell, "Gendered practices in institutions of hegemonic masculinity," *International feminist journal of politics* 7, no. 2 (June 2005): 281.
[177] Ibid, 280.
[178] Ibid, 281.
[179] Joel W. Abdelmoez, "Muscles, Moustaches and Machismo: Narratives of Masculinity by Egyptian English-Language Media Professionals and Media Audiences," *Masculinities Journal* (August 2018): 192.
[180] Ghanim, *Gender and Violence*, 10.

no room for male victims. "A male victim is inconceivable or a contradiction in terms of the patriarchal context where men's weaknesses are to be hidden and unspoken of."[181] Furthermore, when men are subjected to sexual state violence, those internalized patriarchal conceptions, attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes are reproduced and reinforced by the state, cause them to feel emasculated, as sexual state violence is mostly perpetrated by men, adding an extra level of stigma, as it is incompatible with guiding notions of masculinity – such as heterosexuality and strength.[182] This in turn leads to silence. "Acquiring a masculine identity is not only an individual endeavor, but it is also deeply connected to the recognition granted by others."[183] Therefore, men do not come forth when they are subjected to sexual violence, as the shame associated with the feeling of emasculation holds them back, leading to alienation, oppression, and no complete understanding of how state violence affects both genders. While men are affected by different patriarchal conceptions, attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes pertaining to gender roles, norms, and values than women, the result is the same. The Egyptian state, by reinforcing and reproducing patriarchal conceptions of 'masculinity' that dictate what it means to be a man, silences men when they are subjected to sexual state violence, enabling further unchecked state violence with the ultimate aim of sustaining itself in power. Therefore, while it can be said that patriarchal conceptions of 'masculinity' reproduced and reinforced by the state constitutes psychological gender-based violence against men as it was violence affecting them *because* of their gender, the intent behind it was steered by political motives.

This chapter critically deconstructed claims made by the Cohort that state violence against women constituted gender-based violence post-February 2011, as well as their use of the concept "gender-based violence". The analysis found that while elements of gender-based state violence against women and men existed, the primary intent behind it was political, as the Egyptian state sought to punish, deter, and silence protesters posing a threat to its power and used different methods that enabled further unchecked state violence in an attempt to regain control and assert dominance.

[181] Ibid.
[182] Linos, "Rethinking," 1548.
[183] Farha Ghannam, "Live and Die Like a Man: Gender Dynamics in Urban Egypt," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 11, no. 3 (November 2015): 3.

8. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The first empirical chapter of this thesis revealed that state coercion and violence against citizens – whether represented by the military or the Ministry of Interior, through its institutions, organizations and agencies – has long been part of Egypt's history, as a means to contextualize how the state has historically been mediated to its citizens and indicate the current state of affairs. While the head of state changed various times in the past decades in Egypt, the core objectives of the regimes – maintaining power and imposing dominance – and the institutional set-up of inflicting violence, did not change.

The second empirical chapter established that contrary to the claims of the Cohort, state violence against women in Egypt has been politicized, systematic and methodical for decades now and has targeted all women regardless of their backgrounds. The main change identified in state violence against women post-February 2011 was the intensity and extent of it. As Egypt witnessed a sudden and massive wave of large-scale mass mobilization, more Egyptians were present in the public sphere, which became more militarized and securitized in response, with the increased presence of the police, army and security forces. In order to regain control over the public sphere and reassert their dominance, the successive regimes all deployed strategies, tools and methods used in the past to systematically subject women to more intense violence, humiliation, and intimidation, relative to the magnitude of the uprising.

In reconstructing the claims and assumptions made based on the findings from the first two chapters, blind spots and silence in the dominant narrative can now be brought to the foreground, exposing how these claims and assumptions reinforce existing power structures, which the scholars, journalists and activist ultimately attempt to expose. When considering what is at stake or what the implications are of overemphasizing a change in state violence against women post-February 2011 and attributing this change to the separate regimes without providing compelling evidence, it is revealed that the wider issue of the entire state apparatus and its history through time is overlooked. State violence against women did not become an issue because of the 2011 uprising or because the SCAF, Muslim Brotherhood or Mansour ruled the country. Rather, state violence against women has been an issue for decades because of the entire state apparatus' institutional set-up and mechanisms of inflicting state violence across time. The strong involvement of violent uniformed forces – the military, as well as the organizations and agencies

commanded by the Ministry of Interior in everyday life – makes state violence and the threat of it, a central attribute of the Egyptian state apparatus. Thus, the dominant narrative, in overemphasizing a change after the Arab Spring and the responsibility of the separate Heads of State, reinforces the power of the state apparatus, as the focus is misplaced. This contributes to further alienation, inequality, and oppression, and distracts from what should be the core objective, namely dismantling the entire state apparatus, primarily, the military and Ministry of Interior.

The third analytical chapter established that there were elements of gender-based state violence against women. Women were disproportionately affected by sexual state violence in the public sphere, violence affected pregnant women and nursing mothers in state custody, and they experienced verbal violence in form of victim blaming *because* of their gender. It was further established that violence in state custody, including sexual violence, affected all Egyptians and that not only gender, but sexual orientation, also contributed to the probability of violence. Finally, it was found that there were elements of gender-based state violence against men, as men were affected by patriarchal conceptions of 'masculinity' reproduced and reinforced by the state *because* of their gender. Media was found to be a further apparatus of the state used to inflict violence, by relaying the states' narrative. In uncovering these elements of gender-based state violence against men and women, it was established that the primary *intent* behind such violence was political. The Egyptian state attempted to punish, deter and silence protesters posing a threat to their power, using different methods that enabled further unchecked state violence, in an attempt to regain control and assert dominance.

In reconstructing the claims made by the Cohort based on the findings of the third chapter, blind spots and silence in the dominant narrative can now be brought to the foreground, exposing how those claims and assumptions contribute to existing power structures which the Cohort attempts to challenge. What is at stake or what the implications are of overemphasizing gender-based violence state against women, often without providing any evidence for such claims, is that the complexity of state violence against citizens is obscured. State violence against citizens may affect women and men differently, however, it is ultimately violence that is inflicted to crush political opposition. While it is relevant to highlight forms of violence affecting men and women differently, the dominant use of the concept of "gender-based violence" and the narrative associated with it is only focused on women. The effect is that not only are men's experiences are dismissed, but non-binary gender identities and people of different sexual orientations are rendered

invisible. The over-emphasis of gender-based violence against women indicates that state violence was primarily a women's problem – affecting only women, instead of a social and political problem – affecting all Egyptians. This means that the dominant narrative and use of this concept contributes to alienating and oppressing groups, including men, as they are non-existent in the discussion, and reversing empowerment gains in the women's emancipation movement by reinforcing the 'need' of women to be contained, confined and protected. It also means that scholars and human rights and civil society organizations, while having the best intentions, inadvertently reinforce the power structures that sustain the continuation of such violence, namely, patriarchal social structures. If concepts such as gender-based violence are to be used in this context, they should be deployed more deliberately, such as by using phrases like 'gender-based state sexual violence against women in the public sphere'.

Such specifications are not just a matter of language and definitions, they have real-life implications – concepts constitute thinking, action, identities and subjectivities.[184] Even with further specification, the issue remains that at its essence "gender-based violence" is an excluding concept which focusses on women. The gender binary expressed in most definitions is harmful, as it excludes non-binary gender identities that are also vulnerable to violence and gender discrimination. To be used accurately in this context, it must be restructured into a more inclusive, intersectional concept, which encompasses not only gender, but also sexuality, race, class, and nationality, as all these factors can affect the probability of violence. Additionally, the focus in this context should be placed on the *intent* behind state violence, as it reveals that in many cases protesters were not targeted *because* of their gender but that their gender was a means to achieve a political objective. Only focusing on the gendered dimensions, and on one gender in particular, results in the broader issue of state violence against political opposition being overlooked or downplayed. State violence is not primarily a gender issue as much as it is an issue of the dynamics between state and society, with gender used as a means to achieve political motives.

Weber's theory, as understood by Dusza, enables us to view state violence as a broader phenomenon, following this state and society framework. It allows us to see that state violence in Egypt is the result of the set-up of the entire state apparatus, which has historically across time systematically inflicted violence against political opponents posing a threat to its power. It

[184] Berenskoetter, "Approaches," 169.

demonstrates that there is a structure of legitimacy for state violence in Egypt and that this is what defines its power. Throughout history, the Egyptian state apparatus, in order to maintain its power, firstly, claims its monopoly of the legitimate use of violence and grants non-state actors the right to it – meaning that they can commit violence with impunity against those who pose a threat to it – protesting Egyptians of different genders and backgrounds. Secondly, it sustains and cultivates patriarchal gender-related cultural roles, values, and norms, often through media, as they are part of the mechanism allowing them to stay in power. This shows that the primary source of violence does not stem from the respective Head of State, but from the set-up of the state apparatus, which is considered the supreme authority and does not need to consult other associations, but instead generates the necessary power, means and competence through its claim to a monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force. Considering this, it is more relevant to focus on the blind spot in the dominant narrative, namely dismantling the entire state apparatus – primarily the military and Ministry of Interior – instead of reinforcing the power of the state apparatus by overemphasizing the role of the head of state or ruling regime. Or, by further reinforcing patriarchal power structure by overemphasizing the experiences of one particular gender, which ultimately contributes to further alienation, inequality and oppression. One cannot challenge state violence by only challenging separate regimes or only highlighting one gender's experience. Instead, the entire state apparatus must be challenged, meaning their institutional set-up and mechanisms of inflicting violence upon political opposition across history – their legitimate right to use violence.

This study set out to contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon of state violence against citizens in Egypt. In examining its scope, nature, and trajectory, this thesis has sought to establish this understanding on a more solid foundation of empirical evidence and bring blind spots or silence in the dominant narratives to the foreground, as a means to expose and challenge underlying power structures, opening the door for alternative conceptions. It did so by answering the question of how state violence against women changed following the 2011 uprising in Egypt and whether it constitutes "gender-based violence". This was done by using critical theoretical analysis and political (critical) concept analysis, to critically engage with dominant narratives pertaining to the extent and nature of Egyptian state violence against protesters following the 2011 uprising. Empirical evidence tracing the scope of change in state violence against women was provided, as well as a more nuanced interpretation explaining whether and to what extent it is adequate to consider this a case of gender-based state violence, effectively plugging the identified

knowledge and interpretation gaps. This study found that Diane Singerman's statement, quoted by David Ghanim that, "political science suffers from a classic case of methodological bias: where one looks, determines what one finds", has proven to be true in this context.[185] A large amount of focus has been dedicated to firstly, finding changes in state violence against women post-February 2011 and secondly, identifying elements of gender-based violence against women. While these approaches have generated results, they have also been shown to feed into existing power structures which contribute to the alienation, inequality and oppression faced by Egyptians, while the broader issue – namely, the problematic Egyptian state apparatus inflicting violence upon political opponents – is overlooked. This analysis also revealed that often claims and assumptions are made without sufficient compelling evidence. This is problematic, as claims and assumptions are adopted without critically engaging with the evidence. This leads to the spreading of an inaccurate conception of the reality of state violence against protesters pre- and post-February 2011 Egypt.

More research should be dedicated to, firstly, methods for dismantling the institutional set-up of the entire state apparatus. This field of research has the potential to bring about real change considering the extent of state violence against citizens in Egypt. Secondly, research should be directed towards exploring the extent of state violence, especially sexual state violence against men, as means to combat the perception of it solely being a women's issue and raising awareness of it as a societal and political issue. This can break social taboos and stigma, and give men space to join the conversation. Thirdly, more research should be conducted on how state violence affects Egyptians differently based on their gender, sexuality, race, class, and nationality, while stressing that the primary intent behind such violence is of a political nature. This would contribute to a more complete understanding of how state violence affects political opposition differently, without rendering communities invisible or distracting from the *intent* behind such violence. Accordingly, such research would provide valuable impetus to the pursuit of good governance and democratization in the country. While there is a long path ahead of us in combatting state violence against citizens in Egypt, this study meant to offer a helpful step in the right direction.

[185] Ghanim, *Gender and Violence*, 11.

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10. APPENDIX

Interview Transcript of digital Interview, April 29, 2021

Interviewer: Yasmin Khalil, author.

Interviewee: Dr. Magda Adly, co-founder of El-Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture.

Author: Based on your experience working with female victims of state violence since you co-founded the Nadeem Centre for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture in 1993, has there been a change in the nature of state violence against women following the 2011 uprising?

Dr. Adly: State violence includes state violence and torture in prisons, police stations, national security offices and so on?

Author: Yes.

Dr. Adly: To start with, state torture goes back decades in Egypt – concerning men and women – under Mubarak and after. The main difference is in the intensity and the extent of it, so the number of women exposed to violence. Before the revolution, i.e. on 25 May 2005 during demonstrations concerning changes to the constitution in preparation for Gamal Mubarak's takeover, there was great violence mainly against women not men. Especially two situations stand out, one incident happened in front of Saad Saghlool Square and the second in front of the press syndicate. Many other female protesters and journalists were sexually assaulted by *baltagiyya* and the police. After this happened, El-Nadeem and other organizations raised a case to the Attorney General with photos, videos, testimonies, but the files were closed. In 2000, we (El-Nadeem) attended demonstrations in solidarity with the Palestinian cause. Violence was minimal when comparing to after the revolution and not a lot of women were detained compared to after the revolution, because the number of demonstrators were little, a few hundreds. However, the police and *baltagiyya*, when trying to catch women protesting, they started making circles around them and closing in on them to harass and separate them. This also happened during the yearly demonstrations on 26 June, the international day in solidarity of torture victims. This was new. What was usual in detention were vaginal examinations performed on criminals (women) to make sure they don't carry drugs inside

them. With criminal men, they would make them drink water with salt and tobacco and other weird things, so any drugs would be flushed out of their bodies.

Author: Those vaginal examinations had nothing to do with the virginity tests performed on women in 2011?

Dr. Adly: No, they didn't do an examination of their virginity, that is something different. The first obvious torture was 9 March 2011. A lot of people didn't leave Tahrir Square, because they were waiting for the demands of the revolution to be put into action. So security forces attacked the square and arrested women and men. The women were taken to the Egyptian Museum and they were brutally beaten and electrocuted, in sensitive areas. Then they were taken to the military prisons, were virginity tests were performed on them. This was the first time virginity tests were performed on protestors. A lot of soldiers were present when those examinations were performed, not only doctors. This was not performed to detect drugs. El-Sisi (head of Military Intelligence at the time) admitted himself afterwards, after a group of civil society organizations filed a law suit at the administrative court against this practice, that this was to prevent female protesters from claiming that they had been raped by military personnel while in detention. This was the first big "thing" after the revolution. I also heard that this happened in 2013 when women were detained after the Rabaa massacre. I had several reports of detained men reporting this to me, however, when I asked them to let the women come here for psychological examination and documentation and nobody came. I assume that this is because of fear. I cannot confirm whether this happened. Virginity tests are not just a form of sexual violence but also a health issue, because doctors would not change their gloves, causing STDs. Barbaric.

Author: Do you believe that state violence against women became systematic after the uprising in 2011 and that this is what changed? And how would you define systematic or methodic state violence?

Dr. Adly: It means that violence happens with the state's complicity and that the state has a political strategy as to how violence is carried out all over the country. It happens in all places, whether it is on the streets, in police stations, national security offices, etc. and certain methods and tools are used for violence and torture. For example, whips, electrical machines, certain tactics of closing in on protestors and violating, humiliating and intimidating them. This is not an individual police officer or soldier abusing his power. It is systematic, because those methods are known to all police

officers, soldiers and security personnel and are deployed when seen necessary. State violence is systematic now and it was systematic under Mubarak. Because there were more and bigger demonstrations after the revolution, more protesters were arrested and this violence because routine. But it was always systematic or methodical.

Author: There are opinions that state violence against women after the uprising was gender-based violence. Do you agree, if so, why do you believe that it is gender-based violence, how was violence women experienced different from what men experienced?

Dr. Adly: This is controversial. However, I believe that women were primarily affected by sexual violence, not so much men, except for individual cases. So when looking at the numbers, most women were affected by sexual violence, for example, threats of rape, virginity tests, gang sexual assault, those circles of harassment and so on. This didn't happen to men as much. In detention, men who were gay or transgender faced direct sexual violence sometimes. But all protesters were subjected to torture in the end. Men and women were electrocuted with electric batons in sensitive areas, such as their chests and genitalia. People detained did not receive medical examination and were not allowed to see a doctor. Many people died because of this medical neglect. People were stripped from their basic human rights and basic necessities. They were not allowed to go to the bathroom, women were not provided with menstruation products. Pregnant women and nursing mothers didn't receive the appropriate care. Pregnant women actually had to give birth in an unclean environment and handcuffed. So you see, while there were differences between men and women, in the end, they were all tortured in horrific ways.

Author: Do you believe there is a difference when it comes to how society, the media and the state reacts to violence done to women as compared to how they react when it happens to men?

Dr. Adly: Of course. Women are always blamed for violence done to them. Consciously or unconsciously. This does not happen to men as often. Women's integrity is always questioned. Men don't face that.

Author: Is there something comparable to this that men face?

Dr. Adly: Not that I can think of. Violence against men is not spoken about as openly.

Author: Thank you so much for your time and insights.