

**The Stigma of Revolutionary Activism in Egypt: the case of wanted
political opponents**

By

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To a generation looking for survival at the end of every story that happens to them...perhaps because they witnessed endings that were robbed of them or endings that were not in their plans, or because they wished to survive the impact of events that they did not overcome yet.

To my generation with whom we share the joy from our hearts if someone survives in his/her story, we rejoice from our hearts if one of our friends succeeded in his path and won an award, or someone wrote an outstanding book, or another completed her studies as she wanted, or someone was cured of a cursed disease, or someone was liberated out of his distress, or another traveled to a country in which he found himself and what he wanted.

To a generation recovering with the salvation of their loved ones.

Abstract

My research focuses on the experience of wanted people after the 2013 military coup. Based on autoethnography and interviews with a group of wanted people who live in Egypt or who could flee to Istanbul. I chose to focus on wanted people belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood (MBH), ex-MBH members, or who were just supporters and sympathizers of them. I analyze their experience of being wanted and the impact of this experience on their social network and their personas.

Through the ethnographic findings, I structured each chapter and discuss the demonization of activism through the case of wanted people. Each chapter discusses part of the process of stigmatization of wanted people, in the first two chapters I focus on the cultivation of the politics of fear and the normalization of violence against opponents to show the basis of the stigma.

In the last chapter, I engage with the stories of wanted people in terms of their social and family relationships, their relationships with themselves, the relationship of stigma to the formation of their self-esteem, and the impact of stigma on their finances, social and academic status. I focus on the details of the journeys of most of the people I have met over the last few months during the fieldwork.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my interlocutors who have entrusted me for sharing their story in this research. This research is for you, for your unwavering belief in a justice life in Egypt, for your pride in your opposition to the regime, for all the difficult moments you have gone through and are still going through.

My mother, Nagah: when my father passed away, you were angry with me because I was always out of the house. I could not tell you why I did it. You thought that I was abandoning you and my responsibility to our family after my father's death, but the truth is that National Security threatened me with arrest more than once, which led to me staying away from home. I was afraid that I will get arrested in front of you. I always tell my friends that my mother is the bravest and kindest women in the world. You supported my father when he was sick, until he passed away. You always protecting and defending us. You stood by my side and protected me when police and people start to accused me of terrorism. I really love you.

Curzel's family: My family in Europe. Thank you for all the beautiful days we spend together. Thank you for true unconditional love. I am grateful to have you in my life.

Ahmed Elgezy: Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the moments you have understood and tolerated me. Without you on this journey, I don't know what I would have done! Thank you for your great company.

Mongy: I wanted to get to know you better because I know that you are a nice person. Happy to strengthen our friendship. Thank you for the constant reassurance you gave me that everything would be fine.

Elsayed: Thank you for good days in Istanbul. Depression and anxiety would have killed me if you weren't in Istanbul with me.

Sherin: Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the eight months we spent together, including joy, sadness, tension and depression. Thank you for helping me with the proposal of this research. Thank you for accompanying me in my last visit to Egypt. We made the trip to Cairo together, held hands, and conquered fear. I wish you the very best.

Maliha: Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your unconditional and everlasting help. I am glad to have a friend like you.

Rawda: My dear friend. Thank you for always understanding me. I am so grateful to have you in my life and hope our friendship lasts forever.

Prem: Thank you so much for your constant help. I am privileged that you are my supervisor for supervising.

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Salah Hassan Mohamed Krar: My father, I wish you are alive to be proud of me. You were great father and friend. This dedicated to your beautiful soul.

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1.1 Introduction

On 24 January 2015, the security police broke into my home, searched for me, and interrogated my family about me and my whereabouts. The officers told my father that they wanted to arrest me because I was allegedly part of a terrorist group. The officer explained to my father how dangerous it is to be a member of a terrorist group and advised him to force me to turn myself in to the police. The soldiers went to my neighbors and questioned them about me. Threats were made to discourage them from hiding any information about my whereabouts and ordered them (as they are soldiers under his duty) to call the police if they saw me at home.

My family and I became well known in our neighborhood after the police broke into our house, and that caused rumors to spread about why the security police had targeted us. The main rational reason at that time to be targeted by the Egyptian authorities was that we allegedly were members of the Muslim Brotherhood. My family and I have been facing this stigma to this day, and that has affected our relationships with our neighbors, friends, relatives, and even our relationships with each other and ourselves. As people around us are afraid of losing their livelihood or being equally accused of 'terrorism', and investigated by the police, this fear of imprisonment is used to turn our neighbors into a surveillance machine on us. We feel that we want to disappear or hide, nothing is as it was before this stigma. Our visibility is a danger to us, our faces are a danger, and we even began to hate our faces because people recognize us through them.

In the last 6 years, I have not been able to go back home, I do not know the meaning of safety. Even after having left Egypt, I still have a fear for my family's safety.

The government is still cultivating Egyptians by using the media apparatus to demonize the government's opponents and to accuse them of being part of a terrorist group belonging to the Muslim brotherhood. Therefore, I and my family and many wanted people are still facing the stigma of participating in a demonized terrorist group'.

My situation of being wanted has led me to come across many other wanted people who are living in different and more complex situations than mine. I feel that I have the responsibility to document the stories of wanted people to shed light on their frustrating and harsh lives. There is a wealth of literature written on human rights violations in Egypt, especially since Al-Sisi has obtained office. These violations address the cases of murdered, imprisoned, disappeared, and tortured opponents... However, little or even none of this literature has addressed the case of wanted people and their struggle with the military regime.

This research is based on ethnographic work in Istanbul where I conducted interviews with Muslim Brotherhood (MBH) members, ex-members, and supporters or sympathizers who are wanted by security police because they participated in MBH's demonstrations against the military coup. I will articulate the way that the Egyptian authorities are using fear as an instrument to control and oppress Egyptians in post-revolution politics in Egypt by identifying the opponents as deviants. I will also focus on how this fear leads ordinary people to surveil each other and stigmatize opponents with accusations of terrorism.

As a researcher, I was stagnant for quiet a while before setting this research up. This is so because this research is a historical analysis of the period after the military coup and the changes that took place in the methods of repression in Egypt in retaliation to the January 2011 revolution.

Nearly a year and a half into my Master's degree, I have been exposed to a vast amount of information and theories which I have been looking at through my Egyptian and Middle Eastern eyes, searching for something that binds my experiences in Egypt to what I have been reading. Moreover, my fieldwork in Istanbul pushed me back to things I was trying to forget, my interlocutors reminded me of the prison torture that people close to me went through, and of a large number of friends and colleagues killed in cold blood by the police and the army because they were just shouting on streets against the military regime. Therefore, I decided to base my research on the stories of my interlocutors, as the main purpose of this research is to document the stories of wanted people and the stigmatization, threats, and violence they face.

I have divided this research into three chapters: The first is a historical background of the Muslim Brotherhood and its power structure in Egypt, especially since the January Revolution. Here, I connect the revolution to the army's control over the media and the economy in Egypt to aggravate its control over the organs of the state. The second chapter of the thesis is a focused analysis of the state media discourse and President Sisi's speeches. Here, I examine the impact of the politics of fear used to subjugate Egyptians by creating enemies who pose a threat to their lives and the stability of the state. The third chapter begins with an analysis of the interviews I conducted with the wanted people. In this part, I discuss the stigma cultivated by the media discourse of the state and the violence of the National Security Agency in

storming opponents' houses, and how this resulted in the fragmentation of the social networks of the wanted people and their families as well. I also discuss how such fear and violence discourages my interlocutors from practising publicly the rites of Islam to elude the stigma of terrorism. The last section addresses the social class dimension of wanted people and how it is crucial to understand the different dimensions of oppression that wanted people face. This section looks into the lives of the middle-lower class wanted people and how they are enduring an expanded state of languishing life in Egypt and Istanbul.

1.2 Methodology

The first chapter of the research is based on an analysis of the media discourses of President Sisi and the pro-state media. I analyzed media discourses from TV channels owned by General Intelligence¹ such as CBC and Sada Al-Balad. ("Sisification of the Media – a Hostile Takeover | RSF" n.d.)

The rest of the research chapters relied on two sets of data: the first set consists of twenty-three interviews, eighteen of which were conducted in person in Istanbul in January-February 2022, and the rest via the internet because the interlocutors are in Egypt. For the second set, I relied on personal documentation and diary entries of my experience of being on the run, and I also interviewed my mother when I was in Egypt in August 2021.

The people I interviewed in Istanbul and Egypt are mostly close friends, and we have worked together for years in volunteering activities at Cairo University. They easily entrusted me to share their life histories and agreed to participate in the

¹ Rsf.org. 2022. *Sisification of the Media – a Hostile Takeover*. [online] Available at: <<https://rsf.org/en/sisification-media-hostile-takeover>> [Accessed 1 June 2022].

research because they knew how dangerous my demonstrations and sit-ins were at Cairo University.

And yet, there were times when we were suddenly afraid when we remembered the Rabaa massacre or the time of persecution, or when someone remembered the time of their imprisonment and almost cried when they talked to me about the torture that happened to them at the National Security Headquarters. Just talking about these things scared us and we were so quiet that no one would listen to us, even though we were far away from Egypt in Turkey.

I was very keen not to allow the interviews to become retraumatizing, but I did not succeed. Unfortunately, the interviews were emotionally exhausting, and this affected the closure of some of the interviews. The interviews were also traumatic for me, I was not able to work on the research for about a month after I returned from the fieldwork.

The interviews were semi-structured with post-revolution history insights, in which I asked about the engagement of the interlocutors with the political events in Egypt since the 2011 uprising. In some interviews, the interlocutors and I got into a debate about the usefulness of our political activism in Egypt, which had led to us being sought for and exiled. Sometimes the discussions took a serious turn into a true assessment of our activist experience, and sometimes the interlocutors wished they could travel back in time to distance themselves from where they are now, and the word "loss" was repeated several times in their conversations.

In terms of my autoethnography, I regularly document my personal life. After the revolution, I devoted whole pages to documenting events that I had attended myself or heard about in meetings with friends. This documentation consists of writings, audio recordings, and video clips.(N. Poulos 2021)

When I first started working on the research, I was terrified to come back to these things because after my exodus from Egypt, I tried to forget as much as possible all the tragic events I went through. However, in February 2022, after I returned from the fieldwork, I started listening to the personal records of the events of Rabaa Al-Adawiya and reading my diaries on the day the National Security forces stormed my house. I opened the door of painful memories in my mind and until now I have not been able to close it, I sometimes wake up scared because of the nightmares that surround me.

I can consider my autoethnography as one of the limitations of the research, which sometimes made me think of postponing my Master's studies.

Another important limitation is also the interlocutors' fear that the information I have about them could become public. They trust me because we are friends or we have common friends, but when I was in the field, it happened that some of them refused the interview to be recorded. That happened after Hossam Salam², one of the accused in the prosecutor's murder case³, had been arrested while he was returning from Sudan to Istanbul via a Sudanese airline. The plane landed at Luxor airport in Egypt under the pretext of engine failure, and the Egyptian police arrested Hossam.

After this incident, some people refused to participate in the research, and some agreed on the condition that the interview has to be without voice recording.

² *'Terrifying': Egyptian opposition activist arrested off plane after emergency landing in Luxor.* MIDDEL East EYE. (2022). Retrieved 15 January 2022, from <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/egypt-luxor-man-arrested-sudan-plane-emergency-landing>.

³ *Egypt prosecutor Hisham Barakat killed in Cairo attack.* BBC News. (2015). Retrieved 1 June 2022, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33308518>.
Hisham Muhammad Zaki Barakat was Prosecutor General of Egypt from 2013 to 2015

In the research, I tried as much as possible to disguise the identity of the interlocutors and not write much information about them so that their identity would be anonymous.

1.3 Historical contexts

In its modern history, Egypt has known the state of emergency as martial law, introduced by the British occupation in 1914. Then the 1923 constitution was promulgated, which placed the proclamation and abolition of the state in the hands of the kingdom, with parliamentary oversight over it.

During the Second World War, martial law was reimposed in the country between 1939 and 1943, then abolished, and then reimposed again in 1948 with the invasion of Palestine by the Egyptian army against the Zionist forces.

After the events of the Cairo fire in January 1952, martial law was reimposed and continued until army officers moved in to overthrow King Farouk on 23 July 1952, and it remained under the name of "martial law" before it was changed time to its present name of "state of emergency" with the tripartite aggression against Egypt in 1956.(Alzubeidi 2018)

Egypt re-entered a state of emergency that was extended for 13 years, after the war in June 1967, even 18 months before the assassination of the late President Anwar Sadat. So, it was imposed again, but this time for 30 years during the term of the late President Hosni Mubarak's rule, who continued to believe that its lifting would mean his end, as it did for Sadat when he called it off in his late days.

The renewal of the state of emergency immediately after the revolution was characterized by short periods of time. The first application of the state of emergency

came after protesters stormed the headquarters of the Israeli embassy in Cairo in September 2011, and lasted until May of the 20 following year, when the military council - which was ruling the country at the time - was preparing to hand over power to civilians after the first presidential elections in 2012.(Watch 2021)

The Muslim Brotherhood was one of the most well-organized political parties after the Revolution. They won 235 seats out of 358 seats in the parliamentary elections of 2012, following the revolution that overthrew President Hosni Mubarak, after which the Supreme Council of the armed forces dissolved the Parliament.(Kirkpatrick 2012) “On every occasion, the ballot boxes results were in favor of the Islamists, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafis (the latter are closer in ideology to the Wahhabi school of the Islamic law that prevails in Saudi Arabia)⁴. Their organized ability to mobilize their supporters for parliamentary and presidential elections threatened military power over Egypt. On the economic level, the authority of the military in Egypt is controlling the Egyptian economy, and it became clear to the Egyptian people that the military institution that came to power after the fall of the Mubarak regime has enormous economic interests that by no means make them a neutral institution for transferring the power from the Supreme Council of the armed forces to a civil president.

The military institution manages a large number of factories, companies, farms, hotels, gas stations, stores, bakeries, and others and enjoys special privileges in their management. However, Parliament or any government agency has no right to monitor the budget of these projects, its revenues are kept secret, and no one knows what is spent on them from the Egyptian budget. (Abul-Magd 2017)

⁴ Abul-Magd, Zeinab , 2013, The Egyptian military in politics and the economy: Recent history and current transition status

The activists of the Revolution kept asking President Mohamed Morsi to reduce the army's control of the Egyptian economy and to monitor the military budget. However, the Muslim brotherhood had no control over the judicial and executive governmental institutions, because for those institutions, the Muslim Brotherhood is illegal and had a criminal and terrorist record in Egyptian history. (Sayigh 2013)

On the political and foreign policy level, the arrival of Islamists, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, to power in Egypt posed a threat to Israel and the Arab countries under dictatorial rule. For Israel, the relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas (the armed political front opposing the Israeli occupation) represents a threat to its stability because it feared the strengthening of Hamas financially and militarily since it shares part of the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood. (Byman 2011)

In 2012, Israel launched an attack on Gaza during the rule of Mohamed Morsi until Morsi took a clear position and said, "Egypt will not remain silent about any attack on Gaza, stop this farce immediately, otherwise our anger will never be able to stand in front of it, the anger of a people and leadership."⁵ Morsi sent his prime minister, Hisham Qandil⁶, to Gaza, at the head of an Egyptian delegation, and ordered for Rafah border to be opened permanently to Palestinians. Then he quickly reached a cease-fire agreement that guaranteed the cessation of "Israeli assassinations and incursions" and facilitates the movement of Palestinians.

⁵ BBC: In his speech before the United Nations General Assembly, Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi expressed his country's hope for a "just solution" to the Palestinian issue, based on an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dwCrMXkqWA>

⁶ Hesham Mohamed Qandil is an Egyptian engineer and civil servant who was Prime Minister of Egypt from 2012 to 2013.

Back to emergency law, Morsi imposed a partial state of emergency in the canal-side cities in the east after violent incidents in the region on the anniversary of the revolution and its imposition lasted a month.

After the dissolution of the Rab'a-Sit-In in August 2013, interim President Adly Mansour imposed a state of emergency for one month, during which it was first applied as stipulated in the legal texts and at times harshly by closing shops in the evening and preventing movement in the streets at certain times and expanding the arrest of citizens on suspicion, which did not happen when it was applied again in Egypt, except for the areas in the Sinai in the east inflamed by violence. (Aljazeera 2013)

According to the law, a state of war or a situation threatening the outbreak of war, the occurrence of internal disturbances, public disasters, or the spread of an epidemic, i.e. public safety in the territory of the Republic or in areas thereof is endangered, are considered as states of emergency. Article 154 of the Egyptian Constitution, adopted in 2014, stipulates that the proclamation of a state of emergency in the country is in accordance with the Emergency Law No. (162), issued in 1958. (Egypt162/1958)

The law authorized the armed forces and the police to take necessary measures to counter the threats of terrorism, maintain security throughout the country, protect public and private property and save the lives of citizens.

The Emergency Law gives the President of the Republic the right to take extraordinary measures, including the right to authorize the army to impose security, restrict people's freedom of assembly, movement, and transit in certain places or at certain times, to place curfews in some areas and referring the accused to state security courts.

It also grants the concerned agencies the right to monitor all kinds of news, to monitor newspapers, bulletins, publications, editorials, drawings, and all expressions, advertisements, and publicity materials before their publication, and to seize and confiscate them and even close their printing places

The military institution used the media apparatus to promote the law of emergency to give the President and the Government the power to set dates for opening and closing public shops, seizing movable or immovable property, ordering guards for businesses and institutions, evacuating or isolating some areas, regulating means of transport, and limiting and specifying transport between different regions.

On 3 July 2013⁷, the Egyptian Minister of Defence, General Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, turned against Mohamed Morsi, the first elected civilian president in modern Egypt's history, and announced his dismissal. Al-Sisi's government also detained him in an unknown place, disrupted the implementation of the constitution, and arrested hundreds of members of the Muslim brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood was later prosecuted and many of them were sentenced to death in jail by illegal torture or legal execution.⁸

On 24 July 2013 Al-Sisi⁹ stood in front of a crowd of his followers in military uniform and black sunglasses, calling on the Egyptians to do their duty to take a role to serve the nation and to give him the mandate to confront what he called "potential terrorism" to legitimize Raba'a Massacre where security police killed, according to Human Rights

⁷ Georgy, Michael. 2014. "Egypt's Sisi Poised To Announce Presidency Bid". *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-egypt-sisi-idAFBREA0Q0JW20140127>.

⁸ Luther, Philip. 2020. "Egypt: Chilling Rise In Executions Reveals Depth Of Human Rights Crisis". *Amnesty International*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/12/egypt-chilling-rise-in-executions-reveals-depth-of-human-rights-crisis/>.

⁹ Daragahi, Borzou. 2022. "Sisi Calls For Mass Protests In Egypt To Confront 'Terrorism'". *Financial Times*. <https://www.ft.com/content/41af5f60-f435-11e2-a62e-00144feabdc0>.

Watch, more than 1,150 protesters of the military coup.¹⁰ On 26 March 2014¹¹, Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi resigned from his post as minister of defence and officially announced his candidacy for the Egyptian presidency. The announcement was made via live broadcast in which the minister was pictured wearing his military uniform and sitting in front of what looked like a beautiful garden but was clearly an artificial background to represent control and stability behind the military suit. As Al-Sisi won the presidency, the security police started eliminating his opponents by imprisonment and extrajudicial killings. The regime systematically targeted young people at the beginning because they had sparked demonstrations at universities and in the streets after the announcement of the military coup and Rab'a massacre. Moreover, the police especially targeted the students who were politically active and participated in the rebellions during and after the January Revolution of 2011.

The vast majority of these young people had no political history nor a record with the police for which they could be prosecuted. At that historical juncture, I believe, from my observation and experience as a young student from Egypt, people did not know what to expect from the military regime, and many kept demonstrating in the streets to later encounter their own fate of repression from the government by being wanted, arrested or killed. Between 2014 and 2016, the number of political detainees under the Al-Sisi regime reached around sixty thousand and according to Amnesty International, this number includes students, lawyers, human rights defenders, journalists, and LGBT community members. This number is still increasing to this day.

The state's arresting machine has limitations to detain all demonstrators who belong

¹⁰ Sisi's official announcement for Egyptian presidency on Dream TV channel
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Yqn6U55q9o&ab_channel=DreamTVEgypt

¹¹ 8 Sisi's official announcement for Egyptian presidency on Dream TV channel
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Yqn6U55q9o&ab_channel=DreamTVEgypt

to revolutionary activism, which led to countless wanted people escaping from the constant hunting of them by the security police. The wanted people were also forsaken from their community, as their families, home, work, and place of study was under regular surveillance. For instance, the moment the police enter someone's home to arrest them, they are stigmatized as violators of the law and the state, and the media constantly talks about them as agents and traitors, not as Egyptians. For example, on 15 November 2020, the Egyptian security agents arrested the executive director of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) following their meeting held on November 3, where the initiative hosted European diplomats to discuss human rights in Egypt. The Government media reported this news accusing the EIPR and its officials of being agents of European countries, and the meeting with the ambassadors was evidence of espionage. The police stormed the suspects' houses, smashed the furniture, terrorized everyone in the house, and interrogated them about the wanted person. When they did not get any information, they threatened the family with arrest if they hid the whereabouts of the wanted person. From that moment on, the entire family would be stigmatized as suspicious and against the state, belonging to terrorist groups. This stigma affects the social relations of the wanted persons with their family and the family's relationship with neighbors, relatives, and everyone around them.

2 The politics of fear: crisis and dangerous others

The chapter focus on the hegemony of media discourse that promoted the state's fight against terrorism. The word terrorism was used firstly to justify state violence against opponents and secondly to nullify the failure of the state in the security and economic aspect.

This chapter is based on an analysis of the state discourse in the media and the speeches of President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, in which they spoke about terrorism and the terrorist attacks since the end of 2013. I attempt to analyze the post-revolution subject and their various relationships to power. However, my fieldwork focused on ex-members and current members of the Muslim brotherhood; I investigate in this chapter the influence of fear on ordinary Egyptians by demonizing the revolution and opponents and how the pro-military regimes voluntarily situate themselves within the oppression power structure.

I assume that the fear constructed by Egyptian authority has two directions: The first direction is extraordinary and one of terrifying violence in the dispersal of sit-ins and demonstrations, which has led to the deaths of dozens of people and thousands of wounded. I argue that the purpose of this extreme brutality, which I will explain in more detail in the next chapter, is to show the power of authority in the brutality of opponents without accountability and 'by law,' to shut down any space for demonstrations. This violence warns that any demonstration against the military will leave them dead, wounded, and arrested in large numbers.¹²

Salem, a 30-year-old man who was able to flee illegally from Egypt to Sudan, recalls the events he witnessed in Egypt, starting with the Rabaa sit-in. Salem and his family had been participating in the Rabaa al-Adawiya Square sit-in since it started. Three days before its dispersal, they returned to their home for a break due to his mother's illness.

¹² ES CMS, "New Numbers After 8 Years; What Is the Real Number of Victims of the Rabaa Break-Up in Egypt?," Al-Estiklal Newspaper, accessed April 14, 2022, <https://www.alestiklal.net/en/view/10089/new-numbers-after-8-years-what-is-the-real-number-of-victims-of-the-rabaa-break-up-in-egypt>.

On 14 August 2013, Salem and his father woke up to phone calls from friends and relatives in Rabaa Al-Adawiya Square shouting, "We are dying; they have started to forcibly evacuate the sit-in." Salem's father sat in front of the TV, watching the forced evacuation of the sit-in on the Al Jazeera channel. He was dazed by the excessive violence in the square. Salem explains that his father seemed so afraid. For the first time, Salem has seen his father in this condition of fearfulness. That resulted in his father trying to prevent Salem and his brothers from going to the square anymore. Salem's father is one of the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood, and the whole family is used to dealing with police violence. However, this time, the unprecedented brutality of authority in evacuating the sit-in turned him from a father who had raised his sons around the Muslim Brotherhood wherein all their mobilization in life was to serve the group to an individual trying to protect his family, unwilling anymore to sacrifice for the group.

Salem disobeyed his father's orders for the first time, becoming angry with him, and accusing him of cowardice. During the interview, Salem cried when he recalled this incident, saying, "I did not understand the fear my father had that made him not move and did not urge us to help our brothers in the square, I could not understand how he is the same father who used to give priority to the Muslim Brotherhood over everything else, and now he decided in this urgent situation to betray them. Unfortunately, I treated him harshly and did not understand his fear." (Salem 2022)

Salem's father had a long history of experiencing police violence. However, from his experience, Rab'aa and Al-Nahda squares' massacres are incomparable to anything he had witnessed before.

Conversely, Salem had no experience with state violence before the 2011 Revolution. Salem's generation has been practising politics since the 2011 uprising after the overthrow of former president Hosni Mubarak, as the public space was wide open for demonstrations. The only recognized way for Salem's generation to resist the authority's policies was through demonstrations and sit-ins. The massacre that Salem's generation witnessed was horrific and appalling. However, it did not stop the youth of this generation from continuing to demonstrate on the streets and at universities.

The excessive physical violence against the opponents has to be accepted and supported by the ordinary Egyptian, so that leads to the second direction, another form of violence practiced symbolically by the government's media machinery by constantly intimidating and spreading fear among citizens, creating hostility between the ordinary Egyptian and opponents, which results in the loss of support of the ordinary Egyptians, and the fabrication of a threat to the Egyptian state.

The authority creates real or potential enemies of the state who pose a threat to the state security of citizens and public peace, putting citizens in constant danger; the source of that danger is intentionally blurred by the Egyptian authority. In contemporary Egyptian politics, the lack of information about what is happening in Egypt at political and economic levels plays an important role in ruling the state. The cultivation of fear is central to the mode of governance of the contemporary Egyptian state where the discourse about potential terrorism terrifies people and depoliticizes them.(Ahmed 2003) Besides that, the daily life threat people has to deal with putting up with worsening conditions in exchange for the security the authorities hope for and avoiding the oppression of the police state.(Abozaid 2020)

2.2 Maspero¹³ is deadlier than the Castel and the Guns

The title of this section is a verse from the poem "Manifesto" by the Egyptian poet Mustafa Ibrahim. In it, Ibrahim describes the Maspero building, from which government news and official statements are broadcast, as more dangerous than weapons and the president himself (which he referred to by the word "fortress", meaning the headquarters of the presidency). (Astley 2014)

In this section, I analyze the trajectory of the pro-state media discourse, which has threatened people against the idea of opposing the authorities by imposing a state of insecurity and creating potential enemies. During the 18 day sit-in at Tahrir square in 2011, the media discourse characterized Tahrir square as "a licentious space: as space for bad hygiene, immoral behavior, intoxication, and illicit (almost public) sex." (Dardir 2018)

The counter-revolution speech in January 2011, until the announcement of the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak, characterized the demonstrators in Tahrir Square as immoral people who could not represent the opinion of the real masses of the Egyptian people. The comedian Talaat Zakira made one of the most famous such accusations on a sports channels that the sit-in consists of "drinks, hashish, and full sexual relations,"¹⁴ and this claim were ridiculed in many comedy television programs after the Revolution.

¹³ Maspero building is the headquarter of the Egyptian Radio and Television Union, a symbol of state-run media.

¹⁴ <https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?NdjQZu> "علاقات يوجد التحرير ميدان في زكريا طلعت" - YouTube," accessed April 14, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZVnHsUqW8>.

This tone of the 'immorality of protest' was repeatedly used in describing the protesters in Rabaa Al-Adawiya Square and Al-Nahda squares (happening simultaneously between June to August 2013), where demonstrators supported the Muslim Brotherhood and represented by President Mohamed Morsi, toppled by a military coup. However, because this time it was the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamic group, it was not possible to label them "prostitution and drug users," and the alternative was to label them 'terrorists'.

The state instrumentalized the term "terrorism" for all opponents and all kinds of protests. In addition, the outbreak of reported terrorist attacks on the army and police in northwestern Egypt in the city of North Sinai, as well as in the city centre of Cairo (e.g., the assassination of the prosecutor in June 2015). It was, therefore, valid for the state discourse to replace the former 'immorality' accusation with 'terrorism' accusation because the political faction that was elected after the Revolution (and it's the product of the Revolution) was an Islamic faction.¹⁵

After the military coup on 30 June 2013, many reported terrorist operations took place in different regions of Egypt. Many churches were burnt down in Upper Egypt, police stations were attacked, and soldiers were killed in Sinai.¹⁶

The pro-military media focused on linking these terrorist operations to the Muslim Brotherhood and its faithful. Violent events in the history of MB from the 1960s

¹⁵ Egyptian Embassy, "FACT SHEET: TERRORISM IN EGYPT," Google Docs, accessed April 14, 2022, https://docs.google.com/document/u/0/d/1IM0TkOXF6Bv341Y660oNRLdpMzWiN_yDcCWVeSDmSA/edit?usp=embed_facebook.

¹⁶ <https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?h7HZsn> "الكنائس تصل المصري الصراع نار" accessed April 14, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/reportsandinterviews/2013/8/16/الصراع-نار-الكنائس-تصل-المصري>.

and 1970s were recapped to make a full account of the relationship between them terrorism with the Muslim Brotherhood.

While there is a bloody history of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, I argue that accusation of terrorism at this moment used this history as a tool to enshrine the right of the state to massacre the protesters in Rabaa Al-Adawiya and Al-Nahda Squares and to eliminate the democratic product of the Revolution represented by the Muslim Brotherhood whose candidate won the presidential elections.

There is an extension of the accusation of terrorism, which the state and the media loyal to the regime used to eliminate the revolutionary situation and tighten security control, as was the case in the era of President Mubarak. The return to the pre-revolution stage in January 2011 required the dissolution of the bond between the revolutionaries and the political forces brought forth by the Revolution.

I argue that at the beginning of the military coup in 2013, the pro-regime media used the term terrorism to make citizens aware of the opponents' danger, make them obey and mobilize for the military authority, and deprive opponents of confidence.

Nasr, who lives in Istanbul after two years of hiding from the State Security Agency in Egypt, describes that one of the hard moments he experienced after the forced evacuation of the Al-Nahda sit-in was the joy of the people on the street at what had happened in the square. He said, "I was not afraid when I saw dozens of dead and wounded in Rab'a Square. Instead, I had a feeling of anger and a desire for revenge... But when I left the square, I was overcome with fear when I found many people on the street and on social media celebrating our deaths! I felt alienated and vulnerable." (Nasr 2022).

The state's demonization of opponents has been carried out through the hegemonic media discourse in Egypt. For Gramsci, as explained by Sarah Salem in *Anticolonial Afterlives in Egypt*¹⁷, hegemony is a system that maintains a balance between coercion and consent. Consent arises in Egypt in a historical synthesis of a culture of obedience and fear of authority with pride in the victories of authority in its external struggles with the West (in the context of Egypt). There is an ideology of fear and obedience, implemented by authority and invested in it when needed, which has become present in popular culture and is intuitively passed on from generation to generation. (Salem 2020)

In the light of the concepts (state, individual masses, and Police state), Gramsci built his idea so that the masses are able to reform/change what they want from the state policy by adding the concept of "hegemony" which he formulated. Gramscian hegemony is seen as "supplementing" the overall concept of the state with "civil society in particular," which can fend off state violence through "cultural hegemony."¹⁸

From the experience of the failure and defeat of the Arab Spring movements in 2011, it is clear that the lack of effectiveness of civil/political society - represented in parties and unions - can mean that the existing movement does not lack effective political activities and ideas for change, but does not contain social, economic and even moral considerations that need to be put forward as an alternative to what has been established so far and needed to be changed. This puts the members of any

¹⁷ Sara Salem, *Anticolonial Afterlives in Egypt: The Politics of Hegemony*, The Global Middle East (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108868969>.

¹⁸ Gramsci, A., & Buttigieg, J. A. (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

movement and those who demand reform and change when faced by the state/police, as presented by Gramsci. they have to face enforced violence by the authoritarian military and security authorities and the arsenal of laws created by the authority to besiege any calls for demonstrations and restriction of freedoms to prevent any danger or attempts to disrupt the structures of the regime through social media and oppose its ideas.(Gramsci 2011)

An example of this is the law on "electronic crime" that has been in force and effect in Egypt and most Arab countries. Therefore, the absence of direct confrontations with military forces (police and army) does not mean that the state has abandoned its violence, but it exercises it with the so-called "silent violence." (Boyras and Turan 2013)That turns the violence toward opponents through an arsenal of laws.

Gramsci divided hegemony into two natures: political and cultural, and into two levels: international and local. From this perspective, Gramsci was not content to illuminate the role of the state (on the ground) through cultural institutions such as religious, media, educational, and political institutions such as parliaments, which parallel hegemony and violence from the armed forces. However, the effectiveness of the latter and its treatment of the masses depends on the extent of the influence of the former.

Therefore, Gramsci drew attention to a very critical point, which is the responsibility of the masses or their leaders to face the consensus and control that the regime achieves over civil society through the complete control of parties and unions and the generalization of the thinking of the ruler's authoritarian regime (an international or local system) and its transformation into a public opinion and common sense among large groups of people. The people, especially those with positions and influence in the economic and cultural spheres. Therefore, Gramsci calls for a

transition from trade union/party consciousness to direct individual political consciousness and the liberation of the demonstrators from any special economic thinking and factional demands. So that they should present themselves to society as the nucleus of a comprehensive project of change, and not just demand reforms that only change faces with stability or worsening politics.

Without recognizing the foregoing and without looking at the history of state of state formation and understanding that it, i.e., the state, is not only an organ of government but also an organ of repression at all levels, it can only be replaced - at best - with a different system that can dominate through new institutions and mechanisms that serve the public striving for change. Without all this, we will keep falling into the trap of allowing the existing authoritarian regimes to claim the principle of country specificity (that the state is clan-tribal - based on the rule of groups or oligarchy, etc.). without regard to the social status of the individual - and the composition of the family. And thus, the birth of a civil society stalled.¹⁹

In the event that a period of organic crises - moments of political and cultural stagnation in the life of states - an independent civil society cannot emerge and will give only birth to alternative hegemonies, revolutionary thought will find little support. This leads us to two paths, one of which is the severe repression of the revolutionary movement and its failure, or the emergence of a military regime (ruling directly, as Egypt did in 2011 when it was under the rule of the military council, or indirectly, as Egypt does today). This military system is engaged in redrawing the class map in society and containing any movement of the masses, whether groups or individuals,

¹⁹ Jadaliyya- جدلية and Jadaliyya, "المظاهرات زمن في غرامشي قراءة", Jadaliyya - جدلية, accessed April 14, 2022, <https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/40117>.

i.e., working to restore order - the system from its point of view and the system that suits its own interests - if the situation gets out of control.

2.3 Seriousness in the Face of Absurdity

"Oh, our ruler by the emergency, all people are immersed in your oppression."

Kefaya Movement²⁰

This section attempts to analyze Al-Sisi's speech and the violence behind it since Al-Sisi decided to run for Egypt presidency. I examine the violence embedded in Al-Sisi's speeches and the normalization of serious issues by dark comedy.

²⁰ This phrase was one of the famous chants by members of the *Kefaya* movement- Enough Movement- in Egypt (2004-2010), coming from a group of forces that opposed the late President Hosni Mubarak, as an expression of Egyptians' yearning for change, under his rule, which did not exist a day when there is no emergency.

On 26 March 2014, Abdel Fattah Al- Sisi resigned from his post as minister of defence and officially announced his candidacy for the Egyptian presidency. The announcement was made via live broadcast in which the minister was pictured wearing his military uniform and sitting in front of what looked like a beautiful garden but was an artificial background.²¹ This choice of scenery stirred a wave of humor on social media, culminating with Bassem Youssef²², comedian, and talk show host, appearing in front of an almost identical backdrop. However, for one difference: fantastical creatures populated the garden behind Youssef, drawing attention to the simulated quality of the original video. After this episode aired, Bassem Youssef's beloved program was canceled for good.²³ Amidst this spectacle, Abdel Fattah Al- Sisi, the military's presidential candidate, refrained from making any statements about his election program. He justified his stance by claiming that Egypt was experiencing a period of instability and turbulence and that threats to overthrow the state made protecting it a priority over any talk about an election campaign. This manner of speaking was reminiscent of the former president Mubarak's second speech during the January revolution, in which he threatened chaos in the event of his resignation.

In *Political Theology*²⁴, Carl Schmitt refers to political situations like these as states of exception,²⁵ The authority deliberately invokes emergency conditions,

²¹ Dream TV Egypt, كاملا للرئاسة السيسي ترشح خطاب, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Yqn6U55q9o>.

²² Mahmoud Asfour, "Bassem Youssef," accessed April 14, 2022, <https://www.bassemyousssef.xyz/>.

²³ Albernameg, The Show - Season 3 - The Presidential Marcher - Episode 2 - Part 1, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJsOn5sdE_A.

²⁴ Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, ed. George Schwab With a Foreword by Tracy B. Strong (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006), <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/P/bo3649910.html>.

²⁵ Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/S/bo3534874.html>.

intimidating the public into relinquishing control to the government's sovereignty. At the same time, the law and constitution are suspended.

The state of exception represents a point of imbalance between politics and law when the threat of danger ostensibly jeopardizes the stability and security of the state. In this case, the president chooses to override or enforce the law as he pleases, enjoying an unmatched ability to activate or suspend the law and give himself the constitutional right to absolute authority. In the state of exception, the executive authority has the right to issue decrees having the full force of law. Egypt has been stuck in this state of exception since the British colonization that brought war to the region, leaving local governments no other choice but to cooperate with the occupation forces and yield control of all sectors, including security and interior affairs, to the military government. In Egypt today, the regime in power uses these same colonizing tools, waging a public war against terrorism that apparently requires the suspension of human rights. As Abdel Fattah A-I Sisi alleged in his conference with French President Emmanuel Macron, any mention of humanitarian concerns hinders the state's efforts to protect the world from the danger of Egypt turning into an outpost for terrorism.

Al-Sisi adapts the western view of Arabs as they are the source of terrorism in the world, and he is playing a role in encapsulating that terrorism from reaching the global North. The internal orientalism that Al-Sisi used to show up as a gatekeeper to save the global North from Arab terrorism. (Alahmed 2020) This same regime suspended numerous judicial rulings and directly contradicted the Egyptian constitution in order to transfer ownership of the geopolitically and historically critical Tiran and Sanafir islands to Saudi Arabia.

In an attempt to quell the public debate over the land transfer, President Sisi announced to his people that "it's over,"²⁶ indicating that his decision would be the final one; any dissent, however widespread, was irrelevant. Giorgio Agamben, expanding on Carl Schmitt's "states of exception,"²⁷ theorizes a state of emergency, the likes of which we have seen in Egypt repeatedly for over a hundred years since the first British colonial presence. This state of emergency induces an epidemic of panic resulting from the spectra of real or imagined instability that looms over every citizen's life and future. (Schmitt 2006) Individuals are stripped naked under the authority of the state, deprived of civil and political rights, and likened to refugees in the way that they are dispossessed of their right to participate and to belong.

Modern Egyptian history says that the country has been ruled by emergency for most of the last century, whether under colonialism and royal rule or military rule, with the exception of a few years.

At the beginning of the revolutionary year 2011, Egyptians breathed a sigh of relief after the lifting of the state of emergency and the revival of hopes for natural rule and a modern state, but the wind came with what the revolution did not bring wish, so in April 2017, the state of emergency was once again imposed on Egyptians for 5 years, after having been intermittently imposed for a short period before.

By its name, the state of emergency appears to be an exception to the rule as a case of "emergency" for a normal life, but the exception has been the rule in Egypt in recent years, and yet lawyers hope that President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi's

²⁶ Alghad TV - قناة - أخرجو نيران عن الغد، السيسي قناة - 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IndqkFMTdM>.

²⁷ Agamben, *State of Exception*.

announcement to end the state of emergency will be a real start to improving conditions of freedom in the country.

While I argue that the state of emergency has become an established rule in laws restricting freedoms, some human rights defenders in Egypt have also argued about the legality of implementing this abolition against detainees. However, the matter goes beyond the state of exception mentioned by Schmitt and Agamben, which naturally requires a powerful and articulate ruler.(DW,2022)

In the case of Egypt, there is a worn-out model of this state, carried on the shoulders of a military general who is without vision. Al-Sisi seeks to advertise his piety and humility, encouraging rumors that he is often moved to tears at the noon prayer. Emphasizing his impoverished upbringing, he makes frequent claims about the fact that his fridge contained nothing but water throughout his life. With his ingratiating effect, Al-Sisi implored the public to solve Egypt's economic problems by donating one pound daily to the state's bank account.

Al-Sisi is a military man in a trickster's costume, dancing to emotional rhythms with hopes of hypnotizing a weary society, repeating charming refrains, proclaiming that "Egypt is the mother of the world and will become as big as the world!"²⁸ Al Sisi is a president who disowns his crimes and massacres by pointing at "the evil ones" who "started it first.", I emphasize that Egypt experience an exceptional state of absurdity.

Sisi's speeches, disguised by promises and pleasantries, are a tool of invisible violence. Pierre Bourdieu writes that symbolic violence is a type of submission, gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims, exerted for the most part

²⁸ veto talkshow, <https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?6xiYah> حساب السيسي "يحذر: اعملوا" الدنيا قد فيه هتكون مصر اللي لليوم, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGz9u1MJMyg>.

through purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition, recognition, or even feeling.²⁹ This means that speech can influence citizens' awareness of their power and abilities, making them believe they are incapable of challenging the status quo. Moreover, this is considered more dangerous than other types of violence because it is ordinary and simple. It operates subconsciously; it is not recognized socially as violence, as people grow accustomed to it. They eventually accept that they are subject to social constraints that control them, to the extent that this control comes to feel natural. For this reason, it is hard to see a rejection of this emotional and symbolic violence. On the contrary, it appears ordinary, despite negative psychological, social, cultural, economic, and political consequences. In Egypt, economically, it is ludicrously inflated prices and the collapse of the individual standard of living. From a security standpoint, it is an increase in reported terrorist activity, which has spread from remote areas of the Sinai Peninsula into Egypt's capital. The regime's response has been predictable: to roll back civil protections, claiming that critical times require national unity, making no room for popular dissent. This makes the public unconsciously receptive to any escalations, even those that harm their personal security and stability. In this way, the onus of adapting to new and difficult circumstances is placed on the individual, for whom it is necessary to believe that these circumstances represent an unavoidable reality. These speeches, however comical, I assume that it can also be frightening. When certain foods became too expensive for the average consumer, the president responded: "I wish I could help you, but I can't."³⁰ When people expressed dismay at the high cost of public transportation, he said, as if speaking directly to each individual: "You are poor, and

²⁹ "Language and Symbolic Power — Pierre Bourdieu, John Thompson," accessed April 15, 2022, <https://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674510418>.

³⁰ veto talkshow, <https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?XptMbl> "Al-Sisi is warning Egyptians

you cannot pay. I, too, am poor, and I cannot afford to help you." These phrases obfuscate the connection between politics and economics; when the president himself claims to be poor, it seems that the market functions autonomously and that no one is immune to being victimized by it. Without a political-economic vision, an endless search for quick money prevails. This includes Egypt's numerous foreign aid packages and loans (most of which have strings attached) to an economic initiative entitled "Say good morning to Egypt by paying one pound,"³¹ which asks Egypt's destitute citizens to save their government instead of the other way around. Of course, people wonder what they will get in return for their contributions, but the president saves them the trouble of thinking, declaring dramatically: "I swear to God if I could be sold, I would sell myself!"³² Egyptians are quick to make light of statements like these, which is just another way to tolerate, as opposed to resist, symbolic violence. (Bourdieu 1993)

From flattery to threats (as in, "Whoever goes close to the military, I will eradicate them from the surface of the earth!")³³, *Sisi's absurd speeches* are a mask that hides acts of repression unprecedented in Egyptian history. Along with Schmitt, Agamben, and Bourdieu, the anthropologist Walter Armbrust presents another proposal worthy of consideration when looking at the Egyptian context. *In Martyrs and Tricksters: An Ethnography of the Egyptian Revolution*³⁴, Armbrust examines transformations that took place in the media after the January Revolution. Armbrust points to the archetype of the trickster, one of several characters that appear

³¹ <https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?BiKTJF> "Say morning to Egypt by one pound' [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlc_N4ro2_o)," accessed April 15, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlc_N4ro2_o.

³² alRa2eis, 2014, I can't give you <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FldG0Jo--E>.

³³ I will eliminate anyone try to threat Egypt <https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?B8MprW> [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Isr2wYE97eE)," accessed April 15, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Isr2wYE97eE>.

³⁴ Walter Armbrust, "The Trickster in Egypt's January 25th Revolution," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55 (October 1, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417513000431>.

in societies that are in transition. For Armbrust, in the Egyptian context, the role of the trickster is played by Tawfiq Okasha, a controversial media figure known for his stirring hostilities against the Revolution. Armbrust suggests that the trickster, despite appearing as a humorous figure, has a serious impact on society, particularly if he is active in public affairs. His amusing qualities hide what is immoral, harmful, and socially violent. Crucially, Armbrust writes that the trickster is neither pure evil nor pure good; he is an agent of obscurity. Armbrust asserts that the trickster's role is to confuse and maintain the ambiguity of meaning, making public understanding dispersed and variable. (Armbrust 2013)

Seven years have passed since the Arab Spring, and Egyptians have seen only more complex systems at the foreign and domestic policy levels. Charlatans and swindlers are at the forefront of the scene, and these hordes no longer have secondary roles in power but have become the authority themselves. I claim that President Sisi is the greatest trickster on the Egyptian scene, and it should be something beyond what appears initially as comedy.

Tawfiq Okasha, an Egyptian television presenter as owner and principal anchor of the satellite political-commentary channel Faraeen, managed to embody epistemic authority for the average Egyptian. However, in the beginning, his tremendous growth in popularity was owed to the youth of the Revolution, who promoted his image if only to make fun of it. Ultimately, this visibility made him accessible and familiar to the general public. For instance, Armbrust mentions that he once heard a taxi driver repeat Okasha's famous words: "The revolution ruined the nation." Armbrust writes, "I sat up straight and paid attention because I knew this phrase to be one of the empty accusations that Okasha frequently throws at revolutionaries."

Armbrust says that the prevailing successful exercise of power at the beginning of the twenty-first century is populism.³⁵ This is a populism that claims to strive for the nation's good and is expressed in an exaggerated form of patriotism, which spreads fear in sensational media reports, newspaper headlines, and conspiracy theories. In Egypt, it is the fear of Islamists and immigrants; it is homophobia, the fear of atheists, and the fear of a global American-Jewish conspiracy. That absurd, patriotic fear robs the citizen of the ability to recognize his oppression and especially to organize around this recognition. In the face of such absurdity, the only solution is to be deadly serious.

2.4 Conclusion

Violations of human rights and freedoms as well as the systematic abuse of the constitution and the law, lead to the transgression of human rights in Egypt. The "either-with-us-or-against-us" dichotomy propagated since the summer of 2013 has distanced the security and intelligence institutions from the "enemy" and the demonisation of the Brotherhood, that cause justifying the violence against the entire Brotherhood without distinguishing between supporters and instigators of violence and peaceful citizens who did not bear arms. The hysteria of betrayal and distortion claim to the monopoly right to speech in the name of patriotism.

It was in an atmosphere of dehumanization and hysteria of betrayal that the Rabaa massacre occurred in the summer of 2013. The killing of nearly 800 people in the dispersal of sit-ins of the Muslim Brotherhood and their sympathizers was not the endpoint of the ruling authoritarianism's commitment to violating citizens' right to life, but rather the beginning, as official violence is legalized. (Abdelaziz 2019)

³⁵ Armbrust.

The bodies of the victims piled up on the verges of some streets or in the courtyards of some mosques after the dispersal were a pathetic notification that extrajudicial killings, torture and deprivation of liberty become regular tools of authoritarianism to eliminate the opponents.

Authoritarianism used the media machinery to attribute gun and violent crimes to opponents and stereotype them all as actual or potential terrorists, and by calling the killing of opponents in the streets by the state as "legitimate self-defence". And then absolving the Murderers who gave the order from their senior positions.(Ismail 2011)

The media hysteria exported hatred, revenge and dehumanisation of opponents so that we reached the fascist declaration: "You are one people, and we are one people."³⁶ The distortion reached the level of complete domination of the public space, making the few voices in defence of rights and freedoms sound like traitors, agents and conspirators against national interests.

Between hatred and vilification, however, the maddening scenes of pro-military coup men and women gleefully lining up to applaud the bodies of victims carried out of sit-ins in 2013 that were dispersed with excessive violence - scenes captured either by the pro-authoritarian media or by those who had turned to seek truth and justice in a fascist moment - were not surprised by its extreme cruelty.

³⁶ This song by a famous Egyptian singer was released in the summer of 2013, following the military's removal from power of Muslim Brotherhood president Mohamed Morsi. This was a time of heightened political polarisation, with many Egyptians supporting the military, whilst other Egyptians were protesting against what they saw as a coup. The lyrics imply that supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood are not part of the Egyptian people and derides them as 'backward' and supporters of terrorism. The video shows ordinary Egyptians waving Egyptian flags, referring to the anti-Morsi protests of 30 June 2013.

<https://egyptrevolution2011.ac.uk/exhibits/show/introduction/item/144>

Before and after the massacre, the secular elites, liberals, and leftists plunged into an unprecedented moral and human abyss, with their participation either implicated in justifying the massacre or silent about it, and the pathetic participation in the construction of the falsehood.(Tandoc Jr. 2019)

Egypt will not overcome the massacres that have occurred since the moment of the 2011 revolution and its consequences, without destroying the falsehood and deconstructing everything that the fascist moment has arranged, the hysteria of betrayal and the hate speeches of accusations and illusions.

Egypt will not move beyond the anathema of spilled blood, accumulated grievances and injuries, unless the military authorities recognise that the dead, the imprisoned and the persecutors are victims, and this is their true identity, victims whose sufferings and the pain of their families should be respected.(Hamzawy n.d.)

3.1 Stigmatized Family: Confiscation of the right of people to have faith

In this chapter, I discuss the impact of military oppression by examining the moment when the police have a person under suspicion, and storm the potential suspect's house, smash the belongings, terrorize everyone in the house, and interrogate them about the wanted person. Based on the interviews, I could assume that the entire family has been stigmatized by other fellow Egyptians as suspicious, against the state, and/or belonging to terrorist groups. This stigma affects the social relations of the wanted person with their family and the family's relationship with neighbors, relatives, and everyone around them.

This chapter attempts to depict, based on the interviews, how Egyptian families members are forcing each other to de-Islamize themselves by avoiding practicing

Islamic rituals publicly to protect themselves from imprisonment and the label of terrorism.

I examine in this chapter the recurring pattern of excessive violence by the national security forces in storming the houses of wanted people. I do this through the interviews, I conducted in Istanbul with Egyptians who are wanted by the authorities because of court verdicts against them or just wanted by the National Security Agency without legal grounds. Most of my interlocutors were wondering during the interview about the reason behind the excessive and unjustified violence by the police forces in storming houses, breaking furniture and harassing neighbors and people in the area where they live? In the case of Yassin, who had been sentenced to 15 years in absence for joining the Muslim Brotherhood and participating in reported terrorist attacks, police stormed his house through the windows, where the forces climbed onto the roof of the house, descended with ropes and stormed through the windows of the house.

Recounting the night police stormed his family home, Yassin said:

‘Luckily, I was playing football with my friends in an area about an hour away from my house by public transport. My father called me, and his voice was full of fear and hesitation, eagerly asking me, "Where are you, son?" I had a feeling that something bad had happened to my mother, so I stopped him by asking, "My mother is well?!" My father was silent for a while until the state security officer took the phone from him and shouted at me, saying: "You are wanted by the National Security Come voluntarily, or we will be insulting your family." The State Security Officer threatened my family and terrorized the people in the area where I live. It is clear that the National Security has done careful research on our relationship with the neighbors and the houses I visit frequently, so they broke into some of the homes of the

neighbors whom we count as a part of our family, and we have been friends for more than ten years. ”

The authorities deliberately demonstrate excessive force through the violence they used in the dispersal of sit-ins and demonstrations and the storming of opponents' homes. Especially when breaking into homes, I argue, the authorities show excessive force to convey to the people that Wanted people are dangerous, so that the people in the area where they live must sense the danger of their presence among them and report them immediately when they see them.

Yassin studied engineering at one of the universities in Cairo and was well known among his colleagues at the university because of the many voluntary activities he was involved in and his excellence in studies, and he was also the Imam of the Student Mosque.

A week after Yassin's house was stormed, members of the National Security Agency inquired about him at the university and took his academic record and all the documents concerning him at the university. The news spread among Yassin's colleagues and the known knowledge he had among his peers that he was someone who helped students and excelled in his studies was replaced with a person known to be wanted by National Security for being a terrorist and a Brotherhood member.

The authority relies on breaking the social ties of opponents to make them outcasts without any protection from family, friends, neighbors, and others. In Yassin's case, the authorities attacked all the places where he was staying and attached the stigma of terrorism to him to ensure that Yassin was stripped of all social protection and isolated from his social circles.

3.2 The stigma of being an activist

In this section, I argue that the stigma left by the national security forces after storming the houses of opponents and using violence on wanted people's surrounding circles fragments the human relations of the wanted people and turns them into deviants.

In December 2020, my mother had a minor altercation with a neighbor, her name Um Hamada, who lives in the same building as us. Although the argument was about something not related to politics, our neighbor decided to provoke my mother by saying, "You are terrorists.... and Muslim Brotherhood member,, Ikhwan,[Muslim Brotherhood] ", which led my mother to show up by our education level, and how we respect others and so on. The argument escalated quickly which led Um Hamada to call the National Security Agency office and tell them that "Eslam is at home and he is a wanted terrorist." The police immediately responded to the report and sent a group of soldiers who belonged to the police station in my neighborhood. They interrogated my mother about my whereabouts and warned her not to hide any information about me.

My family and I have known Um Hamada for more than 10 years, we sometimes had breakfast together, and she was leaving her young children with my mother to go to work. We had a strong and friendly relationship that lasted for years until the police stormed my house in 2015. This human relationship turned into hostility. In her eyes, we became terrorists, enemies of the Egyptian state, and she became a snitcher to the police in our eyes.

I argue that after the revolution, the military and police state in Egypt wanted to demonstrate their existence in order to return to their role as head of the state, so violence was the tool by which the military state enforced its existence . As a result, violence in its various forms, ranging from verbal violence in media discourse, as I explained in the first chapter, to direct violence in which hundreds of people were killed, and the continuing violence now being used in detention centers and in storming oppositions' homes.

The excessive violence used by the National Security Agency to invade the homes of opponents, which I focus on in this chapter, and which affected neighbors, friends, and relatives, instilled fear in the inner circles of wanted people, and divided people into political relations between those who belong to the state and who are enemies.

Indeed, the revolution had transformed all Egyptians from non-politicized people to politicized people who participate in decision-making and vote in parliamentary and presidential elections while being aware that they make a difference in voting, unlike in Mubarak's time when Egyptians never experienced a democratic process of any elections (Parliament or Presidential election), it was useless for people to vote or not because the results anyway were decided in Mubarak's favor and his party.

After the military coup in July 2013, politics entered Egyptians' homes differently: Al-Sisi's speech to depose President Morsi on 3 July divided Egyptians' homes into supporters of the army and Morsi's ouster and 'others' who supported Morsi and described Morsi's ousting as a military coup against legitimate authority. At that moment, the Egyptian authority forced Egyptians to choose a side, either to join the line of the army, supporting the decisions of the military ruler or to join the line of the opposition, which the state accused of spying and terrorism.

The violence used by the national security forces in storming the homes of opponents and, in some cases, violence against neighbors and friends of the person being persecuted is, in my opinion, a show of force and strikes fear in the hearts of people.

When the national security forces stormed my house, according to my mother, they were equipped with heavy weapons, surrounded the house with police vehicles from all sides, and invaded more than one flat in the building where we live. One of the soldiers asked Khaled, a new neighbor in the building if he knows any information about me, and when Khaled said: "Why are you asking about him? He is a student of good manners", the soldier insulted him and threatened him with imprisonment if he hid any information about me.

As an Egyptian, I have seen Police and army exercises repeatedly broadcast on official government channels, with soldiers showing their masculinity by displaying physical strength during the exercises and performing acts to break into terrorist hideouts in Hollywood style of action movies. In the last five years, after the General Intelligence Service controlled the production of films and series in Egypt through a holding company in the field of media production, many films and series have been produced since 2013 that revolve around the state's fight against terrorism, and these works include action scenes in storming terrorist camps and the method of eliminating and arresting them.

One of the most indicative pieces of evidence of what I argued before is Nesma's case. Nesma is an Egyptian student of journalism at a university in Istanbul who accused of killing her neighbor. She is a writer and human rights defender. She writes about the conditions of Egyptians detained in military prisons and documents

the abuses they face. In 2014, her house was stormed by the National Security Forces, and they forcibly arrested her father several times to force her to turn herself to the police station.

In 2015, a demonstration against the regime accidentally passed by her house, and police forces broke up the demonstration with bullets and tear gas canisters. Clashes between demonstrators and security forces erupted, and police killed dozen people, including Nesma's neighbor. However, Nesma's neighbor was not at the demonstration, he was passing by the demonstration going back home, and a bullet hit him and lodged in his heart. He died instantly.

His family accused Nesma of killing him because they assumed that the demonstrators had weapons and they were attempting to kill soldiers, and Nesma is well known in her neighborhood that she is against the military regime and supports the opposition.

The murdered man's family sought revenge against the murderer, so they accused Nesma of being one of those "murderers" who supported the revolution against the regime. Nesma says: "we did not have friendship with the neighbor who was killed and his family; however, there was always mutual respect and kindness, but everything changed after the National Security Forces stormed my house. They looked at us with great contempt, and they ignored any kind of interaction with my parents. But I could not imagine that they would accuse me of killing anyone! I never imagined that the hatred would reach this level!"

Nesma had to flee Egypt to Istanbul after she was charged with murder accusations, and some people from her neighborhood falsely witnessed to the prosecutor that they saw her with a gun and that she had intentionally killed her

neighbor; an accusation that might result in the death penalty. Her family had to change their residence after several threats they faced from neighbors, and residents in the neighborhood harassed them to force them to leave at the end. The whole family became tainted with terrorism and murder, and this stigma extended to sever relations between Nesma's immediate family and the extended family, including uncles and aunts. Even Nesma's friends permanently broke off relations with her and avoided responding to her calls and messages.

Based on what Goffman described in “Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity” (Stigma 1986), the stigma is the naming and binding of an undesirable difference to an individual from the side of others that deprives this person of social acceptance or community support for them. Stigma, according to Goffman, refers to this process that attributes faults and sins to people in society that indicate moral degeneration and describes them as hateful traits or characteristics that embarrass them and create rumours around them. These characteristics are physical, mental, psychological, or social. If one becomes stigmatized, undesirable characteristics are thus attached to the person, and consequently deprives them of social acceptance because they are different from the rest of society.(Goffman 1986)

The stigma of having participated in the 2011 Revolution turned activists from being citizens into being ‘others’, which means that they became outsiders. Remarkably, the process of “defining outsiders is part of the process of designating insiders and citizens and thus of defining the nation itself” (Nagel 2003, P.147)they get excluded from the nation and get stripped of their humanity (Slootmaeckers 2019).

This stigma is not a product of the January Revolution, but it is a product of the power relationship within society and the police state of Egypt since the establishment

of the modern state in the early 19th century at the hands of Muhammad Ali Pasha, who founded the Egyptian army.

The police state relies mainly on strong security and intelligence systems to control and monitor the citizens. It derives its power from the military rule in Egypt, represented by the police and the army, and holds the executive power to run the state.

The military regime maintains its existence by drawing internal boundaries that distinguish between those belonging to the nation and those outsiders. Those boundaries are drawn by measuring the extent of people's loyalty to military authority.

3.3 How to protect yourself by a Packet of cigarettes, porn movies, a can of beer, and non-religious customs

As outlined in my introduction, this research is based on a case study of wanted people who are part of the Muslim Brotherhood, former members or simply sympathizers and defenders of them. So, all my participants are Muslims or at least grew up in a Muslim family. In this part, I explain the impact of state violence on those practices and habits people have inherited from religion, such as the prohibition of smoking and alcohol, the obscenity of watching porn films and wearing respectable clothes.

I base this on the interviews that I conducted in Istanbul, and the situations I was personally experienced with my family and friends, I show that the stigma of terrorism and joining the Muslim Brotherhood has caused many Egyptian families to abandon any practices or appearances that could classify them as conservative Muslims (or *Ikhwan*).

Most conservative Muslim Egyptians derive the significance of morality and organize their social life and all details of family life through belief in Islamic values.(Ayubi

1991) Therefore, most conservative Egyptians are affected by the conservative political discourse and mobilize on its basis. One of the most famous phrases circulated by Egyptians about why they were voted for the Muslim Brotherhood in parliament and the presidency is "We will choose people who believe in God."

The conservative-populist rhetoric in Egypt had a far-reaching effect on mobilizing people and shaping collective consciousness, which is why Sisi sought the help of the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar and the Coptic Pope in Egypt on the day President Morsi's fall was announced.

In an ethnographic work based on a theoretical framework of populism, Pied explores the cause of conservative populist politics in the context of the US election and the influence of populism discourse used by politicians and political parties to make "the people", who become supporters of them. Her ethnographic work is based on a qualitative analysis of conservative populism and the theoretical contribution of intersectionality, race, and gender to social inequalities. (Ayubi 1991)

She divided her essay into 3 parts: 1) Defining conservative populism, 2) Economic, Social, and Political Explanations of Populism, and 3) Ethnographies of Conservative Populisms. In the first part, she emphasizes the construction of people by conservative populism discourse and in the process of making people there is a parallel process of making "others". Besides, Pied refers to the influence of race, nation, gender, and rural/urban state in the imagination of the people about themselves and how it creates the image of the others as well.(Pied 2019)

In the Egyptian context, I would highlight the power of populist discourse and its investment in the people's anger at the ruling class and the use of a nationalist discourse that increases the people's anger and fear to win their electoral votes.

That's the same as what happened when the military institution cultivates the fear of MBH to rule the state through this fear. Pied does not argue whether populism is an ideology or a discourse, and I agree with this because the whole matter is fluid and indefinable. The components of populist discourse from culture, race, religion, and nation are all subject to interpretation, addition, and deletion. For example, the Salafists in Egypt have always called for denouncing the idea of democracy because it contradicts Islamic law, but after the January Revolution, when they were given the opportunity to act safely in politics, they motivated people to vote for them. Compared the electoral process to jihad for the sake of God. (Yaqoub 2012)

After the military coup, religious discourse focused on breaking the link between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic religion, and therefore they were labeled "Khawarij(Cooperson 2013), a word from Islamic history that refers to a class of people who stand outside the ruler are classified as infidels. The media focused on portraying the terrorists as wearing conservative religious clothing, Men with beards and Women wearing Niqab, and frequently praying in mosques. The media discourse did not directly accuse practitioners of Islamic rituals of being terrorists, but the image of the religious confined to Islamists who joined religious groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Salafists, and others is that people are withdrawing from practicing the religious rituals they grew up with, and it became part of their habits.

Mazen, a young Egyptian man, wanted by National Security in Egypt since 2016, changed his residence and family after National Security broke into his family house several times, and now he is trying to hide from the police as much as he can.

Mazen is a conservative with radical religious thoughts; he is a young man who practiced all religious rituals, from visiting mosques for praying, and for years he kept his beard without shaving it, moreover who is also abstaining from all taboos prescribed in the Quran. However, after the media campaign launched by the pro-authority media against the Islamists, Mazen's father forced him to shave his beard and not pray at the mosque for fear that one of the whistleblowers would report him and get him arrested.

Manar, another interlocutor, was forced by her father to take off the niqab after a wave of criticism of the wearing of the niqab by women, and the heads of several universities in Egypt banned teaching at the university wearing the niqab because it hindered the communication process between students and teachers. At the same time, every veiled girl was arrested and locked up in the street just for wearing the Niqab.

In Istanbul, during the fieldwork, I met some friends with whom I shared the difficult times we spent together in sit-ins and demonstrations during the university years from 2010 to 2016. Most of them are now wanted by the National Security Agency in Egypt, and some of them have been sentenced in absentia to more than ten years in prison because they are accused of joining terrorist groups.

We used to mourn our tragedies with laughter, remembering together the tricks we have been using since 2014 to avoid arbitrary police arrests 2015, the obsession that dominated the security services to arrest the largest possible number of university students who posed a great dilemma for them in universities and streets. The strategy at the time was to carry a pack of cigarettes and have clips of pornographic films on our mobile phones.

Hisham mentions that there was once a police ambush near his home, and this ambush was famous because the officer in charge was always searching for and arresting university students. The officer stopped Hisham and searched his phone. When he found the pornographic clips, he laughed and gave him back the phone, and let him go.

Ayman says that when he saw a police gathering on the street, he lit a cigarette: "I felt very safe and confident when I lighted a cigarette and walked between the police officers. But I also felt very conflicted.. I hated myself, and I hated myself my life because of these sins that I refused to do on people" he said.

I imagine that this hypocrisy that these young people feel is because Muslims in general and Islamists, in particular, portray these things as anti-Islamic habits as a strange things for them and not part of their Islamic personality. Joseph Massad points out in *Desiring Arab* that Western Orientalist literature isolated Muslims from their cultural and civilizational reality and trapped them in the first era of Islam(Massad 2008). The Europeans defined Islamic identity and shaped the identity of the contemporary Muslim. Massad explains that the domination of the Orientalists over the Arabs was decadence, backwardness, and intellectual emptiness because orientalists see the Arab mindset as extended from religion alone. (Guida n.d.)

Thus, I argue, the Egyptian authority uses this orientalist self-perception of Muslims that forces them to reveal their "immoral" desires and actions publicly. The authority believed that smoking cigarettes, watching pornographic films, and wearing modern clothes are not Islamist characteristics, so Islamists or people

associated with them resorted to resisting the authorities' attack on them by hiding behind "dirty" and forbidden acts in Islam.(Douglas 2002)

3.4 Not every absence harms

In this chapter, I emphasize the importance of social class differences of politically wanted people in understanding the different dimensions of oppression they are facing.

I have discovered through field research that wanted people from the middle and lower-middle classes have more convoluted situations than other wanted people from wealthy families since they became wanted. People from these working classes are living in compacted building blocks where they easily know each other, The complexity arises when the stigma that National Security puts on the wanted person and their families in their neighborhood. Among the higher social classes living in gated communities, there is less stigma attached to the stalker because, in most cases, the compound does not have as easy a network of social relations as in the popular areas of the lower-middle class.

At the Rabaa al-Adawiya sit-in in 2013, I witnessed many Muslim Brotherhood members, supporters or sympathizers who had come from small villages in rural Egypt to sit in. I met a young man from a small village in the West Bank town of Damietta in northern Egypt who told me that Muslim Brotherhood operatives transported the majority of Brotherhood families to Cairo on 30 June to support President Morsi, a large A proportion of the demonstrators are from provinces and villages outside Cairo.

The strength of the Muslim Brotherhood's spread in Egypt lies in the charitable work they do for the middle and lower-middle classes, who are inherently conservative and religious classes. Despite the interest Cairo receives in its centralization, the Muslim Brotherhood reaped the fruits of its charitable investments in marginalized towns as they played an effective role in supporting the Muslim Brotherhood, especially after the revolution, because they received the largest percentage of votes from marginalized groups governorates far from the center of Cairo.

Through the interviews I conducted in Istanbul, I found that the lower social class who belonged to the Muslim Brotherhood are harshly impacted by the violence of the authority after the military coup of persecution, arrest, and killing of a family member, a complicated matter for several reasons, the first of which is that most of those I met during the fieldwork were from the lower class situation worse. In this social class, all family members in most families work, even the sons of students work part-time alongside their studies to help the family with their material needs.

For example, Salah was in secondary school when the national security forces stormed his home in Imbaba³⁷, a working-class neighborhood in northern Giza. That was before the secondary school final exams which resulted in he couldn't finish his secondary school degree because he was worried if the police came to the school and arrest him. Salah comes from a working-class family where his brothers and father work full-time, and he used to work part-time at a café in a residential area near Imbaba.

³⁷ Imbaba is a working-class neighbourhood in northern Giza, Egypt, located west of the Nile and northwest of and near Gezira Island and downtown Cairo, within the Giza Governorate.

Salah lost his job after the news spread, the owner of the café found out about it and warned him by a phone message not to come back to work, which resulted in a budgetary crisis for the whole family. His father had to support him financially during fugitive time. Salah was supported by his family and became a burden to them.

Salah was a supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood and had participated in demonstrations against the military coup in his free time from work and studying, although Salah continued to support the group, they do not consider him one of them and do not help in any way during his fugitive period. Some of his friends whom he had met at the demonstrations hosted him in their homes. For four months Salah was moved from one place to another every few days until he decided to flee to Sudan and from there to Istanbul. *Salah says: "In the area where I live, word spread that I was a terrorist. My father is constantly harassed on the street by the inhabitants of our neighborhood... some of the grocers are reluctant to sell him anything. The scariest thing that my father is most afraid of is that any of his colleagues at work know that his son is accused of terrorism. I think then it will be disastrous because my father will lose his job for that reason. Now I live in Turkey.. without a university degree as I left Egypt when I was under eighteen years old, and now I am 25 years old. I was not one of the sons of the Muslim Brotherhood leaders or the sons of the rich to study here in Turkey at my own expense. I had to work as soon as I arrived in Turkey to send money to my father."*

The National Security used the deteriorating situation of the wanted people from the lower classes to put pressure on the parents and siblings of the wanted mean to force them to surrender.

Musab is a 27-year-old who was arrested several times until he could flee from Egypt. The National Security arrested Musab's brother after months of

searching for him. The National Security intimidated Musab's brother and tried to force him with electric torture to tell them about the place of a brother, and they ordered him to work with them as an informer. When he refused, they threatened him that they would fire him and he would not find work anywhere. In fact, the National Security ordered the employer to fire him.

Musab says: "My brother eventually had to report me because of the National Security's pressure on him, and after the National Security stormed every workplace, he went to ... he called me before the police reached my hiding place so that I could escape ... He cried so much because of that ... I understand his situation very much and I don't blame him, I want my family to be safe even if it is at the cost of my personal safety."

That reminded me of my father's anger at the stigma of terrorism with which we are facing until nowadays. In Egypt, while I was being wanted, my father called me one day to blame me for the situation I had gotten myself into and said to me, "I have lived my entire life apart from politics... I have enough financial threats in my life, I have to take care of you and your siblings I have not lacked the threat of arrest ... Please stay away from it."

My father always said he is wealthier than anyone else because he has educated sons who are respected by everyone, and his friends wished that their sons would be like his sons, and he considered his second happiness to be people's love and respect for him, he was very grateful for that.

When I became wanted, he remembered the poverty he suffered over his life and ours when people's love was robbed from him and replaced by fear of him and our whole family. It was the toughest thing that stood between me and him until his

death in 2017, perhaps that is why I decided to write a research about wanted people. I opted to tell the stories of many young people of my generation who suffer from the bitterness of the stigma of being activists. I wanted to tell my father that we are many and we did not expect to end up being a source of threat to our families.

4 Conclusion

Glory to Lucifer ... worshiped by the wind

Who said No to the face of those who said Yes

Who taught Man to tear down the evanescence

Who said No ... so he did not die

And remained a soul eternally in pain³⁸

Amal Donkol- The last words of Spartacus

Spartacus is a slave who rebelled against the rule of the Romans and led a great revolt against their authority, and in a period of the revolution almost stormed Rome and took control as he won many battles before he was defeated and executed.

³⁸ <https://polarabicpoetry.tumblr.com/post/140726966896/the-last-words-of-spartacus-by-amal-donkol>

Translated version of Donkol's poem

Amal Donkol wrote this poem and other political poems after several defeats inflicted on Arab countries, including the Nakba in 1948, the occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel, and the defeat of Egypt by Israel in 1967. Donkol employed a legendary character to Spartacus full of lofty ideals represented in the moment of rebellion against oppression, injustice, and slavery. He wrote this poem in the form of a testament bearing Demon in his initial glory; Because Demon rebelled and could say no in front of the divine essence...! Is there anything more daring than that! And that God did not kill Satan because he said (No), but that gave him an eternal spirit that does not die.(Suneela 2012)

I see this poem as a representation of the case of activists and opponents in Egypt who became demons for saying "no" to the dictatorship. They spent years on the streets saying No through demonstrations and sit-ins. , some of them had been killed and some imprisoned, and the rest became wanted hiding from the people of Egypt, but the word "No" is still echoes in Egypt, and it remains to annoy the dictators.

During this research, I tried to clarify several aspects of the lives of political persecutors in Egypt through an ethnographic work in which I tried to document the life cycle of wanted persons in Egypt.

In the historical introduction, I explained the history of the emergency law in Egypt and its use by the state in suppressing opponents and notifying ordinary Egyptians that there is a constant danger that threatens the stability of the state. I then told how the military-controlled the media through private companies owned by the General Intelligence agency.

I mentioned the main stations during the Muslim Brotherhood's rule in Egypt between 2012 and 2013, I mentioned the political and economic points that posed a threat to the army's relations with neighboring countries, and I mentioned this to highlight that the military coup was covert and support from Israel contributed to the international support for the military coup in Europe and America. Gad, a parliamentarian and former vice-president of the Al-Ahram Centre for Strategic Studies, explained that the delegations Benjamin Netanyahu sent to "USA after the events of June 2013 put great pressure on members of Congress to adopt objective visions of the events in Egypt."³⁹

In next chapters, I have presented the issue of wanted people through the stigma of accusing them of being terrorists and enemies of the state. I first presented how fear is cultivated among Egyptians to believe the authorities' narrative of demonstrations events in Egypt, a fear that dominated the behavior of ordinary Egyptians and made them accept violence against opponents. I have analyzed the political and media discourse that deprived opponents of their rights as Egyptian citizens and their human right to life in general.

For me, this research is final documentation of the consequences of the failure of the revolution in Egypt, which manifested in the efforts of the militant Egyptian authority of depriving all positive aspects in January 2011.

Between 2011 and 2013, political forces, Islamic, secular, and military, committed great sins and manipulated the hopes of Egyptians to successfully

³⁹ Mubasher.aljazeera.net. 2022. نائِب بالبرلمان المصري: إسرائيل دعمت 30 يونيو. [online] Available at: <<https://mubasher.aljazeera.net/news/politics/2017/9/22/%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%A8-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%AA-30>> [Accessed 31 May 2022].

manage the democratic transition and link the preservation of rights and freedoms with the improvement of economic and social conditions and life norms.

Between 2013 and 2019, military power forced people to trade "bread and security for truth and freedom" to authoritarianism. They could neither resist its temptation, nor could they resist the real and fake fears of instability, and that Egypt might suffer the fate of Iraq, Syria, and Libya in terms of terrorism and civil wars, leading to the death of thousands, demolition of cities, displacement and asylum for the citizens of these countries. The authorities in Egypt invested in this threat to force people to cease and desist from criticizing the state out of fear for their lives and fear of oppression by the authorities.

The ruling authoritarianism in Egypt employs the denigration of politics, as an additional strategy preceded by other authoritarian and authoritarian regimes. This refers to the systematic attempts of the military regime to distort civilian political life in its entirety and to reinforce the belief that only generals and people with military, security and intelligence backgrounds are capable of managing the country's affairs and realising the public interest.

For politics to die in frivolity, the state with all its institutions and offices is reduced to the military-security component and the civilian component of the state is stigmatised with impotence, deficiency and lack of discipline that require the mastery of the military and its security and their guardianship over decision-making processes in its various contexts and circles.

It also removes the independence of the legislative, judicial and administrative oversight bodies entrusted (constitutionally and legally) with the accountability of the military, security and intelligence services, transferring the work and performance of

these functions between them. So that politics dies of its own defamation, the military rule remains without alternative.

The authority's fear of a political revival by the opposition led the military authority to exercise more repression against citizens and engage in violations of human rights and freedoms by imposing several restrictions on the working spaces of human rights organisations and legal aid initiatives defence of victims.

The frightened and fugitive wanted people inside and outside Egypt who hold on to their right to freedom of expression and peaceful resistance against the government's practices and policies do not accept the other opinion and stand synonymously between legitimate peaceful resistance and illegal acts of violence and terrorism. To date, the vengeful tendency of authoritarianism has not retreated from them because of their refusal to abort the experience of democratic transition and peaceful opposition in Egypt. The military impose policies that committed horrific violations of human rights, freedom, and compromised the independence of public authorities and the legislature and judiciary.

Egyptian authoritarianism violates, with its vindictive tendency that completely contradicts the principles of the modern state, the rule of law, and the values of citizenship that guarantee people their rights and freedoms. Not only seeks to silence the voices of the opponents and impose stigma on them and their families but aims to take revenge on the 2011 revolution.

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